

He Slows His Pace

#0068

Study Given by Mark Finley and W. D. Frazee—November 19, 1972

[Mark Finley]

Two weeks ago, if you were here, you recall that we studied the three great signs hung out in Heaven as sure tokens of the soon return of Jesus. You recall that the falling of the stars on the night of November 12, 1833, and the morning of November 13, 1833 were the last of those great signs that Jesus said, referring to:

“So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled”
Matthew 24:33–34.

We pointed out in that study that these three signs (the dark day, the moon not giving its light on the same night, and the falling of the stars in 1833) were definite, specific signs that were signs of the coming of Jesus.

Think of the early Advent pioneers as they saw those signs, as they saw the dark day, the moon night not giving its light, as they saw the falling of the stars, the conviction, the power that they preached the Adventist message with. And think of these same pioneers as they studied the prophecies of Daniel 7, 8 and 9 and saw the 2300-day prophecy *terminates* in 1844. Certainly, their hearts were thrilled with the message of a soon-coming Savior.

But, as we well know, Jesus didn't come. There was a delay in the Advent. And so in Revelation, the seventh chapter, there is a graphic picture of angels holding back the winds of strife. I invite you to turn in your Bibles to Revelation, chapter 7. Truly it was the purpose of God for the message of the Advent, preached in the 1830s and the 1840's, to sweep over the entire globe and warn all the inhabitants of the globe of His coming. And certainly, it was God's purpose to come shortly after the message of 1844 was preached. Now notice, Revelation, the seventh chapter and verses 1–3:

“And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the

sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads" Revelation 7:1–3.

Now notice this description in verse 1. What are the angels doing in verse 1? What's the word there?

[Audience responds] Holding.

They are *holding* the four winds of the earth. Here, Jesus has to tell the angel, "Hold! Hold! Hold, lest destruction and strife and bloodshed and war and riot blow on the earth." Occasionally we see some little breezes today of riots and war, breezes of earthquake and pestilence, but the winds that are blowing on the earth today are just like little gentle zephyrs in comparison to what's going to come. And so Jesus said to the angels, "Hold! Hold!"

And so here we have pictured in the holding action of these angels the very delay of the Advent. What are the angels holding the winds for? Notice verse 3:

"Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads"
Revelation 7:3.

So the angels are holding the winds of strife. God, as it were, has slowed His pace. God, as it were, is *delaying* certain events from taking place until, as verse 3 says, His servants are *sealed* in their foreheads.

One of the most graphic descriptions of the delay of the advent in all of the Bible is found in 2 Peter, the third chapter. And I invite you to turn there to 2 Peter 3 and let us study a number of verses in the third chapter of Peter.

What is the significance of the delay of the Advent? What message is Jesus trying to communicate to us tonight in the delay of His Advent? What does Jesus want *you* to see and *me* to see in the fact that the Advent has been delayed?

Now notice here in 2 Peter, chapter 3, starting with verse 3. Peter is talking here about individuals who are scoffers. 2 Peter 3:3–4. Peter says:

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" 2 Peter 3:3–4.

I'd like to read these two verses to you in the *Good News for Modern Man* translation because they illuminate 2 Peter 3:3–4. Notice here this translation, the *Good News for Modern Man*:

"First of all, he must understand that in the last days some

men will appear whose lives are controlled by their own passions. They will make fun of you and say, He promised to come, didn't He? Where is He? Our fathers have already died, but everything is still the same as it was since the creation of the world" *Ibid*.

Notice these two questions that the scoffers are asking. They're saying, "He promised to come, didn't He? Where is He?" And so the very fact that Jesus hasn't come is thrown up in the faces of those who *believe* that He's going to come, by the scoffers, and they say, "He's *promised* to come, hasn't He? Where is He? He hasn't come." And consequently, this fact that Jesus hasn't come has led the scoffers to believe that God doesn't exist. And so, in 2 Peter 3:9, the Lord reveals to us the reason for the delay of the advent. And here we have it crystal clear, given to us by our heavenly Father so no one would misunderstand and wonder why He hasn't come. And here in 2 Peter 3:9, we have the crystal clear reason why Jesus hasn't come. Here, speaking the prophet says:

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" 2 Peter 3:9.

In other words, Peter says, "Wait! Jesus has promised to come, and He's not slack concerning that promise."

Now, in verse 9, we have the great *reason* for the delay of the Advent. The great reason for the Advent being delayed is the longsuffering of Jesus, and Jesus is not willing that *any* should perish. But it's His desire that *every* person comes to repentance. It's God's desire that *every* person be saved. So, rather than being a testimony that God does not exist, the delay of the Advent is one of the greatest testimonies in the world of the great love of God.

