

"THE WAY UP IS DOWN"
MATTHEW 20:1-6

C9094

Magnify His name. He is worthy to be praised. Our God is an awesome God. Yes He is. He's an awesome God. Praise the name of the Lord.

The reason that He's an awesome God tonight is because He's revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. In Christ, we know the Father and through Christ the Father, becomes a reality in our hearts. I think it would be well for us tonight if you would take a moment, I've just felt led of the Lord this afternoon to kind of go a little different direction this evening. There's been something on my heart for a long time and I want to share that. I didn't really share it this morning at North. The Lord led us in a different direction.

But I want to talk a little bit tonight about the way up is down. The millennium will save, it will be here later. And I'll uh, (laughter) work on that another time. But Lord willing, what I'm thinking about doing that this summer perhaps, I will do a series on the book of Revelation again. But until the Lord comes, and all of those things come to pass, we've got to learn how to live in this world. And these young people growing up and coming in to take their place in the world, we're not leaving them a very good legacy these days. And they're going to need to

learn how to live in this word. And the way we learn to live in the world and we are to be in the world but we're not to be of the world. That's the prayer that Christ prayed, is that we learn what is really is that the way up is really down.

Turn in your Bible's with me to

MATTHEW 20:

if you would please. I'm going to begin reading in a few minutes in verse 17 if I may. And I'd like for you to in the key of C please. I'd like you to sing a little chorus with me. We Are Standing On Holy Ground, because every time we read the Word, we're really on Holy Ground. This is a Holy Book, written by Holy people, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And it is designed to help us to learn how to become holy people. And I just feel as though tonight that perhaps the message the Lord's laid on my heart might be helpful to us and it being able to work our way through with the power of God in our lives through the maze of things that He's doing, that are going on in the world today.

Would you stand with me please as we sing. We Are Standing On Holy Ground. (music) Would you remain standing for the reading of the Word please.

MATTHEW 20:17

I'm reading from the New International version. I'd like you to get the setting and get the feel for what's really going on in this particular episode in the life of Christ with His disciples. Because it's a very important episode. Because it speaks

something to each one of us that I think is quite important. Beginning with verse 17. NOW AS JESUS WAS GOING UP TO JERUSALEM, HE TOOK THE TWELVE DISCIPLES ASIDE AND SAID TO THEM, WE'RE GOING UP TO JERUSALEM AND THE SON OF MAN WILL BE BETRAYED TO THE CHIEF PRIEST AND THE TEACHERS OF THE LAW. THEY WILL CONDEMN HIM TO DEATH AND WILL TURN HIM OVER TO THE GENTILES TO BE MOCKED AND FLOGGED AND CRUCIFIED. ON THE THIRD DAY HE WILL BE RAISED TO LIFE. THEN THE MOTHER OF ZEBEDEEZ SONS CAME TO JESUS WITH HER SONS AND KNEELING DOWN, ASKED A FAVOR OF HIM. "WHAT IS IT YOU WANT", HE ASKED. SHE SAID, "GRANT THAT ONE OF THESE TWO SONS OF MINE MAY SIT AT YOUR RIGHT AND THE OTHER AT YOUR LEFT IN THE KINGDOM". "YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE ASKING", JESUS SAID TO THEM. "CAN YOU DRINK THE CUP I'M GOING TO DRINK?" "WE CAN", THEY ANSWERED". AND JESUS SAID TO THEM, "YOU WILL INDEED DRINK FROM MY CUP, BUT TO SIT AT MY RIGHT OR LEFT IS NOT FOR ME TO GRANT. THESE PLACES BELONG TO THOSE FOR WHOM THEY HAVE BEEN PREPARED BY MY FATHER." WHEN THE TEN HEARD ABOUT THIS, THEY WERE INDIGNANT WITH THE TWO BROTHERS. JESUS CALLED THEM TOGETHER AND SAID, "NOW YOU KNOW THAT THE RULERS OF THE GENTILES LOADED OVER THEM AND THEIR HIGH OFFICIALS EXERCISED AUTHORITY OVER THEM. NOT SO WITH YOU. INSTEAD, WHOEVER WHO WANTS TO BECOME GREAT AMONG YOU MUST BE YOUR SERVANT. WHOEVER WANTS TO BE FIRST MUST BE YOUR SLAVE. JUST AS THE SON OF MAN DID NOT COME TO BE SERVED, BUT TO SERVE AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE AS A RANSOM FOR MANY.

Look at verses 26 through 28 again. Could we have that endibly imprinted in our hearts by the Holy Spirit tonight. NO

SO WITH YOU, CHRIST SPEAKING, INSTEAD, WHOEVER WANTS TO BECOME GREAT AMONG YOU MUST BE YOUR SERVANT. WHOEVER WANTS TO BE FIRST, MUST BE YOUR SLAVE. JUST AS THE SON OF MAN DID NOT COME TO BE SERVED, BUT TO SERVE AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE, A RANSOM FOR MANY.

You may be seated. Would you be seated quietly please. Let's sing together Emanuel. (music) Shall we pray?

