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Metropolitan Church of God
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“A Covenant Life in These Times”

Appeared and stopped the choir and been the pastor for a few minutes and said, sing it one more time. Did you appreciate that music this morning? I know you did. I know you're grateful to Randy and to your choir and to your orchestra and to all the people who make this such a wonderful worship experience every Sunday.

Carmelita and I are always glad when we have the opportunity to come and share with you having been a part of you from afar off from the very beginning and having had to bring your pastor in line from time to time. Not true, but a joy to watch his development and to watch your development with him and to see how God is blessing your ministry, how you're going forward with him. It's good to be with Dr. Cary. I didn't know that my mother washed his clothes. She didn't wash mine when I was at Lee College. How did you get by with that? Special talents that he has, but I've appreciated the opportunity to share with him on several occasions. We thank God for the impact that he is making.

And I know that when you have a speaker that comes the first thing you talk about and think about is communication. We live in the age of communication. Communication has been defined as the dynamic interaction between two or more people at several levels, such as a verbal level, emotional level, spiritual level, and use of body language, the physical level. Obviously

when we use words, words are very powerful vehicles and they have two different kinds of descriptions. If I was to talk about the connotations of words, their implied meanings, and the denotations of the same words which are their real meanings. In getting the implied and the real together is always our gigantic task in this day of television and multimedia, we're constantly bombarded as to what they mean and what do they say.

I heard the story told of an old farmer who had been in a terrible car accident, been in the hospital about three months, nearly died, all broken up but now he was in court. And he was feeling interrogated by the insurance lawyers because he had to sue the insurance company to get them to pay off. So they are trying to keep from paying off so they had him on the witness stand in the court room. And the lawyer looked at the old farmer and said, did you or did you not say to the policeman immediately after the accident, I'm perfectly well thank you. Well the farmer said, well it was this way. I was driving my mule down the road, had my dog up in the seat beside me on the wagon. And the lawyer said, no just answer yes or no. Did you or did you not say to the policeman immediately after the accident, I'm perfectly well thank you. The farmer said, well you see it was this way. I was driving my mule down the road, was in the wagon, had my dog up beside me. And the lawyer said no, just answer yes or no. They went through that scenario four or five times and finally the judge said, let him tell his story. So the old farmer said, your honor, I was driving my wagon down the road hitched to my mule and I had my dog up on the seat beside me. Went up over a hill and a Cadillac hit us broad side. It knocked my mule in the ditch, knocked my dog in the pasture, and knocked me out in the woods. Said, the police drove up. They got out of their cars and they saw my mule kicking in the ditch and they shot him right between the eyes. Went out in the pasture and saw my dog kicking in the pasture and they shot

him right between the eyes. They came out in the woods and said, how are you feeling? And I said, I'm perfectly well thank you. Now that's the difference between implied meanings and real meanings. The implication was, don't shoot me. The real meaning, I think I'll survive one way or the other.

But this morning what the Lord has laid on my heart I think is a very important subject for us to discuss for a little while. You know finding titles is always a problem, but if I were to title this morning, I'd like to talk a little bit about the covenant church in contemporary times. The covenant church in contemporary times. I never liked to start off a sermon with any kind of a negative, but I think it's important for us to see the challenge. Now you just didn't come here today because you had no other place to go. You came here today because you feel an urgency and a sense of destiny. A church that does not feel a sense of urgency and a sense of destiny probably is not getting very much done for the Lord, but you feel that. That's why you're here today and my work as the presiding bishop, the general overseer of the Church of God, I went around the world a couple or three times. I've preached to very large congregations, over a hundred thousand in Korea to small congregations, fifteen or twenty people. What I find is that where a sense of urgency and destiny, God is able to work. The danger we have in America is not having the urgency and the destiny that God has for us.

Last year in America, we closed five thousand evangelical churches. The year before that, we closed four thousand evangelical churches. I heard yesterday from a reliable source in a meeting that I was in or rather Friday in a meeting that I was in that the trend continues. They anticipate in America closing fifty percent of all of our churches by the year 2020. Now it's interesting for us to see that in this country, when we have been the great catalyst to take the

