



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Miscellaneous Topics

“The Practical Value of the Doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ” TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] For the Scripture reading this morning, I am asking you if you will to turn with me to two passages in the New Testament, one of them in the 2nd chapter of the Book of Titus, and another in the chapter of 1 John. Titus chapter 2, verses 11 through 15, Titus 2:11-15.

Now as we read these verses I hope that you will notice particularly the things that the apostle has to say about the second coming of Jesus Christ.

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”

Now may I stop for just a moment, and point out something in the text of verse 13, which is very important. Your Authorized Version says, “The glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” As if to suggest that the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ are different persons. Now we know from the doctrine of the Trinity that there are three persons in the Godhead, one God who subsists in three persons. This

is the Christian doctrine, and so we do distinguish between the person of God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. This is orthodox doctrine, and it is important. It is biblical, but this text strictly speaking does not say that, and I was very happy that the Revised Standard Version, which has been criticized for many things some rightly and some wrongly, translated this verse correctly, and if only from this verse I think we could justifiably say that the translators were not strongly biased against the deity of Christ for they rendered it properly, “Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” It is sometimes said that the Bible, the New Testament, never says that Jesus Christ is God. This is one of the number of clear cases.

Now let’s pick it up with verse 14, “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.”

Now will you turn on a few pages to 1 John, and we’ll read the first three verses of the 3rd chapter. 1 John chapter 3, verses 1 through 3 and again notice the things that are said concerning the second coming of Jesus Christ.

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth 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. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

May God bless this reading of his word. Let’s bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the glorious hope of the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for the hope the rapture. We thank Thee that we look into

the future, the future is as bright as the promises of God, and as the days go by the future becomes brighter for the one who has believed in Jesus Christ. And so we want to express to Thee our thanksgiving for the hope that we possess. As the Apostle Paul has reminded us, we were converted. We were saved in hope, and so Lord we pray that as we think of the future, and what it holds for us that this hope may be a practical hope. We thank Thee for the privilege of preaching the gospel in a day such as this. The days marked by crisis that affect the very future of the human race, but we know that amid all of the darkness that lies about us in this world, we have the brightness of the word of God, and we know that for the believer the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

And so, Lord, we rejoice in the hope that we have, and we pray that in the time that Thou doest give us we may represent him who has loved us in a way that will honor him and exalt him and cause others too to believe in him. We thank Thee for the church of Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for the great work, which the Holy Spirit is doing, in wooing men and women through the good news concerning Christ. Into membership in his body, and we know, Lord, that when this purpose is consummated, then he shall come for us, and so we pray that the work of the Spirit may continue in effectiveness and power, and that many, those who are his sheep, may respond to his message and that the church the body of Christ may reach it's fruition.

We pray, Lord, for each one present in this auditorium. We pray for those who are in the midst of trials, and problems, which they find very difficult to solve. We pray that Thou wilt encourage and build up and give the sense of Thy presence to them and of Thy help. As we have been singing about the leadership and guidance of our God, may this be ours in experience. We pray for our nation, for its leaders, for our president, for those who lead the armed forces. We pray for the chaplains in the armed forces, and we pray that as they minister the Word we pray that many of the young men in our services shall turn to Jesus Christ. And we pray, O God that the work of God may expand and

grow in the midst of our men. We commit these things to Thee and our service to Thee in Jesus name. Amen.

[Message] Over the past several years quite a few messages have been given in Believer's Chapel on the second coming of Jesus Christ. Quite a few have been given that touch various aspects of the future, the kingdom, the ultimate consummation, and just recently we concluded a series in Zechariah in which one of the great themes was the Second Advent and the Kingdom that Should Follow. This morning I want to speak to you for a while on the practical value of the doctrine of the second coming of Jesus Christ. We live in a pragmatic age. It is sometimes said, that to speak on prophetic events of the future is impractical, but actually the doctrine of the Second Advent of Jesus Christ is one of the most practical in the word of God.

