

Will Jesus Come Back Again

by Stephen Olford

The sermon emphasizes the necessity and reality of Jesus' return, highlighting the witness of Scripture, the Savior, and the saints, as well as the signs of the times.

Duration: 53:35

Topics: "Second Coming"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the idea that instead of evolving, humanity is actually devolving and deteriorating. He highlights the lawlessness and defiance of the younger generation and the immorality prevalent in society. The preacher emphasizes the sudden and rapid nature of the second coming of Jesus Christ, comparing it to the twinkling of an eye and the blast of a trumpet. He calls on backsliders to come to the cross and seek forgiveness, and urges the unconverted to accept Jesus as their Savior. The preacher also expresses his belief in the signs of the times and the imminent return of Jesus, but admits that the exact timing is unknown.

Transcript

...State Ministry, Queensland. Dr. Stephen Alford, and the address he's giving is entitled, Will Jesus Come Again? Dr. Stephen Alford. Every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself even as he is pure.

Gracious Master and Lord, we thank Thee for that thrilling moment when Thou shalt descend from Heaven with a shout and catch up to be with Thyself, those whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy blood, indwelt by Thy Spirit, and kept by Thy power. May many be added to that number from this congregation here in this church tonight, and among those who are listening over the radio. And triumph, we pray Thee, through the message of song and word here tonight, because we ask it for Thy dear name's sake.

Amen. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. It's great to be back here once again.

Our last weeknight service. And a very special warm greeting to my young people as this is our youth night. I haven't my youth suit on, but I still feel young.

And the biggest temptation I think I had in the whole campaign to do what might have not been right was to put up my hand when he said under 30. However, you're as young as you feel. That's what they tell us over in the old country.

Well, now, I've got a lot I want to tell you tonight, and we're a little late in starting the message. But since we have a holiday tomorrow, there's no meeting tomorrow night except for me and those who go to youth for Christ. I hope you won't mind perhaps a little over the time, but we'll try and keep it within the limits if possible.

We're going to read a familiar passage. There are three I would like to read, but we'll keep to one in the Gospel of St. John. John's Gospel, Chapter 14.

I'm choosing these out of the three possible readings I would have brought you, because I owe my conversion to our Lord Jesus Christ. So, the reading of these beautiful words. John 14, and verse 1. Let not your heart be troubled.

Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you.

I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself. That where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again.

Now, my dear friends listening to me tonight, before we come to the examination of the scriptures concerning this fascinating subject of the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ, I want to suggest to intelligent people here tonight that the coming again of the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, is a moral necessity in a world such as we face today. Somebody says, I want an answer, will Jesus Christ come back again? My reply is, it's a moral necessity that he should come back again. I don't believe unbridled sin and evil can go on reigning persistently, indefinitely.

I believe that there must come a point in the affairs of life when conditions become too bad to go on. I believe there is a moment when some great masterful man, some great personage must step into the scene of world affairs and deal with evil, and vindicate good, and issue in a great age of righteousness, and justice, and prosperity, and peace. I believe it's not only a moral, I believe it's a political, it's an economic, it's a commercial, it's even a psychological necessity, leave alone a spiritual one, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, should come back again.

Now, if that is so, then there are certain questions I want to ask, and there are certain questions I want the Bible to answer. For as you know, I have said nothing to you right throughout the crusade, which isn't included in the covers of this book. I haven't given you my own opinions or my speculations.

I have sought to expound the Word of God because I believe it to be the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. This is the infallible Word of God, and if I'm coming to it for anything else, then I come to it concerning this great subject of the coming again of Jesus Christ. I am not interested in extremisms of interpretation, nor am I interested in pressing all sorts of systems so well known in this land and other lands.