Jesus, as He stands in the sanctuary tonight, with the sanctuary still open, and as He looks over this world, He sees here some John, some James, some Harry, some Alice, some Mary, who has not fully repented, who has not fully accepted Him. So Jesus says to the angels, "Hold the winds. Let not the winds blow on the earth." And in *love*, Jesus tonight keeps the sanctuary open, and in *love*, Jesus hasn't come, and Jesus will keep the sanctuary open *until* every man, woman, and child in this earth has had an opportunity to make an intelligent decision and has forever fixed their eternal destiny.

I'm so thankful tonight that Jesus isn't more concerned about the pain and suffering that sin is bringing *Him* than He is about the salvation of the individual. For you see, if Jesus, tonight, were primarily and fundamentally concerned with the suffering that sin is bringing *Him*, He'd shut the sanctuary, wouldn't He? He'd shut down the sanctuary, return to this earth, purge this earth by fire, and consequently burn up sin and sinners, re-create a new heavens and a new earth, and thus have the

suffering and the pain that has been going on in *His* heart for 6,000 years terminated and sealed.

But there's something more important to Jesus tonight than the cessation of His own suffering. There's something more important to Jesus tonight than the removal of the pain that sin brings to His heart. There's something more important to Jesus tonight than the ending of the grief that sin brings to Him. And sin *does* bring Him grief. For 6,000 years, Jesus has been suffering as a result of sin. For 6,000 years, Jesus has been groaning, as it were, under the load of sin, for it is written, "By every sin Jesus is wounded afresh..." (*The Desire of Ages*, page 300). It is written that our world is a vast lazar house that it gives us agony, brings misery, to even look upon (see *Education*, page 264). And then it goes on to say that Jesus feels it all. Jesus feels it all. He feels the pain of sin. He feels our grief. He feels our agony.

But marvel of it all, Jesus stands in the sanctuary tonight, and although He's suffering, He keeps the sanctuary open because He *knows* if He goes out of business tonight that there is *someone* here that would be lost. And so Jesus pleads with the angels. Jesus says, "Just a little more time, just a little more time, and maybe this one or that one would *fully* repent. Maybe this one or that one would *fully* give their hearts to me." And so Jesus stands in the sanctuary tonight bearing our sins, bearing the pain of those sins, and He's willing to bear that pain so that we can be saved.

One illustration of this that's helped me understand it is an illustration that Elder Luther Warren used. He tells about a train that was traveling down the tracks, and the train was wrecked terribly. In this train wreck, a number of people were mangled and bleeding; they were caught underneath the cars of the train.

The engineer was caught underneath one particular car, and he was suffering and groaning. The particular place where he was caught was the place in which the boiler had exploded, and this boiler was sending and pouring terribly hot, scalding water over the engineer's legs. And he was pinned there between two cars of the train. As he was pinned there, he was crying for help.

Walking along the side of the car, not walking but running, was one of his fellow workers on the train. This man was helping others who had been injured, others who were hurt. He was helping them to get out from underneath the wreckage, and he was trying to do what he could to give immediate first aid to them.

The engineer saw his mate and so he called to him, "Can't you help me? I'm pinned here, but can't you remove this car from off my legs?"

And there, as the engineer was crying out, his mate stopped and he looked down at him, and he said, "Yes, I can. But if I lift this car off you, if I pry you loose, you are caught in such a way that to get you loose, it would mean that this man over here would be killed. The car would fall on *him*. Can't you bear it a little longer?"

The engineer said, "Oh yes, I can, but hurry. Hurry!"

It seems to me that that's the position that Jesus is in, that Jesus could voluntarily tonight; he doesn't need anyone to do it for Him, He could *voluntarily* close the sanctuary. But if He did, *someone* would be lost. And so Jesus tonight keeps the sanctuary open, enduring the pain of sin, and He does it all *for us*. Jesus has slowed *His* pace to walk with us.

[W. D. Frazee]

Another example of this is in the Exodus movement. You remember that God brought His people out from Egypt with a mighty hand, and He intended to take them through to Canaan in a few months. But when they came up to the borders of the land of Canaan, their faith failed, and as they heard the report of the unfaithful spies, they turned down the glowing, courageous report of Caleb and Joshua, and God was forced to accept the report of the majority that Israel *could not* enter in. So it is written in Hebrews, the third chapter, the 19th verse:

"So we see that they could not enter in because of..." Hebrews 3:19.

Because of what?

[Audience responds] Unbelief.

Unbelief. But did God go off and *leave* that nation? Did He *forsake* His church? Did He *abandon* the movement? No. No. They had to go back in the wilderness and finish out 38 more years, making 40 years in all.

