

Easter conf.shannon Hills 02

by Welcome Detweiler

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing our responsibility to be occupied with the message of salvation until Jesus comes, and it encourages listeners to be witnesses for Christ in a world that is hostile to the gospel.

Duration: 31:57

Scripture: Mark 16:19-20, Luke 24:50, Acts 1:6, Acts 1:11

Topics: "Eternal Security", "Spreading Gospel"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of knowing the safety that comes from having a relationship with God. He highlights that many people who appear to have it all together are actually living in fear and uncertainty. The preacher encourages the audience to share the message of salvation and anticipate the future with hope. He reminds them that even though the task may seem overwhelming, everyone has a role to play in spreading the gospel until Jesus returns. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the upcoming service and a call to continue seeking God's will.

Transcript

In his opening remarks this morning, Dr. MacKay mentioned that he had attended thirty-one or, was it, seventy-one of these conferences. However, it is possible that you have set a new record today. You have really gone Dutch.

A Pennsylvania Dutchman, and then a real purebred Dutchman. What a combination. Van Rijn and Van Detwiler at one time.

And this morning, we were thinking of that lovely place called Heaven. Speaking from Revelation chapter 21, and some Bible scholars who graduate into horn lockers do not agree as to what that twenty-first chapter represents. Some will tell us that must be the days of the millennium.

Others will say that is the eternal state, and they both have their reason for arguing. Until they convince the Pennsylvania Dutchman otherwise, I will say whatever the primary thing is, it still is a picture of the real Heaven where our loved ones have gone, and all the conditions that we read about this morning will be what they are enjoying in that wonderful habitation of God. In the epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 11, there are a company of people who are looking for a country.

They are looking for a heavenly country. Of course they are speaking about Heaven. The word country is used there to express the vastness of that place.

If you have ever been worried about the lack of space when you get to Heaven, crowded conditions, forget it. It's a country. Abraham looked for a city whose builder and maker was God, and the city might suggest to us an innumerable host, thousands upon thousands, and just an innumerable host.

No, we're not going to be in the minority up there. A tremendous crowd of people will be singing his praises forever. Again, in your Bible, Heaven is looked upon as a kingdom, a kingdom where righteousness will reign, where justice will reign, and that'll be a nice change, won't it? We don't know too much about that today.

Righteousness and the laws that God gave when he introduced human government have been forgotten, but this kingdom will be properly under the real king. Again, it is looked upon as paradise, and that conveys to us the beauty, the grandeur of that place. If you want to sit down and dream, when you get to Heaven you'll say, all the imaginations that I tried to create in Heaven are on earth.

What Heaven would be like? Well, I'll have to use the permission to use Queen of Sheba's language. The half has not been told. In John 14, Heaven is presented to us as the Father's house, and this would suggest the intimacy of relationship.

All of these combined bring to us a view of Heaven. One young man who was nearly saved thought it was his duty to inquire about all of his friends to see if they were saved, and he was right. He approached an old man one day, and he said, Are you going to Heaven? The white-haired old man.

He said, I live there. And the young fellow said, Oh, one of those dead fellows. I said, Are you going to Heaven? I said, I live there.

Now, you've got to wait till he gets his hearing aid. He still didn't get it. I said, Are you going to Heaven? I heard you.

I live there. Is that possible? Of course it is. Let me think of this subject.

You know, it's possible for us to be so occupied with that future that we forget about the present, and, you know, we could just sit down and say, Great! I'm saved! I'm on the way to Heaven! I'm either going the upper route or the lower route. I gave you some warnings this morning. One was, this world is not my home.

You have to live with eternity's values in view. Again, in the 11th chapter of Hebrews, the Christians are looked upon as pilgrims and strangers. I want you to carry this home with you and remind yourself daily, I'm just a passing through.

This is really not my home, and let's be careful about driving our stakes so deep in this world. Keep that in mind. When Richard D. Hund closes his program, and he uses the same words that his father used, what is it? Waiting, working, watching, something like that.

But at least the word working is in there, and the Lord doesn't want us to stretch our eyes into the future and look for that to the extent that we're not going to be doing something. Do you want a verse for it? Even if Galilee why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven

shall so come in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven. Let's read from that chapter.

Acts chapter 1, and I guess for connection's sake we ought to read from verse 6. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the time and the season which the Father hath put into his own power, but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth. When he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which was taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Let's look at a few more verses. The closing verses of Luke's gospel. Reading from verse 50, And he led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them.

And it came to pass that while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Mark's closing verses, chapter 16 and verse 19.

So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God. They went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following. I promised to answer some question I'd forgotten.