What I'm concerned about is, is Jesus Christ coming back again? Is it a fact? And if it is, well, then what does the Bible have to say about it, and what are the implications of this tremendous fact upon the people who are listening to me tonight? Well, now, one or two of the things that I want to know tonight is, first of

all, is the coming of Jesus Christ a reality? Secondly, how soon before He comes back again? And thirdly, what are going to be the results and consequences of His return to this earth? Let's look at the first one, the reality of the coming again of Jesus Christ, the reality of the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, I believe there are certain witnesses to the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the first one is the witness of the Scripture. Young people, have you ever realized that as you open up your New Testament and read from Matthew to Revelation, if you take it on the law of average, one in every twenty-five verses from Matthew to Revelation speak of the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ? Out of 260 chapters, there is a mention of the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ some 318 times.

There is more said concerning the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament than any other cardinal doctrine of our gospel. As a matter of fact, the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ is mentioned in every New Testament book, with the exception of Philemon and 3 John, two personal letters where there is a very strong inference concerning His coming. If I were to be honest and balanced in all my preaching and necessity were made upon me, then one in every six sermons I preach should be on the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I want to say there is no man or woman, no fellow and girl who is prepared to get to grips with truth, who is prepared to accept the witness of the Scripture, who can read this book without being confronted with the fact of the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ. But not only have we the witness of the Scriptures, we have the direct witness of our Savior. I know we read about it in the Scriptures, but it is the emphasis of our Lord's words to which I now want to draw your attention for a moment or two.

When the Lord Jesus came to earth and began His teaching, He made some tremendous revolutionary absences. I think amongst the many that He made, I have three that arrest my attention and to which I want to just call your attention for a moment or two in passing. Speaking of His resurrection from the dead and lightening His body to the temple, the temple, He said this, You destroy this temple and in three days I'll raise it up.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, He was talking concerning His body. In three days I will raise it up. I want to ask a question here tonight.

Did He do that? The answer is yes. Up from the grave He arose as a mighty victor over His foes, and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ tonight is the greatest proven fact of history. On the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, He founded Christianity in the church.

And Jesus rose from the dead, and I know He's alive, for He lives within my heart. But He made another statement. He said this.

He said this, looking into the faces of His disciples. He said, I will build my church. I will build my church.

His disciples might have doubted that statement when they saw Him nailed to a cross. Wrapped up in linen and buried in a tomb. But you know, He has completed that task.

He is completing that task. He has fulfilled His promise. For let me tell you tonight, as I speak to you, the flag of the church of Jesus Christ is fluttering in every corner of the earth.

Having rose from the dead, He went up to heaven, and 50 days after Calvary, He poured out the Holy Spirit. And 120 disciples were fused into a society we know as the church of Jesus Christ. And the very first day, the birthday of the church, 3,000 people were added to that church.

Another 3,000 people almost the next day. Then 5,000. Then Luke uses a word which just means millions.

And since then, 10,000 times 10,000 and thousands of thousands have been added to the church of Jesus Christ. And I'm telling you right through to the very end, the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church of Christ. The world can say what they like.

They can talk about the division, superficial merely. They can talk about all the various emphases in the church. They can talk about the failure and defeats of the church.

But the church of Jesus Christ constant will remain. And I've got no pessimism about the church of Jesus Christ. I'm horribly optimistic.

But Jesus Christ made another great statement. Not only concerning His resurrection, I will raise it up. And He did it.

Not only concerning His church, I will build my church. And He's doing it. He made another statement.

He said, I, I will come again. And He who has fulfilled the first, He who is completing the second, I believe, will keep His word concerning the third. And Jesus Christ, the Son of God, will come back again, as He has said.

There is the witness, then, of the Savior. But let's go a step further. There is the witness of the saints.

When I read my New Testament, I read verses like this, that everyone who is truly born of God, everyone who knows the wonder of that redemptive blood, everyone who's been born again, I repeat, has within him, listen carefully, a living hope, a living hope. We're told that we're begotten unto a lively or a living hope. We're told that we're indwelt by that hope.