I remember reading some years ago a statement written years ago a statement made by President Alva McClain of Grace Theological Seminary, and one of his writings in which he made the claim that the second coming of Jesus Christ is perhaps the most practical truth in all of the Bible, and it is remarkable how in the various parts of the New Testament this doctrine comes before us. We know of course that when the Apostle Paul preached the word in Thessalonica that he spent a relatively short time there. If you study the Book of Acts and attempt to arrive at the period of time that he spent in the city of Thessalonica. We are told for example that he reasoned in the Synagogue for three Sabbath days.

Now that means that he spent just a little over two weeks there. There is evidence that perhaps he spent a little more than that there, but nevertheless when we wrote his second letter to them, not very many months after that, for he moved South in the Island of Greece and then wrote them. He said in the 2nd chapter of his 2nd epistle in the first verse,

“Now we beseech you brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him that ye be not soon shaken in mind nor troubled, neither by spirit nor by word, nor by letter as from us as that the day of Lord is present. Let no man deceive you by an means for that day shall not come except there come the falling away first and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition who opposeth and exhalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped so that he as God sitteth in the Temple of God showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not that when I was yet with you I told you these things.”

Now if there anything that we would tell someone today not to do, it is to take a group of people who do not know much about Scripture and instruct them in prophecy. We would tell them what they need is the simple things of the word of God. They need to know the simple truths of the person of Christ. The simple truths of the work of Christ. The simple truths of how we may live the Christian life, but to talk about the man of sin, and the beast, and the kingdom, and the tribulation, and the antichrist. Well that is very, very unwise. In fact I have heard some very unwise men say that in some churches they are more interested in the antichrist than they are in the Christ. Well that same criticism might have been leveled at the Apostle Paul’s teaching. He spent only a short time in Thessalonica, but he instructed them in prophetic events. Therefore it is evident that prophecy is very, very important from the standpoint of the New Testament.

You’ll remember too that when the Lord Jesus spoke about the city of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple the apostles who were with him asked him these questions. They said, “Lord when shall these things be? And what it the sign of thy coming and the end of the age?” And Jesus replied, “Now don’t you know you are not ready for prophecy yet? Don’t you know you need the simple things first and then the prophetic word? Why are you so curious about the future?” Well of course he did not say that at all as you well know. As a matter of fact Jesus did not rebuke their interest in

prophecy at all. In fact he gave them the longest answer that he ever gave to any question in the New Testament, and so for the next two chapters the Lord takes special note of this question concerning the future, and gives them one of the most marvelous discourses, the Olivet Discourse and that he gives in the entire New Testament. So now we have been thinking a lot about the second coming of Christ and even in the last message on the series on Elijah, we spoke about the second coming of the Lord Jesus. And so this morning for our time in the Word, I want to speak then on the subject the Practical Value of the second coming of the Jesus Christ, and first of all I want to talk about what the Bible has to say about our attitude to the second coming.

Now this is pre-spectacle and I am not going to distinguish between the rapture and the Second Advent for purposes of our study because they logically go together. Both of these events represent the hope of the Christian. The hope of the Christian is not only to meet the Lord in the air. The hope of the Christian is to then after the tribulation period accompany him to the earth. The hope of the Christian involves the kingdom of God upon the earth, for we shall rule and reign with him. The hope of the Christian involves all of the future, and we are very, very closely identified with the hope that the nation Israel has. So we're just going to talk about the second coming, and you'll understand that these attitudes and the motivation and incentive is true of both of these events.

Now the first thing that the Bible has to say about the attitude of the believer to the second coming of Christ, which I want to point out this morning is found in Titus chapter 2 in verse 13, so will you turn to the first of the passages that we read in our Scripture reading, Titus chapter 2 in verse 13.

Now notice that in this verse the apostle having just said that we should live soberly, righteously and Godly in this present age says. “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;” Now this word looking is the important word, and it's a word that stresses the welcome that one has for

someone for whom he is looking. In other words this word had the idea of looking with the attitude of welcome. It is the word that is use of Simeon when Simeon's thoughts concerning the coming Messiah are expressed in Luke chapter 2, so the believer then is to live looking. This is his attitude.

