

Remnant Life Church
May 20, 2018
Three Lessons Learned
Phil 3:10-14

- Spent Friday and Saturday in Lynchburg, VA
 - Over 20,000 were graduating from the university with some type of degree from all over the world
 - Over 5800 were at the university this past weekend
 - From a doctoral degree to a high school equivalency
 - The youngest graduate was 16, the oldest 90
 - I listened as University President Jerry Falwell, Jr., Dr. Ben Carson and President Jimmy Carter challenged us to integrate our learning with our faith and to do it all in humility and with a servant's heart
 - We did all of this, for the most part, in drizzle, showers, and flat-out rain
- As I stood at the base of the stage ready to hand the reader my name card to walk across the stage
 - Wave of emotion suddenly came over me
 - The end of a road
 - Not the last road of this journey but an important segment of it had just been completed – (38 years after the last segment ended where our college students are this morning)
 - As I thought about it driving home late last night
 - It was emotional, but I also felt the prompting of the Holy Spirit asking me, “What did you learn these last 2 days?”

1. Friday night baccalaureate service

- a. Definition
 - i. a farewell sermon to a graduating class at their commencement ceremonies
 - ii. an academic degree conferred on someone who has successfully completed undergraduate studies
- b. Over 10,000 people – great music, inspiring words, challenged to make a difference with what God has given us by way of knowledge and experience
- c. But it was also the 20 minutes after the service that left an impression
- d. Driving rain
 - i. I parked over half a mile from the venue
 - ii. Three people in their 80's
- e. Dealing with adversity and obstacle
- f. *Phil 3:10-14 - I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is*

behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

- i. Our desire to grow in the things of the Lord is never complete
- ii. In the time of the obstacles, the set-backs, the driving rain – PRESS ON

2. Saturday Commencement Ceremony

- a. It took over an hour for the graduates to process in
- b. I was nobody special in that crowd
- c. I was special to my wife, and my family who had come for to watch me get my degree
- d. But in that moment I was a face in the crowd
- e. I felt the Holy Spirit say two things
 - i. Without me you are another wandering soul, in a sea of wondering soul, marking time from the beginning to the end of your life
 - ii. Before you start to think you are a great gift to whoever is in you life, look around
 - iii. In a later service one of the speakers challenged each of us not to let our accomplishment go to our heads
- f. I spoke of this the other week about taking ourselves too seriously
 - i. The words pride, proud, or haughty are spoken of 122 times in the Bible and virtually everyone in a negative way
 - ii. Listen to what the author of **Proverbs** writes – (God says) *I hate pride and arrogance; When pride comes, then comes disgrace; Where there is strife, there is pride; A fool's mouth lashes out with pride; Pride goes before destruction; Pride brings a person low*
- g. Whatever it is good in our lives comes from the Hand of God

3. Saturday afternoon degree conferment

- a. In the original Thomas Roads Baptist Church
 - i. The site of the very first classes of the university founded in 1971
 - ii. Probably close to 200 receiving doctoral and masters degree from the Rawlings School of Divinity
 - iii. As I walked up the three steps to the side of the stage...
 - iv. Don't you start to cry!
 1. It startled me
 2. Why was I this emotional?
 3. Certainly not nerves
 4. It was a sense of accomplishment but not the end of the academic journey
 - v. Holy Spirit spoke to my heart and asked, "What will you now do with what I have done in your life?"
- This is not a question for a student alone
 - It is not one that is singled out for a milestone moment
 - It is a question for each one of us, every single day of our lives
 - "What will you do with what I have given you?"
 - We are moving in just a couple of weeks

- What will we do when we get in that neighborhood?
- What will you do today, tomorrow, next week, month, or year with what God has given you?

What lessons did I learn these last 2 days that I think are important for each of us?

- When the obstacles come – press on
- In every accomplishment in my life keep the cloak of humility tightly wrapped
- Determine every day to use what God has given us to His glory