

Paul L. Walker, PH.D.
Chancellor, Division of Education
Church of God International Offices

Mount Paran North Church of God
Pastor- Mark Walker

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“Discipleship Depth for Dangerous Living”

What a wonderful experience it is to come together to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth and know that he is Jehovah Shama, the Lord who is near. He is Jehovah Jireh our provider. He is Jehovah Raffa our healer, Jehovah Raha our shepherd. He is Jehovah Sitkinu our righteousness. We come to celebrate that today.

It's always good for Carmelita and I to have the opportunity to be home with you here at North. Special treat here in the month of October, is this October Charlie? It is October. I was with you the first Sunday of the month and the last Sunday of the month. I brought you in and I'm closing you out this one month. And what a joy it is to be home again with you. Charlie, it's good to be with you again too. I appreciate what you are doing for the Lord here. Ran into a friend of yours the other day from where you pastored before in Tyler, Texas. You know brother Buey. Right? Said, you did a good work there, but he wondered if you had ever gotten saved as of yet. I told him I thought we got him saved maybe filled with the Holy Spirit, but we're a little worried about your sanctification, but other than that we're doing pretty well. Truth of the matter is, Pastor Ware, as you know has been with us nine years and has a real heart for missions and God has used him a great way. Let's thank the Lord for Charlie and his family. You've been praying for him, I know.

You know have you ever had one of those mornings when you just couldn't get your act

together. You know women call it a bad hair day. I believe that's what I started out with this morning was a bad hair day. I thought I got a real idea of eternity just trying to get ready to get here this morning. But you know whether you're going through a bad hair day or a good hair day, this is the day that the Lord has made. It's the only thing you got. This is all you've got. Look over at your neighbor and say this is all you got. It ain't going to get any better than it is right now. You understand it? Because this is the day that the Lord has made. Let's stand. I haven't changed a bit. Still sing that song. We in the right key? The only key is F. Right? This is the day. . . Now please take a moment, shake hands with a couple of people and say, rejoice whether you feel like it or not. Rejoice whether you feel like it or not and then you may be seated. The steadfast love. . .

This morning we find ourselves in this nation under duress. Living in dangerous times. Not since the Civil War has the United States of America ever faced such a crisis. We find ourselves today in what is often referred to as a fulfillment of prophetic word when it seems as though the forces of the world are coming together for that last cataclysmic conflict to get us ready for the coming of Jesus Christ.

We come together as people this morning with a hope when the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, the voice of the archangel and trump of God, the dead in Christ shall rise first and we that are alive and remain shall be called up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we be with the Lord. But the question is meanwhile back at the ranch. Anybody remember that old hymn, meanwhile back at the ranch. How do we live? And that's what the Lord has laid upon my heart this morning to talk a little about. Discipleship depth for dangerous living. Discipleship depth for dangerous living. The word depth is a word

that we need to know more than any other word perhaps today. By definition, depth is a condition or quality of being deep. That's real helpful isn't it? That's what the dictionary said. That's the first one. The condition or quality of being deep. It's the extent of or the measurement of the downside, backside and the inside of a person, a place, or a thing, or a quality of life. More than ever before we need to cover our backside, downside and inside. Do we not?

God is calling us today more than ever before to discipleship. You give me a rare privilege for Carmelita and I to pastor with you for thirty seven years and now what is it? Four years since, five I guess from the fifth year having served as the pastor emeritus and also having a tenure of presiding bishop of the Church of God, I had the opportunity and still do to preach all over the world. I was scheduled to be on a trip this week. We were going to Israel, to North Korea, to Phillipines, to India. And a special chartered flight for humanitarian purposes. But for obvious reasons that flight has been postponed and in preaching around the world, I can say that there is no greater thought than discipleship that we need today. So since Mark was out of the pulpit today, he got the old man. Carmelita has been babysitting. I'm preaching for him. Do we ever get these kids grown? Do you ever get them grown?

Acts chapter five verse forty two. Daily in the temple and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. And daily in the temple and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. The NIV says day after day in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. And this is the heart of how then shall we live with discipleship depth in dangerous times for dangerous living. Father, take it off the page. Take it off the page. Take it off of these lovely leather binders and this nice India paper. And put it in our hearts. We stand here today people of destiny

and people with an urgency. We can't play the spectator games anymore and we can't paint this faith in stain glass and air conditioned buildings, You're calling us into rugged discipleship. Help us this morning not to miss what you're trying to say to us today and give us enough intestinal fortitude, enough guts to look at ourselves and see where we are in light of what you want to do in the midst of these dangerous times. May your anointing be present with us in everything we do and everything that we say now in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, amen and amen.