Now this attitude is the attitude then of looking with welcome. Now that's the first word. Let's turn back a few pages now to the first epistle that Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, for another word. 1 Thessalonians chapter 1 in verse 9, the apostle writes,

“For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered (Or delivered) us from the wrath to come.”

Now Paul says here that we are to wait for his Son from heaven. The word that he uses is not the same word that he uses in the Titus passage. That word had the idea of looking with welcome for him. This word is a word that means literally to abide under. It's a word that is used for someone or of someone who waits for something, but in the mean time he has to undergo persecution perhaps, trial perhaps, tribulation perhaps. It's the word that means to abide under, to wait in spite of outward circumstances, so the second attitude that the believer has is not only the attitude of looking with welcome, but the idea of waiting in spite of what the present may hold, or even the future may hold between the present and the coming of Jesus Christ.

In 1942, which is twenty-five years ago, and it's hard to realize for some of us who are getting old and gray General Douglas MacArthur, five star general and field marshal of the Philippines was forced to leave the Philippines, but when he left, he gave a promise. He said, “I shall return.” When he reached Australia from Bataan, he reiterated his promise. He said, “I came through. I shall return.” And then you'll remember that after

many months of trials finally General Douglas MacArthur with forces landed again in the Philippines, and when he landed, he said, “People of the Philippines I have returned.” By the grace of Almighty God our forces stand again on Philippines soil. Rally to me the guidance of God points the way.”

Now the “I shall return” of Douglas MacArthur is only a faint reflection of the “I shall return” of Jesus Christ, but he has promised us that he is going to return. And in spite of the difficulties that may lie in between he is coming again, and it is our responsibility to wait for him in spite of what may happen in the mean time.

Now, let’s turn to our third passage. It’s in 2 Timothy chapter 4, in verse 8. 2 Timothy chapter 4 in verse 8. We should have the attitude of looking with expectation. We are to have the attitude of waiting in spite of difficulties or trials, and thirdly Paul states that we are to have the attitude of loving his appearing. Verse 8 of 2 Timothy chapter 4, “Henceforth (Paul writes in his swan song.) Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

I think every time I read this text I remember something that happened here in the city of Dallas. The pastor of the First Presbyterian Church about thirty years ago was a man by the name of Will Anderson. Will Anderson was an outstanding evangelical, but he was not a pre-millennialist. He was a man, who believed in Jesus Christ, and he preached Jesus Christ, and he preached him with fervor and with distinction too. But he did not know any thing about the future. He did not know the truth of the any moment return of Christ and the Kingdom of our Lord that should follow, but he was very godly man, and he had Godly men in his church for Bible conference. And there was a famous Southern preacher and Bible teacher by the name of George Gill, and he invited Mr. Gill for a series of meetings in his church and during the course of the meetings in his church, as they were discussing some of the word of God Mr. Gill turned to Dr. Anderson, and said to him, “Will, do you love the second coming of Jesus Christ?”

And Dr. Anderson said, “Why I guess I do, but to tell the truth, I am not really interested in that. I have been so interested in preaching the first coming of Christ that I really haven’t had time to bother about the second coming of Jesus Christ.” But the question of Dr. Gill bothered him very much. In fact he went home and he began to study the Bible. For he asked himself the question, “Do I really love the second coming of Jesus Christ, and he studied the Bible over a considerable period of time and through the study of the Scriptures he came to see that the New Testament taught that Jesus Christ was going to come again at any moment and then after a period of time of great tribulation on the earth, he would establish his kingdom upon the earth, and Will Anderson the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, later vice president of Dallas Seminary, became a pre millennialist. But this posed a problem to him.

He was a very honest man, and I think this is a problem that many young preachers have to face too. You see he felt now that he was traveling under false colors, and so he went to his board of elders, and he said to them, “You called me as pastor of this church, and I didn’t believe anything much about the future. I suppose I was a post-millennialist. But in the mean time I have been studying the Bible, and I have come to believe in the pre-millennial doctrine of the future, and consequently I am tendering my resignation as pastor of the church. I do not feel that I should preach having come and now believing something different from what I believed when I came.” One of the elders said, “Praise the Lord. That’s what we’ve been praying for a long time that you would see the truth of the second coming of Christ.”