gospel around the world. Well around the world we're having great revivals. The Church of God last year outside the borders of the U.S. we had one million people saved. We took over eight hundred and thirty thousand of them into the Church of God. We need a renewal of God's spirit in America and we need to while singing God bless America is wonderful, and a sense of togetherness that has been brought to us since 911 is imperative, yet we need the kind of revival that will be the kind of revival that brought this world, brought this nation into existence. William Bradford said when they first came over here as Pilgrims in 1620, he said, we've come for two reasons. One, is to establish the kingdom of God in this continent. And two, to be a light to all the nations of the world. And that's the reason that we exist. Now I have the feeling God is going to raise us up one more time to make known to this world he is alive and the best way to live is to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Well praise him in this place. Well that's the first sermon. The second sermon. Turn with me in your Bibles please to Matthew chapter sixteen verses eighteen and nineteen while we look at a very familiar verse of Scripture this morning, one that you've heard preached on many, many times, read about, but it's a very important verse of Scripture. It's the very heart of the church and the very heart of who we are. We have to understand when I talk about the church, I'm talking about people. The church is more than this building. A church is more than a denomination. A church is more than an institution. A church is made up of the people of God. The Laos. We are the people of God. Would you mind standing with me please for the reading of the Word? I would appreciate that. And I'll be cording it as we move together in God's word. Matthew sixteen eighteen and nineteen. Christ said upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it and I will give to you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in

heaven. Whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Father, lead us by your spirit. Give us ears to hear what you would say to us today. Give us eyes to see the fantastic possibilities that you have for us. Give us hearts to receive the warmth and the energy of your spirit. Give us minds to perceive the fullness of who you are and what you're doing. Give us lips to speak under the anointing of your presence and spirit. In Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you.

You may be seated. If I were to ask you this morning what is God doing in the world today? How would you answer it? In all probability, there would be as many answers as there are people. But most of us would probably agree that what God is doing today is confirming the covenant that he has made with us as people. Because in the idea of covenant is where we have our relationship to God. Without covenant, we cannot communicate with God. Without covenant, we cannot pray and have a sense of his presence in our hearts. And we read the Old Testament, it is the old covenant. When we read the New Testament, it is the new covenant. The two covenants are brought together in Jesus Christ. A covenant is an agreement. A covenant is a contract. A covenant is a sense of mutual commitment and a covenant is a sense of partnership. This is what God was talking about in Exodus chapter nineteen verse six when he said to the people of Israel, if you will obey me fully and keep my covenant, then I'm going to make you a treasured possession and I'm going to make you a kingdom priests and a holy nation. When we read the book of Hebrews, we see Christ as he is mediating that covenant. He is being the intercessor making that covenant a reality for us as individuals. When we read the gospels, we can read about what Christ did on earth. When we read the book of Hebrews, we see what Christ is doing now. He is at the right hand of the father mediating a new covenant. Hebrews chapter nine verse fifteen, it tells us that he is mediating the new covenant so that we might have

assurance of the eternal inheritance that he has prepared for us. When we read Hebrews chapter four verse fourteen, it tells us therefore since we have a high priest who has gone through the heavens, even Jesus Christ the Lord, let us hold fast to the faith that we profess. It says, we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses. But we have one who has been tempted at every point just as we are yet without sin. Therefore, let us come to the throne of grace with confidence to receive mercy and find grace to help us in the time of need. So what is God doing in the world today? He is confirming the covenant that he has made with us, his people. He is confirming the covenant that he made with Eve and he's crushing the head of that old serpent Satan. He's confirming the covenant that he made with Noah and he's keeping the rainbow in the sky. He's confirming the covenant that he made with Abraham and he is restoring the nation of Israel. He's confirming the covenant that he made with Moses and he's fulfilling his precious promises. He's confirming the covenant that he made with David and he's established his throne forever. And he's confirming the covenant that he made with Christ and he's building a church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Can you say amen? Let's just give him praise and give him glory. So when we talk about the covenant, we talk about the church. When we talk about the covenant, we talk about our personal relationship to the father because a church is only made up of those who have a personal relationship with the father. This church is here today because of people who are in covenant with God. When we come to understand that, then we see the fullness of who we are as a church. Ephesians one says we are the body of Christ. Ephesians two says we are the temple of Christ. Ephesians three says we are the revelation of Christ. Ephesians four says we are the new humanity of Christ. Ephesians five says that we are the bride of Christ and Ephesians six says we are the army of Christ. What God

is doing today through the power of the Holy Spirit under the lordship of Jesus Christ, he's raising up an army and he's giving that army marching orders. And he's telling us to invade the territory of Satan, to pull down the gates of hell and to establish the kingdom of God so that when he comes back to earth again, he'll have a number that no man can number. For he's coming back again. Amen, amen and amen. Well give him praise and give him honor and give him glory.

