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“The Dimensions of Discipleship”

Thank you very much and what a joy it is to be with you this morning to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. You know any way we look at it, Sunday is always a special day. It's a special day because it's the first day of the week. On the first day of the week, we always celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the thing that makes Christianity different from any other religion in the world is that Christ is risen. He is risen from the dead. You go to the tomb of Confucius and you say, here he lies. You go to the tomb of Mohammad, you say here he lies. You go to the tomb of Buddha, you say, here he lies. You go the tombs of the many Hindu gurus, and you say here they lie. But you come to the tomb of Jesus, he is not here. He is risen as he said. How many of you believe that this morning? Well give him praise and give him glory and honor.

Carmelita and I consider it a distinct privilege and pleasure to be with you this morning, to fill in for Pastor Page. I've known Pastor Page for quite some time. First met him in Colorado when he was pastoring there and we had a Ministry Now workshop there and he made a great impact for the Lord and I know you appreciate his ministry. You'll be welcoming him back next Sunday. It's also a delight to have watched and charted the progress of the Westmore church.

As Dr. Smith said, I've been around for many, many, many, many years. I got that Henry. I figured that out this morning already. In looking over the congregation, I'm reminded of that. I was sitting here by Ed Williams and we go back to Lee College days in the late forties and early fifties and your pastor Emeritus, we go back to California in the fifties. I see Steve Allen here and I remember when he was born. And then there's Dave Tilley, the defective from Mt. Paran. We're hoping that he'll get to heaven. We're not sure. But we're working on it as we go along. And you know there's good news and bad news. I remember when this church got started and have charted the wonderful works that you have done both here and in the community and really around the world. And that's the good news. The bad news is you just know you're getting older. And once in awhile, you have senior moments. How many of you know anything about that? Anybody here ever had any senior moments? I have one hand that was raised back there. The rest of you, you won't get into it here.

It kind of reminds me of the three ladies that were sitting in the kitchen one day and they were getting older and talking about not being able to remember as well and having senior moments and one of them said, you know, sometimes I'm standing at the bottom of the stairs and I can't remember if I just came down or I need to go up. The other lady said, well I know how you feel. Sometimes I'm standing in front of the refrigerator. I don't know if I just put something in or I need to take something out. The other lady said, well I'm your same age but that's not happening to me and I'm really happy about that. I better knock on wood for good luck and she knocked on the table four or five times. She waited a few seconds and said, I wonder who that is at the door.

So it does happen as we go along. I know you've had several speakers in the last three or

four weeks, sort of filled your pulpit. One of the things that comes into your mind when you have a guest speaker any time is, is he going to be long winded or short winded? Some of you have already moved into your long winded positions. You're hoping for the best.

My father used to tell this story of a lady who had her little boy in church and he was creating a disturbance and causing embarrassment to her. So she tried to get his mind off of his boredom and she pointed things around the church out to him. She pointed out the chandelier. She pointed to the stain glassed windows. They had a pipe organ at this particular church up in the chancel area. Pointed to the pipes. He looked at the chancel area and he saw three flags. Said, mother what are those three flags for? She said, well son that flag on the left, that flag is the Christian flag. That flag in the center, that's the American flag. That flag on the right is the flag in honor of the boys who died in the service. Said, which service did they die? The morning or the evening service?

Now this morning I hope I have enough to say that there won't be any deaths. But ever once in a while, having been a pastor, I've been in the ministry now fifty one years and my fifty first year. Forty two years of those in the pastorate. Thirty seven of those in the one church in Atlanta, Georgia which eventually became one church in five locations. But ever once in a while, I get to feeling the need for us as Christians to go back to the basics. And in praying about this service this morning and the message of God would lay upon my heart, I think it's important in these days to find ourselves to go back to some basics and talk a little bit about the dimensions of discipleship. The dimensions of discipleship.