I know that that report it made. I am not sure that I can document that “praise the Lord.” After all I was a Presbyterian. And I heard very few “praise the Lords” when I was in the Presbyterian church. But I am inclined to believe it anyway and I do know this that there came a tremendous change over Will Anderson and he began to preach with a new fire and a new fervor because he came to an understanding of the doctrine of the advent of the Lord Jesus. And by the way Dallas Seminary is in Dallas, Texas because of the

influence of Will Anderson. For it was he who asked Dr. Chafer to found the seminary down in this out of the way place in Texas, and we are so happy of course that that happened.

Now Paul says that he loved the appearing of Jesus Christ. As I take it then these three words form an effective summary of the believer's attitude toward the second coming of Christ. He should be looking for it with expectation. He should be waiting regardless of the trials that may come. He abides under them looking on beyond the trials to the advent of our Lord, and he should have a personal relationship to the one who is coming. He should really love him.

About ten years ago, I was preaching in Canada at Canadian Keswick, and while I was there Rowland Phillips, who was pastor of the Arlington Presbyterian Church of Baltimore was giving a series of mediations in the morning, and I remember him telling the story of a man whom I think he said he knew. A man by the name of Irwin, who at one time had gone in when he was much younger to see President McKinley, and Irwin has know McKinley or known of him. And he had wanted to see him, and finally he had found someone who knew the President, and he managed to get an interview with the President. And he went in and he sat down before President McKinley, and after they had discussed social things for a little while, finally the President turned to him and said, “Well what did you want?” He said, “Well President McKinley I really didn't want anything. I just wanted to come and see you.” And Mr. McKinley got up and went over and shook the man, and he said, “You know you are the first persons that has ever come in this office since I have been president to see me. Everyone else has come in to get something from me, and I just want to tell you, it's made me very happy to have you here.”

Now the attitude of the believer to the second coming of Jesus Christ is not that we look forward to experiencing this wonderful meeting with him in the air, nor even that

we want to share in the kingdom though we do, that we want to rule and reign with him, but most of all we want to be with him, with him.

Now it's very difficult of course for us to have this love for him, naturally. And I want to just say to you that if you feel as I do, often I feel, “Well I know this is what I ought to do, but how can I possibly have this love for him which the apostle speaks of?” Well you know there is really only one way. I often preach the gospel to people and some respond and some do not. How can you explain it? How can you explain the fact that in some of our meetings someone will come forward and say, “This is just the thing I've been looking for?” And others will sit very impassively and you will recognize that they are not with you at all.

Well of course the answer is the working of the Spirit of God in the work in the hearts of men. And in the hearts of some the Spirit of God has quickened them so that they have a desire to hear the good news, and when they hear it is like water to a thirsty soul. They're looking for salvation and the Spirit of God has prepared their hearts, and being prepared they respond to the good news by saying, “Well this is just what I need.” When you explain that Christ loved them and died for time, and that they may have salvation by simple trust in him. They say, “My, that's simple. This is just what I wanted. I believe in the one who loved me this way.”

Now the same thing is true with regard to the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. If you really want to know him better, if you really want to have this hope, if you really want to, if this has been implanted in your heart by the Holy Spirit, then of course as you read the word of God this faith, this trust, this love for him, this desire for him, will be born in your heart too. So in the final analysis it is as we go to God's Word and allow God to speak to us and allow the Holy Spirit to prepare our hearts that this love for him is created in our hearts by Jesus Christ. You cannot get it by just reflecting upon the fact that you ought to have it, but if you do want it God will give it to you. Would you like to love his coming? Would like to be really looking for him? Would you like to be waiting

for him? Would you like to have this spirit characterize your life? Well it can. Why don't you after the meeting today go home and get down by your bed, and ask God to give you this love for Jesus Christ, and this love for his coming if you don't have it?