Now Jesus Christ wanted to get this message across so the inception of the church is found right here in Matthew sixteen. Now the inauguration of the church is found in Acts two but the idea of the church was planted into this little group of rag tag disciples that gathered at Caesarea Philippi at the foot of Mt. Herman for him to tell them about what he was going to do. And he sat down with those disciples on one occasion. I've been to this spot on many occasions. We don't know the exact spot, but I've been to the probably area in Caesarea Philippi and I've always read this Scripture and I've seen God work in such a wonderful way. We were there on one occasion and I was lecturing on this particular Scripture to a group of people right there at the head waters of the Jordan River. Right at the foot of Mt. Herman. Right at the old sight of Caesarea Philippi and as I was speaking, a man wandered over. I remember he had a beard and long hair and I noticed that tears began to come down his face and then he left. We went on to lunch nearby at the cafeteria and a man came over and said, were you the man speaking in that group a while ago? I said, yes. He said, I've had a man with me who is an Atheist. His wife became a Christian about five years ago and he's been nothing but an atheist. He came on this Israel trip with us just to have a trip and be with his wife, but he said, for the first time in his life, he felt the spirit of God and he left your group and came to me and said, show me how to be a Christian. And I led him to Jesus Christ just a few minutes ago because our God is a great God. Amen, amen, and amen. Well

give him praise and give him glory in this place. Well it was at that particular place that Christ sat down and asked his disciples, he said hey do you know who I am? Whom do people say that I the son of man am? And they gave him all the stock answers. Now you have to understand. They were uninitiated. They didn't have television. They didn't have books. They didn't have all the understanding we have today. They didn't have all the resources. So they were following this itinerate revolutionary. They really didn't know who they were following. They didn't know what he was going to do. We get some kind of ideas sometime that God has it all planned out in crystal, but it's a growing process here. Who do people say that I am? Say, well some people say that you are John the Baptist. Some say you are Elijah. Some say you're Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Then I think he looked at Simon Peter. Now I like Simon Peter. I can identify with Simon Peter. He was always sticking his foot in his mouth. He was always eating sandal. I like that. He was transparent and open before God and God used him. And you know the New Testament says more about Simon Peter than it does the apostle Paul. Now the apostle Paul was used in a very special way, but Peter was close to the heart of God. I think Christ looked at Peter and said, Peter who do you say that I am? Peter doesn't hesitate and said, I know who you are. You are the son of the living God. But I think Jesus would look at him and say, but Peter you don't have that much of a spiritual IQ. You're not smart enough to understand that. Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but you've learned this truth from my father who is in heaven. And you are petros, a piece or a split of the rock, and upon Petra, the fact that you understand me as the whole rock, I'm going to build a church and it's not just any kind of a church, but it's a church that the gates of hell cannot prevail against and it's a church that will bring me victory and give me power in the world. Amen, amen and amen. That's the kind of church I'm going to

build. So what is this covenant church? What are we talking about when we talk about this covenant church, it says upon this rock. It says a covenant church functions in faith because it was built on faith, the faith that Peter recognized who he was and it started a community of faith. We're here today in this beautiful sanctuary because we are a community of faith. The thing that distinguishes us from everybody else in the world is that we are a people of faith. The difference from a believer and a non believer is faith. The difference between a spirit filled person and a non spirit filled person is faith. It becomes the power. When we begin to look at it, what is faith? What are we talking about? It's more than trust. It's more than belief. It's more than confidence. When we talk about faith, it's a release of who we are in Christ. Colossians one twenty seven is Christ in us the hope of glory. First Corinthians six nineteen and twenty, do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you and what you have of God. You are not your own. You are bought with a price, so therefore do what? Glorify God in your body. And we release that. That's what faith is all about. That's Hebrews eleven and one. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the confidence of things not seen. That's verse six, without faith it is impossible to please God. He that comes to God must believe that he is and he's a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. That's the meaning of Romans fourteen twenty three. Whatsoever is not of faith, it is sin. That's the meaning of Galatians five and six, in Christ Jesus it's not circumcision or uncircumsion that counts for anything. The only thing that counts is faith expressing in itself in love. As First John five and four, whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world and this is a victory that overcomes the world and this church that we talk about today is built upon faith, even our faith. Say that with me all over the sanctuary, even our faith. One more time. Even our faith. Now give God praise and give him glory. If you believe in

that faith. But you know our problem today is we have to make a decision. If we're going to function in faith, then we can't function in fear. Fear and faith do not go together. There's an old proverb that says fear knocked at the door. Faith answered and no one was there. And we find ourselves in that kind of a contradictory situation today and the way we think determines about whether we're going to respond in fear or we're going to respond in faith. We have been, the researchers tell us that for every kind of response we make, we are responding every day to stimulus response bonds, maybe two or three thousand of them at our unconscious level. We don't know it, but we're just doing it. But in every one of those responses, there's an emotional field. Scientifically, it's called a proprial septive feedback field. How do you like that? Give it back to me right quick. Proprial septive feedback field. That means there's emotion with it. That's why we get worried. That's why we get anxious. That's why we get depressed. That's why we get discouraged. That's why we feel down, we get left, we get angry. Why we have all the positive and the negative emotions because of that proprial septive feedback field. So we make a choice of either fear or we make a choice of faith. Now what we have to understand is that fear comes from Satan. It's a tool that Satan uses to tear us down. But the Bible has any kind of a message for us today, it's a message of faith and faith says, fear not. Do not be afraid. This is the message of Genesis twenty six twenty four, when we hear God say to Isaac, fear not. For I am with you. I will multiply your seed for my servant's Abraham's sake. This is the message of Second Kings chapter six verse sixteen that God gave to Elijah his prophet, when he was surrounded by the chariots of the Syrians at Dothan to wanting to take his life and his servant got all upset and said look at all of these enemies. What are we going to do? And Elijah said, fear not for they that are with us are greater than them who are with them. Then Elijah prayed,

