

Choose Jesus

- *II Timothy 2:15*

- **This morning we celebrate our graduates & their accomplishments.**
 - I will be speaking primarily to them this morning; but rest assured, the message is meant for us all.
- **This is a time of great celebration in your lives & in the lives of your family b/c of the huge accomplishment that you have made by completing your high school & college educations.**
 - I want you to be proud of your accomplishment & thankful to be where you are b/c many have not chosen the road you have chosen in completing their education.
 - God has blessed each of you & allowed you the knowledge to excel & now to be honored as graduates.
- **Heather, Chase & Zach, this is one of hopefully many great accomplishments in your life. Devin, just a few years ago, you accomplished this same goal & now you received another degree & reached another plateau in your life.**
- **And as you sit here this morning with this phase of your life completed, I will remind you that you have only begun to learn & in actuality this learning process will continue throughout the rest of your life.**
 - You have heard this statement from your parents & grandparents I am sure ... “I wish I knew then what I know now.” Though that’s a statement no one likes to hear, I must confess there’s a lot of truth to it.
 - There is a room full of people today you could write a book on life experiences & suggestions that they have for you as you embark on your adult life.
 - But God has given you your life so that you might make your own decisions & hopefully choose to follow after Him.
- **To graduate from something means that you are going to something. And for each of you, the next steps you make & the choices you decide on in the next 5-10 years will shape the rest of your life.**
 - What you have accomplished is great & should be celebrated, but now you must build on the right foundation from this moment forward, and that is what I will be spending some time on this morning.
 - Many young people make the grave mistake when entering adulthood that they no longer need God & begin to drift from Him in their personal relationships & they drift also from church. Please don’t make this mistake. You will need Him more in the years ahead than you have ever needed Him before.
 - A writer wrote a column about investments & stated,
 - that a plain bar of iron was worth only about \$5.
 - Made into a horseshoe, that same bar of iron is worth about \$11.
 - Made into screwdrivers, it may be worth around \$15.
 - Made into surgical equipment, could be worth upwards of \$3,500.
 - The same is true of you. Your life & your testimony can be worth a lot or a little based on who & what you allow to shape your lives.

- The same writer added that iron bars don't make themselves into horseshoes or screwdrivers or other equipment. They need a master craftsman to shape & mold them & he will determine their value & their worth.
- I would tell you this morning, you also need a Master Craftsman to shape & mold your lives.
- So who are those who are worth investing in your lives?

1. Your Parents

- Each of you have had the privilege of having a father & a mother who cared enough about you that they poured themselves into you to have a part in who you are today.
 - Your parents have taught you from an early age the importance of education, manners, respect, and of course the importance of God.
- They have led you the best way they knew how, though often times you did not agree, but through their efforts you can look back now & be thankful for the sacrifices they have made to get you to this point in your life.
- They have been your supporters, your encouragers, your disciplinarians; but through it all, you can contribute at least a part of this great accomplishment that we celebrate today to the parents & the grandparents who so dearly love you.
- They have seen your life as important enough to invest their time & money & love so that you might enjoy this accomplishment & many more throughout your years.

2. Your Teachers

- Obviously, your teachers have also played an extremely important part in your life to this point b/c they have been the ones, day in & day out, week in & week out, who have remained faithful in teaching you the things that were most important so that you might get to this day in your life.
- They pushed you & gave their best efforts in getting you to study & to do your best ... and b/c of their faithfulness, here you are today.
- These people have also invested greatly into your lives for 12 years to help shape you into model citizens.
- **Your parents, your teachers, your Sunday school teachers, your youth leaders, your Pastor ... these are all people who have cared for you & did their very best to direct you & change you into something more valuable.**
- **But I must confess, we are all limited by what we can do & I want you to realize today that you are also limited by what you can do to shape your life. The One who can make your life worth living, the only One who can make you truly successful, is Jesus Christ.**

3. Jesus Christ

- We believe in you & we will pray for you & encourage you; but it is God who must direct & shape your lives. It is God who is worthy to trust your life to. It is God & God alone who can transform your life into a vessel that is worthy to give Him honor & praise.
- But you must make a choice as to who will entrust your life to. Whose hands will you place the clay of your life in & allow them complete control of your life?
 - In the days ahead you will be faced with some extremely important decisions:
 - Will I choose to further my education, and if so, where will I go?
 - If I choose an occupation, to what field will I begin my career?
 - Will I work as I am going to school?