Well now we want to move on and I want to talk about secondly the activation of the coming to the believer, and I am going to try to be practical now. I have some of my friends who say, “You know that's doctrinal, but I want something practical.” All Bible doctrine is practical. All Bible doctrine is intensely practical. In fact the most practical teaching is Bible doctrine. I have a friend. He pastors a church out in California. He says, “Every truth in the Bible has a practical application.”

Now I remember also that J.N. Darby once said that for in every passage in the Scripture had a practical application.” One of his friends spoke to him and said, “Mr. Darby if that's true, please give me the practical application of 2 Timothy 4:13.” “The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.” “Now what's practical about that?” Mr. Darby said, “You know it's very interesting. You've hit upon a verse, which is responsible for my possessing a library today. He said, “I was a pastor a minister in the church of Ireland, and when I saw the truths of the New Testament and they became vital realities to me and I discovered that in spite of all of my theological training in the theological colleges I didn't know the basic facts of the Bible, the personal relationship to the Lord and the way in which the church was to meet and carry on its ministry. When I discovered all these things were not found in the theological seminary with its great stress on the reading of theological works, I determined within my heart that I was going to give my library away and spend the rest of my time studying the Bible only.” And he said, “My eyes fell on 2 Timothy 4:13, and the apostle himself said, ‘When Thou comest bring with Thee. The coat and the books, but especially the parchments.’ And he said, “I have kept my library, and I have been happy ever since, because I have got a lot from my library.” So every text in Scripture may have its practical application.

Now, the doctrine of the second coming of course is the most practical. Someone said once that a man needs two conversions. He needs first of all a conversion from the natural to the supernatural. That's the new birth. Then he needs a conversion from the supernatural back to the natural. That is so he can put into practice the things that he has discovered spiritually. You've heard people say about others, "He's so heavenly minded that he's no earthly good." There are some Christians that would qualify for that perhaps but it is important that we take these truths of the New Testament and make them practical. So how is the second coming practical?

Well now first of all it is an incentive to worship, and will you turn with me to Hebrew chapter 10, and let's read two verses in this chapter. Now this is Bible drill morning, so you can learn your New Testament books. Hebrews chapter 10, verse 24 and 25. Verse 24, the writer of the epistle says, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

Now did you notice that last clause, "As ye see the day approaching," in other words our gatherings together for worship and for fellowship. One of the great incentives of the meeting of believers is that the day of the Second Advent is approaching, and so in the light of the soon coming of Jesus Christ, we are to give ourselves to meeting together to strengthen one another for the tasks that lie before us in the mean time, so that the second coming is first of all an incentive to Christian worship. Let's not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. Do not do to on another what God never does to one of you, so Mr. Moffet has said because he points out that this word forsake is found only once again the epistle, in the 13th chapter when we read that Jesus Christ says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." So do not forsake one another, for he never forsakes you, and gather together so much the more as you see the consummation of the age coming to pass.

Secondly, the second coming is an incentive to Christian walk. Turn back to our Titus passage, Titus chapter 2, and let me just connect two words again. Titus chapter 2, the apostle has written,

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, (Verse 12) Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live (Now notice that,) that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present age; Looking (Live looking, live looking) for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”

In other words the apostle says that the salvation, which Jesus Christ has inaugurated in us in his first coming, should move us to live with a forward look, so the second coming of Jesus Christ is an incentive to our Christian walk. You will always find something wrong with the Christian who does not have the hope of the second coming burning brightly for him. “Live looking, live looking.” For example the Christian who knows that the second coming of Jesus Christ might be at any moment is not going to be unbiblically involved in social action.

Now social action has its place in Christian outreach, but he will not be so involved in the present that the future is just before us, just before us. Live looking. Will you turn over to Philippians chapter 4 in verse 5, Philippians chapter 4 in verse 5? Now this is the book, which Bill McCray [ph36:33] is so capably teaching to us, and you adults you are missing something if you don't come to Sunday school and study Philippians with us. We are just at the end of the 1st chapter. You have three great chapters before you. We'll see you next Sunday morning. Philippians chapter 4, verse 4, “Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice. Let your moderation (That's your meekness, your gentleness) Let your gentleness be known unto all men the Lord is at hand.”