open the eyes of your servant. Open the eyes of my servant, Lord. So he can see what's going on here. When Gahaza's eyes were open, he saw the chariots of fire that were surrounding Elisha his prophet. This is the message God gave to Israel in Isaiah forty one and ten. He said, fear not. Fear not for I am with you. My right arm with uphold you. Do not be dismayed. This is the message of Isaiah forty three and one and following. Fear not. For I have redeemed you. I have called you by name and you are mine. When you walk through the waters, they will not splash over you. When you go through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fires, they will not burn you. For I am the God of Israel, the holy one of Israel who is the God of your salvation. I'm saying to you this morning, when the church becomes a community of faith and we walk into the combination of what God has done in us, there aren't enough devils in hell to keep us from doing what God would have us to do because in him, we have the victory. Well give him praise and give him glory in this place. Fear not. But you know you get to the New Testament in Matthew chapter ten verses thirty one and thirty two, you see the disciples running into a tough place. The Lord told them. He said, look the very hairs of your head are numbered. Fear not for you are worth more than many sparrows. So if we really believe that we are the community of faith, then we believe that Jesus Christ is in the midst of the community. We go to Revelation chapter one. John was in the spirit on the Lord's day. He said, I heard a voice behind me like the sound of a trumpet saying write what you see and send it to the seven churches of Asia. And I turned to see the voice that spaked with me and I see one like the son of man. And he was in the midst of the golden candlesticks. Now the golden candlesticks represent the church. They symbolize us. We are in the golden sticks with Jesus Christ. Now some people read that passage and they never figure it out. He's in the midst of us today. He is

the one who's getting the honor here today because we are a community of faith. When John saw him, he said, when I saw him, he looked like one like the son of man in the midst of the golden candlesticks. Now look at the kind of image he gives him. You don't see a wimpy Jesus here. You don't see a little plastic figure that we put on our dashboards. You don't see a nice quiet man that we read about somewhere, but you begin to see him in all of his glory because all of his glory is in the community of faith and we are the community of faith. And he said, he had a robe that went down to his feet. He had a golden sash around his very waist. His head and his hair were white as wool. His eyes were as flaming fire and his feet were like fine brass burning in a furnace and his voice was of the sound of many waters. In his right hand were seven stars. Out of his mouth went a sharp edged sword. And his countenance was as the sun shining in his strength and John said, when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead and he laid his hand on me and gave me the message. And here is the message. And here's the message to God's people everywhere. Here's the message to Metro Church today. Fear not, I am the first and the last. I am he that lives and was dead and behold I am alive forever more. And I got the keys of hell and death. Well praise God in this place. Let the people of the Lord give praise to God here. Amen. Well you know you say, how does that work? The community of faith. You are it. What happens is going to happen as you bring that community of faith together because we function in faith. You know I went to Atlanta in 1960. I'm in my fifty first year of ministry now. And Carmelita and I will be celebrating our fiftieth anniversary June the sixth. I was ten and she was nine when we got married. So I was twenty eight years old in 1960. You can figure it out how old I am now. I turned the big 70 about three weeks ago. And I want you to know getting old is a bummer. Not really. But in that fifty one years of ministry, when I went to Atlanta in 1960, the

church was in disarray. There had been a lot of problems, a lot of circumstances that occurred and I went there as a young man and the first two years, I did such a wonderful job I came down with an ulcer. And Carmelita will attest to the fact. I couldn't sleep at night. Had to sit up to sleep. And for two or three months, it was terrible. And I was really living in fear because the doctor told me, you're going to have to do something about the stress load that you're carrying because you know every week, I was getting anonymous letters. I have an anonymous letter file this thick. I don't know who anonymous is, I hope he doesn't make it to heaven whoever he is. And it was bad news. And the doctor even suggested, maybe you ought to give up the ministry. It's not an easy place for you to be. You're going to have this problem unless you get rid of the stress. One Sunday morning we were having communion in our Sunday morning service at the old Hemp Hill church down on Hemp Hill Avenue downtown right next to Georgia Tech. And the elders were passing out the elements and one of the elders came up to me and there were tears in his eyes and he gave me the elements. He said, pastor I feel like this church ought to come together today and pray for you and I'm going to call the church together. He didn't say, may I. He didn't say, should I. He didn't say, it would be a good idea if I did. He did it. He just walked up to the pulpit and said the Lord has laid it on my heart that we ought to come together today as a community of faith. We ought to pray for our pastor that the Lord would heal him. He's been suffering now for three months with this ulcerous condition and we believe God is able to heal him. We ought to join together now. Now he wasn't ordained. He wasn't licensed. He wasn't even an exhorter's. Nobody even set him forth for anything. He was just a knock down drag out business man. But he had a heart for God. He was a member of the community of faith. Do you know where I'm going here? He was a member of the community of faith just like you are. And

