

Marvel With Me!

by Thaddeus Barnum

This sermon offers comfort and hope in the face of suffering, reminding us that God is just and will repay those who afflict us, and that we will behold His glory and be changed to withstand it.

Duration: 26:55

Scripture: Psalm 27:4, Isaiah 53:2, Matthew 6:33, Mark 10:45, John 1:14, 2 Thessalonians 1:10, Revelation 5:12

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by acknowledging the burdens and challenges that many people face in their lives. He emphasizes the need to take a break and find rest in God. The speaker then criticizes the shallow and materialistic messages preached by some churches, which promise worldly success and happiness instead of focusing on the glory of God and the true message of salvation. He warns about the moral decline in society and the potential persecution that Christians may face, urging believers to stand firm in their faith and be prepared for the challenges ahead.

Transcript

Almighty God, Almighty Father, we turn to you in desperate need for you to feed us, strengthen us in your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, and ask by the good graces of your Holy Spirit to open your word to us. Open our hearts, our ears, our minds, our souls, and do what only you can do, change us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Good morning to you. I am coming this morning to the words found in 2 Thessalonians. I'd like you to grab your Bible and go with me there, 2 Thessalonians, and look at this first chapter in its general form, one verse in particular, and one word in particular.

I must say the general sense as it begins, Paul is giving us that wonderful sense of, just take a break. How many of you know what that's like? Just, just, just take a break. So many of us live with such burdens upon our soul, things that weigh heavy upon us in sickness or in suffering, or those that we love, we hold things that are deep inside of us that sometimes feel too burdensome.

For others of us, it's just the elections themselves, alone. Just them. Turn the TV off.

I mean, just turn the TV off. What we have to live through in this day, the scandal, the corruption, the dishonesty, the disintegrity, what is teaching the generation coming up, our children, our grandchildren. It's

enough to make us sick.

A country that has lost its moral bearing. It's lost us. What we called back in the day immoral, legislation has made moral.

And if the change is happening this fast, what will 2025 be like? What will 2050 be like for our children, our grandchildren? Today to believe in the God of the Bible is scandal. I met a 17-year-old, a sophomore, sorry, a junior, senior in high school. She came to me and she said, just wearing the cross, just wearing the cross, people mock me, laugh at me.

I think it's already coming here. I don't have to read the magazine, *The Voice of the Martyrs*, to know that what's happening across the world to our brothers and sisters who are standing firm in the Word of God, standing firm in the testimony of Jesus, who are suffering under great oppression, great persecutions. It's coming here.

Can you not feel it? Can you not see it? And what do we do? How do we respond? Is it like Matthew when it rolled down, we just board up and hunker down? Do we evacuate completely? Do we face the storm that's coming? This is what Paul is dealing with in the Thessalonian conversation, the second epistle. He starts by thanking God for them, for they are a people who are in God our Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ. And he prays that grace be unto them, peace be unto them, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

And he gives thanks for them because their faith, their faith in the Lord Jesus is growing abundantly. The love that they have, one for another, is increasing. And therefore, they say, what we really thank God for is your steadfastness or your endurance and the strength of your faith as you face in the suffering and the persecution.

And that's what this message is geared for. And I fear that this message to you today might miss, altogether miss, because we don't yet know the kinds of suffering that the Thessalonians, others are suffering, even now across the world today. But maybe you've got a taste of it.

Paul is bringing comfort to those who are being abused, who are being oppressed, who are being afflicted. And comfort number one, oh, I rarely hear this preached in churches, is found in verses 5 to 9. Here, what our Lord is saying is that he is just. You'll find this argument, by the way, in *Philippians 1.28*, *Philippians 3.18*, found here also in verses 5 to 9. You're finding the same argument, that God is just.

That when, in verse 7, it says, that our Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, he will come as the judge of the living and the dead. It has been appointed to him by his Father. He has appointed, *Acts 17.31* tells us, Father has appointed his Son to judge the living and the dead.

And he's coming, and the courts will sit, and the judge will come, and justice will reign. And for those who do not obey the gospel of God, the gospel of our Lord Jesus, who don't know God, who oppose, who afflict, on that day of judgment coming, it's so mapped out here, that God considers, verse 6, it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted, as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God, who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of our Lord, and of the glory of his might.