If you have your Bibles, turn with me please to one verse of Scripture in Acts chapter five, verse forty two. Acts chapter five, verse forty two. I know you've been standing so much today,

but would you just stand with me for the reading of the word? In the King James version, it says, and daily in the temple at every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. When you read the International Version, it gives a little more amplification to the verse and it says, day after day in the temple courts from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. Day after day in the temple courts from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. Bottom line, that's why we're here this morning. So let's take a look at that formula that is given to us in the dimensions of . This congregation and every hurt and every burden and every sorrow. You know every sadness. I thank you for this church and its ministry, for its staff and for its constituency. Now Lord would you help us to focus for the next few minutes that we might see truly who you want us to be and may we somehow be tested by your spirit to strive once again to be all that we can be. We thank you for it in Jesus' name and for his sake and amen. Thank you and you may be seated.

In his book, The Twilight of a Great Civilization, Carl F. H. Henry, one of the leading evangelical scholars of our time, makes the statement that we no longer live in Christian America. But that we moved into the post Christian era. In corroborating that principle, he makes several observations. He said, first of all, it's because we have bowed at the, to the gods of secularism and have shut God out of our national affairs. The second reason is that because we have worshiped at the shrine of affluence and have allowed materialism and greed to dominate our culture. The third reason is because that we have become preoccupied with the gods of sex and have lived in an x rated culture. The fourth reason, he says, is because we have actively pursued the gods of violent entertainment. And finally because we as the church have become complacent.

We have allowed the spirit of anti Christ to rise until the barbarians are in control. Then he makes a statement that is very important for us today when he says we need a revival of the Holy Spirit that will bring about a new significance to the meaning of discipleship. We need a revival of the Holy Spirit that will bring about a new significance to the meaning of discipleship.

Now we all know what a Christian is, I would suppose, but in reality when we look at our culture and we look at our nation, Christianity is no longer very powerful word. It has a very diluted meaning. It's interesting when we look into the New Testament, it's only used three times and those times in a derisive manner. But then when we look into the New Testament, the word disciple is used three hundred and eighteen times. No where in the Bible are we called to be Christians. Everywhere in the Bible we are called to be disciples. So we have to ask ourselves the question, well then what is a disciple? If I'm to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, what does that really mean? The Greek word is mathetase. It means to be a learner or a follower of Jesus Christ. It represents that person who has acknowledged Jesus Christ as messiah. Who has accepted him as Lord of life and who is living according to his spirit while crucifying the flesh. It means living a life that emulates Jesus Christ in our attitudes, our beliefs and our values. In our character, our temperament, and our mood, in our relationships, our behavior and our lifestyle. And when you analyze it further, when the Bible talks about being a disciple, it talks about living in a new direction. And somehow it means that we go counter to the culture. It means that we don't live by what is politically correct. It means that we are willing to take a risk to live by values that are transcendent to the values of a given situation. When the Bible talks about it, it talks about it in terms of a lifestyles. The word that is used in the New Testament is walk.

And as disciples, we are to live by Romans six and four, to walk in the newness of life.

We are to live by Second Corinthians five and seven, to walk by faith and not by sight. We are to live by Galatians five and sixteen, to walk in the spirit and not in the flesh. We are to walk by Ephesians four and one, to walk worthy of the calling we have received. We are to live by Ephesians five and two, to walk in love even as Christ loved us. We are to live by Ephesians five and fifteen, to walk cautiously and circumspectly as wise and not as unwise. By the same token, when the Bible talks about discipleship, it talks about a new dynamic. We really don't live by the same dynamics that we see everyday in the world. That the dynamics of life is not set by the feeling level or the tonal level that we find in the culture. But that the dynamic is set by our relationship with Christ.

And God is telling us today that he wants us to live a radiant life. In John one and four, in him was life and the life was the light of men. God wants us to live an abundant life. In John ten and ten, Christ said, I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly. Said, I want you to live an eternal life in John eleven twenty five, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live. The Bible says, I want you to really learn how to live a Christ like life. Paul the apostle in Philipians chapter one verse twenty one says, for to me to live is Christ, but to die is gain. But then when you read the book of Revelation, you find a dynamic there that stands us in our test. For in our world today, we are in the same condition that the first century world was in. And the same message that Jesus Christ gave in the book of Revelation to the seven churches of Asia Minor is the same message given to us. So he wrote to Ephesus and Smyrna and Pergamos and Thyatira, and Sardis and Philadelphia and Laodicea. And he said, there's a lot of things that I have against you. But there's one thing that I want you to learn how to live. I want to learn to live the overcoming life.

amen, and amen. Well give him praise and give him glory if you believe that this morning.