In other words in the light of the fact that Jesus Christ is at hand let your gentleness be known to all men.

Now this is not a verse for the pacifists. The New Testament I do not think does not teach pacifism. This is a verse, which says that the Christian who has the hope of the second coming of Jesus Christ brightly before him will be a gentle moderate type of person. He is anxious to reach those who are outside of Christ. So let your gentleness be known unto all men.

Now turn to the second passage that we read in the Scripture reading 1 John chapter 3, 1 John chapter 3, verses 1 through 3, but for the sake of time, I am just going to read the 3rd verse. 1 John chapter 3, verse 2 remember says that, "When he shall appear, we shall be like him." How shall we be like him? Well we often think of this only in terms of our resurrection body. We say we are going to have a body like Jesus Christ's. Well that's true, and that is stated for us in passages such as 1 Corinthians chapter 15, and Philippians chapter 3, but actually the moral likeness of the believer to Jesus Christ is really before us in 1 John. For we read that, "We shall be like him for we shall see him as he is, and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure." In other words we shall be like him. He is pure. For we shall see him as he is, and the pure in heart see God and those who see God are the pure in heart, and so the apostle is trying to stress the fact that the believer, who has the second coming of Jesus Christ burning brightly before him is going to have his own life more like Jesus Christ's. He is going to purify himself.

And listen, suppose that you were to meet Jesus Christ this afternoon. Suppose you had an appointment at 4:00. What do you think would happen in your life? Well I just have a hunch that most of you would get in your automobiles and rush home so fast, and go into your bedrooms, and get down upon your knees and confess your failures, perhaps your sin so quickly it would surprise everyone. If we had an appointment with him at 4:00, what a difference it would make. I am sure it would make a difference with

me. It would make a tremendous difference, and yet we might meet him before 4:00.

“Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure.” The second coming of Jesus Christ is a stimulus, not a sedative, a stimulus to Christian living.

One of our great preachers was a man by the name of A.J Gordon. He was a Baptist from Boston. He spent his summers in a little cottage in New Hampshire. One day he was there with his kids and a call came from Boston, and it was necessary for him to go back to Boston in a hurry, and so Dr. Gordon spoke to his family, and he said he was sorry. He was going to have to go back on some important business, but he turned to the kids, who were just little kids at the time, but he said, “I am coming back soon, and I want you to be waiting for me at the train station.” And so they took him down to the station in the afternoon, or in the morning it was, and he left on the early train. And Mrs. Gordon said afterwards that all day long they kept coming to her and saying, “Mommy, wash our faces and wash our hands, and let us put on our best clothes. We want to meet daddy this afternoon at the train.” And they went down, but he wasn’t there. And this happened for several days because he was detained in Boston, and Mrs. Gordon used to like to say afterwards she had never known in all of the history of her children for her children to be so interested in soap as they were in those days, because they were looking for the return of their daddy, and they knew it would please their daddy for them to be nice and clean. And so the second coming of Jesus Christ is an incentive to holy living.

Dr. Chafer used to tell us about a colored man with whom someone had a conversation about the second coming and finally the question was asked, the colored man, “Well what affect does the doctrine of the second coming have on your life?” He says, “Ever since I’ve come to know of the second coming of Jesus Christ, I’m sitting with my feet untangled.” [Laughter] Well that’s the practical side of the second coming, so far as our life is concerned. But it’s also an incentive to Christian witness. Will you turn to 2

Timothy? 2 Timothy chapter 4, and let me read a few familiar verses here, 2 Timothy chapter 4.