Do you remember what that was? Oh, yes, I do. Are you reading the scriptures? I told you about the two ways, and I was very careful this morning. I didn't say three ways that you can get into heaven, but I said there are three entrances to heaven.

And it's my imagination too far when I say, if you go the upper route and you approach the gate, it will be, Enter here, sinners saved by grace. If you go the lower route, the same sign will be there, Enter here, sinners saved by grace. How would you like the Lord Jesus to go through that gate? No.

He has to have a gate all alone, and we were reading in these verses, he ascended up into heaven. And of course, if you want to read the counterpart, what happened in heaven when he arrived, you'll have to go through Psalm 24 to read about that. Psalm 24, for when he arrived, the reception committee are there, and these are the words.

Verse 7 of Psalm 24, Lift up your head, O ye gates, and be lift up, ye everlasting doors, the King of glory shall come in. Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your head, O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts. He is the King of glory, and that's the third entrance into heaven. Even sinners saved by grace don't go in there.

Reserve for sinless ones, for Jesus Christ alone. All right, we've settled that. Yesterday was Easter.

What comes after that? Our blessed Savior was on the earth for 40 days, and then something happened, and we read about it this afternoon. He lifts up his hands in priestly blessing, and he fades out of their presence. If you had been living in Pennsylvania a number of years ago, as I was, you would probably, on

a Thursday morning, see horses and buggies, and the people that are driving the horses have their Sunday clothes on, and they're driving towards the church.

And you say, is it a wedding on a Thursday morning? Is it a funeral on a Thursday morning? No. What is it? It's Ascension Day, and every year, 40 days after his death, burial, and resurrection, they have an Ascension service. Is it possible that we have placed so much emphasis on his death and his burial and his resurrection, and then we leave him on earth forever? Is there any significance that when he was finished, he ascended up into heaven? There he is, at God's right hand.

And I wonder if you noticed, when we read these three verses together, that immediately associated with his ascension is the responsibility that he left to those who are left behind. In the first chapter of Acts, just before reading of his ascension, his last words, "'Ye shall receive power,' added that the Holy Ghost has come upon you, "and ye shall be witnesses unto me, Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the uttermost part of the earth." That's what we need to be doing while we've got the prospect, the wonderful anticipation of heaven ahead. Not sitting down, do nothing.

There's still plenty of work to be done. Did you notice when Luke writes, he doesn't mention that we are to be witnesses and go out and proclaim the gospel, but he does mention this, "And they worshipped him, and turned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple praising and blessing God." God's word? Worship, praise and adoration on the way home to heaven. Man's word? A tremendous responsibility of getting this message out to those that are still going the opposite direction.

And, of course, in Mark's gospel we read this, agreeing with the record in Acts, "And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, confirming the word with signs following." We've got a big job on our hands. Do you ever feel sorry for yourself if you were born when you were born? Well, there's nothing to do about just stop being sorry. You could say, "Oh, if I had only been born when Jesus Christ was on the earth, and been born somewhere around the Sea of Galilee, just to be around him and see miracles!" Now, God didn't make any mistake.

He probably would have been a nuisance if you'd have been there, so he brought you up on the scene a little later. But just in case you are hooked on this idea that you happen to be in the worst era that ever was on the face of the earth, let me remind you that probably there has never been a generation of Christians on the face of the earth that had greater opportunities than have we. The experts are telling us that one of the reasons that our young people are turning to drugs, and beyond that to suicide, is because they have already been told, "You don't have any future.

You'll never have any white hairs. You'll never be a senior citizen. Impossible.

If the pollution of the air doesn't get you, the pollution of water will get you, and if that doesn't get you, the population pollution will get you, and you just can't. You'll never be old." And we can go to those young people and say, whatever the experts say, you've got a terrific future. You need to know the sages.

And when you do, you've got a tremendous future. "Men's minds failing them for fear.' That's the day in which we're living, and the unsaved are putting on a good front. But if you could get behind that front, you'd see they're shaking.

What for? We don't know what's ahead. Everything looks dark. We don't know whether, whether, oh, we just don't know.

Oh, that's a good sign. Meet those people. They're ready to hear the gospel.

Are you sure you've got something good for us? Something that'll really help us? Something that'll give us anticipation, a prospect, something real? Yes. The message of salvation. You know, anticipation is a great thing.

The children are told that Christmas is just around the corner. How many days, mommy? Two more days. Next morning, how many days, boy? How many days? Tomorrow morning.

Isn't it terrific? See the smile on their faces, anticipation. This time of the year, the brides, the June brides, are anticipating. You can ask any one of them.

How many days? Seventy-four, fifty-six, thirty-seven. They know. Never heard of a groom counting his days.