Well you say that sounds really good. I mean who wouldn't want a radiant life and who wouldn't want an abundant life and who wouldn't want a Christ like life and an eternal life and an overcoming life? But how do we come to that? And that brings us to the text of this morning because on the basis of that foundation, we begin to understand what the dimensions of discipleship really are. Now when we talk about discipleship, we talk about a process. That's hard for us Pentecostals to get ahold of. I was born in this thing. I've been in it all my life. We like it instantaneously. We don't get it instantaneously. We don't want it. But discipleship was a process. It never stops. It goes on. It goes on and it goes on. And Christ was trying to get that across to his disciples always. So when we find them in Acts chapter five, just getting off the ground with the church. We find a formula here with the dimensions of discipleship. The first dimension is if we are going to live as examples of Christ, we have to have a commitment dimension daily, daily. Now for these people, it was twenty four hours a day. It was more than an intellectual acquiescence. It was more than an emotional catharsis. It was more than a Sunday morning praise session. It was a way of life. It was a commitment. To commit means to dedicate the will to a person, to a cause, to an internalized goal that is worthy of our devotion. And the problem we are having today is the lack of commitment.

Why did we close five thousand evangelical churches last year? Why did we close the year before that four thousand evangelical churches? Why in any county in the United States is there not been an increase in church membership in the last ten years according to the census? Could it be that there's a lack of commitment? Is that what's wrong in the White House? In the last few years, it's a lack of commitment. What's wrong in the congress and you see it on your

television everyday? It's a lack of commitment. What's wrong in our educational systems publically speaking across the United States? It's a lack of commitment. God is saying, I'm calling for a people to become the company of commitment who dedicate themselves to me that I might do my work within them. Amen, amen and amen. Now clap right now whether you feel like it or not.

You see they understood Deuteronomy six and five, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul and your strength. They understood Psalm one hundred and nineteen and verse two, blessed is that person who keeps the statutes of the Lord and seeks for him with all of his heart. They understood Proverbs three and five, trust in the Lord with all thine heart. Lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways, acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths. Hadn't come to pass yet but it became the theme of the later church in the epistles time of Romans twelve one and two. I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and separate before God which is your reasonable service and be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewal of your mind that you might prove what is a good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

For some of you the name Deitrich Bonhoffer will have meaning. He was a world war II Christian martyr. In the Christian and in the concentration camp, he wrote the Cost of Discipleship, a radical call to follow Christ. He makes the statement that the number one enemy of the church is cheap grace. And the danger we have today with all of the emphasis we have on feeling and emotions is that we are content with cheap grace. Cheap grace to him is grace that is sold in the marketplace to the highest bidder. Cheap grace is grace that's the principle, a doctrine, an idea, a concept. Has no cost. Has no price. Cheap grace is preaching forgiveness without

repentance. It's preaching church membership without discipline. It's preaching communion without confession. It's preaching absolution without any cross bearing. What he calls for is costly grace. Costly grace is a grace that you have to encounter again and again. Costly grace is a gift and you have to ask for it. Costly grace is a door and you have to knock on it. Costly grace is a pearl of great price and you sell everything you have to buy the fields to get the pearls to get the kingdom. Costly grace means you will pluck out your eye if it offends your commitment. You would cut off your hand if it offends your commitment. You would cut off your foot if it offends your commitment. Now it's costly because it calls us to follow. But it's grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It's costly because it costs Christ his life, but it's grace because it gives us eternal life. It's costly because it condemns sin but it's grace because it justifies the sinner. It's costly because it costs God his son but it's grace because we're bought with a price. We're not our own. And we're to glorify God with our bodies. Hallelujah be to God. Well praise him in this place. Let the people of God give praise to God.