Christ in you, the hope of glory. We're told that that hope is for the Christian, like an anchor for the soul, both sure and steadfast. And you know, as long as the Church has existed, right down through the centuries, there have been men and women who have held hold of this great, thrilling hope of which Raymond was singing tonight, the hope of the coming again of Jesus Christ.

You read the history of those early Christians, and especially those who hid their lives away in the catacombs in order to worship. And what you hear, you hear them greeting one another, not with a horrible greetings of today that carry no significance, but brother, maranatha, maranatha, maranatha. It was the cry of those early Christians in the Church, the Lord cometh, the Lord cometh, the Lord cometh.

And that hope has come down right through the centuries. And I could give you thousands of names had we time tonight, but let's start from Martin Luther. He held the hope.

John Calvin, he held the hope. John Milton, he held the hope. John Knox, he held the hope.

John Wesley, he held the hope. Charles Wesley, he sang of the hope. Yes, and in more recent times, I think of men like C.H. Spurgeon, D.L. Moody, Dr. Archer Rubin-Torrey, Dr. Campbell Morgan, and a myriad of others have held the hope of the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And if you were to say to me, Stephen Olford, what is it, what is it that keeps you with a steady gaze so far as your Christian life is concerned, I'll tell you this, my friend. Apart from the wonder of the indwelling Christ who gives me power day by day, the thrill of my life is to look forward to that day of seeing my Lord

face to face and casting down before Him the trophies of grace that He's enabled me to win for Him. Men and women all over the world it may be, and some here from Minneapolis.

Dear Minneapolis, I've come to laugh. I'm looking forward to that day. I'm looking forward to that day.

You know, when Blondin, the great tightrope walker of your own country here, crossed the Niagara Falls on that tightrope again and again and again, they asked him why he was so steady. They asked him how it was that he could manage to put a man in a wheelbarrow and wheel him right across the Niagara Falls with the water falling on all sides and everything calculated to unnerve him. Do you know what his reply was? His reply was that he had a secret.

And the secret was this, that he managed to maintain the balance of his walk by keeping his eyes centered on a suspended star away across the river. And as he looked at that star and walked, he managed to cross every time. You ask me again, what is the secret of a steady life here down below? I'll tell you.

Keeping your eyes focused on the star of that shining hope of the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ. But there is not only the witness of the scriptures and of the Savior and of the saints, there is the witness of the signs. And I want to say here tonight that whereas our Lord Jesus Christ warned men and women never to date his coming, since times and seasons were hidden in the power of the Father and it's not given to any Christian to know the hour when Jesus Christ is coming back again, though that's clear on the page of scripture, yet our Savior made it also plain and clear that there were certain signs that were going to announce his coming, impending then cast their shadow before.

As I look into my Bible and as I look into my newspaper today, as I listen to my radio set, especially at home, where I understand it a little better, I tell you, my friend, I cannot but believe that we're very near the moment when the Lord Jesus Christ is going to descend from heaven with a shout. The signs of the times. I think, for instance, of the signs of widespread apostasy.

The Lord shall not come except there be a falling away first, that that man of sin may be revealed, the son of perdition. Do you know, my friend, that even though cults and even though apostasy has raged right down through the centuries, there is a resurgence of apostasy today that eschatological, men of eschatology, prove conclusively is far in excess of anything that's ever been known before. There are great monster apostasy movements that have their hand upon the peoples of today.

They've got priority over the radio, they've got priority over politics, they've got priority in commerce, they've got priority over the minds of the people. In lands all across the sea and in our own land, they've got into theological colleges, into theological works, into pulpits, into the man in the street, and there is a resurgence of apostasy all over the land today, in our land, in your land, in other lands as well. I believe that that's a sign of the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I go further and I say there's a sign not only of widespread apostasy, but of widespread anti-godism, a widespread anti-godism. I have a tremendous fear for our own country. I don't know about your country, but there is a man of tremendous insight who has said that there's such an infiltration today of anti-godism, especially in the form of communism, that there could be a complete change, a complete change of government in our own land overnight.

