

Danger in the Race: Exhaustion and Distraction

By Earl Radmacher

Speaker 1:

For the few who are off campus guests who have not been here. Dr. Earl Radmacher has ministered not only this week but many, many times at Biola and once again has given of himself and his heart to us. I think one sign of this year's team of speakers is that they have been tremendously accessible and this has always been true of Dr. Earl Radmacher. I noticed that his topic. Another wonderful thing about this team is that they haven't changed their sermons and their topics, which is wonderful because I have been known to introduce messages that were never preached here. And so far we're on a roll.

The title for the evening. And what a great introduction for it is Danger in the Race, Exhaustion and Distraction. If Dr. Radmacher were accused of anything during these brief two days, it might be of giving to the point of exhaustion, but not of distraction, because he is really zeroed in. He has spent numerous hours, as many of you know, giving of himself in question and answer, his small group discussions, and this afternoon I doubt that he had 1 hour between his final session this morning and the evening when he walked in. I appreciate him very much. I know you do will be our last opportunity, this Torrey to thank him. And I hope that you'll do that as he comes and opens the word of God. Once again, Dr. Earl Radmacher.

Earl Radmacher:

Thank you very much. Thank you. Will you turn with me in Hebrews chapter 12? We'll go back to the same text again. Hebrews, the 12th chapter, and in the first session, as we began this race this week we started with running demands, reducing. It demands reducing in two ways by

stripping off the weights and by trimming off the sin pounds. I picked up a piece of verse from Alexander Pope. Many of us remember him for the little verse. A little learning is a dangerous thing, but Pope did write some other things as well. He said, Sin is a monster of such frightful mean, to be hated needs but to be seen, but seen too oft familiar with its face. We first endure, then pity, then embrace. You couldn't get a better bit of verse as a commentary on the readily encircling sin. Now, starting with that, you have had a rather heavy requirement laid before you during these two days. Thankfully, Dr. Allen has put some sav on the wounds that Darryl and I have opened up and you can go out after he finishes believing that there is still hope.

I want tonight to give some words from the text concerning two significant dangers for the runner, the danger of exhaustion and the danger of distraction. The first of them is seen in the last part of the first verse. Hebrews 12:1. I will read the whole of the verse. Therefore, we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, having laid aside every weight and having laid aside the sin which so easily ensnares us, let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

First, the danger of exhaustion. Two things that the writer tells us about the race that will keep us from exhaustion. The first thing he says is that it is an endurance race. It is not a sprint. The word very literally means remaining under the load. It is sometimes translated patience, sometimes endurance, very literally, remaining under the load. In other words, this is a long distance race.

This is not a sprint. It is a marathon. Now many of us, when we think about marathons, think, oh, I'd never make it. I have heard about people who when they hit 20 miles, it's like hitting a concrete wall. And I have seen people literally crawling in at the end of the race. I could never make it. But have you noticed that there are 80 year old people that run marathons, but there are none that run sprints? You see, it is a possibility. We had one marathon runner on our faculty who used to try to get to me in this regard, and he said, Radmacher, anybody that wants to can run a marathon. Even you could run a marathon.

And he said, I'd like to give you something that would help you should you ever decide to try it. He gave me a T-shirt that had five short words on it. The words were Run, but Not Too Fast. Run, but not too fast. And that is the secret of a marathon. Measuring your stride. So you've got enough to go the whole distance and finish. We started with a testimony from Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:27. Let me repeat it again, talking about his desire to run, to win. He concludes by saying, I beat my body and make it my slave, lest that by any means, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified. At that juncture in his life, Paul did not presume that he would finish well. He left open the option that he may blow it. He may be disqualified from the incorruptible crown that he spoke of in the preceding text. So, he wasn't going to take any chances. He was going to rigorously discipline this body, which could be a wonderful slave, but a terrible master.

However, a dozen years later he has a different word, writing from his incarceration, where you might say he was on death row waiting for the executioner, he says to young Timothy, for I am already being poured out as a drink offering. And the time of my departure is at hand. They are

about to come for me. I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Finally there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day and not to me only, but also to all who have loved his appearing. No longer did Paul consider it now only potential. Now, he says it is settled. I have finished. I have fought. I have kept the faith. But in between, he measured his stride. Now, I think one way that I can help us to see what that involves is to try to describe the two. I'm not going to try to describe the physical race, the marathon. I'd need Ron to come and do that for me. You are a marathon runner, aren't you, Ron? One. I knew it. I knew it you could do it.

