

My Wish For You!

Jeremiah 29:11

Graduation Speech 2012

You have accomplished many wonderful things in your short life. You learned to crawl at a young age. You eventually learned to put one foot in front of the other and walk, which brought more joy to the hearts of your parents than you can remember. After many failed attempts, you finally learned how to feed yourself without getting food all over you momma's kitchen. You learned to ride a bike, play a sport and talk to the opposite sex. You learned how to add, subtract, multiply and divide, even though some of your test scores might suggest otherwise. You learned what it meant to be a friend, and unfortunately, what it meant to not be a friend. In only a few short years on this earth, you have already accomplished so many wonderful things that you will forever cherish. And now you sit here in these pews tonight, having just completed your greatest accomplishment of all, you graduated from high school.

I remember what the feeling was like; the moment you walked across the stage, or in my case, across the football field and accepted your diploma. You felt a great feeling of pride and accomplishment. You just completed an 18 year journey. You probably had the same thought most high school graduates have had; that was torture; I'll so glad that's over. Then you walk back to your seat and watch the rest of your classmates go through the same process. As you sit there and watch your friends, your accomplishment begins to become real. You begin to think as if only yesterday you were walking down the halls of that fine academic institution for the very first time. You felt like a small fish in an ocean full of much bigger fish. You were on the bottom of the totem pole, you were a freshman. Now you sit here four relatively short years later, although at times it probably seemed like forever, realizing you are closing one of the most exciting chapters in your life. Perhaps, you shed a tear or two, or for some of you, hundreds of tears. You begin to think your life would never be the same and quite frankly you are right...your life will never be the same. That's when you realize it..you're not ready to

graduate. What once seemed like torture now seems like something you don't ever want to leave. Welcome to the world of high school graduate!

Tonight, I would like to share a few things that I wish for each of you to know that you probably won't remember a month from now, much less a year from now; but at least I'll know I said it and for this one night, you gladly heard and received what I am about to tell. So sit back and relax and listen as I tell you my wish for you graduates.

God Has Big Plans For You!

I wish for each of you graduates to know that God has big plans for you. You see, your life is only beginning. You have so many wonderful things in store for you; things you may have never dreamed possible. These plans might not include things like flying through the sky, walking on the moon, running in a burning building when everyone else is running out, being able to eat 75 hotdogs in under 3 minutes or discovering the cure for cancer. However, that doesn't mean God doesn't have great plans for each of you.

God's plan for your life includes more important things. Things that aren't always tangible; things that can't always be seen or touched. Often times, God's plans don't always make sense. Just ask the people of Judah. God sent a letter to the surviving elders of the exile by the prophet Jeremiah which told of God's plans for his people. The letter read, *"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope"* (Jer. 29:11). The problem was God's people were in exile in Babylon, under the hand of the wicked King Nebuchadnezzar. In spite of this, God wanted His people to know He had plans for them, plans which at the present time seemed unattainable. In time though, God's plans would come to pass no matter how insane that might have sounded.

Graduates, I wish for you to realize that God has big plans for you; plans so big you might not know exactly how to accomplish those plans. God's plans for you might be so big that it scares you to even think about trying to fulfill those plans, but don't fear...God will help you accomplish those plans if you are willing to submit to His plans for your life.

Make A Difference In The Lives Around You!

I wish for each of you to know that you have the ability and power to make a difference in the lives of the people around you. Most of you may be unaware of the potential you possess in this area, in fact, most people are. Young people are some of the most influential people of all. You have more friends and contacts than most of the rest of us present tonight. Just look at your cell phone and Facebook page for proof of this. For instance, when you go to the J's to call this really cool guy...let's say his name is Justin, you have to wade through 41 other contacts whose name starts with a J before you ever get to the really cool guy named Justin. You encounter and interact with more people in a 2-3 day period than most of the rest of us do in a full week. Graduates, take hold of your many contacts and friends and use these opportunities to make a difference.

Most of you are about to learn how time consuming life really is. You thought you were busy before, just wait. You're going to be going so fast and be so busy that the next time you look up it will be a new decade. Hannah Montana, Taylor Swift and The Hunger Games will be out and they'll be a host of new people and books to entertain the present generation of young people. I tell you this so you will never become so busy you can't take time for others. If you're so busy you don't take time for other people, than you're too busy...change that! The apostle Peter tells us that Jesus went about doing good ([Acts 10:38](#)). However, I believe there was more to it than that. I don't think Jesus just went about doing good, I think He went about looking for opportunities to do good. When he found those opportunities, He took them. The same apostle Peter who tells us Jesus went about doing good is the same apostle Peter who tells us, *"So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith"* ([Gal. 6:10](#)).

When you see someone in need, go help. When you hear about or see someone who is socially awkward, be their friend. When someone is having a bad day, say something nice to them or offer them a smile. Show people who feel as though no one cares, that you care. Love those who appear unlovable. Buy someone a cup coffee. If they don't drink coffee, buy them a coke. If they don't drink coke, buy them a bottle of water. Just be there for other people. Let them know you care by your actions. Every time you do this, you help to make a difference in the

lives of others. Graduates, my wish for you is to know that you have the ability to make a difference in the lives of those around you. Take every opportunity you are presented.

Glorify God In All You Do!

I wish for each of you to know that your life is nothing more than an instrument. Not an instrument to be played, so stop picking at yourself or strumming yourself like a guitar. Instead, your life is an instrument by which you should honor and glorify God. You do this by the way you live; day in and day out. Every day, in everything you do, be sure you are bringing glory to God.