You have never, never studied communism without trembling in your shoes as to its phenomenal growth and strength throughout the world. And when you hear me preaching as I've been preaching, like I have been here, and especially to you young people, and last Friday, and I'm asking you to count the cost of sacrifice for Christ, suffering for Christ, service for Christ, I believe if the Lord Jesus Christ doesn't come back again, some of you who claim to be Christians are going to be tested by the shedding of your blood. I believe we're going to see the day if Christ doesn't come back again, where your faith is either going to go absolutely to pieces because you've demonstrated you aren't really born again, it's only nominal, it's only nominal, it's only popular, it's only glamorous, or you're going to shed your blood in proving that you are a Christian and that you're not going to bow to anti-godism.

I'm telling you, my friends, that when the late C.E.M. Jode, Professor C.E.M. Jode reviewed the Communist Review, that great manifesto of communism only a little while ago, I read it, I read it in its totality, and I was absolutely shaken. I was absolutely shaken. The view that the Communists have about our Christ, our God, our Bible, our Christian faith is something which shakes me to my very death as I think of myself as a Christian.

They talk about it as an abominable lie. They talk about it as a fantastic, as a fantastic opium for the people. They talk about it as something which completely, completely, diametrically opposes everything that's reasonable, everything that's politic, everything that's wise, everything that's pure.

They make out even our Christianity to be something which is utterly immoral. My friends, I'm telling you that that sort of thing is going apace, not only in Russia, but in other countries as well. Did you know that a little before the war, and I've heard of it since, that the children in Russia are taught to wear shoes that carry a caricature of the Lord Jesus on their soles so that every time they stamp, they can stamp on the face of Jesus.

They even carry around to hit over the head some of the compatriots that are religious-minded, and those clubs carry the face of a little demon named Jesus. I'm telling you that anti-godism is just running amok. I don't know about this land, but I do know about other lands, and I certainly know about our country.

Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse when, on the eve, on the moment of the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ, widespread anti-godism. With widespread anti-godism, there is widespread abominations upon the earth. Listen, my friends.

We're living today in a day of utter lawlessness, lack of restraint, and defiance of the established order of things. Somebody says, well, that's always been so. I want you to prove it.

I want you to prove it statistically. I can demonstrate that with our march of so-called much vaunted modern progress, instead of evolving, we are devolving. And deteriorating.

And I'm talking to a generation of young people today who just cannot be held for their sheer lawlessness and defiance of the established order of things. I think today of the drunkenness. I think of the vice.

I think of the immorality. I think of the things in relation to the light we've had, in relation to the so-called inventions of science, in relation to our so-called education, in relation to our so-called progress, while we're miles, miles, miles behind some of the civilizations that existed long before Christianity, so far as the relative corruption of our hour is concerned. And I want to go further, and I want to say this.

Not only is there widespread abominations today, in the last days perilous times shall come. Men shall be lovers of themselves more than lovers of God, lovers of pleasure, but something more. In the last days, too, there shall be wars and rumors of war.

Widespread antagonism. Well, now, it's a matter of historic and factual evidence that there's never been a time when there wasn't a war somewhere in the world. It's been more normal to be in war than to be in peace.

But do you realize, my friend, that it's only in our generation that there have been two global wars, the 1914-18, 1939-46, that ghastly, that ghastly carnage through which some of us pass physically in London and Great Britain is only a foretaste to what is inevitably going to come if the Lord Jesus doesn't come back again. And that's a third world war. God have mercy upon us.

There is no doubt about it. There is no doubt about it. It's just an inevitable law that we're bound to run into conflict.

We're bound to run into war unless there's a mighty Holy Ghost revival that's going to sweep the world and bring the latter reign of refreshing from the presence of the Lord or the coming again of Jesus Christ. You're not going to tell me that men like Eisenhower, good as he is, or Macmillan or Churchill or anybody else can hold back the reigns of uncontrolled and unpredictable men. There's a war coming, a third world war.