I got to blow my nose. Turn it back on. There's nothing worse than an electronic nose blow. You don't want to hear it. But anyway we look at it today, the Christian church was born in the days of dangerous living in dangerous times. When Jesus Christ was born as a babe in Bethlehem, it started out with danger. King Herod heard about this so called king of the Jews as he would see it. A baby that was born in Bethlehem, laid in a manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes. That was even from a position that was really impacting the world and as you remember, he sought to kill him. He threatened him. And Christ was only saved by divine intervention with the warning of the angel; and Mary and Joseph took him to Egypt and he escaped the massacre of King Herod that killed all the male babies two years and younger in all of Bethlehem and all the vicinity.

From that time on the church has always prospered and been most productive when it's in danger. The old saying is that in the times of prosperity, no altars smoke. We've learned that when the church gets under pressure, that's when it does its best work. In the first three centuries up until 313 AD the church was under persecution. Under ten Roman emperors during that period of time, over five million Christians were martyred and the church flourished. And it moved forward. Today we find ourselves as the people who make up the church because the

church is not this building. The church is not this denomination. This church is not this institution. We build the denominations. We build the institutions. We build the buildings and we have the programs. But God builds people. And he's raising up his people today to do his work and he's calling his people to a new level of discipleship because we find ourselves with a new level of threat and a new level of challenge. And a new call for us to truly be the church. We find ourselves in the conflict between the east and the west. The east represents to us Ishmael. The west represents Isaac. The east is represented by Islam. The west is represented by Christianity. The east is tyranny. The west is freedom. The east is primitive culture. The west is modern culture and when all of those things collide, it gives to us the understanding that there is only one hope for the world and that is in Jesus Christ. He becomes the hope that we have to make known today. And that brings up the very question then to us, what is a disciple?

It is not enough today for us to be merely Christians. There's no problem to being a Christian. It's easy to be a Christian. And nowhere in God's word are we called to be quote Christians. It's only used three times in the New Testament and each time in a derisive sense, but we are called to be disciples. And the word disciple is used over three hundred and eighteen times in the New Testament. So we cant ourselves today, it's a mood question. What is a Christian? Nobody cares. But what is a disciples means everything. When the Bible talks about a disciple in the New Testament, it uses the word "mathetase" and it means a learner or a follower of Jesus Christ. It's one who has accepted him as the Messiah. It's one who has confessed him as Lord of his life. It is one who is endeavoring by the power of the Holy Spirit to model the Christ like life.

When the Bible talks about discipleship, it talks about it in very different terms than we talk about Christians today. I heard the story told of a little boy that was growing up in a quote

Christian home. His father was a leader in the church and one evening one of the neighbors came over because he was entering into Christianity and the little boy, for about an hour, he stalled about what a Christian really is. When the neighbor went home, the boy looked at his father and said, dad have I ever seen a Christian? And I wonder sometimes when we find ourselves in this point in time when we're the only hope of solution, do we really understand that we are his disciples?

When the Bible talks about discipleship, it talks about it in terms of a different direction. It means that we have to go against the stream that we cannot truly be politically correct and live as a disciple. That we can't play the game that the world plays and live as a disciple. But the Bible calls it a walk. It's not just something that we do on Sunday morning for an hour or an hour and a half or hour and forty five minutes when the old man comes to preach. It's not just something that we do on a Wednesday night or something that we come to the special programs that the church offers. It becomes a quote "way of life," and the Bible calls it a walk. It says if you're really a disciple, you live by a new direction. You live by Romans six and four and you walk in the newness of life. You live by Second Corinthians five and seven and you walk by faith and not by sight. You walk by Galatians five and sixteen and you walk in the spirit and not in the flesh. You live by Ephesians four and one, you walk worthy of the Lord who has called you. You live by Ephesians five and two and you walk in love even as Christ has loved us. You walk by Ephesians five and fifteen, you walk circumspectly, cautiously as wise and not as unwise. So we have to ask ourselves what is the direction of our lives today? Do we really live in the newness of life? Do we really live by faith and not by sight? Do we really live in the spirit and not in the flesh? Are we really worthy of the calling that we have received? Do we really walk in

love? Are we walking cautiously and living in the wisdom of the age for above all when we are facing this danger, we need the wisdom of the Lord. And we ask ourselves that question.

