

Choosing The High Road

- *Matthew 4:19*

- Today is a very special day as we honor our graduates for their accomplishments & we pray for them as they take their next steps in education & adulthood.
- I have had the privilege to watch each of you grow up in this church & now to stand here as your Pastor & you accomplishing this great milestone in your life makes me feel extremely old ... but I am very proud of each of you.
- As we celebrate your accomplishments today, each of you have goals & plans that you hope to accomplish in other educational goals or in beginning your carrier.
 - Let me say this morning that the decisions that you make in the next 5-10 years of your life will more than likely set a course for the rest of your life.
 - That's why it is so important that you make clear choices, good choices, and more importantly Godly choices.
- As you look back on your life today, you have grown up in a church that loves you, you are surrounded by people who have prayed for you & directed you, and now as you enter this next phase of your life, you will show what you have learned & what is most important to you.
 - In essence, today you stand at a crossroads as such & you hopefully have already made the choice as to what road you will take.
 - I will remind you that there are only 2 roads, but these roads lead to very different lives & different consequences.
 - One, is a low road. It is a path that is followed by many, it is broad and seemingly the easiest path to follow. But along this road is trouble, danger, and its final destination will only lead you to destruction.
 - The other road is a high road. It is a narrow road that you will find few people choose to travel. But this road is filled with peace, true joy and happiness, and most of all its destination will lead you to a place called Heaven.
- These 2 roads are facing each of you today. The question I have for you this morning is, "Which road will you choose?"
 - I will not waste any time urging you today to take the High Road. The High Road is a road where Christ walks. It is a clean & pure road. A road that will lead to lasting happiness.
 - I have seen many students like yourselves stand at these roads.
 - Some have chosen the low road & wound up wasting their lives, ruining their testimony & never enjoying God's best for their lives.
 - But others have chosen the High Road, and today they are being used by God & are a blessing to others & a joy to God.
- **READ SCRIPURE**
- In our text, we see Jesus standing before Simon & Andrew & He commands them to do something very specific.
 - Now there was nothing necessarily special about these 2 men, just ordinary fisherman.
 - But Jesus desired to make something special of their lives, and here He bids them, "Follow Me."
 - Because they chose to follow after Jesus that day, their lives in-turn pointed others to Christ & we find their names written in God's Holy Word.
 - Today, Jesus still stands before you today & He bids you to follow Him.
 - The road that you choose will determine your character and your destiny.
 - Lets look in detail at the High Road this morning ...

1. The High Road Is The Road Of Satisfaction

a. Pleasure Only Leaves You Empty

- i.** The Old Testament tells of a man by the name of Solomon who had wealth, power, riches ... he had it all.
- ii.** And yet when he came to the end of his life in brokenness & disappointment he exclaimed, "All is vanity." In other words all of his accomplishments & fame still did not fill the void that only Christ can fill. Nothing but Christ will EVER bring you lasting happiness.
- iii.** Then in the New Testament we read of a rich young ruler who had wealth, he had friends, he had morals, he kept every letter of the law, but he comes to Jesus essentially saying, "Lord, I'm not satisfied. What must I do to be truly satisfied & happy?"
- iv.** What I am telling you today is this. These 2 men found out after searching their entire lives that there is no satisfaction on the low road.
 - 1.** Hebrews 11:25 – "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;"

b. Build Your Foundation On Jesus Christ

- i.** Alexander the Great, at the age of 32, had conquered the known world. Yet history records that he became discouraged & unsatisfied b/c there were no more worlds to conquer.
- ii.** Graduates, let me remind you that the pleasures of this life are only temporary, they will not last.
- iii.** Lasting pleasure is found only when we walk the High Road & we choose to follow Jesus Christ.
 - 1.** Philippians 3:8 – "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:"
 - 2.** Everything in Paul's life was secondary compared to knowing & living for Jesus Christ.
- iv.** If you are going to find true satisfaction in this life, it will be through Jesus Christ & Him alone.
 - 1.** The reason so many fail to find satisfaction & happiness in life is b/c they are building their lives on faltering foundations.
 - a.** Career
 - b.** Possessions
 - c.** Relationships
 - d.** Pleasure
 - 2.** In and of themselves, none of these things are wrong. But if these are your foundation, it will eventually let you down & begin to crumble.
- v.** Let Jesus be the Foundation of your life. Follow after Him & you will find this High Road to be a road of great satisfaction.

2. The High Road Is A Clean Road

a. Make Your Stand

- i.** Romans 1:16 – "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
- ii.** As you go out into the world, many will plead with you to give up some of the very things that you stand for today.

1. "Give up your Biblical faith."
2. "Give up your high standards."
3. "Come on out in the world & enjoy the pleasures."
- iii. When Martin Luther chose his faith in God, many along the way urged him to go back to his old lifestyle & abandon his faith. But here was his reply, "Here I stand. I will do no other. God help me."
- iv. I pray that God also will help you along this High Road. Determine today to stand for what is right.

b. Remain Pure

- i. Let me just simply remind you today that this world we are living in has been polluted by sin & many today stand against what is right & true.
- ii. We must live in this world & continue to be a light in this world until Jesus comes. But in order for us to shine the Light of Jesus, we cannot blend in with the world around us.
 1. Keep your relationships pure & honest.
 2. Keep your faith grounded in Jesus Christ.
 3. Keep your testimony above reproach.
 4. Never compromise your beliefs or the truths found in God's Holy Word.

iii. Romans 12:1-2

3. The High Road Is A Road Of Power

a. Don't Settle

- i. Sitting before me are some intelligent young people who, if the Lord tarries His return & spares them, have their whole lives ahead of them to serve the Lord & be of service to Him, whether it be in the ministry, or in some occupation, or both.
- ii. Don't cheat yourselves in the opportunities that present themselves & be willing to "stretch" yourself to reach new heights & new goals.
 1. Example of rubber band

b. Allow God's Transforming Power To Change You

- i. Matthew was a despised, greedy tax collector who was hated by many. But through the Master's touch, God used him greatly & he wrote the first Gospel.
- ii. Peter was a loud-mouth, cursing fisherman who was consumed only with himself, until he met the Master. God's power on his life changed him forever.
- iii. John Bunyan was a metal worker who knew little about God. But he was transformed by the touch of God on his life. He was thrown in jail later on for preaching the Gospel. But even prison's bars could not stop God's power on his life as he wrote the inspiring book, Pilgrim's Progress.
- iv. God has begun transforming each of you into the vessel that He would have you to be. Follow God's leading. Be moldable in His hand. And He will make you a masterpiece for His service.

4. The High Road Is The Road Of Eternal Life

a. Stay Focused

- i. I believe it was Trymon Messer who used to say, "Keep the main thing, the main thing."
- ii. Up until this point in your life, you have been focused primarily on your education, and that is extremely important.

iii. But along the way, I hope you have seen that this world, more importantly your life, is not just about education. Nor is it about a job, a profession, money, possessions, finding a mate, etc.

1. Matthew 16:26 – “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

iv. All of these things are extremely important as you will find out, but your priority rests in your relationship with Jesus Christ. There is no greater decision you will EVER make than walking with Christ, not just today, but for the rest of your lives.

b. Commit to Christ

i. As you step out in the next few months to begin the next phase of your life, make sure that Christ is a part of everything you do.

1. Psalm 37:5 – “Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.”