And some of you ought to be pitchforked into London and just have seen something of what we saw there when the last war was on to know how ghastly and how terrible even the contemplation of it is. I was telling my dear brother Paul Rees of one instance only when I stood in a hotel the night that Germany claimed to have brought 1,000 tons of bombs in a given area of the city of London. I can see now one side of that hotel absolutely blown to pieces.

Every window shattered. My father lying on a bed driven by sheer impact clinked to the ceiling right over one bed crashing down the other side. And I myself hitting the ceiling and coming down almost in the same position.

We looked out of the window and we saw wardens, we saw people chasing for the underground, chasing for the shelters being cut down, absolutely cut down just like, just like corn with a scythe by flying bullets and bursting bombs. Great tank, taxi ranks, absolutely blast to pieces. Driven, driven to miles and miles and miles of the extent of London just by one terrific explosion.

I've seen fire burning, I've seen planes falling, I've seen children, children, tiny little children carried in their mother's arms cut off instantly. I've heard the shrieks and wails of men and women in pain with not a soul to tend them. And I said, this is war.

Some of you don't know anything about it. You never knew there was a war on. You never knew there was a war on.

And I'm telling you, some of us who've been through it know what we're talking about when we say God preserved us from another third world war. There are the signs of the times and I believe that all these things are a portent of that which is soon to be the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ. I cannot believe, I cannot believe that the world will go on with unbridled evil, on and on and on, persistently and endlessly without the Lord breaking in to just seize hold of the situation Himself.

The reality of the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ. How do I know the witness of the Scriptures? How do I know the witness of the Savior Himself? How do I know the witness of the saints right down through the ages? How do I know the witness of the signs? But somebody asks me tonight, when do you think He'll be back? How soon will it be before He comes? Well, I don't know the day or the hour. I don't know the day or the hour, but I can say this, as to the day, it's bound to be soon.

It's bound to be soon. I'm absolutely sure it's bound to be soon if our Lord, by inspiration, spoke to the early apostles of the imminence of His return. Do you mean to tell me that, do you mean to tell me that those Scriptures aren't even more relevant today? Paul says the time is short.

Peter says, the coming of the Lord, the coming of the Lord, forth now. John says the revelation of the things which must shortly come to pass. The other apostles talk about it is time to seek the Lord.

Why? Because the end is at hand. The end is at hand. As to the mighty descent from heaven, once that moment strikes when He's going to come from heaven, the Bible tells me that it's going to be swift.

It's going to be swift. The day may be soon, but the descent will be swift. Once He leaves His sapphire throne, it'll be instantaneous.

He'll come. He'll come. Listen to the three behold of the last chapter of the Bible.

Three times. As to the mighty deliverance that's going to be effected for His own people, that's going to be, listen, it's going to be devastatingly sudden. Listen to this.

In a moment, that's an indivisible part of time. In the twinkling of an eye, that's not the winking of an eye. That's far too wrong.

In the twinkling of an eye, just as that light reflects upon the eyeball and sprinkles for one moment as fast as that, at the trump, at the last trump, that is to say, just as a trumpet blasts the air, like that, He will come. He will come. And says the Bible, the bodies of our humiliation shall be likened unto His own glorious body.

And we shall be changed in a moment. We shall be changed in a moment. Beloved, now we are the sons of God and it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Blessed moment for the true Christian. I say, my friend, are you ready for that moment? Are you ready for that moment? Coming suddenly, coming soon, coming certainly night or noon. Jesus, I humbly pray, take all my sin away and keep me till that day when Thou dost come.

But what's my great burden tonight, what my great concern is tonight, is not so much the reality of His coming, because I think that's generally known, not so much the speed and rapidity of His coming, because that's assumed. We believe in the imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ. What is concerning me in these closing moments is what the consequence and results of His coming are going to be.