But they even start off in a different way. Don't they? Have you noticed that? The 100 meters dash, they are down there on all fours and they are as nervous it looks like as can be. And in fact, they are so jumpy that they get off before the gun goes and they pull them back again. And maybe they get off again before it's time and they pull them back. You don't do that three times. But have you noticed they don't do that in a marathon? They hardly know it's time to start. And finally, and you know, we need to get started. Because they've got a long ways to go. They want to get there. And they're really not as concerned many times about how quick they get there. Is that they get there. They want to get there. And that's important. That you get there. That you win. I remember when Frank Shorter lost for the United States and he was figured by everybody to win. The newscaster was calling it and he said, look at the East German. He's catching up with Shorter. A little later, the East German is neck and neck with Shorter.

A little bit later, Shorter is dropping behind. Oh, well, Shorter sees him. He's doing all right. Pretty soon you couldn't see Shorter anymore. And at the end of the race, when the East German

had won just to kind of stick it to us, he sprinted the track twice at the end of the race. And when they asked Shorter what happened? He said, I just didn't measure my stride, right. How do you do that spiritually? Well, I rather expect that during the hours we've spent together now. And as you've listened to appeal after appeal from the word of God, I have no doubt that the Spirit of God has been at work bringing conviction in innumerable ways to your minds and hearts. And you have probably said, I really need to drop that weight or I need to stop playing with that sin. I've got to call it quits there. And maybe with regard to some practice or some habit or some association or whatever it happens to be, you have said there's got to be a change. The devil doesn't like you to do that and he will not give up at that point.

Once you've said to God and yourself, I am going to change there. He will then try to foul up your strategy for change. If you've decided to do it, then mess you up with regard to the strategy. Saw this portrayed very graphically for me at a conference ground in Northern California. This particular conference ground had several different camps going at the same time, the adult and the high school and the junior high and Indian village and all the rest. And they brought the leaders of the various camp into the adult camp to report on what was going on. And everybody wants to outdo the other ones on the great things that are happening. And I remember the junior high leader came in to talk about a decision that had been made in junior high camp of a guy who not only had come to Jesus Christ, but he had been so impressed with the need that man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God that had been driven home to him and he had not been in the word of God ever. And he was going to get into the word of God.

And he vowed that he was going to spend 2 hours a day in the word of God. And this junior high leader shared that with us and the whole adult crowd went up with rejoicing. And praise the Lord and uncontrollably, I said, Oh no! And everybody looked around at me like I was a pagan. Well, what's the matter with you? Can't you appreciate this man's commitment? No, I couldn't. And I couldn't appreciate the people who let him do that. Because they had scheduled him for defeat. He was not going to get 26 hours the next day. He was going to still get 24 hours like he got the day before. And he was using all 24 hours up the day before and the day before that and the day before that. And he was not going to successfully carve 2 hours a day out after this. What a senseless commitment. He'll lose it not by way of decision, but by way of strategy in whipping the devil into warfare.

How much more sensible was a decision of a doctor that meant a great deal to me. He brought three of our four children into this world, and he was one of those doctors that still made house calls and when I would be gone and Ruth would be home alone. And our kids, all four of them had convulsions when they were little kids, and oftentimes they'd wake up in the middle of the night with that kind of convulsive activity, and it's hard to handle that when you're alone and he would come over at night, a busy doctor to help Ruth. And he helped many of the seminary students in many ways. And he said to me when I was in for a physical. He said, you know, I really am not consistent in the word of God. And I couldn't believe it because my wife would testify to you. He was probably the most exciting Sunday school teacher we had in our church. And yet he confessed, he was not faithful in the Word of God. And he said, I really want to do something about it.

He said, But I am so busy and he didn't have to try to prove that to me. I knew it from experience he was busy. He was giving of himself unstintingly. I said, you know, have you ever heard of the track called Seven Minutes with God? No, he hadn't. I said, Well, I'd like to give you a copy. Do you think you could carve out seven minutes a day? He said, yeah, busy as I am, I can get seven minutes. I said, Good, let's start there. He started with seven minutes. He hadn't been in that for just several weeks. When he said, you know, that seven minutes had just gone like that. I had to double it to 15 minutes. It was in 15 minutes for several months when he went to a half hour. A year later, I came in for my next physical, and he said, I have gotten so much out of being in God's word an hour a day. He said, I told the Lord Lord, I can't get any more time. But if you would give me adequate strength for the next day, on 1 hour or less sleep a night, he said, I'd give 2 hours.

