

Making Disciples

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 September 1994

Preacher: Darrell Johnson

[0 : 00] I can think of no more challenging time in history to be the church of Jesus Christ than the one in which we are now living.

As I said in a sermon last October, ever since returning to the United States from the Philippines in 1989, the words of an old hymn have been ringing in my heart and in my head.

The words, we are living, we are dwelling in a grand and awesome time. It seems that the whole world is going through major convulsions.

No place on the globe, east or west, rich or poor, one-third or two-thirds world is immune from all the upheaval. Major paradigm shifts are taking place in every arena of life.

Alvin Toffler of Future Shock fame calls this span of time from 1955 to 2025 the hinge of history.

[1 : 12] A wonderful imagery, isn't it? Because it feels that way sometime. Oh, here we go again.

Lance Morrow, who is the chief essayist for Time Magazine, is calling the 1990s a cosmic divide.

He calls our decade the transforming boundary. The transforming boundary between one age and another, between a scheme of things that has disintegrated and another that is taking shape.

Medical doctor Richard Swenson, who has written this book, Margins, writes, as we close in on the millennium, there is much excitement, not a little anxiety, and certainly lots of press.

No one knows for sure what will happen. Will we collapse? Will we thrive? Will we transition? One fact, however, is certain. Something historical is happening in our lifetime.

I still think that Richard Halverson, chaplain of the U.S. Senate, sums it up best when he says, there is something cataclysmic in the air.

[2 : 19] Something cataclysmic in the air. Is it the final preparation for the inbreaking of the new heaven and new earth? Is it the judgment of God upon decades of blatant idolatry?

Or is it the most massive spiritual awakening this globe has ever witnessed? We are living, we are dwelling in a grand and awesome time.

Well here's the question then. Churching on this cosmic divide, walking along this transforming boundary, swinging on the edge of history, the hinge of history, what does it now mean to be the church of Jesus Christ?

What does being church now look like in this era? What are we to be about in the midst of all the change? Answer, what the church has always been about in every age.

Or as I should say, what the church should have been about in every age. In the last paragraph of the Gospel according to Matthew, Jesus himself sets the agenda for his church.

[3 : 36] The agenda for the church in the first century. The agenda for the church in the twentieth century. The agenda for the church in the twenty-first century. I call his agenda the unfinished agenda.

Unfinished partly because even if the church had taken it more seriously, there would still be more to do. But unfinished mostly because the church has not taken it seriously enough.

I know I have not. But I submit to you that the world is in the trouble that it is, largely because the church has not been about what we should have been about.

Jesus' agenda, his unfinished agenda is two-fold. One, coming to terms with his great claim. And two, fulfilling his great commission.

Coming to terms with his great claim and fulfilling his great commission. It is because we have not come to terms with his great claim that we have not fulfilled the great commission.

[4 : 48] Jesus' great claim. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. It's an enormously huge claim.

It's insane if it is not true. It is as though Jesus of Nazareth were saying, I am the chief executive officer of the universe.

I have the last word everywhere, in the heavenly realm and in the earthly realm, and in every sphere of the earthly realm, in the private and the public, in the religious and the secular, in the moral and in the scientific, in the economic, in the sexual, the political, the legal, the medical, the educational, the business.

To me is given final say in everything. As I see it, we have not even begun to grasp the implications of Jesus' great claim.

All authority in heaven and on earth. The implications are literally cosmic. The Apostle Paul says of Jesus that God raised him from the dead and seated him at the right hand and heavenly power, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is named.

[6 : 18] And he put all things in subjection under his feet. The Apostle John says of Jesus, he is the firstborn of the dead, the ruler of the kings of the earth.

Paul and John are not speaking poetically here. They are not speaking metaphorically or mythologically. They do not think that they are stating an opinion.

They are declaring facts of life, what Russell Chandler of the Los Angeles Times calls hard news. Hard news. Jesus really lived. Jesus really died.

Jesus really rose from the grave. Jesus has really ascended to the throne of the universe. Jesus really is in charge. All authority to me.

He is stating objective historical fact. Two plus two equals four. Babies mess in their pants. Jerry Rice has scored 127 touchdowns.

[7 : 20] It takes two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom to make water. Three freeways intersecting Glendale. Bill Clinton holds the office of President of the United States. Fidel Castro holds sway over Cuba.