Ask him sometimes, why would I remember that? The day they're going to hang me. I wouldn't bother with that. Anticipation is terrific.

You'll bring sunshine into our lives. Think of the poor sinners around us that have no prospect. The best prospect they can get is in the newspaper, and I'll tell you, there's not much there.

Bargains, of course. The Winn-Dixie perhaps find out through the A&P, and that's about all the prospects you'll get in your newspaper. We owe it to those who are still in their sins to bring them this wonderful message of salvation.

One of the things, perhaps, that will keep us from carrying out this commission of being witnesses and proclaiming the gospel to the ends of the earth is the size of the task. We're overwhelmed with it. The millions in the earth, and the few real believers who know the gospel, the grace of God.

We're so few. Someone has written this. I am only one, but I am one.

I can't do everything, but I can do something. And what I can do, I ought to do. And what I ought to do, by the grace of God, I shall do.

We've got plenty of work to be done. Until Jesus comes, we've got that message to carry. After he comes, we transfer that message over to the 144 Swartzes who will carry on the message from there on.

But until then, we've got a tremendous task on our hands. Now, the size of the task may overwhelm. Where do you begin? With a great big world of sinners.

But begin anywhere doesn't make any difference. But let each of us recognize, until he comes again, I have something to do. Occupy till I come.

Let's not be caught sitting down, knitting for something that is useless, while we could be doing something for our blessed Savior. Maybe something else will be used by the devil to hinder us in our progress of making Christ known, and that is the hostile feeling in the world toward the gospel. People turning away from us.

You're a religious man, I don't want anything to do with you. You can't blame them, because religion without Christ isn't too wonderful, is it? We need to be patient with people who have said, you're a

religious man, get out. We need to be patient with them, because maybe they have plenty of reason.

They've met religious people who were not Christians, and they need to hear the difference. The real way of salvation. The simple, clear plan of salvation.

Is it possible that we have lost our assurance that the gospel contains the dynamite of God? That there are no impossibles living around us? We are so easy to witness a few times to a person, and when we get a rather sharp answer, we say, well, I'm not going to waste my time with that fellow. He's hard-hearted. He's Mr. Impossible.

No, Mr. Impossible was saved on the road to Damascus many years ago, and if he could be saved, any person to whom we can witness today can be saved. This is a wonderful era in which to live, and it's our responsibility each day, until we get to the glory lands, to be occupied with this wonderful message. When I closed the message this morning, I mentioned that there is still a possibility of one person in this congregation who does not know the Lord Jesus, and that could be true this afternoon.

So, I want to obey this command the Lord gave in his word to you right now. You don't have to leave this country the way you came. You can leave it saying, I know I'm going to heaven.

Your whole life can be changed. If I could help you at the close of the service to take the word of God and show you how to be saved, I'd love to do it. If you're afraid of me, why don't you go to someone that you know here, in whom you have confidence, and tell that person, I would like to be sure about going to heaven.

I believe, I know the hearts of the conveners of this conference, they would be very happy to learn whether today or a few weeks later, someone, as a result of the effort of arranging this conference, posses the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. Thank you. Thank you for that good message, Brother Welton, and I'm sure you didn't mean about the knitting the way some might have taken it.

You and I both remember a certain brother who's in this audience right now, who on one occasion was knitting for a missionary for the Lord. Well, it's true you can knit for the Lord. You know, it's wonderful, too, we were reminded of the presence of Christ with us always, and that's certainly true.

He's promised never to leave us nor forsake us, and we noticed when turning to the scriptures that our brother directed our attention to the ascension of Christ in the gospel of Luke and the gospel of Mark. You know why I didn't turn to Matthew and John? Because Matthew and John don't speak of the ascension of Christ, and I think that's very significant. Mark writes of Christ as the servant.

Luke writes of Christ as the man, and when we think of the ascension of Christ, we're to keep in mind that there's a man in the glory who's serving us. Let's turn to 335. Oh, lead me to the man that died, who all God's nature glorified, descending to the depths of woe, and for us vanquished every foe.

Oh, lead me to the infant who, his death, has robbed of all its bloom. He's risen, the Lord of life and peace, and holds me in his fond embrace. Shall we stand and sing 300? Oh, lead me to the man that died, who all God's nature glorified, descending to the depths of woe.

It's at seven o'clock. More special music, and then our brother Elliot Van Ryn will be bringing the message. That is at seven o'clock, so we trust that you will be back.

We know some of you who live away from Greensboro perhaps are tempted to go on home. We trust that will not be the case. Stay around and enjoy the rest of the conference.

We'll ask our brother Charles Crawford to commend us to the Lord in prayer.

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