But the Bible then says that it's a new dynamic because when you have the dynamic of this discipleship life, then it takes on a whole different dimension of how we live because there's an inner dynamic that gives us the power to be able to cope with whatever is coming our way. So we don't live like the rest of the world lives, but we live as exemplary under the midst of dangerous living. So we become living and walking epistles of who Christ really is. When you read the epistles of Peter, and you remember the church was scattered all over Asia Minor and Peter wrote back to them and let them know what they could do so they could be able to survive. They had lost their jobs. They had lost their families. Some of their families had been martyred. Some of their family was in prison. They had run for their lives. And they had been scattered out all over the country. And Peter wrote to them, said you got to remember this. First Peter chapter two verses nine and following, said you got to remember who you are. You are a chosen people. You are a royal priesthood. You are a holy nation. You are a people belonging to God. It now remains for you to demonstrate the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. For once you were no people, but now you're the people of God. Once you had no mercy, but now the mercy of God is really yours. He said, I urge you as aliens, I urge you as strangers, I urge you as pilgrims in this world. Do not follow, but abstain from your evil desires for they are at war with your soul. And then he makes this great statement and he said, you live in such a good way before all of the people that are around you, said, even though they call you evil doers, they will glorify God in the day that he visits us and the church that Jesus Christ is raising up today is a church that will go into the culture and say, we have the answer and you

don't know where to turn. You can follow us. Because in him we have found life and we have found it more abundantly. Well let the people of God praise God in this place this morning. Let the people of God praise God this morning.

And God is saying I don't want you to live then a depressed life. I don't care what the circumstances are. I don't want you to live a defeated life. I don't want you to live a discouraged life. I want you to live a dynamic life. Because you're a disciple and then you live a life of radiance and John one and four, in him was life and the life was the light of men. You live a life of abundance. In John ten and ten, I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly. And you live a life of eternality. In John eleven twenty five, I am the resurrection and the life, He that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live. And you live a life of Christ likeness. In John thirteen and fifteen, I have given you an example that you should do unto others as I have done unto you. And I want you to live a life of overcoming. And when you read the book of Revelation, and all seven of those churches God had a word for them. Five of them they had judgment. Five of them had indictment. Only two of them got away of the judgement and indictment. But in every one of them there was an encouraging group and an overcoming group of disciples. When you begin to see the overcoming life, then you begin to understand why God has brought us to a point like this. Why on the one hand we feel sometimes a defeat and we feel the fear. On the other hand, we feel the enthusiasm because this is our greatest hour because God is raising up an army. We're going to invade the territory of Satan. We're going to pull down the gates of hell and God be for us, who can be against us. Well let the people of God praise him in this place. Let the people of God praise him in this place. Hallelujah be to God. Let the people of God praise him.

And that's why he writes to the people of Revelation that said, you've got to learn how to overcome and he uses this beautiful imagery. And I hope that you can get a feel for it right now. In Revelation two and seven, to him that overcomes I'm going to give to eat of the tree of life that's in the midst of the paradise of God. Revelation two and seventeen, to him that overcometh, I'm going to give to eat of the hidden manna. And I'm going to give him a white stone. And in that white stone, there's a new name written that no one knows except he who receives it. Revelation two and twenty six, to him that overcomes I'm going to give him authority over all the nations. Revelation three and five, to him that overcomes, I'm not going to blot his name out of the Lamb's book of life. But I'm going to confess him before my father and before his angels in heaven. Revelation three and twelve, to he that overcomes I'm going to make a pillar in the temple of my God. He should go out no more. And I'm going to write on him the name of my God in the city of my God which is new Jerusalem which comes down from my God and I'm going to write on him my new name. Revelation three and twenty one to him that overcomes I'm going to give authority to sit down on my throne like I've sat down on my father's throne. Revelation twenty one and seven, I like this, to him that person that overcomes, he's going to inherit all things. I'm going to be his God and he's going to be my child. And if we have God with us, there's nobody can be against us. And we break down the territory of Satan because he is a defeated foe. Amen, amen and amen. Well give him praise and give him glory and give him honor. Hallelujah be to God. Well I feel the spirit of God in this place. Let the people praise him. Let the people praise him. Let the people praise him.

You know you're getting old when you have to drink water. So then how do we do this? And that's where this text comes into play. What the apostle is telling us and what we read about

in this book of Acts, we begin to see in this book the way that we live in dangerous times. When you go to Acts chapter five to get this text, you have to see that it's done in a context of danger. Beginning with verse twelve, a great revival was going on. Great miracles. Wonderous acts. Bringing people and putting them in the streets. But Peter might pass by and even if his shadow touched them, they might be healed. Worshiping in the temple courts. Having favor with the people. Numbers coming to know Jesus Christ in spite of the anxiety that was promoted by Judaism in Rome.

