

Young Men

Graduation Message Sunday June 11th, 2006

1). Today we come to recognize the achievement of four young men in our midst who have reached a point of transition in their lives, having graduated from high school – being ready now to go on to more in depth study.

a). And as I thought about this it seemed to me that their situation is not dissimilar to the one we all find ourselves in

b). Heb 6:1 ¶ *Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection,*

c). We are all at a place where we have heard and understood ‘the elementary principles of Christ’, and we are going ‘on to perfection’ – not abandoning what we have learned, but having these elementary principles as our foundation.

d). So the word, that I ask these four young men in particular to pay close attention to, is a word for all of us as we continue in this race of faith.

2). Ps 119:9 ¶ BETH. *How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. 10 ¶ With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! 11 ¶ Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You! 12 ¶ Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes! 13 ¶ With my lips I have declared All the judgments of Your mouth. 14 I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, As much as in all riches. 15 I will meditate on Your precepts, And contemplate Your ways. 16 I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.*

a). Let us consider some things here – the opening question, looking at the original language, would allow itself to be translated – ‘How can a young man remain innocent in his race?’

b). Remembering - 1Co 9:24 ¶ *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.*

c). And the answer to our opening question is in the last half of the verse – ‘By taking heed according to Your word’ – and this we may remember is the subject of the first of the warnings given to Christians in the Book of Hebrews – the very thing we had looked at last week.

d). We will also note at the beginning of v10 that David speaks of seeking God with a whole heart – whole heartedly

i/ Ps 119:2 *Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart!*

e). And then the concern – ‘Oh let me not wander from Your commandments’ – again our warning from Hebrews - Heb 2:1 ¶ *Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.*

3). Jesus prayed this with regards to His disciples - Joh 17:15 *"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.*

a). And for these young men, and for all of us, here is a possible dilemma – we have to live and function in the world.

b). We have to pay bills, go to the store, tend the yard, there are the pressures and commitments of work – there will be lectured to attend, papers to write, examinations to pass – and we are not supposed to abandon these.

c). But in the midst, we must keep a proper perspective and keep our minds focused on the reality of scripture - 1Jo 2:17 *And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

d). Even the most brilliant career will have a termination point and within the endlessness of eternity is nothing but a faint memory – but that which God has set in place for those who would fear Him have implications that stretch beyond the Millennial Kingdom to the farthest reaches of eternity.

e). To work, to study, to succeed in this world is fine, but never at the expense of the world to come.

f). Mt 6:33 *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

g). It remains true - Mt 16:26 *"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*

h). I cannot stress enough for all of us where our priority is to be and how important it is for us not to ignore ‘so great a salvation’

i). 2Pe 1:10 *Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 12 ¶ For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.*

4). And I will not be negligent this week to remind us of the final three warnings from the Book of Hebrews as they are especially pertinent to our topic.

5). The third warning we find in Hebrews concerns our moving on to maturity if God permits - Heb 6:1 ¶ *Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits.*

a). And this is really where we have already found ourselves, going on to maturity in respect of the Word of the Kingdom as our priority in the midst of the demands of our daily lives.

b). The promise here is great - Ps 25:14 *The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, And He will show them His covenant.*

i/ 1Pe 1:9 *receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.*

ii/ Jos 14:14 *Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.*

c). But please note that the warning here for us is that God may not permit us to go on to perfection.

d). This is not an arbitrary decision on God's part, but an expression of His love and mercy, knowing the consequences for the one who goes on to perfection and then turns away from it.

e). But let me encourage us all today – if we remain steadfast and immovable, if we will remain faithful to our calling, if we will wholly follow ‘the Lord God of Israel’, if we will seek His Kingdom first, we will have nothing to fear at His Judgment Seat.

f). And let us understand that although we may escape the severest punishment by not being permitted to go on, we would still spend 1000 years in the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth – this is not an experience we should settle for because we are too lazy to put in the effort now.

g). When we think that God the Father has offered us coheirship with God the Son in the coming Kingdom, that He is looking to adopt us as His own firstborn son – with all the rights that go with that – how could we possibly settle for the baubles and trinkets that this world has to offer?