We can't talk about discipleship without day to day. Day after day. Daily. It's a commitment. And the second dimension here is one of community. In the temple courts and from house to house. These people understood the meaning of having to live together. They knew what it meant to have to come together in community because the word church represents to us community and they understood the church as community. The anglo saxon development of community was the keeper of the wall. In the early days of the middle ages for a city to be secure, it had a wall. It was made out of mud and sticks and stones. Every citizen was assigned a certain level of the wall. If he let his area of the wall deteriorate, it brought everybody else into danger. Maybe that's what we need again today. You know there are two hundred and seventy

five denominations in America. Thirteen thousand denominations in the world. Thirty three thousand para church ministries of one kind or another. But all of that means nothing unless it comes down to community. Maybe that's why Christ prayed for the unity of the church. The thing that bothered Ghandi so badly about Christianity, he loved Christ, he loved what he taught, he loved what he preached, but he couldn't stand the church because it was so stratified. And you see a church is a different kind of a situation. The word community means a group of people around common interest. But in our case, it's the attitude, beliefs, and values, and character, the temperament, the mood, the relationship and the behavior and the lifestyle that centers around the head of the church, Christ himself.

In the Greek, church is ecclesia, those who are called out of the world into fellowship with Christ. The church is laos, the people of God. The church is lityrgia, the work of the people of God. The church is coinanea, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. The church is curoso, those who go back into the world to proclaim, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. A church is more than this building. A church is more than this denomination. A church is more than this institution. God's only got one church. There may be many different delivery systems, but the church that he is building is the church that the gates of hell cannot prevail against. Amen, amen and amen. Well let the people of God give praise in this place. So who are we? We're the people who are called out of the world into the fellowship of Christ to become the people of God to do the work of the people of God as a fellowship of the Holy Spirit to go back into the world to proclaim, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. But see you have no way of knowing that the concept of community can accomplish. What's the church going to be in the twenty first century? Only church that is going to prevail is going to understand relationship, relationship,

relationship, relationship and relationship. The technological age has robbed people of the sense of community. That's where the church has its biggest operation and you have no way of knowing how big of an impact the church of community makes. When I was pastoring at Mt. Paran, we had grown right fast. Fairly large congregation. So most people came to see me by appointment. It was much more convenient for them. And for me. So one day I was in my office waiting for the next appointment and the secretary came in and said, there's a long distance call. It's from a lady on the alpine highway on the way to Alaska from the state of Washington on up to Alaska. And she said that she is frozen with fear and she can't move and she's got to talk to you. She's on her car phone. Will you talk to her? I said, sure, I'll talk to her. I talked to her and she told me her name and she said, I'm on the Al Can highway and I am scared to death. I've come to know you through one of your members who has moved to California where I live and I've been listening to your tapes for a long time. This road is so curvy. It's so narrow. And the trucks are coming by me about to blow me off. I'm scared to death. She said, you won't believe this. But I'm in a place called Hell's gate and I'm trying to get to a city called Hope. And it's fifty two miles from here and I can't go any further. And if you've ever noticed on the map, there is a place called Hell's Gate. There's a little town called Hope. She said, I can't go any further. She said, I've been listening to your tapes for over an hour and they haven't helped a bit. A real testimony. She said, I don't know what to do. I'm frozen. I can't go any further. I said, well do you believe in God? She said, sure I believe in God. I said, believe he can help you? She said, sure I believe he can help me. Do you think he can trade your fear and turn it into faith? She said, I believe he can. I said, alright. Here's what we're going to do. I'm going to pray for you that God is going to deliver you from this fear and fill you faith so you can go on. So I said, do

you think after we pray, you can get yourself together long enough to drive a mile and can you get off on the shoulder. She said, yes. I said, can you drive one mile? And then pull off and pray. She said, I think I can do that. Then you drive a mile, and what do you do? She said, I pull off and pray. You drive a mile. And you pull off and pray. Now I said, we're going to pray. So I prayed for her that God would give her confidence and deliver her, etcetera, etcetera. Got finished. And I said, now how far is it from Hell's Gate to Hope? She said, fifty two miles. I said, no. How far is it from Hell's Gate to Hope? She said, oh I get it. It's one mile. I said, you got it. It's one mile. You and God make it one mile. I said, I'll be here in the office for three or four more hours. If you need me, you call me. And I'll be glad to talk to you again. I never heard another word from her for three or four weeks. I don't know if she had went over the side, she got raptured, what happened. Then I got a letter. And here's the letter she wrote. She said, Dear Dr. Walker, in the event you wondered if I was still wandering about somewhere on the Alaska Canada Highway, I'm glad to tell you that I did eventually reach the town of Hope after being stuck emotionally and who knows, maybe spiritually, at Hell's Gate. I am presently enrolled in the graduate program in Walla Walla college. I should perhaps major in fear issues. After talking and praying with you, Dr. Walker, I went back on the road. Soon, I noticed that I sort of had the road to myself. Those vehicles ahead of me were very far ahead of me. Those vehicles behind me were a good one hundred and fifty feet behind me giving me the road all to myself. I relaxed and began to really enjoy the beautiful scenery. All of a sudden, you probably think I'm making this up and I'm not, but I'm not. Here comes a small burgundy colored Toyota Corolla zipping by and passing me. Parentheses, I'm doing sixty five miles an hour by now. In the Corolla is an older grey haired person that I could not tell if it was a male or female. This person