When you are on campus next fall at the University of your dreams, glorify God. When you are hanging out with your friends in your dorm and doing stuff that only seems like a good idea when you are in college...for example: riding in a shopping cart down the hallway into a plexiglass window, even during those moments, glorify God. When you are taking a test that you aren't really prepared for, glorify God. When you are tempted to do some of the sinful things that come with being a college student, glorify God. When you are on a date with the boy or girl of your dreams, you know...the guy or girl that causes your stomach to churn and your heart to race, glorify God. When you sit down to eat a meal and everyone else is shoving their food down faster than Usain Bolt running the 100 meter, glorify God. When your friends want you to watch the latest trashy movie that Hollywood puts out, glorify God. When it's Sunday morning and Bible class starts in 10 minutes, but you have only been asleep for a few hours, glorify God. Young people, in everything you do, glorify God.

Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:13-16).

Graduates, allow God to be glorified through you. Let your life be holy. Let your actions be pure. Let your priorities be faithful. Let your motivation be, not to be seen of men ([Matt. 6:1](#)), but to honor and glorify your great and awesome God. I have always been told to be careful as to how I live and present myself to others. Why, I would ask? Because it's been said that perhaps I might be the only Bible someone ever reads. Let your life speak volumes about the God you serve. When others look at you, may they see Christ Jesus. When others look at you, may they see someone who lives their life in order to honor and glorify God. Graduates, my wish for you is that you live a life that glorifies God in all that you do!

Seek Heaven

I wish for each of you to seek after heaven daily. After all, we all go through life seeking after many other things, don't we? For instances, we live our lives seeking happiness, success, degrees, relationships, fun, adventure, approval, wealth, fame, power, popularity, status, friends, worldly pleasures, awards, honors and seeking after a host of other things that in the long run aren't that important. My wish is for you to wake up every day and seek heaven.

What does seeking heaven look like you ask? Seeking after heaven looks like trusting God, it looks like not worrying about the things of this life. Seeking after heaven means giving until you got nothing left to give, it means serving until you count others more significant than yourselves ([Phil. 2:3](#)), it means waking up every day with a longing for what is to come. Seeking after heaven means not placing your hopes and aspirations on earth, but on the city whose builder and maker is God ([2 Cor. 5:1](#)).

At some point, especially early on, you may experience a feeling of being homesick. You will miss your own bed, your dog, notice I said dog and not cat, who would miss their cat? You will miss your mom and dad; yes believe me...the point will come when you will miss having your parents right there by your side standing over you and telling you what you should and should not do. You will be homesick for your brother or sister or perhaps both, because no one is as much fun to pick on and mess with as them. You will miss your momma's cooking especially after about a week of eating objects that you are not quite sure what they are, but they must be okay because they serve them in the school cafeteria. You will miss your church family here

at Karns, because no matter which church you choose to attend while you are in college, that congregation will never truly feel like home because they will never know you in the same way as your family here at Karns. Perhaps most of all, you will be homesick for your comfort zone. You know, the feeling you had while living at home because it was the only thing you had ever known. Graduates, you will be homesick.

Thus, it is my hope and prayer that you seek after heaven in such a way that it causes you to be homesick for heaven. You see, our ancestors believed in two worlds, the world we live in now and the world which is to come, and they understood this to be the worthless and short one. We are the first generation of man that actually expected to find happiness here on earth, and our search has brought on much of our unhappiness. The heroes of faith we read about in our Bibles lived in this world, the worthless and short one, with one eye looking forward to the next world. They understood that this world could not, cannot, and does not bring the ultimate happiness.

The apostle Paul was torn because he was homesick for heaven. He wrote to the church at Philippi, *"For I know that your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account"* (Phil. 1:19-24).

Paul, writing this letter from a jail cell, is saying, "Listen, I know it's better for you if I remain here on earth, but for me...aaahhh, going back home is what's best." Paul could say these words and many more like them because he lived every day seeking after heaven.

Perhaps, it was these verses that inspired the song by Building 429, "Where I Belong." The chorus says, "All I know is I'm not home yet, this is not where I belong. Take this world and give me Jesus, this is not where I belong. Graduates, this world is not where you belong. You, along

with all the rest of us here tonight, belong back home in heaven with our Father God. I wish for each of you to live every day of your lives seeking after heaven.

Graduates, these four things are my wish for each of you. May your eyes be open to the big dreams God has for your life. May you truly make a difference in the lives of those around you. May each of you seek to glorify God in everything that you do and may you wake up each day and seek after heaven. If you do these four things I have no doubts that your life will be a success. You may not grow up and be rich and famous to others, but you will be rich and famous in the eyes of God and that's all that matters.

Graduates, may you find the friends you need to help you through life. May you meet that one special person that will forever change your life and help you walk the straight and narrow path. May you love the church and realize it truly is the greatest blessing on earth and may you run to God, accept what He offers you, and live your life to please Him above everything else.

That's my speech to you all. I know you probably won't remember much of anything I have said during this speech, but I hope you know how much I love you and what a blessing it has been to work with each of you. Even though I have only had the privilege of working with you for a short period of time, you are one of the best senior classes I have ever had. I will never forget the time we shared in this ministry. I think I speak for the entire congregation when I say, we look forward to watching you all do great things for the Lord and His church. Good luck and best wishes in your future.

God bless each of you class of 2012. Let's us pray!