But then there was persecution. Jealousy came on the chief priests and all of his associates. He had the apostles arrested, put them in jail. It's a dangerous thing to put people in jail. Several years ago in Africa, we had a lady missionary there by the name of Stark, Grace Stark. She had such a great revival that it made all the religious people mad, made all of the civil people mad and every Pentecostal that they could find they put in jail. And they filled up all the jails with Pentecostal people. And everywhere in jail they started having worshiping services. The wardens got saved, the guards got saved. Everybody that was there got saved. All the people in the cafeterias got saved. And revival went everywhere and it was so bad that the government passed a law. It's illegal to put a Pentecostal in jail. I don't recommend we try that here. But the angel of the Lord came and delivered them and said, you go stand in the temple courts and preach the full message of Jesus Christ. Well when they heard about the miracle that had taken place, they arrested them a second time. Said, why are you doing that? They said we must obey God rather than man. Remember that statement. We must obey God rather than man.

The die is being cast. We have to decide on whose side we are. And it's time that we stood up and let the world know there's one Lord and one God and one Father and one faith and

one hope and one baptism and that comes from Jesus Christ who is the way, the truth and the life. Hallelujah be to God. Amen, amen and amen. Well praise him in this place. Hallelujah.

So, hermelio, they decided that they would kill these apostles, they would assassinate him, they would execute him. But Kamelio said that's not the political thing to do. You're going to stir up the masses. Let them go. If this is of man they will fail. If this is of God it's not going to cause us any trouble. Serious mistake. They went back out and began to preach. In verse forty one says they rejoiced because they were worthy to suffer shame for his name. Isn't that a stupid statement? They rejoiced because they were worthy, they were considered worthy to suffer shame for his name. It was a badge of their honor. They didn't even feel as though they had been qualified to be able to suffer, but it was the thing that they were willing to do and then that brings us to the text. Just hang on. We're going to get this thing done and all the doors are locked and there are no windows.

And he said here's the formula. Here's the way you are going to save your household. Here's the way you're going to save yourself. Here's the way you're going to live in these dangerous times. Here's what it's going to take for you to cover your backside, your downside, and your inside and to have depth, if you're going to make it, because you ain't seen nothing yet. This is not a little antiseptic hearing. And all the puff and all the talking heads and all the stuff you see on television, that's built to make ratings to sell advertising. It's time we understood there's a much deeper battle than the media knows about and that is the battle between good and evil, between Satan and Christ. And we've read the last chapter. We know how it's coming out. Therefore we rejoice because we're considered worthy to suffer for his name. Well praise him in this place. Praise him in this place. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah be to God. Amen, amen

and amen.

And so he says, number one, is daily. I wish he hadn't put it in there. I wish he had said Sunday. Wednesday. Perhaps. If it's convenient, maybe. Good preaching Pastor Walker. Amen, amen and amen. Daily.

There was an intellectual commitment to a transcendental lifestyle. And because of that transcendental lifestyle, to be transcendent means we rise above the circumstance. We rise above the situation. We rise above the persecution. We rise above the fear. We rise above the anxiety. We rise above all the worry because we know Psalms forty four five, through thee, we will push down our enemies and in thy name, we will destroy those who come against us. We know Luke ten nineteen, he says, I give you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy and nothing by any means shall destroy you. Amen, amen and amen. Well praise him. Hallelujah.

But it takes an intellectual commitment for that to happen. And when we talk about an intellectual commitment, that means that we decide in our minds who we are and what we are going to be and we don't straddle the fence. We don't become wishy washy. And we say with Job, though God slay me, yet I'm going to trust him. Well hallelujah. Well hallelujah.

I'm talking about depth discipleship. I'm not talking about spectator Sunday religion. Whoa, whoa, whoa. I won't be back for a year, so you've got to get the whole load here. And that's why he says, look, the word in the New Testament for daily, a lifestyle, is wholehearted. Deuteronomy six four and five, you shall love the Lord your God with your heart, your soul, and your strength. Psalm one hundred and nineteen verse two, blessed is that person who keeps the statutes of the lord and seeks for him with all of his heart. Proverbs three and five, trust in the

Lord with all your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. That is so foreign to our situation. It's foreign to me. I am the world's number one attempter to solve problems. I am problem solving oriented and that will get you in big trouble. There are some problems that you just can't solve. Some problems that Mark and Paul Dana gave us we could not solve. Still trying to solve them. And you have to live with it. Lean not on thy own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy path. And that means somebody has got to talk to him to get your path directed. He ain't, to use good grammar, going to give it to you on the Internet. Particularly some of the stuff that you're looking at. Oh, remember the old man here is a counselor, hang on folks. It's going to get worse than that.