That day is coming. That day is coming. It's captured in our creeds.

It's been captured down through the years. It's captured in the Bible. That day of justice, that day of justice which actually already happened on the cross of Calvary, when our Savior took the wrath of God to himself.

But there are those today who oppress and afflict. And if you know what it's like to be in that position of being abused of heart and of soul and of mind, and to think that there's no justice in this world, my dear friends, this is the first ounce of comfort from Paul. Oh, but yes, there is justice.

Always justice. God is always true. God is always holy.

God is always righteous. God is always just. And the only reason you don't see it now is, he is patient toward us.

You'll find this in 2 Peter 3. He is patient toward us, not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance. He is not slow about his promise. He's right on time.

But when he does come, he's coming with justice. Yes, he is. And for you and I who've been rescued at the cross of Calvary, where that justice met upon Jesus our Savior, where we knew the infusion of life, as he granted us the ability to repent and turn away from the things, the sins, the sinful nature, all of it that gripped us, grabbed us, thrust us in bondage.

When he has set us free and cleansed us, and we know it, and filled with his life, his resurrected power and life, when we know it, on that day when he comes, this is what it says in verse 10. It's just, it's just that when I was a young Christian, this verse 10 just, it was my verse. You can't have it.

It's my verse. It's my verse. Here it says it.

It says, on that day when Jesus comes, revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, verse 10, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints and marveled at among all who believed. Only time in New Testament, only time in the Scriptures where that word is used here to describe that day. We shall see him, and we shall marvel, astonishment, wonder, love and praise when we behold him.

No, no. No, no. It's not going to be like when he was a young carpenter in Nazareth.

No, no. Not when he had pushed his glory aside. He laid his glory aside.

He appeared as one of us. The prophets told us this. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him.

Nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He came as a common man. A common person in Nazareth.

One who stood up. It's not like when he was walking the dusty roads of Galilee with his disciples. Or despised and forsaken when he bore that cross on the way to Calvary.

No, no. This is him who we see at the transfiguration. His glory upon him.

So that Peter and John and James can't even stand. This is the one that appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus. In the darkness of his own soul.

The light of the glory of God in the face of Christ appeared and knocked him straight on down. This is him who John worshipped on the island of Patmos in Revelation 1. When he beheld the glory of the Savior.

John who had laid his head on the breast of Jesus at the Last Supper.

Friend and confidant and Lord and teacher. But now in Revelation 1 John can't even stand in his presence. He can't even stand.

And poor John has to write it down. I mean he's got to take and write it down. How do you grip the glory of God in the face of Christ? How do you say it? And John gives us the description but our words are so, are so hard.

They're the finite trying to describe the infinite. The wonder, the glory, the splendor, the majesty of our Savior and of our Lord. Oh, on that day we shall see him.

We shall behold him as he is. And we shall marvel at him. I love that verse.

I love that verse. Well, why not? Because this is the point of it. Oh, the poor people today.

All we hear is about Jesus the common, Jesus the friend, Jesus the intimate one and he is all that. Thank God he is all that. But when he comes it will be with honor.

We shall behold him in his majesty. And if he did not change our bodies from the mortal to the immortal. As it says in 1 Corinthians 15, verses 15 and following, it says, I tell you a mystery.

We shall be changed. In a flash, in a twinkling of an eye, the last trumpet, the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised and perishable. We will be changed.

The mortal will take on the immortal. The perishable will take on the imperishable. The corruptible will take on the incorruptible and I'm convinced of this.

It's the only way these bodies, these jars of clay could ever withstand the glory, the weight of glory of our savior. Oh if he appears and oh I've got this little jar of clay, poof, back to dust. Back to dust.

I'd be blessed as to be dust. But on that day he shall change us so that we can behold him and we shall be like him. I don't know what those words mean from 1 John 3. We shall see him as he is.

We shall be like him. And so I grew up, I grew up loving the Bible. I grew up loving the Bible.

Because I finally figured out this is the key. This is it. You go through the stories that these people knew, the darkness that we know, the sinful nature, the pains of life, the sufferings of life.

They know it all. They know it all. And then into the midst of it they get this glimpse of glory.