waves at me while passing me. I looked at the license plate and it read, praise him. Some of you need to be looking for that Corolla to come your way. Absolutely incredible. What do you think about that? Then she said, I enjoyed the rest of my trip. Parentheses, I'll never do it again though. My husband will have to come and drive my car back. I'll fly. What's important is that fear never returned. I learned several things. Number one, I learned that the rapture doesn't occur just for you no matter how hard you pray for it. Number two, I learned that fear is a powerful emotion and it can immobilize you. It did me. But God is still the god of the mountain. Physical altitudes do not faze him. He can and will safely guide you from what feels and looks like Hell's Gate to that place which represents Hope. And thirdly, I learned the importance and this is a community. The importance of being a part of a body of believers. I've never seen this woman. She's never seen me. What is there between her and me? Community, relationship. The importance of being a part of a body of believers, people who will take time and pray with you and be supportive of you. Thank you again for taking the time to counsel this counselor and for your messages of hope. Praise God. I don't care what's going on in your life or what you're going through. God's got a Toyota Corolla with a license plate that says, praise him and there's a community of believers who give you the strength that regardless of what comes your way, you can be more than a conqueror. Amen, amen. Well let's give God praise and give him glory in this place this morning. Hallelujah. Let the people of God praise him. Let the people of God praise him. Let the people of God praise him. Let the people of God give him praise in this place. Hallelujah be to God. Hallelujah be to God. So there's this dimension of commitment. There's this dimension of community. But then there's the dimension of communication. Day after day in the temple courts from house to house they never stopped. Hello. They never stopped. They

never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. Teaching and proclaiming. You know it's important to have a church. It's important to have a building. It's a tool. The better we can make the tool, the better off it is. It's important that we come together as we are so that we can be prepared. But God is not nearly as interested in the church gathered as he is in the church scattered. Church begins this morning when we pronounce the benediction. Are you all still here? Nobody fell out of the hearse. Church begins with the benediction. You came here this morning to do what? What's the point of being here? To give praise, to give worship, to be strengthened and built up to do what? For every person you get saved in this altar area, eight people will be saved through your individual witness wherever you are. The answer to this need if we are going to invade the culture, going to impact the culture, we've got to get rid of this fort mentality. We got to see this as a house of motivation to send us into the world to proclaim repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. That's what a church is for. And you can't not feel responsibility towards your neighbors. You can't not feel responsibility to your friends. You can't not feel responsibility to your close associates at your workplace. That's the point. Acts one and eight, what's the whole point of the Holy Spirit? Just to make you speak in tongues, feel good, have the time of emotional upheaval. You shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you. You'll be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. The whole commission in Matthew twenty eight and eighteen, all power, Christ said, is given unto me. And the implication is that I'm transferring that power unto you. Go into all the world and make disciples of every nation, baptizing them in the name of the father, the son and the Holy Ghost. And behold I'm with you always. That's the point of the Holy Spirit. To be with you and tell you what to say and how to say it. It's easy. I've been

