

Sermon— Libby Daniskas, 5/31/15, Confirmation Sunday

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Good Morning, my name is Libby Daniskas and I'd like to start off by saying that this year has been the best yet at this church because of the journey I have gone through with all of my fellow confirmands. I can't thank my family, Christie, David, and the church enough for all of their support. Today I will be preaching about how life is all about preparation for the return of Jesus. Proverbs 16:9 says, "The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps."

People are always planning and preparing. They think that we people are in control of everything. And if they want help with their plans, there are people who actually plan for a living-- wedding planners, financial planners, life coaches. That's not bad but maybe we should be planning and preparing for the final chapter of life. Maybe we should be looking to Jesus, the master planner to teach us about eternity. And let the ways of the Kingdom of Heaven guide our steps in this world.

I have learned that in the current world, Christians are looked upon as unusual. In many ways, we do not follow the same plan as others around us. Being very open about my faith has gotten me into sticky situations. I've been told that I hate gay people but I do not. I just disagree with their lifestyle. For example if my friend or brother started using drugs, I would not hate them. I would just want them to stop doing that. And when I explain what it says in the Bible, they think I am shoving my religion down their throat.

Another cultural norm is that people are always worried about money. Hebrews 13:5 says "Keep your life free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, for God has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'" I think too many people choose their jobs based on how much money they can make. And many of them do not even enjoy it. I would rather have a job that I love. And even though I do not make a lot of money, I know the Lord will provide. Think about Jesus-- he did not have any money but I think he had more fun than anyone who ever lived.

But it is tough because so many around us do not believe. They think we should rebel against many biblical norms. There are new norms-- new ways of fitting in. But if not following our Lord and Savior is now fitting in, then I don't want to fit in.

When the Lord comes down, Christians who stuck by his side and had faith in him will be rewarded in heaven. And thank goodness this is not up to us! We have to plan and prepare for heaven but nothing we do can get us there.

It reminds me of a lacrosse game. Sometimes, I might have not done the best in a game. And it was really the rest of the team that won it for us. But still all of my teammates congratulate me and tell me how amazing I did anyways.

That's how it is with Jesus. He has won the game for us. And we do not deserve any congratulations in heaven. But still everyone will be praising us and telling us what a good job we did.

The best thing about Jesus is that if he promised it, then he will do it. The grieving will end and we will all meet again. Once it's his time, then he will gather the fallen and the people on earth and in heaven enjoy the peace given.

The key is very simple, all we have to do is believe in the three in one—God-- Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Even at the last second of your life, if you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior then you will be greeted by the Lord in heaven, instead of Hell.

Our job as Christians is very simple too. When we sin, ask for forgiveness. And then forgive others as we have been forgiven.

And lastly, give your time to God and Jesus. After all, God made time to create us all, along with the world. And Jesus had time for anyone who needed it. He even had time to die for us on the cross. We will never love God as God loves us, because His love is unimaginable and unconditional. But we can all at least try.

So I'd like all of you to take a short moment and actually think about how much time you carve out of your day to make time to talk to your creator. I'm very guilty myself as the only time I talk to God is when I say my prayers before bed and when I need something from Him. I should have more conversations with him and so should all of us! Paul even said we should pray without ceasing!

I think guilt keeps us from conversing with God. I am reminded again of lacrosse. I sometimes feel guilty when I mess up. But the support of my teammates keeps me going. And we keep playing and having fun. That's how it is with God. We mess up time and again. But he forgives us so that we might return to Him regularly and keep rejoicing in Him. I believe he made us all imperfect so that we would go to him and ask for forgiveness and help. That's how our relationship with him will grow.

What I have spoken about so far all leads up to the day of Jesus' coming again. Our whole life is preparation for him; it is about learning to depend on God's mercy and grace, so that when he comes we will be not be afraid. We will run to him instead of away from him.

I'm actually curious to see how many Christians are left when Jesus comes again because I feel like we are all slowly decreasing. It seems like parents give their kids the choice to believe or not. And when the world around them does not believe, I am not sure how much of a choice they end up with. Chances are they will not. And in many families—even ones which believe-- sports is the priority, so there is no room left for church.

But a common misconception is that eternal life only starts after death, eternal life actually starts when you start believing. From the very beginning to the end God is there already. And when we believe, we can enjoy the Lord's company. I'm leaving you with this-- don't get wrapped in life's stress, worrying about all kinds of things and thinking everything is up to us. Rather, believe in God and enjoy his company. That's what we will be doing in heaven after all! So why not start now?