Father, open our hearts now to your Word. May it come alive in all of it's fullness and all of it's power. Speak to every heart that needs a touch of what your Word has in store for us this evening. Lord, may the words that are spoken not be just my words, but may they be under the anointing of the presence of your Holy Spirit. Give us receptive hearts, receptive minds, receptive ears and touch these lips to speak and may this not be a monologue, but may it be a dialogue together Father, as we share in the experience of your Word now. In Jesus name and for His sake, amen and amen.

You know, if we're all honest with ourselves, each one of us is really interested in getting ahead. We want to move up and we want to be a success. The question for each one of us tonight is, what does that really mean? Does it mean that we merily want to make more money then anyone else? Does it mean that we merily want to have more activities then anyone else? Does it mean we want to have more promotions then anyone else? Does it mean that we really want status and prestige and power more than anyone else? Or does it mean something far different from that?

Evidently, there is a new trend in the land because the

University of Pittsburg just made a survey of all of their MBA'S, their master of business administration in their particular graduate school in business. And in that particular survey, they were asking them what they really wanted out of life. And it showed a far different trend then what we see today. First of all, they said that what they really wanted were to have happy, contented families. And they wanted a challenging career. At the very height of what they put down was, family was first. Health was second. Interesting enough, ethics was third and fourth was a meaningful leisure time that they could enjoy their lives.

Now secondarily, there were still some of the this that we see in the world today. But they were second to this particular sampling. They saw the importance of leadership and expertese and wealth and service and power. But these were second to the family, to health, to ethics and to leisure. Now the point of all of that is that it's telling us that the secular world is finally learning a principle that has been in the spiritual world ever since the Bible came into being. Namely, that the way up is down. Because if Jesus Christ demonstrated anything to us, He told us that the way to have a happy life, the way to have a productive life, the way to have a powerful life, the way to have a meaningful life, the way to be able to handle the flesh, to be able to handle the devil and to be able to handle the world, to be able to handle all of the circumstances and the situations that come our way, is for us to learn how to live a life that the

way up is really down.

There was something about Jesus Christ that He lived a divine paradox. He always lived in a way that was contrary to the conceived opinion. He was always going up stream. He was always going against the grain. He was always the deviation from the norm. And He lived by a divine paradox. In

MATTHEW 4:

He was hungry. But in

JOHN 6:

He fed the multitudes. In

JOHN 19:33

He was thirst. But in

JOHN 4:14

He is the water of life. When we begin to look at His life and we begin to see in

JOHN 4:6

He was weary. In

MATTHEW 11:29

He was the one who gives to us the rest. In

MATTHEW 17:27

He paid tribute to Ceaser. In

REVELATION 19:16

He is the King of Kings. In

MARK 14:32

He prayed. In

JOHN 14:13

He listens to our prayers. In

MATTHEW 25:16

He was sold for thirty pieces of silver. But then when we look at

JOHN 10:11

we begin to see that He was the good shepherd and in

I PETER 1:18

He redeemed all of the world. In

ISAIAH 53:7

He was as a sheep that was sold to the slaughter. But in

JOHN 10:11

He is the good shepherd. When we begin to understand His reality, we begin to see that in

ISAIAH 53:7

He came to us to redeem us and to make us whole and to make us know that He is Lord. And He did that through the paradox of His life. And that paradox was the power of His life. And what He calls on each one of us to do is to learn to live by that same kind of a paradox of power. And the power of the life in the Lord is

MATTHEW 10:39

IF WE LOSE OUR LIVES, WE FIND IT. The paradox of power for us is

II CORINTHIANS 6:9,10

AS UNKNOWN, YET KNOWN. AS DYING, YET POSSESSING LIFE. AS SORROWFUL, YET REJOICING. AS POOR, YET MAKING MANY RICH. AS

HAVING NOTHING, BUT REALLY POSSESSING EVERYTHING THAT IS REALLY WORTHWHILE. The power of life is found in

II CORINTHIANS 12:4

WE HAVE HEARD THE WORD BUT THAT WORD IS BEYOND OUR EXPRESSION. The power of life is found in

II CORINTHIANS 12:10

when it tells us in no uncertain terms that WHEN WE ARE WEAK, YET WE ARE MADE STRONG. The power of life is found in

EPHESIANS 3:19

WE HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LOVE OF GOD, BUT IT'S THE KNOWLEDGE THAT SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING. The very fact that we have

II CORINTHIANS 4:18

THAT WE HAVE SEEN THE UNSEEN, makes us to know that God has given to us in Christ a power by which we can live above everything in this world. And if you want to know the way up, if you want to know the way to life, if you want your life to really change, if you want to have the ability to cope, if you want to be able to do what God has created you to do, then you have to know that we lose to find. We die to life. We give to receive. We renounce to rejoice. We dispossess to possess. And by the unseen things, we have the seen things because the real things are the eternal things and in the eternality of God, we are more than conquerors through Him that has loved us and given Himself to us by His power. Amen, amen and amen. (applause) Well, praise the Lord in this place. Magnify His name. Hallelujah. Well, praise Him, magnify Him. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