He's going to only talk to you in the only way that he can talk to you and that's through prayer and we do so much talking to him, we don't do enough listening. And when we start to listen we can only listen when we get to Romans twelve one and two, I beseech you therefore brethren that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice unto God which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that you might prove that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Now that doesn't mean that you withdraw from the world. That doesn't mean that you get above the world. That doesn't mean you're in a battle with the world. That doesn't mean you're in accommodation with the world. That means you invade the world and you light a candle and you redeem the world and you let the world know that there's a better way to live and if you live this way you'll never die because in him we live and move and have our being. Amen, amen and amen. Well hallelujah be to God. Praise him in this place. Praise him in this place. Hallelujah.

Well, I've got a lot more on point one, but I'm going to point two. Does anybody

remember point one? What's point one Charlie? That's too short. What are you doing, are you writing your grocery list? I can't read your notes. What does that say? Wholeheartedly. What was the point Charlie? No, he doesn't get the point. Why do you have him on your staff? He doesn't have the point. You have to make an intellectual commitment to what? A transcendental lifestyle. Write it down Charlie. I thought you were working on your doctorate. You're not working on your doctorate. What did you do get socially promoted all through college? And everything? An intellectual commitment to a transcendental lifestyle. Now if you're going to keep your head in the boottube, you're going to stay depressed forever. Have you got the first point Charlie? Very good.

Now point number two, daily in the temple and in every house. There's an emotional consciousness of the presence of God. Did you hear me? An emotional consciousness of the presence of God. That's what makes this church so important and every church where the gospel is preached and people worship God, but you've got to take the church with you, so it becomes the church in your house. Daily in the temple and in every house. That means that we've got to understand what the church really is. And that the church is a constant and emotional consciousness of the presence of God. That doesn't mean that you're verbally praying all of the time. That doesn't mean that you're just all the time thinking God, God, God. But that means that you always know who you are and whatever the circumstances are, that if God be for you, who can be against you and you know that he's there to help you and you can live by Philipians four six through eight, nine and following and you can hear him say don't worry about anything whatsoever.

Now Paul says this when he is in jail waiting to be executed by Nero and he writes back to

the church at Philippi and he says to them, don't worry about anything whatsoever, but tell God every detail of your life in earnest and thankful prayer and the peace of God which transcends all human understanding will keep constant guard of your hearts and lives as they rest in Christ Jesus and whatsoever things are true and noble and right and pure and lovely and admirable and excellent and praiseworthy, you think about these things and whenever you've seen in me and whatever you've learned in me and whatever you've heard from me, you do these things for I have learned whatever the circumstances to be content. Whatever the situation to be content because I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Amen, amen and amen. Well praise him in this place. Hallelujah be to God.

Do any of you remember the ten finger prayer? How many remember it? I'm not going to tell it. That's the ten finger prayer. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Now what that means is in good times and in bad times, you have to have the eternal consciousness of the presence of God. You practice it in every circumstance. Small, big, medium sized. You know the Lord is there. Now we've all been through very difficult times. Very difficult times. You know after the death of Paul Dana, I had to continually, Carmelita and I we had to continually practice consciously the presence of God and you helped us do that. I've walked into this pulpit, the pulpit at Central, the other pulpits of our five places down, depressed and out of it. But hearing you sing, feeling the worship and the dynamic of the people of God coming together, it gave me the knowledge that God is still on his throne. The presence of God is there whatever the circumstances are. He's going to speak to you in a lot of different ways.

I don't know you, remember ten years ago I had a skiing accident. Anybody here remember that? It was really dumb. I went over a cliff. Unplanned. Shattered my left arm. I

mean it was shattered. I've got a plate from here to here with fifteen screws in it. Now that they've set up all the things at the airports, it just ring a ling a ling. Well you know I lost four and a half pints of blood. I'm laying out there in Veil, Colorado and they say we can't fix it here. It's too complicated. You'll have to be here until you get your blood built up. Can't give you a transfusion. All that bit. Well, bless you. You men got together and sent me one of those air vacs and they picked me up at Vail. Flew me back here. And I had it done here by the same surgeon that did Chris Miller's shoulder. Anybody remember Chris Miller? Three people. That's because the Falcons change quarterbacks so often, you never know who's going to show up. Since Jeff George, we've never been the same. Where was I Charlie? I was back to my arm. Thank you.