This was no sacrifice for him. This was sheer delight. And so he began 2 hours a day. At the time of my next physical, he said, you guys over there at the seminary, you're always getting these tidbits out of the Greek. You got a Greek word here and a Greek word there, and you dig into it and opens up the text. And he says, I don't ever want to teach Greek, but I'd sure like to know all I can about the text. He said, if it's the inerrant word of God, I want to know all I can about it. You suppose somebody could teach me Greek? I said, yeah, I think we could work that out. One of our Greek professors took Dr. Custis and four other doctors who had an interest in doing the same thing. And they met every Friday every Thursday morning at 06:00 for five years and learned Greek. At 50 years of age, he was notified he had a brain tumor, malignant. They opened up his skull, took out a cup of watery mass, closed it back up again, he talked the operation through with the physicians.

Short time after that, he went to sleep on a Thursday night in his wife's arms and woke up in Jesus arms. The church where the funeral service was held was the Henson Memorial Baptist Church in Portland, which was packed out. His brother had the service and he stood up and he said, I know that there are a lot of you people here who are here because my brother was responsible for bringing you to Jesus Christ. We're glad you're here. He said there are some others of you here who my brother has talked to about the Lord, and he has prayed for you. And you haven't trusted the Lord. And he said, I just want to tell you that he's not going to pray for you anymore. And when he said that, I felt a knee come into my back of my seat, and I looked around to see a guy flatted out back there, ash and white. He was one that at that service trusted Christ as his Savior, who my doctor had prayed for for a long time. I went to his wife after the service and I said, Marilyn, is it true that M.L. spent 2 hours a day in the Word of God?

She said, at least two and a half hours a day. A busy doctor, but it started at seven minutes. It's a marathon, not a sprint. But you say, Well, I don't have that kind of equipment. I don't have that kind of brain power. I couldn't do that. Well, let me switch gears for you because in that same church was another lady who when the church announced that I was going to teach a course on Greek for laypeople, was the first one to sign up, and she was mentally retarded. An elderly, mentally retarded lady. I didn't want to offend her by rejecting her for the class. And I thought, Lord, what are you doing to me? What am I going to do with this mentally retarded woman in a class to teach Greek? Well, I took her in. I gave the assignments. She was faithfully there every time. She did what she thought were the requirements. And at the end of the semester, I gave a final examination. I'll never forget her paper. During that semester she had memorized the

alphabet, and as her final examination she transliterated my name Earl D. Radmacher in Greek letters, and I gave her a solid A.

And I believe God did too. You see, she wasn't competing in the race with M.L. Custis. She was only competing with herself and what God had given her. And that dear lady used to come with a cane to church, and I can still see her sitting in the second section in the second row, and she would come with a stenographic notebook, and she would take notes on every message that was preached. You wouldn't be able to read them, but God could. It is required of a steward that he or she be found faithful, faithful to what you have. It's a marathon. You need to measure your stride in managing your gift to complete the race. There's a second thing he says about this race. He says it is a set race. I used to read that wrong. I would read it run with patience or run with endurance, the race that is set before us. And then one day at Don Dombey, where else is a race beside before us?

And I realized that I had put the emphasis on the wrong syllable. And what I needed to say was let us run with patience the race that is set before us. And that little three-letter word set speaks volumes to me because it means appointed by my heavenly coach, who is sovereign overall. Maybe some of you remember a heavyweight wrestler for the United States in the Olympics by the name of Chris Taylor. I don't know why he stood out to me so vividly, but he was 480 pounds of muscle. I noticed in the Olympics that they never answered Chris Taylor in the 100 meter dash, and I thought that was downright brilliant of the Olympic coaches. And I noticed, on the other hand, that some of those string bean people that ran the 100 meters dash, who you

couldn't see if they turned sideways, were not put in the heavyweight wrestling arena. And I thought that was really clever of the Olympic coaches.