Jesus Christ has the last word over it all, over everything and everyone in every place. The fact that not everyone knows or believes it does not change the reality.

All authority has been given to me. Authority. The word is exousia. And it literally means out of being.

Ek, out, uzia, being. After Jesus preached his sermon on the mount, the crowds were moved because, as they said, this man speaks with authority, with exousia, without of being.

The words and deeds of Jesus rang without of being. They resonated with the really real. Which is why whenever anyone meets Jesus, they speak of coming home.

[8 : 23] No one ever speaks of meeting a stranger out of being. Here is reality itself. When we surrender to him, we finally find life itself.

Exousia, the really real. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Jesus isn't bragging.

He's simply stating the way things are. And coming to terms with this great claim is one part of Jesus' agenda for the church. The other part of his agenda naturally follows, fulfilling his great commission.

As you go, make disciples of all nations. Given the claim, we are not surprised by the commission. And given the scope of the claim, we are not surprised by the scope of the commission.

All authority, all nations. Make disciples of all nations, of all the ethnoi, of all the ethnic groupings of the world. You see, the nations are rightly Jesus.

[9 : 31] They belong to him. And he calls his church to bring the nations into the knowledge of the truth so that they can come home. Make disciples.

He plans to transform the world over which he has authority by making disciples of all nations. Not just converts. Not just church members.

But disciples. Disciples who in turn can make other disciples, who in turn can make other disciples, who in turn can make other disciples. That is Jesus' agenda for the church as we approach the third millennium.

Make disciple-making disciples. Because of all the turmoil of our time, I believe he is calling us to be more intentional than ever before.

Make disciple-making disciples. Make disciples who can make disciples who can make disciples. Now, I know that this word disciple makes many people uncomfortable.

[10 : 39] It scares some people, right? What, me? A disciple? Me? It repulses others because of negative experiences with hyper-discipling movements.

Thus, over the past few months, I've been trying to come up with a better translation of the original word. The Greek word simply means learner or student. Which tells me that whatever is involved in being and making a disciple, whatever else is involved, it means that we are people in process. Always in a learning mode. Or another way to put that is, no one will ever graduate from the Jesus School. There are no graduates. Always undergraduates. Go make learners.

That doesn't quite do, does it? Make learner-making learners. Go make students. That doesn't quite do either, does it? Make student-making students.

So, after all these months of struggling to find another word, I've decided I'm just going to stay with the word disciple. Now, what helps me is realizing that, as a matter of fact, every human being is a disciple.

[11 : 55] Everyone in every nation is a disciple of someone or of some ideology. Which means, then, that the question is never, will I be a disciple?

The question is always, whose disciple will I be? If not Jesus, then who? Sigmund Freud? Karl Marx?

After what we've witnessed since 1989 with the collapse of the Berlin Wall? Joseph Smith? Mohammed? Krishna? Buddha? Madonna? Bart Simpson?

Megabuck sports heroes? The question is never, will I be a disciple? The question is always, whose disciple will I be?

Who are the viable candidates for master? Who has exousia? Who speaks out of being? Who speaks, and when he speaks, makes me feel like I've come home?

[12 : 59] As Peter said, Lord, to whom else shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, make disciples of me, of all the nations.

Two questions are begging for an answer at this point. The first is, what does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? What do his disciples look like at this time?

And second, how do we make them? Clearly, it is his work, fundamentally. But he does use human means. How do we make disciples who make disciples who make disciples?

Question one, what does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? Well, that's what the whole fall series is going to be about. I'm going to try to unpack that. Let us today just focus on what this text before us teaches us.

There's a whole lot more. But what do we learn from Matthew 28, 16 to 20? I think that we can gather it up all around four words.

[14 : 07] And I invite you to write these four words down and then add to the list as this series unfolds throughout the fall. Four words about what it means to be a disciple.

The four words are attachment, intimacy, submission, and security.

Attachment. Being a disciple of Jesus means being attached to Jesus. Attached to a person. To a person.

To a person. I cannot overstress this. In fact, in a thriving church like GPC, I need to stress it all the more. It is so easy to begin to focus on principles or on programs or on philosophy of ministry and lose the person.

Come to me, he says. Not come to religion. Not come to ministry. Not come to vision. But come to me. Being a disciple of Jesus means being attached to a person.

[15 : 21] Richard Halverson likes to point out that Christianity began on Palestinian soil as a relationship with a person. It moved on to Greek soil and it became a philosophy.