6). Our fourth warning deals with willful sinning - Heb 10:26 *For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

a). Now please note this is not willfully sinning in a general sense, but rather willfully sinning against the knowledge of the truth – knowing what God has said about the age to come and our inheritance and then deliberately sinning against this truth by refusing to believe Him.

b). Until the conclusion of the dispensation the Lord continues in His High Priestly Ministry, after the order of Aaron, in the Heavenly Tabernacle, making atonement for the sins of the saved. And throughout this time it remains true - 1Jo 1:9 *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

c). Within this remit our confessed sins, even those we do willfully, are forgiven and eradicated.

d). King David, was as you remember, an adulterer and a murderer and yet still was considered by God as ‘a man after His own heart’ – the reason being his readiness to come to repentance.

e). Ps 51:1 ¶ <<To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.>> *Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me.*

f). And David’s realization of whom he had sinned against

g). Ps 51:4 *Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight-That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge.*

h). David’s sin, great as it was, was confessed and repented of – God in His mercy forgave him. And God’s forgiveness kept the way clear for David to enter the Millennial Kingdom in a place of honor –

Eze 37:25 *"Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their*

children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever.

7). On the other hand understanding our calling and knowing what God has said about our inheritance in all its facets, and then rejecting it is a sin against the purpose for our creation and the purpose for our salvation and from God's perspective we will have - *trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?*

a). Our picture of this is the religious leaders of Jesus' day.

b). They knew full well who He was and why He had come and yet attributed the miraculous signs which pointed to the Kingdom being at hand as works of the devil - Mt 12:22 ¶ *Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. 23 And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" 24 Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.".....31 "Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. 32 "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.*

c). Note this sin would not be forgiven them in this age – the period of time leading up to the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom, or in the age to come – the Millennial Kingdom itself.

d). But what about after the Kingdom, on into eternity? Jesus is very specific in the boundaries He sets for this lack of forgiveness. He mentions nothing of eternity as the Religious Leaders were eternally saved and sin in the realm of eternity is never an issue.

e). As it was for them so will it be now for anyone turning away from what they know to be the truth, with the same outcome.

8). Our fifth and final warning in the Book of Hebrews has to do with the rights of the firstborn – remembering that we are dealing with the rights of a firstborn son of God and all that this encompasses.

Heb 12:15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; 16 lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. 17 For you know that afterward,

when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

a). We will remember that the rights of the firstborn are to be particularly prized, yet Esau, for the temporary gratification of his flesh, gave up his birthright as a firstborn – and once having given it up there was no way to regain it.

b). He sought it with tears but here was no repentance on the part of his father – his father would not change his mind and reinstate him.

c). In respect of ourselves then we should know that we are not looking at just one instant of giving in to the flesh, we have already seen that Christ's High Priestly Ministry would take care of that, but we are looking rather at someone who has gone on to maturity, who understands what God is offering them as a firstborn son and yet chooses to live according to the flesh rather than according to the Spirit.

d). *Ga 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

e). This warning that God brings to us by Paul, through the church in Galatia, is in respect of those who have had the gospel of the glory of Christ preached to them and yet in their lifestyle choose to practice 'the works of the flesh'.

f). I had thought for a long time that for our young people the works of the flesh constituted a greater risk than for us older ones as the very nature of their youth meant they had much more temptation to face.

g). This thought however is wrong, and I don't want our young people, especially our four young men to fall into this deception, nor do I want the rest of us to fall into the deception of complacency

h). The evidence of scripture remains the irrevocable truth
1Co 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

i). For both young and old and everyone in between scripture remains true - *Ro 8:13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

j). Do not cast away the rights of the firstborn for the gratification of the flesh.

k). We all have the same narrow path to walk and the same narrow gate to enter by – age does not alter that.

l). Jer 17:5 ¶ *Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man And makes flesh his strength, Whose heart departs from the LORD.*

9). Finally, for our four young men – God has provided protection for you and I urge you to embrace it - 1Pe 5:5 ¶ *Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. 8 ¶ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.*

a). You remain under the authority of your parents until you marry – listen to their counsel and be obedient to their wishes, in this is your safety.

b). To rebel against your parents is to rebel against God.

c). To do so would align you with the enemy of our souls – you would in fact be choosing him as your father.

10). I implore you to take heed of that Word of God which you have heard Jude 1:3 ¶ *Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.*

a). Fight that good fight of faith and lay hold of that crown of life that awaits you – be encouraged – be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might – put on the whole armor of God

b). Isa 51:7 *"Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, You people in whose heart is My law: Do not fear the reproach of men, Nor be afraid of their insults. 8 For the moth will eat them up like a garment, And the worm will eat them like wool; But My righteousness will be forever, And My salvation from generation to generation."*

11). Four to come out with their parents

a). Fathers to pray a blessing over them

b). All under 30 to come and pray for them – one person to pray

c). Everyone else to come – one person to pray

d). Presentation of gifts - Don