Think of it, dear friends, think of *all* that time and where was *God* all that time? He was with them. He was with them. Paul tells about it in 1 Corinthians 10, the first four verses. There he tells us that it was Christ that went *with* Israel through all those wanderings. I like the way it's put back here in Exodus, the 13th chapter, the 22nd verse, if you'll turn to that. Exodus 13:21–22. What a picture of Divine love, *longing* to be with His people, even in their slow, dilatory ways:

"And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people" Exodus 13:21–22.

For 40 years, that pillar of cloud was with them. For 40 years, that pillar of fire gave light to that encampment until they arrived in Canaan Land. Thank God, my dear friends, that same Jesus has delayed again and again His coming that *this* people might finish their work assigned of Heaven and develop the characters on which He can put

His seal. And as it has just been brought to us from Peter's wonderful epistle, all this is evidence of His longsuffering love.

What a pity if we turn that all around and make it the occasion of doubt; unbelief, the very thing that kept Israel so long in the desert. Somewhere along the line, God wants to give us the measure of *faith* that will enable us to quicken *our* pace that we may go with Him in His final movements, which we are told, will be what kind?

[Audience responds] Rapid ones.

Rapid ones. Are you ready for them?

"Ah," we may say, "yes, I'd like to have them come right now." Are you sure, dear friends, are you sure?

You know, it's always interesting to me to watch people coming *into* this movement, how many changes they make in a short time. Think back to the changes that took place in your life when you met the Master. Think of the many things that God did in changing your ideas, your views of truth, your practices. Oh, if that speed could be maintained, how quickly the work could be finished!

Baptism was never intended to mark the *end* of those changes. Not at all. Baptism is the *initiation* into school, not graduation. And God wants us to be all the way through our Christian experience, *accelerating* rather than the opposite. He wants us to be taking steps *faster*. But, ah, how slow we are! And what does God *do* when that is our experience? Does He forsake us? Does He get impatient? Does He say, "If that's the way you're going to do, goodbye. I'm on My way. I've got something else to do than loiter with you."?

No, my friends. Well, as has been presented, it costs Him oh so much to wait, to tarry. Love causes Him to do it. That's the picture there in Laodicea, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock..." (Revelation 3:20). For 138 years, He's been standing at the door, at the door—waiting, longing. But friends, He's never gotten so tired that He went away. He's never gotten impatient and gone on without us.

He longs to walk with us *here* that we may walk with Him *there*. And in order that He may walk with us, He has slowed His pace again and again. He's done it for us as a church, as a movement; He's done it for us individually. Hasn't He, friends? Hasn't He done it for you? Hasn't He again and again waited, waited? Oh, how wonderful His love is!

But you know, we do that with our children, don't we, when they're learning to

walk? I remember when my little girl was eight or nine years old, and we were walking over through some of these woods here on this place, and she said, "Daddy, remember, my legs aren't as long as yours." No.

Oh, my friends, I thank God for a wonderful heavenly Father that *could* finish this work quickly, but He waits so that you and I may go with Him in the finishing of the work. But what a shame to keep Him waiting any longer than absolutely necessary. What do you say?

[Audience responds] Amen.

[Special music]

There are two things that impressed my heart tonight, friends, and that is what a wonderful love it is that causes Him to slow His pace for us; the other is a great longing in my heart to let Him know that I'm willing to walk fast. What do you say?

[Audience responds] Amen.

Now turn to Revelation, the third chapter, and I want you to see what it is He has His heart set on. The third chapter of Revelation, the fourth verse, speaking of those few here in this world who choose Him:

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy" Revelation 3:4.

The walk that we begin in this world as He comes down and walks with us, slowing His pace to our feeble and slow steps, that walk is to be continued, on through eternity.

"...They shall walk with Me..." This is a very literal experience, friends. We're actually going to walk with Jesus in the green fields of Eden, through the woods, and on the golden streets, we're going to walk with Jesus. And this will be a very *personal* experience.

Just this week, something wonderful was brought to my attention from the little book, *Counsels to Teachers*, page 162. Listen:

"With Christ we shall walk beside the living waters. He will unfold the beauty and glory of nature" *Counsels to Teachers*, page 162.

Think of having Jesus for a nature guide. Think of having *Him* show you things in trees and flowers and in sun and stars and clouds and sunshine. He will unfold to us the beauty and glory of nature. Now notice, this is on the walk with Him.

"With Christ, we shall walk beside the living water. He will unfold [to us] the beauty and glory of nature." Now watch this line. Here it is, friends:

"He will reveal what He is to us, and what we are to Him" *Ibid.*

Oh, this is wonderful! Yes, as my Lord takes me on one of those walks down along the River of Life, just Jesus and me together, there's something He wants to tell me that nobody else can hear. It's something special, just between Him and me. He wants to whisper in my ear what He is to me, and what I am to Him. Oh, can it be, friends, that the King of the universe has that much time and thought for *me*? Amen.