But it's hard for us to understand the real meaning of living by the paradox of the gospel. That's so different from anything we've been taught. It's so different from anything that we hear. But Christ, Himself, was the divine paradox. And He gave to us the knowledge that the way up was really down. Because in the final analysis, we have to reject the temporary and we have to reach for the timeless. And that's different than anything we hear in the world. And every day, we're constantly programmed to live by only what we can see and hear and feel and touch and put in a test tube and break in to it's component parts and live scientifically. But the thing that keeps us from being what God wants us to be, the thing that keeps us from doing what God wants us to do, the thing that keeps us upset all of the time is the fact that we've never really learned how to put our emotions under the power of God. The emotional makeup is fickle. It's high one day, it's low another day. And so we find ourselves saying, I'd really like to live by that paradox. I'd really like to know that the way up is really living down. But my emotions keep getting in the way.

. . . well today say, well I am really unworthy. I'm not worthy to live for the Lord Jesus Christ. It kind of reminds me of the little book that was sent to me one Christmas by a couple of teenagers in our church and they were letters of children to the pastor. And the name of it was, Dear Pastor. And in those particular letters, the little children had a lot of insights into what emotions really are. And one little boy who was nine

years old wrote and said, "Dear pastor, I know that God is supposed to love everybody, but He never met my sister". (laughter) And sometimes we feel really unworthy to be able to do what God would have us to do. And that sense of unworthiness keeps us from living by this divine paradox.

Sometimes we get the feeling of being really confused. There are so many doctrines and there's so many interpretations and there are so many ideas and I listen to a couple of television programs through the week that have to do with the christian faith and you hear one side of the story and another side of the story and you get very confused about it all.

It's like the little ten year old that wrote to the pastor and said, "Dear pastor, I really enjoyed your sermon last Sunday. I will write you more after my mother explains to me what you said." Now that's kind of the way we get sometimes that we need that explanation.

Then sometimes, you know, the thing that keeps us is that sense of unworthiness, that sense of confusion. The thing that keeps us from God is that sense of leathergy. We get to looking like that it's some kind of a task. It's such a hard job. It's such a terrible thing that we have to do and we want to drop out. We want to just go to the background. We get the feeling that I just can't measure up to live by this divine paradox that God's giving me, the way up is down. That's difficult for me. It's like little Denise who was 11 years old. She wrote to the pastor and said, "Dear pastor, my father likes for my mother and our

family to sit on the back row of the church so we can sneak out during the sermon. Sometimes my mother stops him. But not last Sunday, he got out and boy was she mad". Well, I don't know, that may be the way it is sometimes. But we have that feeling of lethargy.

But then, we come to the fact that if Jesus Christ has said anything to us, the fact of the paradox that we live in is this. That we do not live this life by our self. There is no way that we as individuals can measure up and live this life of discipleship. The answer is

COLOSSIANS 1:27

IT'S CHRIST IN US, THE HOPE OF GLORY. The answer is in

ACTS 17:28

IN HIM WE LIVE AND MOVE AND HAVE OUR BEING. The answer is in

HEBREW 13:8

HE IS THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY AND FOREVER. And the answer is in

PHILLIPIANS 4:13

I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHO STRENGTHENS ME. And by that power, we are the conquerors. Amen, amen and amen. (applause) That's where the answer lies. That's the answer. Hallelujah.

Well the disciples had a problem here because they were hearing sounds come from Christ that weren't compatible with a lot of the things they looked for. Here was Christ telling them things that were going to come to pass that they really couldn't

fully comprehend. They were looking for the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords. They knew He was to rule and He was to reign. And they'd heard Him talking about the fact that He would die, He would suffer, He would rise again the third day. But it really didn't register. We know even after His resurrection they'd had a hard time sorting it out. They had a difficult time putting it together. It wasn't until He appeared to them after the resurrection that they really understood the nature of the eternality of the Kingdom. And so what Christ is trying to tell them, now the way you get ahead in life, the way you really live in your life is to live the way up. And He starts out by saying, first of all, you've got to have confidence regardless of the circumstances. They were going up to Jerusalem. They were down in Judah. They were coming by the way of Jericho. They were headed to Jerusalem where Christ was going to give up His life. He was going to be crucified. He was going to die. He was going to raise again the third day. He was going to send from Jerusalem the Mount of Olives. They were headed for that last journey of His. And He brought the twelve disciples aside, said, "We're going up to Jerusalem, I'm going to be betrayed to the chief priest. I'm going to be condemned to death. I'm going to be turned over to the Gentiles. I'm going to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and on the third day, I will be raised to life." And so He brought them into the understanding that there were going to be some negative circumstances that they would have to face up. But the way up is that we have confidence regardless of

the circumstances. That's the paradox. It's contrary to natural opinion. We have confidence regardless of the circumstances. And that's what He wanted to instill into the lives of His disciples.