everyone of us has a responsibility because we are a kingdom of priests and we believe in the universal priesthood of all believers. And a church only grows as all the priesthood people in the congregation become a kingdom of priests begin to do their priestly duty. He called that church to prayer. The elders came up and laid their hands on me in the name of Jesus, heal our pastor. And there was an electricity went through me and I felt that wonderful presence of God. Does anybody know what I'm talking about here. Do you have any idea of what I'm speaking about here? That wonderful presence of God. You don't know it until you've experienced it. You don't know it until you've felt him. And I felt that I was healed. I went home that night. Carmelita fixed me the first solid food I had in three months. It had no repercussions. I went back to the doctor. Did all the tests. No sign of an ulcer. And that ulcer has been gone now for thirty nine years because Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever because upon this rock, I will build my church. Upon this community of faith, I will build my church. Well give him praise and give him glory in this place. Hallelujah. Amen. Well that's point number one. Let's move on to point number two. A covenant church functions in faith, but a covenant church focuses on the founder. Christ said, I will build my church. I will build my church. Now when he says, my church, he's talking about a church that belongs to him. I've been to a lot of churches that really didn't belong to him. I'm not sure who they belonged to. Hello. You know we often say my church. I'm sure you refer to metro as my church. I probably refer to Mt. Paran as several thousands of times as my church. Come visit my church. My church this. My church that. I really don't want to discourage you, but I hate to tell you this, but you don't have a church. I don't have a church. There's only one person who has a church. Who is he? Jesus Christ. He is the founder of the church. Did you hear me? He is the founder of the church. And

we don't focus on the program. We don't focus on the plan. We don't focus on the denomination. We don't focus on the institution. We focus on the one who is the foundation of all, Jesus Christ, because he said, I will build my church. Hallelujah be to God. Amen. Well clap if you're going to clap. Let's don't do it half heartedly. Whatever you do, do it. We don't worship the babe in Bethelhem. We don't worship the man of Galilee. We don't worship the one who was hanging on a cross. We don't worship the one who was raised from the dead. We worship the one who is at the right hand of the father making intercession for us and giving us the marching orders that we are to get this world ready for the greatest event it has ever known. That event is the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first. We who are alive and remain shall be called up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. So shall we ever be with the Lord. Now get this. The next verse says, comfort one another with these words. Forget about 9/11. Forget about CNN. Forget about Fox News. Recognize we're a kingdom in the kingdom, we're a society in this society and Jesus Christ is going to take us home to be with him. Well praise him in this place. Praise him in this place. Praise him in this place. And that's the whole point of the Holy Spirit, to work in our hearts so that we can focus on the founder. You know during my thirty seven years in Atlanta and my fifty years of ministry, I've learned that I get more from the congregation that they give to me. When you preach to people and they believe what you have to say, they start practicing it. And it puts you in a bad light if you can't practice it too. Hello. It's more than do what I say do. But it's more than talking the talk and walking the walk. And we had one of our young men in Mt. Paran by the name of Tom who was in the hospital dying with cancer and only in his middle thirties. Lovely wife and three young children. And he was in and

out of a coma hooked up to all the wires etcetera. His wife was named Betty and she called me one day and said, come down here. I want you to pray for Tom. I think he's dying. I want you to come. So I jumped in my car. Went down there. And she said, I want you to meet me in the chapel. We met in the chapel and she was just a little old tiny skinny gal. She had a Bible about as big as this pulpit on her lap. And she had a bottle of oil about this high. When I saw those two symbols, I knew I was in for quite an afternoon. She said, and you know I've been to seminary and I know how to get people ready for death and grief. I had a class on that. I've got a PhD in counseling psychology. I'm supposed to understand those things, so I was all set for her. Hello. So we sat down and I started to tell her what was going to happen. When he died, how she would feel. What she would go through, what was going to happen. The kind of experience that would do and what was going to be necessary and after I had talked for about five minutes, she said, shut up. Well that kind of set me back. Don't talk like that. That's not what God wants. I said, well what does God want? She said, God has told me that if we'll go into this room where Tom is, and put this Bible on his head, you anoint your hands with oil and put them on the Bible. I anoint my hands with oil and put them on your hands, Tom is going to get healed. Well, I thought I need this today like I need a hole in the head. I didn't want her to be discouraged to go through all that stuff. She's got these high hopes built. And I felt the need to kind of and I tried to talk her out of it. And she started to cry. Now a woman starts to cry. You know you do whatever. Carmelita's last resort is always crying and she gets her way regardless. So, what to do. She took me by the coat sleeve and gave me the Bible and I got the big Bible. She's got the big bottle of oil. Got me by the coat sleeve and here we go. We go into the room. Tom is by himself. The nurse, she has the nurse step out. And he's laying there out to lunch. He doesn't