blessed to preach over a hundred thousand in Korea. I preached to twenty thousand, thirty thousand, used to preach to nearly ten thousand every Sunday. The toughest part is one on one. Hello. One on one. That's when the rubber meets the road. That's when you have to decide, am I a disciple or am I not a disciple? You know and catch you at the wrong time. You never know what's going to happen to you. I used to like to ski a lot. Went over a cliff. Shattered my left arm. The nurses there said, what's a Pentecostal preacher doing skiing anyway? I was on a ski trip. And I was getting off the plane in Salt Lake City, to ski in Park City. Back in the back maybe twenty or thirty feet from me getting off the plane as you do in a line, there was a woman who really wanted to get saved. And she suddenly recognized me and she hollered out clear across everybody. Pastor Walker. I thought, oh goodness. So I turned around and I saw that woman. I thought, you know I don't want this now. She said, pastor Walker. Finally somebody said, I think they're talking to you. I had on a cowboy hat and I kind of pulled it down over my eyes, but she had me pegged. And finally, she was making her way up through the people. I said, what? She said, I heard you preach last Sunday and I want to get saved. How do I get saved? How do I get saved? All of them looking at me and looking at her. I said, well let's get off this plane. She said, no I want to get saved right now. I said, well get in this seat here. So we stepped to the side and it's amazing. Standing right there, I led her in the sinner's prayer and she came to know Jesus Christ as Lord. Now it didn't matter how I felt. Did it? It didn't matter about my ego or my pride being on the line. All those people, I was surprised. You know I thought, they're going to think we're idiots. Silence, quietness. They just passed by quietly. She came into the greatest experience that the world has ever known to know Jesus Christ as Lord and there's nothing like it in all of the world and it's the most important moment in anybody's life.

Amen, amen and amen. Well give God praise in this place. Give him praise in this place. Give him praise in this place. Last Sunday, I preached at Mt. Paran Central. Obviously when I go back, it's like going home. After the eleven o'clock service, I'm shaking hands with people and a young couple comes up. He's thirty two, she's thirty one. I married them ten years ago. Had a little boy, Jonah, four years of age. And I talked with them and they hugged my neck and we were reminded of the ten years ago and how wonderful they had done. Four o'clock last Sunday afternoon, I got a call. Nicky, Nicole, whose husband's name was Todd, came down with a massive stroke, thirty one years of age. Tuesday, she died. Friday we had her funeral. But you know what came to my mind that makes all this worthwhile. The reason that the ministry is so important to me and should be to each one of us, I talked to Todd, he said, as a seven year old, I sat on a front row and listened to you preach and I've heard you all of my life until you left Mt. Paran. But you gave me the knowledge that whatever I went through, that the word of God would stand and I still remember the Scripture that you used to quote over and over and over again from the Philips translation, Second Corinthians four eight through ten, we're handicapped on every side, but we're never frustrated. We're puzzled, but we're never in despair. We're persecuted, but we don't have to stand it alone. We're knocked down, but we're not knocked out. This is the reason we never collapse. The outward man receive wear and tear, but the inward man receives fresh strength daily and these little troubles which are really so transitory are working out for us a far more solid reward out of all proportion to our pain. For we look not at the things that are visible, for they are temporary. For we look at the things that are invisible for they are timeless. And we'll have a new body and we'll have a new life. And we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is. Amen, amen and amen. Let the people of God give him praise in

this place this morning. Let the people of God give him praise. Let the people of God give him praise. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. And there's a fourth dimension here. I feel the presence of the lord in this place. I believe the Holy Spirit is speaking to hearts and to lives here. I believe he is speaking to you in a very special way right now. See the fourth thing is Jesus Christ. There's commitment, there's community, there's communication, and there's Christ. They never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. You see he's the energy and he's the force. And he's the focus. He's the one who has the answer to all of the needs and he's the one who meets us right here today. Meets us right here now. Back in the fall, I was in the Dallas airport. A man came up to me and said, I used to live in Atlanta. I moved to Dallas. I used to see you on television. Slipped into your church a few times. But then my headquarters got moved to Dallas. But I still fly into Atlanta. And I'm headed to Atlanta today. He said, I'm on standby. I hope I can get on this flight. And we were talking and I you know being somewhat a student of human nature, I noticed that he kept wanting to say something to me, but I didn't know what it was. And then they called the plane and I had to go on and get on and I sat down and waited. And all of a sudden, here he came. And through standby, he got a seat right by me. He looked at me and he said, you know, I think God's in this. Said, I've never been a Christian. I always thought I needed to be a Christian. But I got diagnosed with cancer this week. They say it's bad. They don't know if I'm going to live or I'm going to die. I've come to grips with the fact that I've got to think about eternity. I think God put me beside you to tell me about eternity. Said, there's more to it than two cars in your garage. There's more to it than your listing on Dunn and Bradd Street. There's more to it whether you can take a four week vacation this year or a six week vacation. There's more to it than that. See it's a matter of eternality. The biggest