There are three classes of people listening to me over the radio, three classes of people in this auditorium tonight are going to be affected at once by His coming. Never mind the wider sweep of His coming. Let's consider just the three classes that represent you people here.

There are going to be, listen, when He comes, the believers. They're going to be the backsliders. They're going to be the unbelievers.

And the coming of the Lord Jesus is going to affect every class. For the believer, for the believer who's living in victory, for the believer who knows the radiance of the mighty Son of God dwelling in him, for that believer, it's going to be unspeakable satisfaction. I shall be satisfied when I awaken His likeness.

Why is it going to be satisfaction? Because that moment is going to usher the believer into all the realization of the blessings of the gospel. For him, it's going to mean a happy reunion, a happy reunion. For when the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, the believer is going to be caught up together with the Lord to meet Him in the air.

And there's going to be a reunion not only with the Lord, but with all loved ones who've gone on before. Blessed moment, blessed moment of recognition, not only of our Lord, but of the loved ones who've gone on. It's going to be the moment not only of happy reunion, but the moment of happy rewarding.

Behold, I come, says the Lord Jesus, and my reward is with me to give to every man according as he has done. Oh, the wonder of standing at the judgment seat of Christ and taking from Him one of those six crowns for which we can qualify, those symbolic, those symbolic crowns of degrees of responsibility and purpose and service in the eternal kingdom. It's going to be also the joy of happy, listen, listen, the joy of happy worship and service eternally in the presence of the Lord without any sense of regret, no regret.

Why? Because we serve Him perfectly. It's going to be a happy rejoicing for we're going to be presented, be presented before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Happy reunion, happy rewarding, happy rejoicing.

Are you, my beloved brother, waiting for that moment? Can you say face to face with Christ my Savior? Face to face, what will it be when in rapture I behold Him, Jesus Christ who died for me? But there is another class to which I want to say a word of solemn warning. It's the backslider, the backslider. And I want to say that the backslider is a man or woman who is not living in conscious victory.

The backslider is the fellow or girl in this audience tonight, man or woman who isn't winning souls for Jesus Christ, who doesn't know the radiant happiness of the indwelling Christ, who doesn't know the joy of daily communion and fellowship with Him over the word and prayer. The man or woman who doesn't know the radiant thrill of living in victory, the backslider. For that person it's going to mean, listen carefully, unutterable shame, unutterable shame.

When the Apostle John writes to his converts, he says, My little children, oh, I beg of you, I beg of you, abide in Him, abide in Him, that ye may have confidence and not be ashamed away at His coming. And I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is going to come and He's going to find people, and I trust there won't be anyone here tonight who have not been living in touch with Him and by virtue of that set the backsliders. And I want to tell you, my friend, that when you look, when you look into His face, you're going to be ashamed.

You're going to be ashamed. Your eyes are going to drop. Your face is going to burn with shame and confusion.

You're going to be ashamed not only before your Lord, but before the judgment seat of Christ. Because I want to tell you, my friend, that every single day you live, you are either building gold, silver, precious

stones unto the day of reward, or wood, hay and stubble. That day when you stand before the judgment seat of Christ, if your life has been lived selfishly, if your life has been lived in defeat and frustration, if your life hasn't merited the gold, silver, precious stones, you're going to see that wood, hay and stubble burn up, burn up! And you're going to have the uneterable shame of bending down and picking up the charred embers of a wasted life and pressing them into His hands and saying, that's all I've got for you, Lord.

And I wouldn't be in the shoes of any backslider in this place tonight. And you say, then what about, what about heaven? Will heaven ever be a happy place if I'm a backslider? Listen, when you stand before the judgment seat of Christ and Christ gives the assessment of your selfish, defeated living down here, your very happiness will be to agree with it and to say, Lord, you're right. You couldn't have judged otherwise.