Now the problem is today, that many people are losing heart. Many people are giving up. In

GALATIONS 6:9

it says, LET US NOT BE WEARY AND WELL DOING, BECAUSE IN DUE SEASON, WE SHALL REEP A GREAT HARVESTE IF WE DO NOT GIVE UP, IF WE DO NOT LOSE HEART. And you know, medical science has finally coming to the understanding that the best way to live a healthy life is to have a trusting heart. And their doing everything they can to bring people to a trusting heart. Because they know that there are certain negative emotions that block the systems in our body and create for us a stress syndrome that brings on all kinds of diseases. They know that synisism, they know that hostility, they know that unresolved anger are the three great enemies of the human body. When you live a synical life, when you live a hostile life, when you live an angry life, it blocks the biological passeges. It confuses all the hormones. It triggers off all of the glands and you're body becomes an alarm reactor and you're like a time bomb that is ready to go off. And the only antidote to that, fully and finally and completely is to claim the legacy that Jesus Christ has given to us when He says to us in

JOHN 14:27

PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU. MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU. NOT AS THE WORLD GIVES UNTO YOU DO I GIVE UNTO YOU. LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED AND NEITHER LET IT BE AFRAID. Amen, amen and amen. (applause) That's what He says to you and to me. Hallelujah.

I want you to have confidence He says. I want you to come to the place of a trusting heart. But how do you really keep that trusting heart? Well, first of all, you've got to monitor your synical thoughts. If you're going to allow your life to continue to live in synicisism, then you're going to lose that sense of confidence. You're going to lose heart. You're going to lose heart. You're going to give up. And synicisim is doubt. And when you live by doubt, then you can't live by faith. Doubt is the antthesis to faith. And when you life by synical kinds of feelings, then you can't live by faith feelings. And synisism makes us always to over react. Hostility, as you know, is the sense of hate. And when you have hostility, then you're hating. And you can't love. And when you can't love, then your life is really miserable. Unsolved anger is bitterness and when you live in bitterness, the route of bitterness, the route of bitterness pushes out everything that God has done in our lives. And those become the three great enemies against our lifestyle. But we have to learn this one thing, that when we come into the confidence of the Lord, when we are touched by the power of the Holy Spirit, when Christ becomes Lord of our lives, when the Holy Spirit becomes the active agent in us, those kinds of things have to go. For God and mammon cannot dwell together in the same

being. And what we need is a revival of the Holy Spirit that would set us free from the negative emotions of this world and bring us into the freedom of the fact that Jesus Christ is Lord of our lives. Amen, amen and amen. (applause) That's what He wants out of you and me. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

When I first started preaching, more years ago then I like to think about now, the second revival I held was for a pastor in Logan, West Virginia. And he began to give me his testimony and he told me that when he became a Christian that he had not spoken to a brother for twelve years. And he and that brother had a tremendous amount of hostility and hate between themselves. And the first thing that he knew that he had to do was to resolve that hostility, to do something about that bitterness. Because it was ruining his ability to go forward in the Lord and he felt the call to preach but he knew that that had to be resolved. So he payed a surprise visit on his brother. He drove to his home. Knocked on the door. His brother opened the door and saw him and the first thing his brother did was punch him in the nose. And they had a knock down drag out fight. And he went staggering off, got in his car and went home and wondered Lord, what in the world have I done? Well the next thing he did, knowing he'd have to resolve that, he wrote his brother. And he told his brother exactly what had happened. He said, "I'm coming on a certain day, please don't fight. Please just listen to me." And he walked into this brother's living room and his brother was sullen. He was recalcitrant, but yet he sat down and he

listened. And the Holy Spirit began to work. As this pastor began to weep, he was not a pastor then, and to tell what God had done in his life. He'd been a hard drinking, hard living, hard working coal miner. And his brother was a hard drinking, hard living, hard working coal miner. And the Holy Spirit came into that little mining house in that place in West Virginia and that pastor had the first convert was his brother that he hadn't spoken to for twelve years. And the Holy Spirit melted their hearts and the two became one and the result was, both of them went into the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, because you can have a confidence regardless of what the circumstances may be. Our God is bigger than any circumstance you have. (applause) Amen, amen and amen. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Amen.

You've got to monitor that synisism. You've got to get rid of that. But you know what you really have to do, you have to reason with yourself. You know, so many people have really never learned to talk to themselves. Now don't do it outloud. They'll put you in the funny farm. Just do it to yourself. They've never learned to let the still small voice in them really speak, to really reason to themselves.

You know, little children, they have that capacity to reason that anything their going to do, it's going to be right. When Paul Dana went to his first day at HomePark school downtown, he went the first day, came home, figured he knew everything. No need for him to have anymore help, he had it all together. He

told his mother, "You don't have to take me to school tomorrow, I'll walk". And we tried to talk him into ride and he wouldn't ride. Pitched such a fit, he won. So I said, "O.K. kid, you walk". Well, his mother being the smart woman that she is, she let him go out the door and head for school. But she followed about a block behind in the car. He got down to States Street, took a left. Went down Straight Street to Tenth and started looking around for the school. He forgot he had to go two more blocks before he got to the school. He stood on the corner and he looked everywhere. Mother said, "He looked up, he looked down and he looked right, he looked everywhere". About that time, she drove down the street. He recognized the car and ran over to her. Said, "Oh mother, isn't it terrible, isn't it terrible? Somebody moved the school." (laughter) Now that's reasoning with yourself folks. That to know that the power in you is going to give you the capacity to make it through. Now a little kid, he doesn't think that he's going to make any, there going to be any problem there, because he reasons with himself. Now that's exactly what comes with confidence. And what Christ is trying to do is to get these disciples to have confidence regardless of the circumstances.