Those people are really smart. They don't put heavyweight wrestlers in a 100 meters dash, and they don't put 100 meters dash runners in the heavyweight wrestling. Those are smart people. And I thought, Isn't it too bad that my coach, coach Jesus isn't that smart? Wouldn't it be neat if he didn't put us in events that we weren't equipped for? I have to conclude, if I listen to what I often hear in the Christian congregation that that must be true, because in spite of his commands, I often hear it was more than I could bear. He gives a command about commitment in marriage, and we take an alternative route, and we say it was just more than I could bear. And so at that point, I have to either say that person is a liar or God is a liar, for one of the other is because God's word says 1 Corinthians 10:13. There is no testing taken you, but such as is common to man. But God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tested above that you're able, but also will with the testing, make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it.

And thus, if I charge God with putting me in an event that I cannot bear, either I'm lying or God's lying. And therefore, if I charge God that way, I need to go wash my mouth out with soap and ask for forgiveness. Dr. Allen told you this morning a little vignette from Rachel. I wish he had time to tell you the whole story of when he left his wife, who was a pediatrics nurse in the hospital with Rachel on a 24 hours around the clock sit in while he would try to take care of that farm that he told you about and the goats and the pony and the pigs and all the rest and milk the goats and keep teaching his Hebrew classes and drive the kids back and forth and try to get meals and whatever else it took. And one day as he was driving home, the doctor had given him the

news that Rachel was terminal. And I think it was Brucey, if I'm not mistaken, Ron, that said, Daddy, what did the doctor mean by terminal?

And Ron said, what do you say now? And he said I was trying to determine whether that water out there was on my eyeballs or on the windshield as I pulled to the side of the road and was perhaps tempted to say, Why, why, Lord? But instead of why Lord, in submission to a sovereign God who never sends us anything that he has not first screened through his infinite knowledge and love and power, said, what now, Lord? For he said to say why Lord would border on blasphemy knowing what I know about God. The only appropriate answer to this God was what now, Lord? That'll make all the difference in the race. It may save you from being derailed or disqualified because it is a set race, an appointed race by a sovereign God whose love for me is unconditional. He is immutable. What a God. And Solder the coach says to me as he sends me out into the track. And I've been thinking about those weights and the sin, he said, Now plan your strategy.

This is a long race. Measure your stride and you'll win. The danger of exhaustion. Now he doesn't stop there because he bolsters that with another clue that will help me to not be exhausted. If I can keep this other one in right perspective. Verses two and three highlight it. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. The late professor of Greek at Moody Bible Institute, Kenneth Weiss did many books. One book he did was Untranslatable Riches from the New Testament, and then he proceeded to translate them. Never quite been able to figure out the title of that book, but what he meant was that there were these little nuances of thought that were real gems if you caught hold of it, that cannot nicely be put into another

language. And you have one of them here. For the word, looking unto Jesus, may seem to be the simple word to look, but it is not that.

It is the word off horaho, and the word horaho means to look. And he puts a preposition on the front of that, From. To look from. If the duty of the runner only involved fixing your eyes on Jesus with no other attraction, it would be simple. Why wouldn't one want to look at someone as beautiful and wonderful and magnificent as Jesus? Why would I want to look away? But the fact is, I am to live in the world where I must be aware of many things that I dare not fix on. And so the writer puts it neatly when he says, look away from, unto, or if I may expand that look away from the many things that I must be aware of if I'm going to live in this world unto Jesus. And that is tough. There are many things that I must be aware of if I'm going to live in this world that I dare not focus on. But I must be aware of. And thus the strategy here is to get me to see that I must be aware of them. But I dare not focus on them. And that requires me to constantly be focusing. Focusing. Focusing on that which I want to be the object of my attention.

And that picture in which Jesus is the object will have many other things in it, but nothing else can safely be the focus. Have you noticed that cameramen do not focus their camera for the year? Nobody, when 1987 started, that's any kind of a cameraman said, When I'm going to focus this camera for 1987, nor did he focus it for the summer or even focus it for a month. Or focus it for a week or focus it for a day. He focuses it picture by picture by picture. It is a moment by moment by moment task for a good cameraman. He may have a lot of other things in that picture, but there's something on which he wants to focus, and that's the craft of the good spiritual marathon runner here. He must keep his focus on Christ in the midst of being aware of many other things.