But if He loves me enough to take me up there and give me that experience *there*, and if He loves me enough so that 2,000 years ago He came and walked this world to give me the example and show me *how* to walk, and then died upon the cross that my sins might be taken away, and then when He arose, He loved me enough to go back to Heaven and devote His entire life to intercession in the Heavenly Sanctuary that my sins might be covered as they're forgiven, and finally be blotted out—listen, friends, if He loves me enough to do all that, can you not see that He loves me enough that He wants to walk with me *now*?

I think it's our privilege to make this very personal and very practical. I like that statement in *Ministry of Healing*, page 511:

"Cultivate the habit of talking with the Saviour when you are alone, when you are walking, and when you are busy with your daily labor" *Ministry of Healing*, page 510–511.

Cultivate that habit. I believe that part of this spiritual walk with Jesus is the literal, practical walk as we go along the paths, the trails, as we go from our home to our work or our study, or go out in missionary endeavor. As we're walking, oh, let us keep in the footsteps of Jesus! What do you say?

And remember, friends, if we *insist* on being slow, He doesn't leave us. Listen, here's a tremendous statement in *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 173:

"...We have a sympathizing Friend. If in our ignorance we make missteps, Christ does not leave us" *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 173.

Christ does not leave us. Now don't misunderstand me. If in high-handed rebellion we turn our backs upon Him and leave Him and run off to Egypt, friends, of course, that's something else. But even then, He's pleading for us before the Father and praying for our return as the father of the prodigal son waited in sorrow until the son came back. Isn't He? But along the pilgrim pathway, as our efforts seem so inadequate, sometimes we get almost

discouraged ourselves with our slowness, don't we, friends? But isn't it wonderful to know that Christ hasn't gotten discouraged with us? He slows His pace that He may walk with you.

I believe it, friends. I know it. This says it. He *does not* leave us. The One who is planning for us those *wonderful* walks by the side of the River of Life, that One is waiting for us every morning. He wants to walk with us. All through the day He's waiting, wanting to walk with us. Let's tell Him that we want nothing less than what He wants, what do you say? How many would like to send Him that word tonight? Ah, yes, friends! Thank God. It makes Him happy, *wonderfully* happy, *wonderfully* happy.

Well, I'd like to have us sing Number 531, "I've Found a Friend":

I've found a Friend; oh, such a
Friend!
He loved me ere I knew
Him;
He drew me with the cords of
love, And thus He bound me to
Him.

And 'round my heart still closely
twine Those ties which naught
can sever, For I am His, and He is
mine, Forever and forever.

And while we sing, if there's somebody here that needs to come to Jesus tonight, come up and kneel here and we'll pray for you. If there's somebody here that has *never* begun the walk with Jesus, come and begin tonight. If there's somebody here that has once walked with your Lord, but you've gone astray, you've left Him, come tonight and let Him walk with you. And if there's somebody here that like Peter has been following Him afar off, you realize that you've kept Jesus waiting so many times, been slow and dilatory, and tonight your heart is impressed that He's calling you to take rapid steps, if you'd like to come and seek God here, to put your hand in His, and encourage Him to encourage you to move rapidly, you come.

[Audience sings "I've Found a Friend" with Elder Frazee.]

Oh, dear friends, how wonderful Jesus' love is! Oh, I do long that every heart here shall sense as never before how precious you are to Jesus. Remember, if you had been the *only one* in this world that needed Him, Christ would have come for you. Remember, that if everybody in this world were saved tonight but you, Christ would keep the door open for *you*.

Oh, yes. He is longsuffering to us, not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance. And it is the goodness of God that leads us to

repentance. And dear ones, as a deeper sense of His love, a clearer view of His goodness comes to us, our repentance can deepen, and our response can deepen. Thank God for every seeking heart.

And now, dear Father, we're placing our little hands in Thy great hands that Thou mayest lead us home. We're not asking Thee to loiter anymore with us. We're asking Thee to help us hurry home with Thee. We've sensed tonight something of what our ease in movement and lackadaisical attitude of these things have been [...inaudible]. And tonight, our Savior, by Thy grace, we shall hasten on the way home. Dismiss this congregation with Thy blessing. Be with us in the little after meeting and may these seeking hearts receive all that they're longing for and give *Thee* all Thou art longing for. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

[Audience sings "I'm Pressing on the Upward Way" with Elder Frazee.]

[Testimony service]

Copyright 2021. All rights reserved.

W. D. Frazee Sermons
435 Lifestyle Lane, Wildwood, GA 30757
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755
www.WDFsermons.org
support@WDFsermons.org