Well, let's go on here with verse 20. And what He tells us is the second place is, WE HAVE TO HAVE CONTEMENTMENT, REGARDLESS OF THE CONTEXT. Now this thing takes a strange turn here. THEN THE MOTHER OF ZEBEDES SONS, JAMES AND JOHN, HER NAME WAS SALOMI AND ZEBEDY WAS A FISHERMAN AND JAMES AND JOHN ARE GROWN UP AS

FISHWERMEN. THEY WERE CALLED THE SONS OF THUNDER. They were impetuous. They were young men with a temper. They were young men that were aggressive. They wanted to get ahead. And there was a mother that was pushing behind them. This was the original jewish mother right here. You see her at work right here in this story. You know, one of you is going to be a doctor and the other one of you is going to be a lawyer. Only in this case, now look, she says, and they had a little huttle somewhere. I'm going to push this issue, now you come with me and I'm going to get you the best places in the Kingdom. You heard what the Lord said, He's going to raise again the third day. Now she had insight into the Kingdom. She knew more about it then the disciples did. She saw what was going to happen. You see a very brilliant woman here. And you can't really falter. She's wanting to push these kids ahead. She'd been doing that all their lives. This is just as natural as falling off a log. So she comes and she kneels down before the Lord and has these two sons with her. Now that act of kneeling down is saying, Lord, I really want this petition from you. I'm really intreating you. I'm really asking you, and what is you want, he says. GRANT THAT ONE OF THESE TWO SONS OF MINE MAY SIT AT YOUR RIGHT AND THE OTHER ONE AT YOUR LEFT IN YOUR KINGDOM. And then Christ said, BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE ASKING. IF THAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN, ARE YOU GOING TO BE ABLE TO GO THROUGH THIS SUFFERING. YOU GOING TO BE ABLE TO EAT, TO DRINK THIS CUP THAT YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DRINK? And they were all enthused, yes, they didn't really

realize what was going to be involved. When Jesus says to them, SURE, YOU WILL INDEED DRINK FROM MY CUP. YOU'RE GOING TO SUFFER. YOU'RE GOING TO GO THROUGH THE PERSECUTION. BUT TO SIT AT MY RIGHT OR LEFT IS NOT FOR ME TO GRANT. THE RIGHT AND THE LEFT ARE THE GREATEST PLACES IN THE KINGDOM. THAT'S WHERE THE SECOND AND THE THIRD SAT IN THE KINGDOM. Said, THAT BELONGS TO MY FATHER. HE KNOWS WHO'S GOING TO BE SECOND AND THIRD. IF YOU WANT THE PLACE OF MY PLACE AT HIS RIGHT HAND, YOU WANT THE PLACE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. You want to sit and be like God.

But what He's reallys saying to them is, that you've got to learn to be content regardless of the context. And the context here is going to be persecution. But you've got to learn contentment in the midst of that persecution. Now the great question that these young people are going to have to learn is how do I live a contented life when everything around me is chaos? We say that this is a beginning of the end. We say the end times are coming. It's not going to get better. It's going to get worse. The pressure is going to be tougher. We don't know what the future is going to bring with all of the social diseases and all the hunger problems and all the ecological problems. We know that this planet earth is wearing out. It's getting ready for the day there'll be a new Heaven and a new earth. And what we have to learn to do is to be learn to be content. Don't have to look for the first places or the second places. Don't have to look to get pushed ahead. The thing that we want to do is to be like Jesus Christ and to live like Him.

Now hear me very carefully. When you please the Father and you live like Jesus Christ, when He comes alive in your heart, then the promotions are going to come your way automatically because He is going to be in charge of everything that you do. Amen, amen and amen. (applause) Amen, hallelujah. That's what's got to happen in our life.

But you know, the great problem here was, these men were not content with what they had because they had lost their sense of humility. The great thing that the disciple's had to learn was the life of humility. Now the most powerful lifestyle in the world is humility. Humility doesn't mean poverty. Humility isn't passivity. Humility isn't that your some kind of a milktoast. Humility isn't that you're a wimp. You use this word humility and everybody thinks about a wimp. That's not it at all. When the Bible uses the word humility, it is an unassuming character. It is a patient disposition. It is being the void of selfish pride. It is being the void of aggressive egocentricity. It is being in control and poise. It is being opened to change and to growth. This is what the Bible is talking about in

PROVERBS 14:22

it says, HUMILITY AND THE FEAR OF THE LORD BRING WEALTH AND HONOR AND LIFE. This is what Christ was talking about in

LUKE 14:11

He said, THAT PERSON THAT IS GOING TO EXALT HIMSELF WILL BE HUMBLLED, BUT THAT PERSON WHO HUMBLLES HIMSELF WILL BE EXALTED. This is what James was talking about in

JAMES 4:10

when he said, HUMBLE YOURSELF UNDER GOD AND HE WILL LEFT YOU UP. HE WILL EXALT YOU. This is what Peter was talking about in

I PETER 5:5-7

He says, CLOTHE YOURSELF WITH HUMILITY. HUMBLE YOURSELF UNDER THE ALMIGHTY HAND OF GOD AND IN DUE SEASON, HE WILL LIFT YOU UP, CAST YOUR ANXIETY ON HIM BECAUSE HE CARES FOR YOU.

