



# SOUTHSIDE

## MIDWEEK NEWSLETTER

### 4.29.20

#### Never Graduate – Barrett

As May quickly approaches, I have been thinking quite a bit about our high school and college seniors at Southside. Of course, one of our high school seniors lives in my home. My oldest daughter, Bailey, will be graduating from Trinity Christian Academy in two weeks from today. What an interesting time to experience this important moment in one's life!

As I reflect upon this, I recall how I chose to not attend my graduation ceremony from the University of Georgia. Instead of receiving my diploma "in between the hedges," I attended the wedding of a family friend in Columbus, Ohio. I also chose to not attend my graduation ceremony from Lipscomb University. My older brother was graduating the same weekend from Medical School and I attended his graduation instead. Now, I don't know what this says about me. Perhaps it's as simple as I don't like to wear a robe. I am not sure. Yet, missing these two important milestones has definitely influenced the way I think about my life in Christ. Allow me to explain.

One of my mottos for understanding my life in Christ is to "never graduate." The word in the New Testament used to describe someone who follows Jesus Christ is 'disciple.' In fact, the word 'disciple' occurs 269 times in the New Testament. "Christian" is only found three times and was first introduced to refer precisely to disciples. In Acts 11:26, the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch. Therefore, a prerequisite to being called a Christian is a lifelong commitment to being a disciple of Jesus. I think a practical way of understanding what it means to be a disciple is to be someone who "never graduates." A disciple of Jesus is one who never stops growing daily in their relationship with Him.

High School Graduates:  
Bailey Coffman, Jane Durbin,  
Addi Goan, Jack Johnson

College Graduates:  
Andrew Herrmann, Hollye Issac,  
Mackenzie Purvis, Lillie Reinhart,  
Anne Russell, Dee White,  
Harrison Williams

We are sad that our 2020 graduates will not get to experience a normal graduation ceremony this May; however our prayer is this special group of young men and women will always be known as followers of Jesus who "never graduate." We are so proud of these students and celebrate this special occasion with them. If you would like to send a note of encouragement to one of these students, the high school student's addresses are in the directory and you can mail notes to the church for our college students and Evan will make sure they get them.

## A Fresh Perspective – Kevin

One thing I learned in elementary school: if I got in trouble at school, I will be in trouble at home – no questions asked. My parents were typically uninterested in my side of the story. That was not part of the conversation. They always assumed the teacher and the administration were right, which meant I was not right. To be honest, their assumption was a good one to make. I wasn't right and I got caught.

For whatever reason, parents don't necessarily embrace this same assumption today. My wife taught for many years and now our son does as well, along with our daughter who teaches part time. The three of them have taught at all different levels – middle school, high school, college. Each of them has experienced conversations with parents regarding their student who didn't assume their story was accurate. They believed their student was right. I wonder if this might be one of the realities which will change post COVID19?

I saw a note which was going around from 8 year old, Ben. He was writing about how things were going at home with his mom as his teacher. Here's his note: "It's not going good. My mom's getting stressed out. My mom is really getting confused. We took a break so my mom can figure this stuff out. And I'm telling you it is not going good."

Tim Elmore, of Growing Leaders fame, makes a couple of points I'd like to share regarding parents' perspective of teachers. He wonders if parents will gain an appreciation for the daily grind of a teacher. Will the role parents have assumed as a teacher these past few months impact their perspective? Teaching a class full of students is not as easy as it appears. Teaching a couple at home is challenging enough. He also wonders if parents will realize that the teacher wasn't the main problem at school. Perhaps parents won't be so quick to defend their child when problems are addressed. Their child may not have been right after all. They just got caught.

When all this has passed, go find a teacher and give them a hug. For now, pray for them and give some thought to the amount of respect you hold for those in this profession.

## A Shepherd's Prayer – Bob

In previous years the slogan "20/20 vision" came to mind for some advertisers, and businesses. In 2017 this was also my bright idea to assist in building a mission trip to Nigeria during this 2020 year. Eventually, the words fell short of sounding miraculous. No special vision for 2020 came about, and the trite slogan was dropped; thankfully. As good stewards we are required to plan ahead, but being reminded of that slogan, I ask, "what are we preparing for exactly?" How often do my plans include serving God's kingdom? How can His plans become my own?

These questions remind me of the man in Luke 12 labeled as a rich fool. His abundant harvest led to his idea of having bigger storage barns and plans for 'the easy life'. Intent to no longer be productive, he would "eat, drink and be merry". He lacked consideration for other's needs. Unlike Joseph, who prepared the entire kingdom of Egypt and surrounding countries for the famine ahead, this rich fool thought only of himself. Joseph served God by serving others. Similarly, since we wear the name of Christ, our actions should trend toward thinking of others and not ourselves. So let me ask, "besides prayer and study, how might I prepare to attend to others for our Creator?" I encourage you with one suggestion. Awake each morning saying to God, "show me how to serve others for your kingdom today". Let's pray together.

Lord God, we thank you for the opportunity to be a child of your kingdom. Thank you Father for those who served me with the "good news" of Jesus the Messiah. As a believing child who wears the name of Christ, assist me in learning new ways to serve others. For today, show me how to serve your kingdom by serving another. May my meager service honor your name and advance your kingdom plans.

In the name of Jesus, Amen.