It moved on to Roman soil and it became an institution. It moved on to European soil and it became a culture. It moved on to American soil and Christianity became an enterprise.

We Americans are always trying to turn things into an enterprise. It isn't. It's a person. Come to me, he says.

Eat of me. Drink of me. Abide in me. Be yoked to me. You are my brothers and sisters. You are my bride. Attachment. Being a disciple of Jesus means being attached to him at profoundly deep levels.

I will come back to this again and again and again. A person. Crucified. Risen. Living. And attached to him. Intimacy.

[16 : 31] It follows from attachment. Being a disciple of Jesus. And I'm not sure I can put this well. Being a disciple of Jesus means entering into intimacy with him and thus intimacy with his Father

and his Spirit.

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, he says. Go baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. To be baptized means more than getting wet.

To be baptized means entering into the reality signified in the baptism. The incredible privilege of discipleship is entering into intimacy with the Trinitarian God.

I'll put it more boldly. The incredible privilege of discipleship is entering into the intimacy within the Trinitarian God.

Being called to come and share in the love that the persons of the Trinity have for one another. It's what we were created for. It's what we were redeemed for.

[17:41] Baptism in the New Testament refers to so much more than being immersed in water. It refers to being immersed in the reality behind the water. To be baptized into the Trinitarian name means to be immersed in the personalness of the Trinitarian God.

To be immersed into the love and life of God the Father. To be immersed into the grace and truth of God the Son. To be immersed into the power and purity of God the Holy Spirit.

Wow. Discipleship involves growing in that ever richer intimacy. Already we know something of the love of the Father. Already we know something of the forgiveness and freedom of the Son.

Already we know something of the pervading and permeating glory of the Spirit. But the promise is that we shall know the fullness of life available in the Trinitarian God. We shall even know the love the Father has for the Son and the Son has for the Father.

Intimacy leading to fullness. Intimacy and submission follows naturally enough, doesn't it? Being a disciple of Jesus means being submissive to His authority and thus obeying Him.

[19:00] All authority has been given to me. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. This does not take place just once at the beginning of the journey of discipleship.

It happens day after day after day at each new turn of events, submitting our wills to Him and doing what He tells us to do. Submission and obedience are of the essence of discipleship.

I am not a disciple unless I obey. I may be an admirer of Jesus. I may be a fan of Jesus. But I am not His disciple until I obey.

John 14, 15. If you love me, you will keep my commandments. Luke 6, 46. Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?

I recently heard Lloyd Ogilvie, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood, make a critical distinction. He said that Jesus does not want us to respond to His claims with a true-false answer.

[20:05] He wants us to respond with a yes-no answer. And Dr. Ogilvie says that most Christians live at that true-false level and avoid the yes-no level.

Now, clearly, the yes-no is not possible unless we have, first of all, encountered the true-false. But what Jesus wants is yes or no. All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.

True, we say. What He wants is yes. And therefore, I submit. Follow me, He says. True, we say. What He wants is yes.

And therefore, I get up, turn around, and follow you down the new path. Growth as a disciple involves growing in submission to the exousia of Jesus.

No, Lord, is the ultimate oxymoron. The two words cannot stand in the same sentence. The only appropriate response to His claim is true, and therefore, yes.

[21:09] Attachment, intimacy, submission, and security. Being a disciple of Jesus means living in great security. Lo, I am with you always till the end of the age.

Literally, I with you am. I with you am. All the way, every day. On the bad days and the good days, on the down days and the up days, on the days when we obey, and the days when we do not obey. I will never leave you nor forsake you. Security. I'm never alone in this journey, anywhere, under any circumstance. He is the one who started this journey in discipleship.

He is the one who called me to Himself long before I went looking for Him. He started it. He will be with me all the way, all the way, all the way. What does a disciple look like?

Attachment, intimacy, submission, security. And that's only one text. We have more to go. Second question. How are disciples made?

[22:11] Again, this is what we're going to unpack in this series throughout the fall. Let us today focus on just two things Jesus teaches us in this text. According to Jesus, there are two chief means by which we make disciples of all the nations.

They are baptizing and teaching. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I've commanded you. Baptizing and teaching. Baptize. Again, it means more than getting people wet. We've all heard the stories of missionaries who have gone into unchristianized areas of the world and then just, in mass, baptized all kinds of people.

