

Guide Us in Your Ways (Pastoral Advice for Confirmands)

Psalm 25:5, John 16:13 (New American Standard Bible)

Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long (Psalm 25:5).

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come (John 16:13).

Introduction

Today is a very special day for our confirmands. All together ten youths, five youths last year, and five more this year, have completed their 12 week-long confirmation class. They were confirmed today. Congratulations. We are very proud of them.

This is what they have learned in the class: they learned that in their faith journey to Heaven they never travel alone. God the Father, Jesus Christ our Savior, the Holy Spirit, and we the church go with them. They also learned about worship, the Bible, prayer, spiritual warfare and how to win the battle.

Today our families and congregation have committed our youths to God with prayer and thanksgiving. May the Lord bless them all the way throughout their lives. May the Lord make them a generation to follow the Lord in truth and with a whole heart and do what is good in the sight of the LORD. Amen.

Content

C. S. Lewis compares our life to a boat sailing in the sea. Three things must we remember during our voyage to Heaven. First, know how to stay afloat. Next, don't bump into other boats. You may sink your boat, theirs or both. Be careful. Finally, remember where you are going.

Well, you don't need any further explanation on the necessity of staying afloat and staying clear from each other. Let me remind you, though, where we are heading. Heaven. To the presence of God our Father in Heaven forever. We are on a Heaven-bound voyage.

When ships sail in the ocean, what does every ship need to have? GPS system, right? Likewise, in our voyage, we too need the guidance to get us to our final destination. That's what I am going to talk about this morning. Guidance to Heaven.

From now on, I am going to give our confirmands three pieces of pastoral advice.

Let God's Truth Guide You (Psalm 25:5).

Dig into God's Word the truth. Not just any truth but God's truth. Why do you need God's truth? Because it never changes. Because it always tells you truth and nothing but the truth. It doesn't show any favoritism. It doesn't flip flop depending on who it is talking to. The heavens and earth may pass away, but not the Word of God, Jesus says. That's why you can rely on God's Word.

God's Word is like the North Star. In the old days, for centuries, ships always used the North Star as a reference point to the north. Why? Because it never changes its position. Pointing north all the time. Likewise, the unchanging God's truth guides you through your lives.

As you launch your own faith journey today, our church provides you with the most reliable and important life reference point--the Word of God, the Bible. In our class, you already have learned how to get into the Word of God the truth. 15 minutes. 3 chapters a day. Every day. And you will be able to finish the Bible in a year.

The real question is: will you do it? How much effort will you make to get to know God in the Bible? If you take my advice seriously and getting into the Bible daily, your life will be steady and secure like mine has been. Don't let your Bible collect dust. Wear it down so that your life may never unravel.

If our church gives each of you a million dollars today to start your life journey, all of you would appreciate it. Yet, let me tell you this. We choose to give you a far better and more valuable life tool than a million dollars. That's the Bible. Let me quote God's Word: *The Law from Your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold* (Psalm 119:72). The Bible, the trusty Word of God, will teach you knowledge and good judgment for your life. Let the Word of God guide you.

Let God's Spirit Guide You (John 16:13)

The second advice I give you is this: learn to walk with the Holy Spirit. Who is the Holy Spirit? He is the Spirit of God. He is the Spirit of Truth. He is the resident counselor in you. He Himself dwells with you in your heart 24/7.

It would be the gravest mistake if you never ask for His help. He is your guidance Counselor from God. He is a wise teacher from God. He helps you in your weakness. He

constantly prays for you even when you don't know what to pray for yourselves. He makes a case for you to God on your behalf every day (Romans 8:26).

Now, let me remind you where He is now. He is in your heart. You see, when you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, the Spirit of God comes into your heart and stays there forever. You may say, "Pastor, I don't feel His presence. Where is He?" Of course, you cannot feel Him physically, because He is the Spirit. Neither can you feel His presence through your senses; smell, seeing, or even touching. Where is He, then? He is in you and within your heart. He is at the center of your heart. In the inner most seat of your emotions, will, and intellect.

He promised that He will help us. His help is always available. He is waiting for you to ask for help. So, starting today, claim His promise and ask Him to guide you into truth. Ask Him to lead you in your life. Every step of the way. He will never forsake you. He will be always with you. Remember: He is God's way to help you to get to your final and eternal destination. It can't get any better. He will guide you into all truth.

Let Your Integrity Guide You (Proverbs 11:3)

My final advice to you is this. Learn to walk in integrity. I am using a big word. Integrity. What is integrity? Being honest and upright. You can develop integrity by making right decisions for you and for others. Integrity comes from a habit of choosing what is right and doing what is good to the Lord and to others. Keep making right choices and doing what is right every day until it becomes a natural part of you. Then your integrity will guide you through both good and bad times. Here's a promise from God's Word: *The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity* (Proverbs 11:3).

Remember the quote we have learned in the class? The resolution of President Jimmy Carter when he was 12 years old:

"There are certain habits of thinking which have a good effect upon health.

If you think in the right way, you'll develop:

- *The habit of expecting to accomplish what you attempt.*
- *The habit of expecting to like other people and to have them like you.*
- *The habit of deciding quickly what you want to do and doing it.*
- *The habit of "sticking to it."*
- *The habit of welcoming fearlessly all wholesome ideas and experiences.*
- *A person who wants to build good mental habits should avoid the idle daydream, should give up worry and anger, hatred and envy, should neither fear*

nor be ashamed of anything that is honest or purposeful” (p. 33, The Carpenter’s Apprentice, Ariail and Feltz).

Conclusion

Dear confirmands, you have your whole life ahead of you. Today you have committed yourself to the Lord God. We the church and families joined you in prayer and support. We will journey together. We will be there for you. Today, you have declared your faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. Do not depart from your faith. Do not depart from God’s truth. Learn to ask for help from God’s Spirit in you. Walk in integrity so that years later you too will be able to say to your children, I have kept my faith and walked in the light and truth of the Lord all my life. That’s what I would call a wonderful life in Jesus.

Amen.