Now you want to know what's going to change this world? You want to know what's going to get it ready for the second coming? You want to know what's going to make a breakthrough for the church? You know what's going to change your home life and gonna change your business life and to change your relationships? You know what's going to give you the ability to drive down the freeway and not have ulcers? You know what's going to help you through that tangled maze of kinds of relationships and all of your employee, employee relationships that go in a business, when you learn to live under the manner of the humility of Jesus Christ and you walk like He walked and you talk like He talked and you do what He did. You can walk through anything because He will give you the victory. Amen, amen and amen. (applause) Hallelujah. Well, praise God. Hallelujah.

But humility means you have to walk impathetically. You have to feel, when you're humble, then you're going to look through the other persons eyes. You're going to look through the, feel through the other persons' skin. You're going to walk in the other persons' shoes. Someone asked me one time, "What's one of

the greatest experience you've ever had in your ministry"? I got to thinking that over for a little while. And I remembered going to Grady Hospital, being called on a suicide late one night. When I got there, they were pumping this mans stomach out and I couldn't get in to see him. So I was waiting untill he got stabalized. I could go in and talk and pray with him. We had a young eternist who was doing his internship there. And he saw me there and came and got me and he said, "I need your help right now". Said, "There's a young black girl that we've been with for some time. She just had a baby. The baby was born dead. Her husband was killed six weeks ago in an automobile accident. She's hesterical. We can't get her calmed down. Would you come and talk to her?" Walked in the room and they shut the door behind me and there was this girl rithing on the bed, screaming to the top of her lungs. Lost her husband six weeks ago, baby born dead, feeling all alone, going through that whole senerio. I felt so helpless. I felt so alone. But I walked over to her and I took her hands in mine. When she screamed, I screamed. And she wept, I wept. When she rithed on the floor, I rithed on the floor. When she walked around, I walked around and I would not let her hands go. For about 20 minutes we went through that senerio. And then suddenly, she came calm. And I'll never forget it, she put her head on my shoulder, threw her arms around my neck and sobbed as though her heart would break. And then as I began to pray sofilty into her ear, the Holy Spirit began to touch her and she got calm and serine and tranquil. And she

began to repeat the prayers after me. I begin to repeat the 23 psalm and she'd repeated the 23rd psalm. I repeated the Lord's prayer and she repeated the Lord's prayer. When it was all finished, she looked up into my face and she said, "Sir, I don't know who you are, but thank you for sharing my pain." And that's exactly what Jesus Christ did on the cross. He shared your pain and He walks where you walk and He gave to you the ability to be a conqueror. (applause) Amen, amen and amen. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Well praise the Lord.

But you know, humility gives you a sense of objectivity. We over personalize so many things. We decide that some how or other that this world is really going down the tubes and there's nothing else to look forward to. And I see Christians who live in such depression. They live so shortchanged. They've never been able through humility to take on a sense of objectivity, to understand what God is really doing. ONLY THE TRUTH SETS YOU FREE IN

JOHN 8:32

JOHN 17:17

SANCTIFY THEM THROUGH THY TRUTH, THY WORD IS TRUTH. That's the truth that we have to have. That's the truth of the living God. And when you become objective, then you begin to come to that place you don't take life so seriously. Most christians take life too seriously. This is not the end folks. This is just the beginning. Anybody know what I'm talking about. This is just a beginning. (applause) Amen. You don't have to make such a big

deposit in this life. You don't have to get so uptight about it. As though this is all you're going to get. Hello, are you still there? You know, you've got to learn to laugh about life. So many charismatic's and pentecostal's have forgotten how to laugh. Hello? (laughter) Everything is so intense. Oh, it's ah, uh, oh, uh, oh. Have you ever seen anybody like that? Everything is terrible. Now some terrible things happen.