know whether he is coming or going. She said, alright, we're going to do this. This is what God said. So, what can I do? We put the Bible on his head. Anoint my hands, put my hands on it. Anoint her hands, she puts her hands on mine. And she says, pray. So I pray a good seminary prayer. She said, shut up. She said, don't pray like that. She said, pray like you pray in church. Well, I said, what have I got to lose. We've gone this far. So I prayed in the name of Jesus Christ, touch Tom, heal him, take this cancer away from him and make him every bit whole. Raise him up. She said, okay. Now we've done what God has said. No thunder. No lightning. Nothing happens. We get back to the door and start out of the room. And she looks back and says, now Tom if you think you're going to die and leave me here to raise these three children, you got another thing coming. Now you live. Well I'm kind of getting into it now. So I say, yeah Tom, you live. You live Tom. So, I bid her good bye. I go home and about two o'clock in the morning, the next morning, the phone rings. And she's on the other end of the line. I thought oh my goodness, Tom's died. So you can see where old doubting Walker is. Tom's died. I thought my goodness, she's going to be devastated. And then there was a lilt in her voice. She said, pastor, isn't it wonderful. Tom is sitting up in bed eating ice cream. There are three doctors around him that they got out of bed to come over here. Said, they don't what happened to this man, but he's made every bit whole. He is healed. And she said, it's a miracle of God almighty done by the power of God. Amen, amen and amen. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Praise him in this place. You know sometimes you're going to have it done in spite of your pastor. Point being, you're a priest of God. He's in your midst. He's building his church and you're in it. That's a new revelation for some of you. Look over at your neighbor and say, you're in his church. If you're worried about it, I'll give you a card later and you can sign it and I'll put you in

his church. I will build my church. Alright, now here we go. Let's step one. A covenant church does what? Upon this rock. Where have you all been? I've been preaching here for twenty minutes. What is going on? A covenant church functions in faith. Now say it. Functions in faith. That's a C. Go for a B. Functions in faith. Upon this rock, I will build my church. What does it do? Focuses on the founder. Say it with me now. Focuses on the founder. Focuses on the founder. Let's do it one more time now. Some of you are just waking up. If the person is snoring, don't touch them. Let them sleep. Probably the best thing they'll get all day. Number one, upon this rock, you function in faith. I will build my church. Focuses on the founder. We're about to get it. Hello. Now what's the third point? Fight the fight. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Now when you say that statement, it immediately lets you know that you're in a battle. You're fighting the gates of hell. And the reason that the metaphor of gates is used is because that's where all the action went on in the city. That's where the commercial action went on. That's where the social action went on. That's where the recreational action went on. That's where all the relationships were formed. When we talk about the town centers, it was a town center. And the gates of hell, the very action of hell, is not going to prevail against this church that I'm building because we're going to fight the fight. Now we talk about being in spiritual warfare. What does that mean? Well we know that our arch enemy is Satan, that he's called Satan. He's called the devil. He's called Beloeil. He's called Beelzebub. He's called the adversary. He's called an angel of light. He's called a roaring lion. He seeks whom he may devour. We know all of those. When we read the Bible, we know that he does everything he can to detour us from doing what God would have us to do. He imitates everything that God does. He sows tears among the wheat. He instigates false doctrine. Tries to, perverts the truth if he