So I have the operation. Now when I fell, see I hit my head, knocked myself out and bruised this whole vein and artery thing that goes up and down here. What do they call it? I don't remember what it is. You know. And I could hear my heart beat with every beat. Every beat I could hear it beat. And it was driving me crazy and they gave me shots. And it would be alright and then the morphine didn't start doing it. And then one night in the hospital at Crawford Long trying to recuperate after this operation, that thing was killing me and I had two nurses. Both Pentecostal. One was Dorothy and one was Sylvia. Both African American. They took a real interest in this Pentecostal preacher. They thought I really needed some deliverance. What was a Pentecostal preacher like you skiing anyway? You shouldn't even have been up there skiing. Stupid. That was their attitude. And you know both of them could have played tackle for the Falcons and they weren't cutting me any slack. They would pray for me and they were determined I was going to get well. And I said, look I've got to have some morphine. And they

said, no, you've got another hour yet. I'm not going to give you any. But I'm dying. I've got, I can't stand this. And the doctors had told me maybe three months, maybe six months, maybe never get better. There's nothing we can do. It's just got to heal itself. I've got to have something.

She said, you know it's time for you to get well. Said, we're going to pray for you. She said, I'm going to call, this is Sylvia, I'm going to call Dorothy in here and we're going to pray for you. We'll be back in a minute. In about fifteen minutes here they came with a bottle of oil about this high. Now this is daily in the temple and in every house and it also means in the hospital. And they said, alright, get up. And you know if you've got on one of those hospital gowns, you're not wanting to get up before anybody. I don't know who designed those, but I sure hope I get my hands on whoever that is. I mean that back door is just too wide any way you look at it. Let me tell you. So, I'm trying to protest. But you don't protest Sylvia and Dorothy. Let me tell you. They jerked me up and stood me in the middle of that room and I'm saying oh God. They're holding this thing that's hooked to this other thing. And I'm standing there. You talk about Ph.D. Walker, I've suddenly went down the tubes right there. And you know when they anoint, they don't, anointing to them is pouring. Whhh, all over my head and on down. And they laid their hands on me and began to pray in Jesus' name and they got blessed. I thought they were going to tear up the room before it was over. You get that size moving in a little hospital room. And it's interesting. When it was all over, I happened to think I'm not hurting any more. It's gone. I was completely healed and I never had it after that. Well praise God in this place. Praise God in this place.

You see it's that emotional consciousness of the presence of God. Now you see it may

not always be a high level kind of euphoria because we have the tendency to equate the presence of God with how loud the music is. Or how the fast we sing it or how many people are there to cheer us on. But really the time that you need it the most it's when you're all by yourself and there's no where to turn and nobody to help you and you feel like you're all alone in the world. That's when he is closer than a brother and he'll never leave you and he'll never forsake you. Amen, amen and amen. In the temple and in the house. In the temple and in the house. In the temple and in the house. Charlie what's the second point? Emotional consciousness of the presence of God. Amen. Way to go Charlie. Emotional consciousness of the presence of God.

Alright, we're ready for point three and then we're coming down to the homestretch. Point three, daily in the temple and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. Now here we have a spiritual communication of an eternalized hope. Now you've made an intellectual commitment to the transcendent lifestyle so you can rise above these circumstances. Now the way you do that is through this emotional consciousness of the presence of God. Now it doesn't stop there because then we have a responsibility. See God didn't do all these things that he's done for the church and the world without giving us a sense of what our responsibility is in the great commission. And I don't need to tell you that. Go into all the world, preach the gospel. Make disciples of all nations. Now the way he says you do that is cease not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. Now the spiritual part comes then through our verbalization and through our behavior. We talk the talk, preach and teach, we walk the walk, Jesus Christ. Some people really talk the talk, but they don't walk the walk. Now we're getting ready for some good preaching coming right up here. Some people walk the walk and they don't talk the talk. And the world is sick of looking at our steeples. They're sick of looking at our stain glass. They're sick at looking

at all of our slick programs. They're sick of looking at all the wonderful things that we can do. They want to see some walking, talking disciples that make it work every day of our lives and that's what will change the world when we do it for the kingdom of God. Amen, amen and amen. Well praise him in this place. Praise him in this place. Let the people of the Lord praise the Lord. Let the people of the lord praise the Lord.

And that brings us to the fact of what do we have to sell. You know a lot of times I wandered to myself, why are these people Christians? They're miserable. If I had the kind of religion that some people have, I'd give it up in a minute. I mean what do you have to sell. What have you got to share? What is it that we're selling and sharing? Why should anybody want what you've got? I mean what do you have that's any different? You see you have hope. You see you verbalize and you behavior and you act in ways that bring hope. Hope. You see what the terrorists want to do is to rob America of hope. They want to take away our faith, take away our hope, take away our love. Which you have to make a choice in life whether you're going to live by fear or faith. Old Hobard Myer and his two factor learning theory talks about the fact that every time we make a response, it's not just some visceral physical response, but it has proprioceptive field. Have you got that word? No you need proprioceptive. I want you to write that down. A proprioceptive field, which means that it's an emotional field and in that emotional field, you respond in one of two ways. Fear or hope.