Often against their will and then call the people Christian. To baptize means to invite people into and then nurture them in this intimacy with the Trinitarian God.

We make disciples by surrounding people with the divine presence, with divine reality. We make disciples by helping people enter into the fullness of the Trinitarian presence and blessing.

[23 : 15] When was the last time you asked someone to be baptized? To receive and enter into that for which they were created and teach.

Which is to say, we make disciples by inviting people to enroll in the Jesus School. There are all kinds of schools out there.

Read the Los Angeles Times. We invite people to enroll in the Jesus School. We make disciples by helping people learn their lessons well in the Jesus School. I want you to note the way Jesus refers to His curriculum in this school.

Teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. He does not refer to His teachings as principles to live by, although that they are.

He does not refer to His teaching as doctrine to be mastered, although that they are. He refers to His teachings as commands.

[24 : 22] Obey what I have commanded you. And therefore, He refers to the goal of enrollment in His school as obedience. Not just knowledge. Not just wisdom.

But obedience. Someone recently said to me, You only really know what you obey. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.

This line is what a number of people are calling the great omission. They argue that we have not fulfilled the great commission because of this great omission.

We have not taught converts to obey. We have taught in order to bring people to a true-false level. But we have not taught to bring people to a yes-no level.

Teach, teach, teach to obey, obey, obey. The world is transformed by teaching obedience. In his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul summarizes his whole ministry as seeking the obedience of faith.

[25 : 29] The obedience of faith. Paul is telling us there that faith is not faith unless it obeys. Faith that does not obey is not yet saving faith.

It is still at that true-false level. Faith that saves is faith that obeys. Faith that does what the Master tells us to do. I do not have faith in my doctor unless I do what she tells me to do.

I can rave about her greatness all I want. Boy, is she good. But I do not have faith in her until I obey her prescription. Teach them to obey everything I've commanded you.

It means teaching trust. For I will obey Jesus only if I trust Him. And I will trust Him only if I believe that He is good.

Which means we make disciples who can make disciples by teaching the goodness of Jesus Christ. By showing in every way we can that He is utterly disposed to our well-being.

[26 : 34] He commands what He commands only because He really wants the best for us. Teach, teach, teach to trust, trust, trust so that we can obey, obey, obey.

Teach in what form? The teaching takes place in worship on the Lord's Day. It also takes place in special classes like those being offered right now.

It also takes place in small groups. I do not see how anyone can be a disciple who makes disciples apart from a small group.

I need the fellowship of other disciples. I need the encouragement of other disciples. I need the correction and guidance of other disciples. And the teaching takes place one-on-one in a mentoring relationship.

I need someone who can help me discern the Lord's voice. I need someone who can help me over my fears of obedience. Who can help me with the nitty-gritty dynamics of this attachment and intimacy and submission.

[27 : 41] It seems to me that over the past decades, if not the past centuries, we the church have been working with an assumption.

And the assumption is that disciples grow themselves. We win people to Jesus. We give them a few tips like pray, read your Bible, witness, and tithe.

And then we let them go on their own, hoping that they will grow. It's a faulty assumption with terrible consequences. Left on our own, we fall.

No one grows on their own. Oh, we can be good church people on our own, but not disciples. The command is make disciples. No one matures into the fullness of Jesus Christ apart from regular worship, regular study, regular fellowship with a supporting group, and regular one-on-one mentoring.

Think for a moment how bricklayers are made. One does not become a good bricklayer on his or her own. Read all the books you want about bricklaying, and you will not be a good bricklayer until you have had all kinds of time, lots and lots of training, trial and error, under the guidance of a master bricklayer.

[29 : 04] We do not become faithful, reproducing disciples on our own. We become the kind of disciple who can make disciple with someone walking along with us and helping us through all the ins and outs of following Jesus.

At this crucial moment in history, I believe the Lord Jesus is calling GPC to be the best Jesus school imaginable.

I believe He is calling us to be an academy of disciple making. With worship services shot through with the presence of God.

With classes wherein we intentionally engage in rigorous study of Scripture and theology. In house groups wherein we intentionally wrestle together with the cost of discipleship, praying together, discovering God's will for our lives.

And with one-on-one mentoring relationships wherein we can discern the secret workings of sin and the workings of the Spirit who overcomes sin.