possibly can to get us into error. He tries to hinder the work that we're doing. You make these announcements and you've got these things going. He'd like to hinder every kind of outreach that you have here. That's what he tries to do. He tries to blind people to the truth. That's why we're finding ourselves in this big battle with Islam, Mormonism, and all things. Satan trying his best to blind this nation to truth. We find ourselves in this great challenge and he's operating that way. You know he tempts. He allures. He accuses. He afflicts. He does all of those things. We understand that. But what we have to recognize it about Satan is that he is a defeated foe. Hello. He's a defeated foe. He is not omnipotent. He is not omniscient. He is not omnipresent. Are you with me now? So where does Satan belong? Amen, you've got it. First John two and eight says, Christ came to do what? Destroy the manifest works of the devil. First John four and four says, he that is in us is greater than he that is in the world. Romans sixteen and twenty, the God of peace will soon do what? Destroy Satan under your feet. There's no place for Satan in anything about you because he's destroyed by the power of the living God and in Jesus Christ, we have the victory. Amen, amen and amen. Now trying to make that work is not easy because then we talk about spiritual warfare. Now all of you have read about spiritual warfare. You've heard sermons about spiritual warfare. You've seen spiritual warfare on television. What are we talking about here? Well we know that the battle is not a battle that we can just reach out and touch. It's a battle for the mind. Warfare is a very small field. It's a six inch field. The devil doesn't want your money. He doesn't want your children. He doesn't want your wife or husband. He doesn't want your business. He wants your head. If he's got your head, what's he got? He's got you. And most of our problems come from the stinking way we think. Hello, hello, hello. Get a good hold now. Most of the difficulties we're feeling here today is because of

stinking thinking. Because you have to make a choice. You're either going to think like the world or you're going to think like Christ. You're going to think secular or you're going to think sacred. You're going to think in the flesh or you're going to think in the spirit. And the mind is the controller. And the gates of hell want to get a hold of your mind so that you become politically correct in everything you do, so that you take seriously everything you see and hear, so he can program you into a life of fear. And then that breaks up the channel of faith that God wants to give you. You have to make a choice. I mean you can't have Romans one and twenty eight, talks about a reprobate mind. You can't have Romans eight and seven which is a carnal mind. You can't have Ephesians four and seventeen which is called a futile mind. You can't have Colossians three and eighteen which is called a fleshly or a puffed up mind. You can't have Titus one and fifteen which is a defiled mind. But there is another choice here. The Bible talks about the mind of Christ. Romans eight and six says to have a spiritual mind. Romans twelve and two says to have a transformed mind. First Corinthians two and sixteen says to have a Christ like mind. Ephesians four and twenty three says to have a renewed mind. Second Timothy one and seven talks about having a sound mind. So we've got to decide how we're going to make this choice. Now let me show you a little process. I think I'm going to do it. Bruce come on up here, would you please? Brock, it's Brock. Sorry. And I need you up here Floyd. Carmelita help her up the stairs Floyd. She's got bad knees. Help her up. Look over at your neighbor and say, just relax. It's going to be alright. Now what are we talking about? Somebody tell me. What are we talking about? Where abouts? In the mind. Alright. Hallelujah. Some of you have got one. That's wonderful. Praise God. Praise God. You've got something in there. You're thinking. You know how much we go to church and don't think. We get up here and holler and

yell and puff and scream and you go out of here and say man it was wonderful. You say, well what did he say? I don't have the foggiest notion but it was good. Alright, is everybody still in the hearse. Nobody has fallen out. Alright, now Brock here is the problem. He's the problem. Does he look like a problem to you? He's the problem. Carmelita you're going to be the pain. You're going to be over here. Carmelita is a pain. I know that from first hand experience. No sorry. A pain. Pain. Now what we have to understand here is now the problem does not cause the pain. Brock is not causing Carmelita. Is everybody still with me? Our problem is Floyd. Floyd is perception. And he causes all the problem. Because the situation is the way we think about the problem causes the pain. The way we Floyd, Brock, causes Carmelita. Now we can't always change Brock. We can't always change the circumstances. We can't always change the situation. We can't always make this better by rearranging the furniture. So what do we do? Now if this is the problem and the circumstances and Carmelita over here is the pain and anxiety and most of what we deal with is anxiety because we live in an anxiety producing society. One out of every four people in America is depressed. One out of every ten people in America suffers from a phobia of some kind, which is a fear out of all proportion to the cause. One out of every twenty people suffers from agoraphobia, the fear of the marketplace. Now that's anxiety over here. But you see we can't always change the circumstances to change the anxiety, so we have to change Floyd. Now when we change Floyd, then we change the way we feel. And when we change the way we think and the way we feel, then we can get rid of the pain. The only way that we can get rid of Carmelita is to change the way Floyd operates toward Brock. Are you with me right here? And you say, is that Biblical. Well give God praise. If you're going to clap, let's do it. Thank you. Is that Biblical? Alright, let's take a look at it. Philipians chapter four verses six

