

Morning Worship at Sunnyside

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Study by W. D. Frazee—July 3, 1960

There are three great facts I would like to study with you. The first one is so important that Jesus states it three times in one chapter:

"Behold, I come quickly" Revelation 22:7.

"And, behold, I come quickly" verse 12.

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly" verse 20.

Jesus is coming very soon. I suppose we all believe that. I trust that we are letting worldly events keep pounding that fact into our conscience. All these things are being allowed to tell people that. All the troubles in Asia, the revolutions in Latin America, earthquakes, wars and rumors of wars, the unveiling of political scandal, the increase of crime and vice. All of it is to tell us that the coming of the Lord draws near. Worldly events are rapidly shaping up to the final issues. Surely I come quickly.

The second great fact that I would like you to notice is in Revelation 14:

"And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud One sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for Thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe" Revelation 14:14-15.

This second fact is that Jesus will come when the harvest is ripe. The converse of that is very important to you and me. He will never come until the harvest is ripe. How many people who are interested in the coming of Jesus are concerned with how long it will be until He comes? What year? What day? There are some who believe that Jesus may come today. There is a song about that. But He won't. He won't come today at all. He is coming very soon, but He won't come today. He won't come until the harvest of the earth is ripe. What does that mean? That means characters developed in His people like His own character. The wheat that is reaped from the grain field must be like the seed that was put into the soil. And when it arrives at that point, it is time for the reaping. I read:

"When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.' Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in

His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own" *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 69.

In a few months it will be a hundred and twenty years since William Miller preached his first sermon on the second coming of Christ. Time has gone on and on. But no mere passing of time will bring the Savior's coming. It is the development of His people, the perfection of character is what makes it possible for Jesus to come. And the fact that He has waited so long impresses me with the fact that He will never come until He gets what He is waiting for--a perfected people; a people that reflect the image of Jesus fully.

The third great fact is what the delay is costing heaven.

"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth"
Revelation 5:6.

This is in heaven. The throne is there. The angels and elders and living creatures are there. All is wonderful and glorious. Gold, jasper, and pearl mingle in a maze of beauty and wonder. But there is something we marvel at--a Lamb as it had been slain. In heaven? Yes. A dying Lamb. How can it be? This is many years after Calvary. John is given a view of the heavenly sanctuary. At the center of the heavenly picture he sees this slain Lamb. What can it mean? It is a glimpse of what it is costing heaven to wait.

"All heaven suffered in Christ's agony; but that suffering did not begin or end with His manifestation in humanity. The cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God"
Education, page 263.

When they think of the coming of Jesus, most people are glad at the prospect of seeing Him. They think of what it will mean to them. But few think of its relation to God. Jesus and His Father feel the suffering, the pain, the woe, the sin of this sad world. They have been carrying that burden for six thousand years, and it is not getting lighter as time goes on. And even the infinite One must be weary with the load.

It is because He loves us that Christ suffers. I do not mean that His love leads Him to be willing to suffer. Love itself is the cause of His suffering. Loving us, He cannot be happy while we are unhappy. He cannot be happy while we are in sin. The more He loves us, the more His love for us makes Him suffer. He is suffering while we delay. He is suffering the pain of a broken heart while sin and sickness and war and vice continue their reign in this world. There is something we ought to do because we know that He can't come until the harvest is ripe, and because we know what it is costing Him.

"I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" Revelation 3:18-22.

What shall we do? We had better listen. We had better turn off the radio of this world. We had better stop the TV that is blaring and glaring the sights and sounds of sin. And we had better listen to what the Spirit says.

We had better hear that knock at the door. Let's remember that it is the knock of the One who says He will come quickly. It is the knock of the One who brings the sickle to reap the ripened harvest. And it is the knock of the One who is suffering for us. That hand that knocks is the nail-scarred hand.

As we listen, we will want to do something about it. We will want to open the door and let Him in. That is what He asks us to do. He brings with Him the eyesalve for discernment, the gold of faith and love to make us rich, the white robes of spotless character that prepares us for the wedding feast. It all comes with Him.

Through five-score years our great High Priest
Has waited earnest longing for the final day;
The day when sprinkled on the seat of mercy,
His blood shall wash this people's sins away.

This generation wanes and nears its passing,
The thickening signs fill earth and sea and sky;
Yet still the Bridegroom tarries while His message
A century re-echoes, He is nigh.

With earnest expectation of redemption,
The whole creation groaneth, filled with pain;
A universe waits the final cleansing,
The blotting out of every guilty stain.

What means this long delay? This lengthened night watch
With moon and stars arrested in their course?
The very God of ages forced to tarry,
This awful disappointment, whence its source?

Oh, shame, my heart, thou hast kept Him waiting,
This thine own hand that stayed the clock of God;
Thy feet in selfish paths have learned to wander

As thou has spurned the teaching of His rod.

In mercy He has sought to turn me homeward,
The thorns that pressed His head have pierced Thy feet;
Oh, shame my heart that Thou dost weep,
And question the providence that calls from doom complete.

Wilt thou not raise thine eyes and see Him standing
With hands uplifted at the mercy seat?
Wilt thou not yield thyself for final cleansing,
And let Him make His work in thee complete?

A universe has marked thy sinful lingering,
A universe is waiting for thy word;
With sorrow and with joy I choose completely
The finished work of Christ, my blessed Lord.

That is the crux of the problem.

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W.D. Frazee Sermons
PO Box 129, Wildwood, GA 30757
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755
www.WDFsermons.org
support@WDFsermons.org