Jesus put it well in Luke 11 and verse 34, when he said, the lamp of the body is the eye.

Therefore, when your eye is good or clear, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, when it's unclear, your body also is full of darkness.

One of the world's leading architects, Marcel Breuer, put that in his framework of thought when he said, No muscle of the body can relax if the eye is uncomfortable. No muscle of the body can relax if the eye is uncomfortable. Or James put it this way. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways, not in some of his ways. In all of his ways. I've got to have singular focus. Or I will stagger like a drunk. If you've ever watched the inebriated person at the police station being asked to walk the white line, you know what I mean. We don't need a personal testimony at this point, but perhaps you have seen him pick up his foot and put it right down there on the line and pick up the other one and put it right down there on the line. And for everything that's in him, he thinks he's putting it on the line, both of them. But there's only one. And consequently he staggers like a drunk.

And a Christian that is not single-visioned is in God's sight like a drunk. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. I've got to have singular focus if I'm going to run to win and I've got to figure out what I must be aware of but can't focus on. Now, let me just throw out some ideas to you at that point. Any one of you could think this through with me. You could develop this area yourself without any trouble, without any help from me. But let me do it with you. What are some of the things that I must be aware of that I dare not focus on? But one most obvious one is this body of mine. Back in the spring last May, when I was here in chapel, I spoke to you on increasing mental health through prophecy from 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. And I talked about that

verse where Paul says, My outer man is decaying, but my inner man is being renewed. And he said, I don't look at the things which are seen, my outer man, but at the things which are not seen. A new body eternal in the heavens fashioned like unto the glorious body of Jesus Christ.

In other words, he focused on the unseen, not the seen. Now that's not easy, and I am finding as I get older, it's becoming more difficult for me. I don't think the problem is nearly as bad for most of you as it is for some of us. Ron can still run the marathon. Give him a few more years and he'll be only on the marathon. He'll be off of the other things because his body, as good as it looks now will continue to decay. I speak by way of personal testimony. I mentioned to you then that 25 years ago, when I went to Western Seminary, I not only had hair, but it was dark. This is what seminary will do to you, but that's not even the beginning of the story. If I were to tell you all about me, I could do a veritable organ recital for you on the organs of my body. And I would start with the edema in my ankles and the diuretics that I need to take to get the water out of my system. And I'd come up my body to my dilated inferior vena cava.

And I didn't know I even had one of those before. But now I know it's dilated, and I come a little further to the back, and I've got a herniated third disc. Oh, I know what that means. And I go a little further up and I've got a prolapsed mitral valve in my heart. That's a heart murmur. And I know that's bad because the Bible says, do all things without murmuring and disputing. And I come a little further up and I've got a slit across my throat where they did a thyroidectomy. And I go a little further up and I've got sinus drainage from my head, down, on my nodules, on my vocal cords and then flames those and, oh, this body is a mess. And if I'm not careful, I can focus

on it too much. And there are a lot of people who are doing that they're veritable hypochondriacs or I can lack good sense and not be aware that I even have one.

And then I'll be in trouble, too. So every year I need to check with my cardiologist and find out if my heart is any bigger than it was the year before. And if I'm in danger. And forget about it in between. I was visiting a lady in Arizona. This was many years ago, so there's no danger of identification. But in Apache Junction in Arizona, she took me back into her bedroom and showed me two shelves on two sides of her bed that had jars of organs of her body that she had removed that were pickled. She was saving them. That woman had lost the focus. I need to be aware of, but not focus on. And that may save you from being disqualified somewhere along the line. Catch it. But I'm not the only one that gets in the way of a right focus. You get in my way. I trust most of you are my friends and friends get in my way. If I'm not careful, I can become helplessly dependent upon them, or enemies can get in my way. I hope none of them are here.

But if I'm not very careful, I can lose my focus through friends or enemies. A friend of mine in Montana had come to a new pastorate and he was introducing himself around the town, and he talked to one pastor in town and they began to talk about who they knew and they were getting acquainted that way. And my friend mentioned my name, to which the other person responded by saying, oh, he's not even a Christian. It's obvious that is true, isn't it? As another friend of mine told me, it's plain to see from your face that you're continuing your road to liberalism. See, everybody has their scenario, don't they? So this fella said, Well, he's not even a Christian. And when my friend said what the other person said, I felt my blood pressure begin to rise. And there was a question in the making. And the question was going to be who said that I'll get him.