Now I think you can see from this that the second coming is a very practical doctrine, and not only is our worship and our Christian walk involved in the belief in the soon return of Jesus Christ, but also our witness. Listen as Paul in 2 Timothy 4 speaks. “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead and by (By the way I am translating this as the Greek text says it. It’) I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and by his appearing and his kingdom;” Not at his kingdom, and if you were able to read Greek, and you were to open up your Greek testament right now, I have right over here if you want to take a look at it, but if you were to open it up right now, you would say, Dr. Johnson’s right. He’s translated that correctly. Ought to after thirty years. [Laughter] it reads, “and by”. In other words, “I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, I bring you into the presence of God. I bring you into the presence of Jesus Christ, and I charge you by the doctrine of his appearing and his kingdom Preach the word;” In other words the preaching of the word is to be done because we stand before God, because we stand before Jesus Christ, who is going to judge the quick and the dead and because he is to appear and because he does a kingdom to come, preach the word. That means be a personal witness for Jesus Christ. That does not mean come into a pulpit such as I am doing. It means preach the word for every Christian. “Be diligent in season, out of season. (Whether 11:00 Sunday morning, or 11:00 Sunday night, as the opportunity comes.) Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and teaching.” No doubt teaching involving the second coming too. So you see we have an incentive to Christian worship, an incentive to walk, an incentive to Christian witness all bound up in the soon coming of our Lord Jesus.

Turn quickly to 1 Peter chapter 5. You know I never thought I had so much to say on this topic. I thought to myself, “well for the first time, I am going to get through at

12:00 on the dot, but I am not sure I am. 1 Peter chapter 5, verses 1 through 4. The Cowboys are not playing this afternoon. [Laughter] Verse 1, not listen Peter the first pope, listen to what he says.

“The elders who are among you I exhort, who am also (Pontifus Maximus [Laughter] no,) who am also an elder, (and elder, really he says a fellow elder. That’s all he claims. You see when an apostle stops his apostling, and then settles down in a church he becomes an elder, also so he says,) a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight of it (By the way he didn’t address anybody called the minister. He addressed the elders. It’s the elders who tend the flock. It’s the elders who Shepard the flock. All the elders together they do the shepherding. They do the tending they do the feeding. They do the guarding. They do the guiding.) Feed the flock of God, which is among you. Taking the oversight of it, not by constraint, but willingly; (Not because someone comes and says nobody else will be an elder. Will you be one?) not for filthy lucre, (Not for money.) but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage.” (I am an elder, you know.)

I was visiting in the hospital some time ago, and I visited a woman and she’s in the congregation right now I think, and she told me of an experience that she had with a deaconess who visited her, and she talked with the deaconess and she told me afterwards she said, “You know I’ve listened to you preach so long, that I had a few interesting questions to ask her, and when she came in and she said she was a deaconess in the church, asked her well what has this meant to you?” Oh, she said, “This has meant an awful lot to me. It’s been a great experience.” “Well what have you gotten out of it?” “Well it’s just been a great joy. I’ve had the privilege of being over twenty-five women or twenty-five people.”

Now you see when we serve in the Lord's work, we are not over anybody. An elder is not over anybody. Oh, I know there are some texts that say that we are to regard those highly who are over us, but it's in the Lord, and the over is the being over in the sense of under to serve. So Peter says, “Neither is being lords over God's heritage, but as being examples to the flock, and you elders And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” In other words even the elders are to serve in the light of the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Now that text has to do with elders. That text has to do with elders. I was preaching in a church about five years ago, in Texas, and we had in the audience a woman, a very fine woman. She is a very good friend of mine now, but she went into a tailspin over something I said about this verse because she like most had taught the doctrine of the crowns, and one of the crowns that we are supposed to be able to offer everyone is the crown of glory, and I just simply pointed out that the crown of glory belonged only to elders. It was for those who shepherded the flock of God as Peter says here, and when the chief shepherd shall appear the elders shall receive crown of glory that fadeth now away.” For almost a year she was mad at me because I said that, but now we are good friends again, and I think she believes that. You see the doctrine of the second coming of Jesus Christ has a practical application to the elders in the church, and in the light of this those who are elders are to feed the flock of God.