Just this glimpse of glory. Acts 7 verse 1. Example. Abram in the Ur of Chaldees.

Darkness. Cult. Reminds you of Philadelphia.

The Bible says, the God of glory appeared to Abram. I love that. How did it happen? I don't know.

But it did. And that's the story right through the Bible. The God of glory.

He's appearing. He's constantly appearing. There's Jacob.

He's running in fear from his brother. And down comes a ladder. And Jesus standing at the top and He beholds His Savior.

Angels ascending and descending upon them. It's all through the Bible. All these glimpses.

Isaiah bringing a hard message to the generation to repent of their sins, return back to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Return back to the faith of the fathers. And there he sees the Lord sitting upon the throne.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. And you see it's constantly Daniel. Old Testament Daniel.

Listen to me. Old Testament Daniel. What does he see in chapter 7, verse 13? He sees what we're talking about.

He said in the night vision, I see the Son of Man coming in power and the glories. I can see Him. Daniel already seeing the day that you and I have yet to see.

Already got it. Job in the midst of his suffering. And he suffers.

Job suffers. We have to walk 34 chapters through his suffering. But right in the midst of it, in chapter 19, what's he say? I know my Redeemer lives.

And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed. Yet from my flesh I shall see God.

Whom I myself shall see. Whom my eyes shall behold. Not as a stranger.

I can see. This has always been the story. I don't have time today to walk through the Gospels.

Jesus, even when His glory was laid aside, how many times do you see He just would lay His hands on the sick and people would be astonished. They would marvel at the spectacular glory that was coming. Even though His glory was hidden.

The greatest glory of all the Bible actually isn't found in the splendor and beauty of light. The greatest glory that's found in the Bible is in the darkest moment of all time. The glory of the sun upon the cross.

For us. For our salvation. By the time you get to Revelation, it's all we sing about.

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing. Falling down before Him all the days of eternity, the marveling will never stop throughout all eternity. We shall marvel all the days we are given.

And we shall know what it means down through the ages because it's been the story from the beginning. It's why I fell in love with biographies. I love to read the biographies of the saints.

They are as weird as I am. Uncommonly so. And they're doing things they ought not to do.

And then it comes. Sound of the glory of God in their life. And the marveling begins.

The marveling begins. It's always a sound. And the reason that biographies help is because when we're down, when we're in need, they show us that justice is true.

That God is just. And that He's coming for us to glory and for what He's done on our behalf. And so, when I was a boy, young Christian, young Christian man, and I was going to church.

That's all I wanted. I wanted to be at church where this is what happened. We talked about Jesus.

We saw Jesus. We heard His word. And the worships and the praises and the sounds.

It always happened. It always happened at the time of Reformation. The moment that Jesus presided in His church, the worship came.

After John Wesley. Charles Wesley. You've got it down through the ages.

The praise rises. The worship rises. And faith grows strong.

And we know how to love one another as Christ has loved us. And I thought that was going to be my journey until I got into the church. And I realized we've got an enemy.

And he has one job. Just one job. Eyes off Jesus.

Eyes off the Savior. Eyes off the glory of the Savior. Oh, it's so simple.

All it takes is one person saying, actually that color green isn't right for today. Dissensions. Factions.

We start biting each other. I don't think like you think. I don't agree with you.

You're not supposed to baptize that kind of a person or this kind of a person or do this thing or do that thing. And we tear apart. And eventually we become like the church of Laodicea.

Found at the end of Revelation 3. Where we're doing church except the Lord of the church is outside his church. Knocking on the door of our lives, of our churches. We can no longer hear his voice.

We can no longer hear his knock. What Jesus taught us in Matthew 24 is you've got to be watching out for this devil. This Satan.

This ancient serpent who deceives. For he doesn't come as himself most times. He comes as wolf dressed in sheep's clothing.

He comes as angel of light. And you can barely recognize him. And worse off, he comes with signs and wonders.

And we all love signs and wonders. This too is Paul's message. You'll find this in chapter 2 of 2 Thessalonians in verse 9. The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan and all power and false signs and wonders.

It's happening. It's exactly what Satan has always done. You remember how he tempted Jesus in the wilderness? Tried to show him the marvel, the splendor, to show him the kingdoms of the world and his glory.

