

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The spirit of the graduate

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Graduating seniors, with their family members and friends, fill auditoriums and stadiums this time every year to celebrate an important passage in their lives. Accomplishments are enumerated, creating an atmosphere of joy. Optimism fills the air as the future is anticipated. Engaging speakers are sought to inspire.

Engaged, or sought to inspire what? The “spirit” of the graduate, of course. The graduate is asked to “envision” a successful future; maintain “confidence” when facing problems; and overcome “fears” that stifle personal progress. These are matters of the inward or spiritual part of man. Is it not ironic, that speakers strive to engage the spirit of young men and women, without including the wisdom of the Father of our spirits (cf. Hebrews 12:9)?

Graduates, please reflect for a moment in your spirit about God’s wisdom for you. God demands his greatest creation to put Him **FIRST** in their lives. He cares for your physical needs, but his plan for eliminating anxiety in your life is, “seek ye first His kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things will be added

unto you” (Matthew 6:33). In the same context, Jesus said, “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). With God’s rule prioritized in your spirit, your life of righteousness will see your physical needs of food, clothing and shelter met.

God wants you to envision the future. He clearly informs us of two roads heading for respective destinies. Jesus implores all, “Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14). Set your plans for eternal life, and you will have to walk the restrictive way authorized by Jesus (John 14:6). Ignore this way, and you will join the crowd suffering eternal destruction in Hell (2 Thessalonians 1:9, Matthew 10:28).

The Lord does not forbid us to make plans for future employment whereby we can support ourselves and our families (2 Thessalonians 3:10, I Timothy 5:8). But he wants you have a vision that focuses beyond just your next

career choice. He asks you to fathom the following: “For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life (soul)? Or what shall a man give in exchange for is life (soul)?” (Matthew 10:26).

When problems arise, upon whom should we lean for solutions? God speaks to your spirit with words that you will probably never hear in a commencement address: “Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding: In all thy ways acknowledge him, and He will direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes; Fear Jehovah and depart from evil: it will be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones” (Proverbs 3:5-8). Trusting, relying upon, and fearing God, we will be able to face life with confidence (Philippians 4:13).

Dear graduates, envision the future with confidence by giving yourself to the Lord today. Exercise yourself to be godly knowing “godliness has the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come” (I Timothy 4:8). Heed God. You will never regret it.