You know, back in 1964, I had an old car, had about 80,000 miles on it, three or four years old, chugging alone. One of our members felt sorry for me. He had a brand new car, had about eight or ten thousand miles on it, a '64 Lincoln. He decided he didn't like it. So he gave me that car. Took my old car, traded it and got him another car. It was the nicest car we had ever known. And I loved that black Lincoln. I really felt like somebody in that thing. You know, driving down the street. And I got it free and anything I get free, you feel good about, you just, (laughter) uh, going along, you know? It was on Carmeledda's birthday and we were going to out to lunch and I had to stop downtown at Ridder McGhahe to get a very important item called handball gloves. I was playing in a tournament that afternoon. We were going on to lunch for her birthday so I said, "Look", I parked right down, just a block off Five Points. And I said, "Now the store's right there. I'm going to run over, now you just take the car, drive around the block and pick me up." I'm sitting right by the curb. I go to the light, waiting for the light to change, she gets in, adjust the seats. Have you

ever watched a woman get ready to drive? (laughter) Have you ever done that? You know, they look in the mirror and they fix their face, I don't know why. (laughter) Smooth their dress, get everything ready to go. I'm standing there watching her. Light hasn't changed. She puts it in drive, takes off and there's a truck parked right there and she hits a truck right on the side and just takes the side right out of that Lincoln. (laughter) She goes down and parks and I'm standing there saying, God, this isn't happening. (laughter) And I was so upset, I knew I couldn't talk to her then, because it would end in divorce surely. (laughter) Or she'd have to go to jail for murder. I wasn't sure which it'd be. So I just decided, I'm going to act like this did not happen to me. I went on across the street. I made my purchase. I came back. Walked down the street and there she stood and she saw me. Said, "Did you see what happened? (laughter) Did I see what happen? I said, "Carmeletta, what in the world were you doing"? And she started, broke into tears, "Don't fuss on me". That's all I said, "Don't fuss on me". She started crying. Now as she stood there waiting for me or somebody, Elephaz, Bildad and Zophar came by. (laughter) Elephaz said, "Lady, that's going to cost two thousand dollars". Zophar said, "Lady, you're lucky you weren't killed. A man just had a motorcycle accident down the street and he was killed". Bildad came by and said, "Lady, if I were you, I'd committ suicide". That's what he told her. (laughter) Then I came to fuss on her. Well, somehow we didn't feel like going

to lunch. (laughter) Now this is a crucial time folks. Everything within me wants to take this woman and go, umph, umph, umph, umph, (sound of fist hitting hand) (laughter) But when you're sancitified, you can't do that. (laughter) You just feel that way. You don't act, you just feel, you understand? So we went home. She went in the bedroom and started crying. I stomped around the house. If you know how men do, they just stomp, they just stomp and slamb doors and stomp. Have you ever noticed that? Women cry and men stomp. So I finally got over the stomp and I went in and she's lying on the bed, it's her birthday. (laughter) Fantastic present. So I brought her her present, gave it to her and opened it. Looked into her brown eyes, I got it right folks. (laughter) (applause) And I ha ha, and suddenly you know, the whole thing just wasn't that important. It just wasn't that important. And I said, "Honey, it doesn't matter. I love you. You can wreck that car any time you want. (laughter) Just make sure I'm not with you." And she started to laugh and I started to laugh and we went into hysterics. One thing led to another, the rest of it is none of your business. (laughter) (applause)

But take life too seriously. Too intense. And you see, that was wrong with these sons of thunder. They were too intense about what they wanted to do and what their mother wanted them to be and what places in the Kingdom they were going to have and what the final result was going to be. And we get so hung up on whether we're going to get up or we're going to get ahead or

what's going to happen when the realities are, when Christ is in charge of our lives, then those things are going to happen.

And the final thing here, there was a comittment. Regardless of the conflict. Now when you look at verse 24, the other ten disciples got uptight about this. They resented it, they were indignant. There was conflict here. There was almost the breaking up of the apostolic unity. Now, if you read between the lines here, this could have been a very serious breach. Now Christ was there obviously and He said, LOOK, DON'T LIVE LIKE THE GENTILES DO. They enjoy lording it over other people. They like to come to a place that in their leadership, they can exploit and they can manipulate. But He said, that's not for you. If you're going to be the greatest in the Kingdom, you've got to be a servant. If you're going to be the first, you've got to be a slave. You've got to follow my model. I didn't come to be served, I came to serve. I came to give my life a ransom for many. And I made a comittment, regardless of the conflict.

You know, if you got on the human side of Christ, He didn't want to go to the cross. He didn't want to give up His life. That was a tough role for Him to follow. Now there's a contradiction in the world today that you've got make a comittment to overcome that contradiction. You young people are going to live with conflict the rest of your life. Every decision you make will come out of conflict. You're going to have to decide how to resolve that conflict. There's only one way to do that, and that's through a comittment. A comittment to serve.

I'm going to serve the Lord regardless of the conflict. I'm going to serve the Lord regardless of the contradiction.

Chuck Colson made the statement when he was 41. He had everything that he had ever wanted. He was making over 6 figures a year. The best lawyers in the country wanted to be in his firm. He had more clients then he could possibly use. He had a yacht on the Potomac River. He was a personal friend of the president of the United States, but he'd never been so miserable in all of his life. And he didn't get over that misery until he went to jail. And out of that conflict, he made a commitment to serve. And he's back now doing the greatest prison ministry that probably history has ever known, because he was committed to serve.