through eight, Paul is in prison. He's about ready to get his head cut off. He knows he's going to die and he says some very stupid things. I mean it's very stupid if you think about it. Philipians four and four, he says, rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say rejoice. What's the matter with you man? You ought to see your psychiatrist. You're in prison. You're going to be killed and you say, rejoice in the Lord and again I say rejoice. And then he says in verse six. Now this is going to really blow your mind because it's going to take away your favorite pastime. Don't worry about anything whatsoever. I hate taking that away from you. That's one of our most blessed times is the time of worry. Worry, worry, worry. Don't worry about anything whatsoever, but do what? Tell God every detail of your life and what? In earnest and thankful prayer and the peace of God which transcends all human understanding will keep a constant guard of your hearts and minds as you rest in Christ Jesus. He doesn't say this, but I think he'd say turn off CNN. Turn off Fox News. Turn off all the negative things you hear. Then he says in verse eight, whatsoever things are true and noble and right and admirable and excellent and praiseworthy, you think about these things. And the victory will be yours. Amen, amen and amen. Well praise him in this place. Praise him in this place. Well hallelujah. I could preach another hour, but I've preached long enough. You've heard all this you need to hear. And that brings us to the fourth point if I could have the organist and pianist please. And the fourth point is we've got to fulfill the formula. I'm going to give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. And whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven. Whatever you loose on earth will be loosed on heaven. When he says, I'm going to give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. That key means authority. A key means responsibility. A key means accessibility. That's why they use it because it means authority, responsibility, and accessibility. I'm going to give you authority. I'm

going to give you responsibility. I'm going to give you accessibility to all that I have. So that you can bind and loose. Now that doesn't mean you're a little God going around playing God, but it does mean that God's word has power. That's what always bothers me that people don't understand that God's word has power and his word makes a choice and makes a difference and when we share the word, people have to make a choice. They have to make a response. If they accept it, they're loosed. If they reject it, they're bound. And you think well nothing is happening, but it is happening. When you plant that word, it is happening. It is happening. The keys to the kingdom of heaven. The keys to the kingdom. Oh back in 1991, I had a ski accident. I went over a cliff and I hadn't planned on it. It's not a cool move. I hit on my skis and I was fighting to stay up. And I was headed for a snow fence. Took a quick right turn and shattered my left arm and knocked myself out and terribly bruised the artery and it was bad news. Took about nine months of rehab. And I had to go for about the first six months, I had to go to the hospital twice every week for rehab. You know you talk about and I had this Pentecostal therapist. And she took great delight in causing me pain. Terrible. You know what a therapist will do for you? What you do, you get, this whole arm was shattered. Had to have bone grafted. I've got a plate from here to here with fifteen screws in it and set off the things in the airports. And she'd, you know what she'd do? It really, really, it got me every time. She would get it real warm and put this stuff on it and she'd just start moving it and talking and sometimes she would quote Scripture and then all of a sudden, she'd just jerk that thing as far as she could jerk it. And I'd backslide every time she did it. But I was walking out of that therapy one day when I was getting on the elevator at the hospital. Crawford Long Hospital in Atlanta, and I was getting on the elevator, a doctor got off the elevator, he was in his white coat and he saw me and he said,

you're Dr. Walker, aren't you and I said, yes. He said, you don't know me, but I know you. I sit in your congregation every Sunday. He said, about a year and a half ago, I guess two years ago, he said, I was a cocaine addict. I was an alcoholic. I had lost my practice. I had lost my wife. I had lost two children and I was helpless and hopeless and I decided to take my life. So I went to a motel, got the room. And had been drinking until I was anhebriated and I had all the pills laid out and I knew that they would kill me. And I was trying to get up the courage to take them and end them all because life was over for me. And he said, I just flipped on the television inadvertently almost and you were on tv. You were preaching about the keys to the kingdom of heaven. You were telling all the folks who were listening to you if you'd take the key that it could help you to open up God's resources to meet every need you have. Then you suggested that if there be anybody in a hotel, in home, or wherever they might be watching television, they really needed the keys to the kingdom of heaven to let Christ come into their hearts and give him the resources they needed and to get on their knees if they could and to pray a prayer with you and that you felt led about somebody out there who was suicidal and on the verge of taking his life. He said, it was almost like you read my pedigree. And I thought I wonder if that will work for me. Is he talking about me? Am I the one? He said, I fell on my knees by a bed in a holiday inn and I followed your sinner's prayer and he said, I cannot describe to you what happened. He said, it's like everything in my life, the burdens of my life rolled away. And it's like I had a flood of light come over my spirit. And I was like a brand new person. Then he said, then I started coming to church and then I got involved in one of your groups and then he said I got my wife back. And now they're allowing me to work in the emergency rooms and in another six months, I'll have my full practice back. And it's all because I learned to live my life everyday with the

keys to the kingdom of heaven. He said, I bind that cocaine. I bind that alcohol. I bind that temper I used to have. And I loose everything that belongs to God. He's saying to you this morning, hey, fulfill the formula. I've given you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Now what is a covenant church? Who are you? You function in faith. You focus on the founder. You fight the fight and you fulfill the formula and we're going to do that right now. Let's get into the key of C. Shall we stand together please? We are standing on holy ground.