

**LETTER TO GRADUATES**  
**Father's Day –Graduate Recognition Sunday –June 17, 2018 – 2 Corinthians 3: 1-6**  
**The Church of the Covenant**

All the graduates of Dickinson College, my alma mater, pass through the hallowed doors of Old West to receive their diplomas. That is, unless it rains. So for every one of my graduations over all the years it has always rained. Naturally. So we graduated in the college cafeteria, passing through the cafeteria line in our caps and gowns, the last person we saw was the food service director, Wayne Modney, and had to pass through the turn style to walk through the door to get up on the makeshift stage. My great aunt and uncle, who had been bitter political rivals of the commencement speaker, said that they wouldn't walk across the street to hear this guy, let alone travel to Carlisle, PA. But there in the midst of it all were my parents, smiling and proud and happy. It is good when we can make our parents happy. And graduation day is one of those days. I've heard many commencement addresses over the years inasmuch as my Father referred to me as "The Professional Student" as in, "When are you going to get a job, a real job, a job that pays real money?" But they are all, more or less, the same; they are all LETTERS TO GRADUATES, hoping to inspire, uplift and encourage as you go out into the world.

One of my favorite letters to graduates is from noted Christian author, Madeleine L'Engle, a favorite of mine. She wrote that the next chapter of life was to be filled with COURAGE...

*" the courage to ask the difficult questions that have no finite answers, the courage to be joyous and vulnerable and alive; the courage to dare, to take risks; the courage to love where loving is not easy; the courage to accept our own selves, just as we are, as children of God, loved without qualification." (Letters to Graduates, L'Engle, p. 64)*

To this I would add –The COURAGE to be a CHRISTIAN in the midst of a secular world that will do everything in its power to pull you down and rob you of your faith and conform you into their image and not the image of the Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ...

Over the years you have been with us, with your families, raised by your parents, your Father and/or your Mother setting living examples for you, in worship, in Sunday School and Youth Group and Confirmation Class and mission trips and choirs and, and, and, we have sought to write things on your heart that will endure; not just for a time, but for a lifetime, for all eternity. We have tried to point you to the truth above every truth. We have tried to have you receive the Lord deep in your heart. We have tried to have the scriptures come alive and live in you. We have sought to write words on your heart that you will keep there for life. We have sought to write a letter to graduates in your heart and mind that will last throughout your lifetime. Not on pieces of paper but on tablets of the human heart. Your parents have sought this; your family has sought this; your church family has sought this; I, as your pastor, have sought this...

Our scripture is the Apostle Paul addressing the church in Corinth and saying we need no written letters of recommendation, because YOU are our letters of recommendation. You are the letters addressed to our world on our behalf. Did the words in the letters make it to your heart? Is that what is written there? Did we make a difference in your life? Did your Father and/or your Mother write words of faith and life in your heart? Did your church send you forth

into life with the gifts and the graces and the words and the Spirit not just to survive but to thrive? With God there is victory, today, tomorrow and forever. With no God in your life there is no victory and particularly in eternity. Is HE written in our hearts or not????

The Apostle writes this –“(YOU) are our letter (our epistle) of recommendation written on (YOUR) hearts to be known and read by all men.” (2 Corinthians 3: 2) You are our letters going out into our world, telling the world whether or not we made a difference in you. You are the ones in whom Jesus does or does not dwell. You are the ones who will seek to live your lives for God or not. You are the ones who will make the world a better place in the power of God or not. Because, as the Apostle writes, what is written on your heart, O epistle of God, is not written in ink, but with the Spirit of the Living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of the human heart. So what do you take with you, written on your heart, from your church family, your parents, your Lord?

Madeleine L'Engle wrote in 1962 a wonderful little children's book, entitled “A Wrinkle in Time” and it has recently been made into a current movie, starring Oprah, among others. It is a story of a plucky little girl and her brother and friend who are transported into time and space in order to rescue her Father held captive by evil forces on another planet. It is a classic tale of good versus evil. But as L'Engle originally wrote the story the force within the plucky little girl was God. L'Engle is a decidedly Christian author; her stories don't just have morals, they are stories of how God's love and power works itself out in our world. There is no struggle between good and evil without God. There is no moral strength in your life to face the battles in life without God. There is an inner strength that gives us our pluckiness and internal fortitude and ability to persevere against the forces that would suck us down and destroy us.

The letter L'Engle wrote to young children about how God gives us the strength to conquer evil has been edited. Hollywood has edited out God from the letter L'Engle sought to write. So it becomes just a story of a plucky little girl, not a story of how God uses us to assure that good triumphs through us in life. The secular world seeks to edit out God and to conform you into their image. They seek to remove from your heart the very words that will give you victory in life and in death. The LETTER TO GRADUATES L'Engle sought to write has had the Lord God Almighty edited out of it...and so it is now a lie, told by a dying and death-filled world seeking to avoid the Spirit we have sought to write in your heart. Seeking to edit out the very thing that will have good triumph over evil in our world.

Will you succumb to the world? Will you allow the world to edit out God from your heart? Will you allow the world to undo everything we have sought to do in, around and through you? Will you erase the words of life we have sought to write upon your heart through the Spirit of the Living God? Or not? When you go out into this next chapter of life, it is the question you must ask yourself. Real courage is fighting against a world that will seek to edit God from its heart. From YOUR heart; my *Letter to Graduates* whom I love dearly and deeply. Amen and Amen.

*By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, PA  
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*