Now this for Jesus is not a temptation. This is not the essence of that temptation. For us, this is temptation.

All we need is the... Our economy is built on the way the devil does this. Is it not? To seduce us into buying more, seeing better, getting bigger, better job, better... I had a friend look at me and said, I've got it,

by the way. What? He said, I've got the iPhone 7. I said, does it make coffee? I was at the car dealership yesterday getting my airbag changed.

And I was sitting out there and I looked at this car that's not my car. There was a better car. I'm looking at it.

I want that car. I don't want my car. I want that car.

That one. I want that one. It's all built on it.

Isn't that the way he does it? Isn't that the way it always happens? Always seducing us for more. Wanting us to do more. A friend of mine said, you know, our church isn't doing as well as the church down the street.

Well, tell me what's happening in the church down the street. He said, well, they've got it all. They've got the building.

They've got this incredible preacher. And they've got a light show. They've got a light show.

And they've got a band. And the people crowd in. And they crowd in.

And I said, well, what's the message that they're bringing? He said, the message they're bringing is just that. That if you trust Jesus, He'll get you the car. If you trust Jesus, you will not be sick.

If you trust Jesus, they salt and pepper their message, giving people promises of a happy life, a better life. A life where miracles will happen and you'll live on this euphoria, this heroin rush of our American culture. Not preaching the Savior.

Not preaching the Savior. And what they end up doing is condemning people. There are people who are set free and they are healed.

And there are other people who embody they are going to be with Jesus. And our job is to understand the will of God for each person and to know what the Lord is doing with each person. But if you say to a person who is sick, if you had faith you'd be well, you're not preaching the Bible.

You're not preaching the Savior. You're not preaching the Lord. You're giving us these false signs, these false wonders, a false gospel, a false Jesus.

And they're crowding in. They're crowding into churches like this. And it's just so full of the heroin rush of our culture.

Not knowing that what heroin does is it leaves you utterly empty and addicted. It does not satisfy the soul. Our Lord actually said, it just takes two or three of you to gather together in my name.

And there I am. And where I am in that. Where I am in that.

You will marvel. Times we're about to go in are not going to be easy. It is going to be important to tell the generation coming up that God is indeed just.

He calls us to a real repentance of our sin. And grants us the ability to repent. To repent.

To be cleansed by the blood of Calvary and receive new life in Christ. So that we can stand in the day of a storm. But his promise is that all our days we shall marvel.

As we put our eyes upon him. And the prayer will be answered from Ephesians 1. I pray the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation and the knowledge of him. That you might know what is the hope of your calling.

The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. What is the surpassing greatness of his power toward us who believe we will be a people where faith deepens and love grows strong. We will be a people that long for the day that our Savior returns.

We'll be a people that already have begun the journey to marvel. So we will say like the people of 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 8. I love this verse. It says this.

It says this. Though we have not seen him, we love him. And though we do not see him now, yet we believe in him.

We rejoice now with joy unspeakable and full of glory because he's here. He's revealing himself. He's showing himself.

The marveling has begun. And we get to show the world out there what it means to follow him. Real, real him.

Not false him. And to be able to lead a generation to know what's coming in the days when he comes to part the skies and to long for that day when we are home. When sickness and mourning and sighing and death will be no more.

We shall behold our Savior forever. We shall see his face. And we shall behold him.

Oh, praise the Lord for the one who showed us the glory of God to us. For the reformers who have come in and said, no, no. No, no.

We're never going to do church without the Lord of the church. We're never going to do it. If there are distractions, we're getting our eyes back.

If Satan's going to come with signs and wonders, let him come. But no sign and wonder that doesn't glorify Jesus isn't a sign and wonder at all. The only glory I want to see is the glory unsurpassable.

The glory eternal. The glory which the Son had with the Father from when the world began. Dear friends, get this.

The marveling has begun. Would you stand? Would you marvel just for a moment? Would you worship him who saved you, who rescued you? Would you just yield your life to him? There are things where you just need to repent of things. Just do it.

Put your eyes upon Jesus and let him cleanse you, wash you and fill you, and then sing his praise and marvel at the wonders.

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