problem we have is we lose our sense of urgency and our sense of destiny. We're not just sitting here in the Lion's Club this morning. We've got to make a decision what God means when he says, I want you to be disciples unto church. He said, I've got to learn about eternity. From Dallas to Atlanta, I told him about eternity. He found Christ in his life. I've been in communication with him with e mail and with regular mail and over the telephone. He said, the doctors told me, just heard this last week, it's miraculous but my cancer is in remission. Said they don't know what that means. But I know what that means. It's a miracle of God in my life. Hallelujah be to God. But there's something better than that cancer. And that's that he came to know Christ as Savior. Jesus Christ. See, he's more than that plastic thing that you put on your dashboard. He's more than you hear his name used in cursing and blaspheming. The Bible says that he is representative of the image of God, that he's the first born of creation. That he's the creator of all things. That he's before all things. That in him, everything consists. That he's the head of the church. In all things, he has supremacy. He is the first born among the dead. In him all the fullness of God dwells. He reconciles us to himself. And through him we have peace. We use a lot of terms that this society doesn't know anything about. We may have to translate that in a different kind of way. But he said, you know what I'm doing for you is I gave my life so that you might have all the benefits of the father. I have justified you in Romans five and nine. You're justified by his blood, Paul says. Hebrews thirteen and twelve says we are sanctified by his blood. First Peter one and eighteen says we are redeemed by his blood. Ephesians two and thirteen says that we are brought nigh. We are reconciled to him by his blood. Colossians one and twenty says we have peace through his blood. That's a disciple. As every head is bowed and every eye is closed, please. There's a story that I repeat to myself often. It comes out of Omer Obugaw

where they have the passion play. An American tourist couple was visiting there at practice season. The play was opening in just a few weeks, but they would let people in to see the practice. So that couple went in along with others to watch them practice. They had a break in the staging area and the wife of that American tourist saw the cross of Christ up in the air and said, wouldn't it be wonderful to have a picture of you holding the cross of Christ. And they asked the man who played the part of Christ if it would be alright if they took a picture. And he agreed. And so the husband went up and started getting under the cross and lo and behold, it was very heavy. And he staggered under neath it. He got self conscious and embarrassed because everyone was watching him and he finally got it up. He looked at the man who played the part of Christ and he said, sir, why did you make this so heavy? Why didn't you make it out of paper mache or aluminum or some light wood? No one in the audience would know the difference. And the actor who played the part of Christ said, sir, do you think I could play the part of Christ and not feel the weight of his cross? And that's what I'm asking you this morning. Do you feel the weight of his cross? Do you feel the sense of urgency and destiny that God has given to us to reach the lost? Can I pray an unusual kind of prayer. Can I pray with you a prodical prayer with you this morning? Can I pray with you about those persons that you know that need to be saved that are in your immediate world and in your circle of love? Can I say to those of you this morning, you might have been around, you may be in a periphery around the edges, but you really haven't made the commitment. You've been playing the games with God. And you're a little tired of that. It's not working out for you real well being in and out. Wouldn't this be a good time to make that commitment and be his disciple? How many of you here this morning would say, just by an uplifted hand, I'm not going to put anyone on the spot, we're going to pray a

covenant prayer together just in a few moments and then we're going to leave. You would say, Pastor Walker, there are people in my immediate family, there are people in my immediate sphere of influence that I have some kind of impact in their lives and I need to see them come to Christ. They might be your son, it might be your daughter, it might be your father, your mother, your husband, your wife, maybe those who have come and strayed and they need to come back. So it's a prodical prayer. We want the prodigals to come home. I want to pray that prayer with you this morning. I'm going to pray that God would help you leave here today carrying his cross to be his disciple. Those of you that have that kind of a burden this morning and you can feel that responsibility anew and afresh, would you just slip your hand up please? Put them up. Amen, thank you so much. Thank you much. Would you stand with me all over the building? Would you just join hands where you are if it's across the aisles, don't worry about it. Just join hands where you are. Get me in the key of C please. We are standing on holy ground.