[30 : 11] Intentionally. That's the key. I believe that we are to ask of every program of our church, what does this have to do with following Jesus? To ask of every program of the church, how does this help people strengthen their attachment to Jesus?

How does this help deepen their intimacy with the triune God? How does this help people become more submissive to His Lordship? We are to ask of everything we do, is this building up people in Christ so they can build up people in Christ so they can build up people in Christ?

Now whether or not GPC grows in number is not the issue for me. The issue is, what is happening to the people already under the GPC umbrella?

If we increase numerically, so much the better, and in that I will rejoice. If we decrease, I will be sad, but it will be okay.

For the Great Commission is not build big churches. The Great Commission is build big people. Who can build big people?

[31 : 19] Who can build big people? Now the fact is, if we do what Jesus calls us to do, the numbers will take care of us. Though for a while it will look like we're making no progress.

World Vision International has this poster. It says, how do you feed a hungry world? And the answer is, one person at a time. How do you disciple the nations? One person at a time. It's a slow process, but it's the only one that is effective.

Let me show you. If the most gifted evangelist among us were to reach 1,000 people a day, think of that.

The most gifted evangelist were to reach 1,000 people a day, it would take 10,000 years to reach the present world population. But if someone committed to the hard work of discipling, and it is hard work, were to give him or herself to just one person a year, one person a year, building that person up in Christ, and then release the person to repeat the process with another person while he or she then gave him or herself to yet another and did this year after year, it would take only 33 years to reach the present population of the world.

The first year, there would be two disciples, while the evangelist would have won 365,000 converts. No guarantee, though, whether those converts will obey. The second year, there will be four disciples, while the evangelist would have won 730,000 converts.

[32 : 58] No guarantee whether they're going to obey. Boy, this is slow. Two and then four. By the sixth year, there are 64 disciples, while the evangelist has 3 million converts.

Oh, dear. I think we're going to have to remove the funding from this disciple ministry. It's not going anywhere, you know. 64 people after six years. Shouldn't we spend our money better?

No, we shouldn't. Because something is happening, slowly but surely. Year 13, there are now 8,000 disciples. There are 4.7 million converts, and we probably have a very weary evangelist by this time, too.

22nd year, there are 4 million disciples, still behind the 8 million of the evangelists. Then in the 24th year, things take off. The evangelist now has 8.7 million converts, while the discipling ministry has now produced 16.7 million disciples.

By the year 32, the evangelists will have won 11 million who may or may not know what it means to obey Jesus. But by the year 32, the discipling ministry would have made 4.2 billion disciples.

[34 : 10] Who can make more disciples? Now, don't get me wrong. I'm not minimizing the work of the evangelist at all. I'm simply demonstrating the multiplication effect of a discipling ministry.

I woke up last Friday morning with all of this gripping my mind and heart. I couldn't shut it off. It's my day off, and Sharon was a little frustrated. I couldn't shut this off. And I had a daydream. In the daydream, the elders came to me, and they said, Daryl, we want you to streamline your ministry big time.

We want you to preach on Sunday, teach a midweek class, and then give the rest of the week to building up 10 people. Do everything you can for those 10 people. Spend time with them. Pray with them.

Mentor those 10 people. Show up to preach. Show up to teach. Do nothing else. And we'll take care of everything else. Oh, was that a nice daydream. I stayed with the daydream all morning.

And I imagined myself investing in those 10, who one year later would then invest themselves in only one person. Well, then I took on 10 more, and they won, and so on.

[35 : 19] Get this. By the year 2000, 630 people will have been equipped to make disciples. By the year 2005, 20,480 people will have been equipped to lead other people to Christ and nurture them.

By the year 2010, we are up to 6.5 million. I can't even imagine that. By the year 2016, only 22 years from now, we would have reached 4.2 billion, the present population of the world.

I quickly caught myself and reminded myself that I have a tendency towards idealism. Remember, Daryl, you're an idealist. You better stop this dreaming.

I couldn't stop the dreaming. So I thought, well, what I'll do is work with these 10 people for two years. And then each of them will work with one person for two years. So I'll slow it down a little bit. Still, it would take only 44 years to reach the present world population.

By that time, the population would have increased significantly, so it'll take two more years, 46 years to reach the world. I even decided that I better be more realistic, so I factored in the reality that a number of folks were probably going to die during this time, go to be with the Lord, and that a number of folks were going to drop out.