But God helped me. God helped me. And instead of saying who said that. The words that actually came out were, Don't tell me who said that. I don't need to know that. I've got enough garbage I'm carrying around already. I don't need anymore. Be careful of your curiosity at that point. You may ask to carry more garbage than you need in the race. You may get scuttled. Does that mean I shouldn't be aware of my enemies? Oh, there are some that I need to be aware of, and Paul was aware of them. If I go back to that fourth chapter in 2 Timothy again, I pick up these kind of words. He says, Alexander the Coppersmith did me much harm. He knew him. He knew him by name. May the Lord repay him according to his works. Oh, that's nasty. That's quite a judgment on him, isn't it? And furthermore, he put it in Holy Scripture for everybody else to read for every generation.

When Alexander and Paul talk this over in heaven, it's going to be interesting. Verse 15. You also must be aware of him [audio abruptly stops] who had deserted him for demons has forsaken me, having loved this present world, has departed for Thessalonica. Crescens for Galatia. Titus for Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus, et cetera, et cetera. And then these rather sorrowful words in verse 16. At my first defense, no one stood with me, but all forsook me. I want to talk to Paul about that one. Can you believe that the Apostle Paul at his first defense, no one stood with him? No one. All alone. Aren't you glad he wasn't dependent on his friends to hang in? What caused him to hang in? The next statement. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me so that the message might be preached fully through me and that all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

No friends stood with him, but Jesus did. And he is enough. When everyone else fails. You see, I want friends. I need friends, but I don't need them helplessly. And I need to know who my enemies are. But I dare not focus on them. Go back to the race again. You're doing the 440 relay. Your team is on the last leg of it, and they're coming in victoriously. And on your side, your people are cheering them on. And your runner stops and takes a bath and says, thank you, friends. You've never seen that, have you? Only in the Christian race. Or if the other side is booing and the runner stops and says, oh, yeah, you want to fight? You've never seen it, have you? Only in the Christian race. You see, isn't that runner aware of the ones that are booing and the ones that are cheering? Certainly he's aware of it. And by the way, it makes a difference. That's why the Celtics tend to lose in L.A. and the Lakers lose in Boston.

But you see, they don't focus over there. They hear it, they're aware of it, aware of it. But their focus is on the goal. It's hard at times, isn't it? Because sometimes they lose their focus and come off the floor fighting. Be careful that you don't get disqualified. I can get in my way. You can get in my way. My friends can get in my way, my enemies can get in my way. Then I could go on. And so could you. For some people, it's issues that will distract them. In Portland recently, in Oregon, we have been fighting Bill 2325 in the legislature of our state that provides, quote, gay rights that to me are obnoxious and the people turned it down and now our governor is threatening to make an executive order to put it through. We will fight it. But I hope we won't lose the focus because I don't want to be known primarily as anti-homosexual. I want to be known as pro Jesus Christ. And if I become primarily the former and not the latter, I've lost the focus.

We're dealing with the issue of abortion, and it is a tragedy. To think that 20 million people, innocent victims have been murdered since the Wade versus Rhode decision, and I want to do everything I can to turn that around. We have one faculty member who keeps that before us. We can't all do that, so one helps us in that area. And I've gone down to join in the group that was picketing, but I've seen some people picket and they really bothered me. They go down and with nasty attitudes wave signs of murderer. I don't think that that somehow keeps the focus on Jesus, but I do think I've got something to offer to those gals going in that place. I know they're hurting, and I want to offer Jesus Christ to them, and I want to offer some help. I want them to know we have compassion on them, and I want the homosexual to know that we have compassion. I want the AIDS victim to know that we have compassion, and I want God to help me to show them that God forgives sin and that Christians have compassion.

But I don't want to lose perspective on what sin is. I want to think clearly about sin and what sin is. I want to think clearly about grace. I want to understand that where sin abounded grace much more abounded. And I want to keep the focus on Jesus. And I believe that every opportunity I run into is an opportunity to give glory to God if I'll think through the issue. But I better get my brain in gear, and I better plan a strategy. There are people today who get so absorbed in demon exorcism that they forget that you don't become like Jesus Christ by looking at the devil. Jim Packer, when he talks about the Middle Ages, characterizes them as those who practice devil dodging exercises and anti-Satanic maneuvers. And they became so consumed with the devil that they developed a doctrine of the atonement that lasted for 1000 years that we would consider heresy today. And that is the ransom to Satan theory.