Now it's very hard for people who don't have something inside of them to respond for hope when they get down to the gun. But what this says is that you teach and preach Jesus Christ. We talk the talk and we walk the walk and that gives us the ability to respond in hope. You see you can't have faith without hope. You can't live in all this positive thinking and

possibility thinking and all the wonderful things in these self help books that we talk about if you don't have hope. Hope is desire plus expectation. It's a confident anticipation of fulfillment. When the Bible talks about in Romans four eighteen, it says, we believe through hope. Romans eight twenty four says, we're saved by hope. Romans fifteen four says by the confidence of the scripture, we have hope. First Peter three fifteen, we are to be ready to give an answer to every person who asks us the reason of our hope. Did you get that? Every person who asks us, what is the reason for your hope? And we answer with meekness and with respect. We give an answer for the hope. John three three says we are purified by hope. You see your life really gets out of kilter and you get out of balance because what God wants us to do and he made us to have a balance three ways. A balance between our head, our heart, and our hands. Between our thinking, our feeling and our doing. Now when that gets out of sync, we talk about being emotionally upset. We talk about having bad days and if it's bad enough, then we talk about being mentally ill or emotionally disturbed or we use all of these high powered words. Are you all still here?

Now he says with the way to answer that is to eternalize that hope and there's nothing sadder than lost hope. Most of you remember back in the seventies when the hippies were in town. Ten thousand of them scattered across Atlanta. Those were tough days for everybody as you recall. But the Lord gave us a great revival of the hippies and we would have eight hundred or a thousand of them just about every Sunday and Wednesday nights we opened up a disciple program. The first night, we had eight hundred hippies. Some of them strung out on drugs and some of them looked like they had been run over and had three times and they looked like three miles of bad road. But these weren't dummies. These were college kids. They had given up on

life. You remember how it was. You had to be careful what you preached in those days. Because you know sometimes I would preach about the apostle Paul and I would say, you know, the apostle Paul was stoned. And they would say, oh yeah, yeah, the apostle Paul was stoned. And by the way how many of you were hippies? Oh man we had a bunch at the nine o'clock service. There's a few of you and some of you wouldn't have raised your hands anyway. How many of you have thought about being hippies again? But I used to dress like a hippie. Can you imagine that? I even tried to grow a beard. It just wouldn't work. I had to get fertilizer. It still wouldn't help it. It just made my face look dirty. I tried growing it and I would show up to preach, Dr. Walker, you need to wash your face.

But I would dress up like a hippie and go out and get kids on drugs and try to get them in to the renewal house and you've heard these stories. You've heard me tell about that. But you see one of the problems was they'd lost hope. See I'm not sure if we really understand what it means to lose hope. I was in my office at Central one day and got a phone call. On the other end of the line was a drug addict, a girl who had been coming to church. She said, I've overdosed. I think I'm dying. I need your help. Can you come right away? Her voice was faint. I said, give me the address. I wrote down the address very quickly and then the line went dead. I couldn't rouse her. I tried to get her back on the phone. Nothing. We didn't have 911 in those days, but I called the suicide squad. They had a suicide squad. And I said, meet me at this address. This is happening. So I rushed in my car and rushed over there. And it was the wrong address. She had given me the wrong address. We looked for two or three hours for her. Couldn't find her anywhere. It was the most disconcerting. Most frustrating two or three hours of my life. A couple of days later I had a lady policewoman call me. And she said, we found this girl. Her

name was Lisa. Dead in her apartment. Two days later. And she had a note that was clutched in her hand and it was written to you. And I'm going to send it to you. So I got it. And here's what it says. Dr. Walker, it's four thirty in the morning. I can't stand living any longer. Inside of me, I'm lost and empty. There's so much fear and uncertainty and a loneliness that never leaves me alone. I don't know what to do. I'm so confused. I've got to get away from it all. I want to live and be happy. I want to be free. I want to love myself and other people. I want my life to have meaning and purpose. I want to be able to look forward to the next day of living and have peace inside me instead of fear and loneliness. I want the emptiness inside of me to be filled with love and happiness. I want to be able to feel the rain and sunshine and hear the birds sing. I want to see the green trees and the bright flowers. I want to care for other people and make them happy. I want to love the whole world and really be turned on. I want to smile. I want to live. The question is how?