I deserve it. And heaven wouldn't be heaven for me if you didn't judge me for the life of unfaithfulness I've lived down here. And so you'll be saved.

So is by far. But I want to tell you this, right throughout eternity, you will carry a mark, however happy you are in the presence of the Lord, you'll carry a mark that demonstrates that your life wasn't lived as it should have been lived. There are Christians in this place tonight who think that because they've got Jesus Christ in their life and they're born again, that they've got an insurance policy to heaven.

And it doesn't matter how you live. It does matter how you live. God doesn't condemn sin in the sinner and condone it in the faith.

And I'll be witness against you at the judgment seat of Christ that you heard me speak tonight. You can't play with fire. You can't go on living defeated lives.

You can't live a nominal sort of Christian life and get away with it. You'll stand that day and you'll carry forever the mark of unfaithfulness. And if one star differs to another in glory, so your places in the kingdom will mark whether or not you've been well rewarded or less rewarded.

The very brightness of your life up there will demonstrate just how you've lived down here. Your life up there is a crystallization of your life down here. And if I never said a warning word to this audience before, I say tonight, God have mercy upon any man or woman who's a backslider here in this place tonight.

God bring you to the cross tonight. God break you. God smash you.

God cleanse you. God kill you. God send you out to live victoriously until he comes.

And I want to say another thing too. I want to say this, that your test of faith, your test of faith concerning the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ is one of the things which will be brought to account. There are some of us who are loving his appearing.

Some of us who are living as if Jesus might come before this service is over. And whether or not he comes won't matter. Jesus Christ is going to judge our faith in terms of our expectancy of his coming.

But there is another class, and this class burdens me even more perhaps. It's a class called the unbeliever. And I'm telling you, my friend, if it's unspeakable satisfaction for the believer, if it's unutterable shame for the backslider, it is going to mean unending separation, unending separation for the unbeliever.

But once the Lord Jesus comes into the air, the day of grace is closed, the next moment will be when he comes from heaven with his mighty angels, inflaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God,

that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. Oh God, have mercy on every unbelieving soul. Separation from Christ will mean eternal loss.

Separation from heaven will mean eternal hell. Separation from your loved one will mean eternal loneliness. A very foolish man came to me one day and said, Stephen Alford, I'm not afraid of hell.

I'm not afraid of hell. There'll be plenty of us down there. Oh, the doped man, the blinded man, the foolish man.

He didn't realize that heaven is going to be the loneliest. place in the universe. Don't ask me to explain it.

Don't ask me to try and rationalize it. Don't ask me to try and pierce the mystery of it. All I know is that everything that can be terrible and horrifying is characteristic of hell.

And Jesus Christ is coming back again. And his coming back again means the closing of the door of mercy. I beg you, I beg you, I beg you tonight, if you're out of Christ, I beg you, if you're out of Christ tonight, oh, get right with God and do it now.

Get right with God. He tells you how. Oh, come to Christ who shed his blood and at the cross get right with God.

He's coming. The reality of it is unquestionable. The rapidity of it is plain and clear in the word of God.

The results of it are conclusive. For the believer, satisfaction. For the backslider, shame.

For the unconverted, eternal separation. I'm facing you with a challenge in this closing moment. I'm asking, first of all, the backsliding brother, sister here tonight, will you come to the cross? Will you be humbled? Will you allow your pride to be broken? Will you get into fellowship with him again? Will you start to live the victorious life? I beg of you.

For the unconverted tonight, may I say, there's only one guarantee for heaven. It's Christ in you, the hope of glory. Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Will you come to the cross tonight and bow low there and having sought the pardon and forgiveness which the cross provides, will you ask this Savior, Lord, to come into your heart and life? Will you do it now? Will you do it right now? Right now, in the silence of the next few moments, will you get ready for that day when he shall come? And he will not tarry, for when he steps off his throne, it'll be in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the blast of the trumpet. I repeat, coming suddenly, coming soon, coming certainly, night or noon, will you pray, Jesus, I humbly pray, take all my sin away and keep me till that day when thou dost come. Let us bow together in prayer.