- What type of person do I want to have a relationship with?
 - And these are important decisions, and no doubt some of these will have to be answered rather quickly over the next few months.
- But the greatest question you will answer as a young person and the greatest question for you adults is who you will give your life to.
 - I'm not talking about a mate or even an occupation.
 - I am talking about whether you will give your life to this world or surrender completely to God.
 - This world will be competing for your life. This world will make you promises of happiness & success.
 - But Jesus Christ gave His life for you & it is in Him alone where you will find true happiness & joy.
- READ SCRIPTURE
- John Adams said, "There are two types of education: One should teach us how to make a living, and the other how to live." That's what this Book is for, to teach us how to live.
- The term "*Study*" used here in II Timothy 2 means to be earnest and zealous and dedicated in your action. It means to be sincere & to take the choices of life seriously.
- And then Paul goes on to give us 3 reasons why we are to take this command so seriously.
 1. "Approved unto God"
 - a. Just to be honest with you, so much of your lives will be focused on pleasing teachers & pleasing parents & pleasing your supervisor & pleasing your future mate. And though all of these people are important & we should desire to please them, our greatest aim should be to seek to please God with our lives.
 - b. Don't get so caught up in life that you lose track of making sure that you are pleasing God in all that you do.
 - i. I Corinthians 10:31 – "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."
 - c. Your greatest achievements in the eyes of man pale in comparison to pleasing your Heavenly Father. Seek to honor & glorify Him with your lives.
 2. "Needeth not to be ashamed"
 - a. This refers to the result of inspection of one's work.
 - b. If you are planning your future right now, if you are thinking about what course you want to follow in life, ask for God's direction in your life.
 - i. I want your prayer to be, "Lord, help me to be the person that You want me to be."
 - ii. "I want to marry the person You want me to marry."
 - iii. "I want to be in the center of Your will. I don't want to go out there and blow it. Help me to do Your will."
 - c. When we attempt to plan our life with no involvement from God, we are setting ourselves up for disaster & we will make a mess of our lives. God's plans for you are better than anything you could ever plan for yourself.
 - d. Timothy is commanded to be diligent to do his work so well that he will have no cause for shame when it is inspected by God. Make sure that your life is lived out the same way.
 3. "Rightly dividing the word of truth"

- a. It is imperative that if you have not already committed yourself to this precious Book, that you do so today.
 - i. One of the great preachers of America, Dwight Moody, stated, “The Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible.”
- b. Make sure that the choices you make in life are in accordance with this book.
 - i. The relationships you have need to line up with this Book.
 - ii. The business ethics you will learn should come from this Book.
 - iii. The morals & standards that you develop in this life should certainly come from this Book.
- c. Let me also encourage you to honor & obey this ENTIRE Book. We believe that this complete Bible is the inspired Word of God.
 - i. Make sure you do not twist the scriptures to support your opinions or the opinions of others.
 - ii. Instead, allow this Book to dictate your actions.
- If you will trust your life to Christ & obey this Book, God will do a great work in your life.
- In the book of Luke, we are given the parable of the Prodigal Son & for sake of time this morning, we will not cover the story in its entirety.
- But in summary, as the young man became of age, he chose to go his own way, take his life into his own hands, and forsake the direction of those who loved him most. And this one choice left him with many consequences.
 - Luke 15:11-32
- Now the Father forgave him, and eventually the young man came back home, but the consequences remained.
- Remember that the choices you make, both today & in the future, have consequences tied to them, but not all consequences are bad.
 - If you choose to live for God, the consequences for that is He will bless your life & in turn you will be a blessing to others.
 - John 12:26 – “If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.”
 - If you commit your life to God, He can do far more with your life than you could ever do on your own.
 - If you choose to serve God & give Him your life, you will be a great success.
- **Parents & Grandparents of these graduates, though you have done a great job up to this point, your job is not complete, for now it is truly time to trust God with their lives.**
 - They have been under your shelter for all of their life, but now it is time for them to spread their wings.
 - And as they embark on their new life, it will be more crucial than ever to make sure that you continue to pray for God’s direction & protection in their life daily.
- **Church, I ask you this morning to be faithful to pray for these graduates that God’s hand of protection will continue to be upon them & that they will always serve Him with all their lives.**