Discipleship depth. But it's too late. I've blown my mind too many times. I've tripped out too many times. I've escaped from reality so long that I'm not sure what reality is. I feel like I'm losing my mind, breaking into millions of pieces. Floating into space in thousands of different directions. I've tried to reach out and put the pieces back together. But I can't catch them. They float away so fast. I'm coming apart and I know I'll never be able to put the pieces together again. And the police woman sent me a description of the girl. Said, she's eighteen years of age. Very pretty. Five feet two inches tall. A hundred to a hundred and ten pounds. Black hair long. Dark brown eyes. Cause of death, overdose of barbiturates. Suicide. Dead when she was found. The last statement the parents do not want the body. Her parents lived in San Francisco. She had wandered across the states. She was fifteen when she left home. I found out from later

investigation, she had been beaten and banging around. And got on drugs and finally did her in. And so in West End Cemetery in a pauper's grave, a funeral director and me put a pine box in the ground. If I were to put a headstone I would have said, lost hope.

But see that's one way. But you see there's another way and that's where the whole idea of discipleship and the gospel comes in because other people are going to go through this same thing in a different way. 1972 when I went into the Air Force over seas. Some of you remember I was gone six weeks and went to all our bases in the Pacific and to Vietnam. Counseled with our psychiatrists and our chaplains because I was in the last two bombing raids we had in Vietnam. And I spoke to the squads who went out. I was in the control towers. The war went on, but we didn't do anymore bombing after that for quite some time. It was about six or eight months before the war really stopped totally on the ground, but the bombing was over. While I was gone, something tragic happened. There was a twenty one year old in Central who had found the Lord as a part of one of our families who had come in through the hippie revival. She was twenty one years old and she wrote me a letter because she had tried the hippie thing. She had tried drugs, she had tried this and tried that, and now she had her act together, going to college. She wrote me this letter. She said, I'm writing this right after my psychology class. I feel the love of Jesus all over my spirit. That had to be some psychology class. I feel energetic, gay, happy and free. This feeling is probably due to the fact that I've just talked to another believer in Christ. The unity and communion of the Holy Spirit between two believers is so fantastic. Then she used the modern word for amen. She writes in big letters, wow. Hello. Does anybody know what I'm talking about here? Does anybody see the contrast?

Well see this is the depth of discipleship. Now, while I was overseas, she was really a

professional hiker. It had been a hobby of hers for years. She knew how to do it. Went with a national hiking organization to Texas. Got caught in a flash flood. Several of them were washed away and she was killed. When I got back, I got a letter from her family. Here's what they said to me. An interesting thing happened while you were out of town last week. We found the Lord sustaining us by his spirit working through the Mt. Paran ministerial staff and family in a most unusual way.

The depth of discipleship. Pam's death of course leaves us with a deep sense of personal loss. Our immediate response to the telephone call from West Texas was Lord give her back. Please. She's only twenty one. But we found out on our knees at the foot of the cross. An intellectual commitment to the transcendent lifestyle starts at the foot of the cross. Some hours later his thoughts are far above our thoughts and his will beyond our will and his perfect will. He had called her home. So in the following early morning hours, we released Pam into the arms of Jesus Christ. That's hope. It's not easy, but then he didn't promise us a garden of roses. What he has done staggers and boggles the mind. Imagine. Imagine. Eternal life beyond the grave.

See that's why everybody is so uptight. That's why the economy has had such a problem. That's why everything is so fragile. People think this is the answer. That the only way to survive is the world trade center. What a tragedy. Terrible loss. But that's fragile. How Paul the apostle put it. Second Corinthians chapter four verses eighteen, 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 stand alone. We're knocked down, but we're never knocked out. This is the reason we never collapse. The outward man indeed suffers wear and tear, but the inward person receives fresh strength daily. And these little troubles are working out for us a far more solid reward out

of all proportion to our pain for we look not at the temporary things. We look not because they will vanish away. But we look at the timeless things because they endure forever. Are you catching this? Eternal life beyond the grave.

Truly no victory in the grave and no stinking death. Instead of a hallelujah chorus singing to God be the glory. These parents have just lost their twenty one year old. A fine Christian girl about to finish college. Yes it's true. He's given us his assurance and his word that he never forsakes us. Even in our darkest hour and the point of physical death. That assurance is undergirded by the fellowship of Christian brothers and sisters everywhere. You're more important to each other than you've ever been before. We can't continue to live in isolation. We've got to become the coinanea, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit or we're not going to make it. Pam's greeting to the master likely is embodied in the second stanza of the hymn on page 93 of the church hymnal. Truly the comforter has come. And he proclaims to all the universe that he has gained the victory over Satan, the enemy and death and that's all you need. And I don't care what comes out of Afghanistan or any other kind of stan or any other terrorist cell. We know the last chapter and he that is in us is greater than he that is in the world. Amen, amen and amen. Well praise him in this place. Amen.