The message which you have just heard is copyright and cannot be copied without written permission from Outreach Incorporated, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and that duplication and distribution rights have been granted only to Tape Evangelism Fellowship of Queensland, Post Office Box 224, Wynnum, Postcode 4178. The importance of being a disciple was the title that Dr. Stephen Alford gave to this address. Luke 14, verse 25, And there went great multitudes with him, and he turned and said unto them, If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, he cannot be my disciple. Verse 33, So likewise whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Turning back to chapter 9, verse 57, We read, And it came to pass that as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head. And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee, but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.

May God have his blessing to the reading of his infallible word and to his name be praised. Most gracious heavenly Father whose mercy is wider, wider by far than the measure of man's mind and whose love knows no ending. In the name of thy sinless Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the energy of the Holy Spirit, we are bowed before thee in worship and lift our hearts to thee in grateful gladness.

Safely through another week thou hast brought us. And whereas there are many who a week ago were able to lift their voices in praise to thee who are in eternity this morning, our lives have been spared, our bodies have been strengthened, and our steps have been directed. And in thy very wonderful providence we are sharing in this experience of worship and we are filled.

Fill our hearts with that kind of humble gladness that makes us aware of how completely dependent we are upon Jesus Christ. Other refuge have we none. Hangs our helpless souls on thee.

Leave, O leave us, not alone. Still support and comfort us. We are thy children and thou art our father and we are thy sheep and thou art our shepherd.

We are thy servants and thou art our sovereign and our master. And we confess to thee this morning that there is a thrill in our spirits as we recognize these holy relationships. Put into our hearts a passionate concern for our fellow beings who, although they are thy creatures, are not thy children.

They are living for themselves. They are living for the things of this life. They put things and put themselves first and therefore they are strangers from the covenants of promise.

They are without God and without hope in the world. Wake them out of their complacency. Convict them in their sins.

Bring them sharply up against the claims of the cross of Jesus Christ. And this very morning may they bow a stubborn will and a high mind before the claims of the Son of God who became the Son of Man that we, through grace, might become the children of God. We thank thee for all of the sacred and lovely significance of this day when we honor our mothers.

And when we think about the Christian homes, when we show as Christians our concern over the fact that more of our homes in this nation are not Christian. We who are sons and daughters of mothers yet alive give thee thanks for every influence of love and patience, of prayer and consideration that has been poured into these lives of ours by the mothers who bore us. We honor them.

We give thee thanks for them. We commend them tenderly to thy fatherly love and care. Then we who have mothers who have gone on to fairer worlds on high give thee thanks for the influence they have left behind and pray that we may be worthy of such selfless devotion which we found in them.

Most gracious and merciful God, God who hath set the solitary in families, God who in the coming of thy dear son Jesus into a simple peasant home in Galilee long ago didst forever crown the home with honor, call the families of America to thy heart. Call the fathers and the mothers of this land to a saving acquaintance with Jesus Christ. As we pick up our papers day by day and see what ravages sin has wrought in the lives of our young people, how far they have drifted from paths of decency and self-restraint and sobriety and nobility and how they make themselves a menace to society, we pray that thou will put in the hearts of all parents a cry that they may be God-fearing parents, that they may be Christ-loving parents, and that they may be church-related parents, both by example and by precept.

They may rear children in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord. We ask today that thou will comfort all those who sorrow, strengthen all those who are feeble, companion all those who are lonely, give light to all those who are perplexed, and give the grace of surrender to all those who are living without Jesus Christ. Command thy blessing upon him who is to speak to us again the words of this life, which are also the words of the life to come.

God, strengthen and anoint him. Give us a harvest of souls this very day, and further quicken all of thy believing peoples. Help us to live as those who must one day die, and help us to die as those who will live forever in Jesus Christ's matchless name.

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