[36 : 36] I imagined someone coming to me and saying, look, Daryl, the pull of the gods of materialism and comfort are just too strong right now. I need to back off of this intentional stuff for a while. Anyway, I've got my ticket to heaven.

Why don't you just let me cruise as a pew potato for a little while? So I factored into all of this. I factored in two deaths a year and two dropouts to become pew potatoes.

I said to myself, okay, only six of the ten will actually be able to reproduce themselves. Do you know what? If I only worked with six, it still will only take 23 years if we do it in the one-year model and 46 years if we do it in the two-year model.

And that's only taking me into consideration. We haven't even factored in Greg and Marsha and Tim and the many others. I factored in about a thousand people, a hundred people I started with, a people I know who could do this.

And we can reach the world in less than 18 years. Billy Graham is quoted to have said, if I had it to do all over again, I wouldn't do as many crusades.

[37 : 52] Instead, I would invest myself in 12 men who could then invest themselves in other men if I had it to do all over again. I do not want to get to the age 70, which is only 23 years away from me, and say, if I had it to do all over again.

At 70, I want to look at Jesus and say, here are disciples who can make disciples. I conclude this introductory sermon with the insights of two keen observers of the present moment.

The first is Cal Thomas. You probably know him. He's a syndicated columnist, newspaper columnist. He argues that America is where it is today because the church has failed to do its job. In an interview with the magazine Christianity Today, Mr. Thomas said this. Listen, he says, the problem isn't the Clinton administration. The problem isn't the abortionists. The problem isn't the pornographers. The problem isn't the drug dealers. The problem isn't the criminals. The problem is the undisciplined, undisciplined, disobedient, biblically ignorant church of Jesus Christ.

[39 : 11] Several years ago, a USA Today Gallup poll found that only 10% of people who claim to be believers read their Bibles every day. Thomas says, there's your problem. If you're ignorant of the Word of God, you're going to be blind to the way of God and disobedient to the will of God.

The second observer is Dallas Willard, who is professor of philosophy at USC. He writes this. Listen carefully. Multitudes are now turning to Christ in all parts of the world.

How unbearably tragic it would be, though, if the millions in Asia, South America, and Africa were led to believe that the best we can hope for from the way of Christ is the level of Christianity visible in Europe and America today, a level that has left us tottering on the edge of destruction.

The world can no longer be left to mere diplomats, mere politicians, mere business leaders. They have done the best they could, no doubt. But this is an age for spiritual heroes, a time for men and women to be heroic in faith, in spiritual character and power.

And then Willard writes this. Listen, listen. The greatest danger to the church today is that of pitching its message too low.

[40 : 27] I promise you, I will not pitch it too low. I'll do my best to get the cookies on the lower shelf. But I won't pitch it too low.

Because when I'm 70, I'm going to look at him and say, look, disciples who can make disciples. Well, I invite you now to do something. Printed on the inside of the worship order, third page, is what we're calling renewal of baptismal vows.

In the light of the Word of God to us today, I invite you to renew your vow to be a disciple. If you've not been baptized, you'll have an occasion to be baptized by joining our new member class and following with that whole group.

Here's the plan. I'm going to, in a moment, I'm going to ask you to stand, and I'm going to ask you these questions that come from our baptismal liturgy. And then we're going to sing the hymn, I Have Decided to Follow Jesus.

[41 : 45] If during that hymn, you would like Marcia and Greg and I to anoint you with oil and the sign of the cross in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, I invite you to come during the hymn and come up here as an act of rededication.

You don't need to do that, but I invite you to do it. After the hymn, I will then give a benediction, and if there are more people who are going to be coming, we'll sing some more, but those who have already received the sign or are not going to receive can make their way.

If you are here and you need prayer for some healing, it doesn't matter what that is, the ministry team will be over here. After you've received that sign, come and they will minister to you.

Will you stand to renew the vows made on your behalf or the vows you made when you were baptized? Jesus says, I do not call you servants any longer.

Because the servant does not know what the master is doing. But I have called you friends because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me, I chose you.

[42 : 51] And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father may give to you whatever you ask in my name. First question. Do you renounce all evil and the powers in the world which defy God's righteousness and love?

Do you renounce the ways of sin that separate you from the love of God? Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept Him as your Lord and Savior?

Will you be Christ's faithful disciple, obeying His Word and showing His love to your life's end? I will, with God's help. I will, with God's help.