John Hagei is a personal friend of mine. Many of you know about the Hagei Institutes. He's been in business over 20 years. Across the world he has trained native missionaries everywhere and business people to carry the gospel. They had a little boy born to them, the obstetrician was drunk when he delivered him. And the child was left helplessly impaired. The only thing he could say, only two words he could say, could say, yeah for yes and umph for no. His mother poured herself into him for 24 years is how long he lived. John was on the road a lot and it was a source of problem for him. But inside that difficult body and that impaired life, there was a keen mind. When John would come home from the third world, he'd tell his son about all the things that were going on. And he learned how to communicate with him

even though he couldn't talk. And that impaired boy spent most of his life and most of his days in prayer for those people in the third world. And his whole life was committed to a service of prayer. That's all that he could do. And John would tell you today that he's felt the strength of those prayers time and again. Because there's a commitment, regardless of the contradiction, regardless of the conflict.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, we know him. He defected from Russia, the Nobel Peace Prize winner, turned his back on communism as an asserter of democracy. A great American, we know who he is. He was an atheist. He was put into prison by the Russian government. He wound up in a Siberian concentration camp. He'd contracted cancer, had surgery for cancer, was given up to die. Dr. Boris Felderman who was a Jewish doctor who had found Christ as Messiah in the prison and embraced Jesus Christ, came to Him in the dead of the night. Spent all night with him telling him the gospel story of Jesus Christ. When the next morning came, it was like new strength surged through Solzhenitsyn's body. And he took a pen and he wrote some verse. He said, on that verse, Oh God of the Universe, I believe again, though I denounced you, yet you were with me. Though I denounced you, yet you were with me. And his life turned around, he wound up in America. He won the Nobel Peace Prize. And he's given to us warning after warning in this country. And he has said there's another watershed coming if this world stands, it will be greater than the shift from the middle ages to the renaissance. And to meet that shift, we have

to have a spiritual blaze, and spiritually we have to go to new heights and live a new life, because what God is talking about today and what He's calling are for people that will rise up and comitt themselves to serve regardless of the circumstances.

And that's what He's calling you tonight about. As our heads are bowed and our eyes are closed. Where are you with this? Where is your confidence level? Where is your contentment level? Where is your comittment level?

The Holy spirit is speaking to my heart right now. And He's saying to us at this very moment and time, I'm calling you to a place of service in me. The way up is down. A place of comittment in my Kingdom. There's a place of service where you need to be. The things that's on my heart, we've got personal witness training up. We have a mission seminar coming up. And then I look into all of our homes. The great growth of this church came out of people winning people. And I'm asking you tonight, where is your comittment? Where is your comittment? Where is your confidence? Where is your contentment? Where is your comittment? Is it in Christ or is it in the world? And I'm asking you tonight to pray in a concecration prayer with me. Lord, I'm available for use. But here's what the Lord laid on my heart this afternoon as I was praying. There's someone that only you can win. There's someone that only you can influence. There's someone that only you can touch. There's someone that you'll only be able to win to the Lord.

A few years ago, a man woke me up in the middle of the night

and said, "I've got to find my wife. I want you to go with me because you are the only one she'll listen to. We began to look everywhere, in every bar we could find in the city. About 4 o'clock in the morning we found her. She was sitting in a bar all alone. I said, "You stay outside, let's me to in". I walked in and sat on a barstool beside her. And I begin to talk to her and she was surprised obviously to see me. She said, "What are you doing here". I said, "I'm here because your husband sent me here. He's concerned about you. But more than that, God's concerned about you. And felt like maybe I was the only person that you could talk to and that you'd listen to. And I want to talk to you about where you are." And I've learned a long time ago, it doesn't matter where it is, God'se. It doesn't matter what the surrounds are, God is there. She broke into tears and she said, "I've been in such a turmoil. I'm married to a good man, but the old life beckons me. And I keep wanting to go back and I've given up." But it was right there in that bar, hand in hand that I led her in the sinner's prayer and heard her confess Christ as Lord. And I've watched that couple for the past ten years as they've been in this church nearly every Sunday worshipping the Lord, because a comittment was made.

Now there's somebody that only you can win. Evidently, I was the person for that woman that night. Who is it, your husband, is it your wife, your son, your daughter, your neighbor, who is it? Who is it? I want you to picture that person. I want to pray about that person this evening. I just feel led of the Lord

for this. That's why I preached this sermon tonight, for you to walk out of here tonight and say, "Lord, with your help and by your grace and by the Holy Spirit, I'm going to try to win that person".

There was a little girl up at North this morning that hadn't been to church in a long time. She was delivered this morning from alcholism, from drug addiction. She said, "I'm a young single mother and I've got a child and I'm going to be a better mother then ever before. And there was a lady that brought her, there was a lady that led her, there was a lady that prayed with her. That lady for that girl, this morning. And that's how the church grows folks. That's what a church is. That is what a church is all about. That's the meaning of what we're trying to do here. The way up is down. You lose to find. You give to receive. You die to live. You renounce to rejoice. You disposses to posses. That's the way it happens in your life.

I'm going to ask you to stand please. Could we join hands all over the building and everybody staying with me just for a moment or two longer.