Now, I must with one remark or two close. Will you turn back to Titus, and I want to just leave you with an admonition. You know before I read this text, I want to say something that has troubled me a great deal. Recently, and I know I should not say this, I look over the audience this morning and there are at least half a dozen maybe a dozen people whom I do not know, and consequently I don't know whether I should say this, but I am going to say it anyway because I think that we as Christians should be frank because the world reads us even when we do not think that they do, but I am greatly disturbed by the things that are happening in the Christian ministry. And I am greatly

disturbed by the things that are happening among the graduates of Dallas Theological Seminary, greatly disturbed.

Now I think that it is a part of the day in which we are living. It is not only among them, but it is amazing how many preachers of the word of God are falling by the way side today. Will you pray for me that I will not? For example, a young man whom we knew well in seminary, left seminary, had a successful ministry in Canada in one church, went to another church, one of the preeminent churches of the city to Toronto. Had a great ministry there, went out to California with a church of, well it seats about a thousand to fifteen hundred, First Baptist church of a city out there. He had a wide-ranging ministry. He stood up Sunday morning about six months after I had preached in his church, and he said, “I just want to say that I have been living a lie. I have not been believing the things that I have believed down in my heart and I want to resign.”

Now he did not tell the whole story. When the whole story came out it turned out it that he had been running around with a woman for some time. The result was that he was soon out of the ministry entirely. I spoke to his wife, Saturday night, when I was in California, just Saturday a week. And she came over to me and spoke to me and she said, “Lewis, Jack is married again. He married the girl that he had been going around with.” And she said, “I’m married again, but we’re both unhappy.”

Thursday afternoon, I had a young man come into my motel in California who has a doctor’s degree from Dallas Seminary. He has been in the ministry and has done acceptable work in two schools of about twelve years, and he sat down and now he is selling securities with Shearson Lehman in Los Angeles, but he sat down and he told me the sorted story of his relationship with a girl about eighteen years younger than he. And now he’s out of the Christian ministry.

On Friday night I was with a young man who knows of a situation in a church, an important church in Southern California in which this man, not a Dallas man, but a strong evangelical began to take a great deal of interest in psychology, and psychology has its

place, but he became so interested in psychology that it began to consume his life. He was working towards his PhD, now has his PhD as a counselor. In the mean time, he became involved in sin. The church was wrecked. And one of the things that was so interesting after I had had this conversation I was out with another young man Friday afternoon, a graduate of Dallas Seminary, who told me that he had had the privilege, I wouldn't say privilege, but he had had the opportunity to listen to this man preach. He had sat one time been a very, very acceptable preacher of the word of God. Built up a large church and a significant church, and he had noticed this trend and finally near the end he had been reading a book by Helmut Thielicke the rector at one time at the University of Homburg, and he said he began to listen to this pastor, and he said, “You know he discovered that not only was the pastor following Professor Thielicke's expositions of Scripture, but was repeating them over the radio word by word. From a preacher o the word of God he had become a preacher of the word of man.

Now of course Professor Thielicke has a lot of good things to say, but mind you this was the climax. He said, “Furthermore when he came to the passages in which Professor Thielicke gave illustrations from his experience, this man repeated them in the first person as if they were experiences of him.” This is the man of God. This is the man who has been used by God, and this is the thing that can happen to anyone. So I point you as I close to Titus chapter 2, in verse 2, teaching us that “Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age looking for that blessed hope.” In other words connected with the coming of Jesus Christ is the definite admonition. We live looking, but we also live denying. Denying, ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and we can never expect to have this bright hope for the second coming of Jesus Christ shinning before us. If there is not also that denial of ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and so the proper attitude is to look, to wait, and to love his appearing, and the practical application is the worship, the walk and the witness. The second coming affects all of our life. May God help us to love his appearing and also to remember that

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the fact that Jesus Christ is coming again has tremendous practical application for us?

Shall we stand for the benediction?

[Prayer] Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father, the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit guard and keep us from stumbling, as we look forward to the second coming of Jesus Christ. May this coming be a hope that stirs us to worship, to witness, to work, and to a Christian walk that honors Christ. We ask in his name. Amen.