Oh, they understood that Satan was real, and they understood that he was powerful. But they gave so much concentration to him that he became the focus of their thinking. And he became the object of the atonement and that heresy. Be careful that you think right. It's even possible to think wrong within the members of the Triune God. It's possible for some to put so much attention on the Holy Spirit that they forget that the one that God, the Holy Spirit and the one that God, the Father wants to have the preeminence is Jesus Christ. Let me suggest to you that the Holy Spirit would never start a Holy Ghost movement. He would start a Jesus Christ movement. Some of my Pentecostal friends down here in Southern California shared with me that they were concerned in their particular orientations that two things were happening.

They said, number one, we see that an experience is being substituted for a body of truth as our unifying principle, and that bothers us. And then they said, the second thing that bothers us is that Jesus Christ is being shoved off of center stage and being replaced by the Holy Spirit. You say, how could that be wrong? Ah, because Jesus is the only member of the Trinity that became incarnate. He is that which may be seen of that which can't be seen. He's the image of the invisible God. No man has seen God at any time. You want to be holy like God is holy. Don't think about some kind of esoteric concept of holiness. Think of Jesus Christ, and you'll have a model of it. You see, holiness sometimes is hard to get hold of, isn't it? But Christ puts it in human form. You can get hold of that. Let me give this illustration and I conclude. I had the delightful experience of meeting a lady here whose husband is in Talbot now who I had the opportunity of having a ministry to in 1976 in Australia.

And it was a delight to see them here. And he has come for a couple of master's degrees and a couple of doctorates that he's working on now and intending to go back to Australia. It made those two weeks that I spent or three weeks I spent in Australia freezing to death in the middle of the winter fairly worthwhile. I left on July the 3rd 1976, from Philadelphia and missed July 4, 1976, our 200th birthday when I crossed the international date line and ended up in Australia in July the 5th and I had meetings every day on spiritual gifts, and consequently I was absorbed with the subject, going from church to church and conference to conference. And I'll never forget going to a Church of Christ in downtown Melbourne. And in order to get there, I had to go through the campus of the University of Melbourne in the middle of which was a very dark park. And the only thing I remember about that park was that as I drove through it. I looked to that end and I saw this huge statue that was magnificent. You could not help having your attention drawn to it. I got to the other side of the park and I thought, what a fantastic piece of art.

And then it dawned on me. I could never have seen that piece of art if it hadn't been for the lights. But at no point as I gazed, did I even think once about the lights. I only was focused on that which the lights lit up. The statue. Those lights were doing their job. For if those lights had drawn my attention to the lights, they would have failed in their job. And God brought back to me the relationship of the Spirit of God and the Son of God and God the Father. It is the work of the Spirit of God to throw the light on Jesus Christ. That which may be seen of that which can't be seen. And therefore no man speaking by the Spirit will demean Jesus. And no man can say Jesus is Lord indeed but by the Holy Spirit. There's the beautiful balance. You see all the way through whether it's the simple thing of my body or my friends or my enemies or issues that I deal with or Satan or the persons of the Godhead. All the way through the Scripture would say,

look away unto Jesus. Look away unto Jesus. He is that which may be seen of that which can't be seen. And the only place he can be seen is in this priceless book.

I commend it to you. May it be more and more real to you. And may you, like Simon Peter of old, have expressed about you that which Jesus said, Now you are clean through the word which I've spoken unto you. Let's pray. Will you stand with me as we do? Father, we stand before you with very grateful hearts. Grateful for your faithfulness, grateful Lord for your mercy, which is new every day. Grateful that you never go back on your promises. Grateful that you never give us more than we can bear. Grateful that the grace is always sufficient for the test. Oh, God, what a magnificent, majestic God you are. Father, we want these hours of these days to be beneficial for us and for our land and for your Kingdom and for your glory. Help us, O God, to practice that kind of reducing that will enable us to run without being disqualified and help us, Father, to strategize how we will overcome that by your grace, we may win. And we will be careful to give you praise and honor and glory through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen and Amen.