

Sermon 5.17.20 Pastor Jordan Gades **John 14:15-21**

Grace and Peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

1. Jon B - NYG service day in the heat, did good work though and have continued that work here over these last few years, escape room, we were sabotaged and we still won!
2. Alaina Chute - Always impressed by your skill with your livestock, You show such care and dedication with them. And how ridiculously humble you are about your amazing work and accomplishments. Seriously you should brag a little.
3. Joe Cummings - Remember racing you up the ramp at the NYG, and you rocking out with that giant red spiked hat. you doing the rap on synod day at the NYG, your commitment worship team and your friends
4. Carter Dox - NYG sat adjacent to you for like 24 hours, heard a lot of stories, I have grown to have a deep respect for you and will always in my head hear you all singing Sad by xxxtentacion.
5. Kendra Gruhlke - Always caring and open, you have strong dreams and a strong heart. I see in you an Endurance of will and spirit that will get you far.
6. Ellie M. - council last year - those times talking to you, where you got a little flustered and a bit angry, like right now probably - but I've also seen you work hard with dedication and compassion. Thank you for all that you have done at First.
7. Abby M - it has been a joy seeing you share your gifts with this community, I know that you have been a blessing to all here. And I have to say I think you bread has sent more kids on mission trips than pretty much anything else I can recall.
8. Carter Olson- you've always been exciting to watch on the field, I've seen you be an excellent player and an even better teammate and friend.
9. Hannah Paulbeck - worship team bringing your gifts and leadership to the whole church and community

10. Sam S. I mean Sam, come on, you have been a blessing to this congregation and to this whole community - LYO, Council, Worship team, NYG and that's just with church
11. Reagan Wilson - you were my first Confirmation interview - I saw a young man with a strong faith and a good head on his shoulders, and since that has only been shown again and again.

You are all graduating high school in possibly the strangest circumstances which any of us could ever think of.

It's a bit foggy but I can still remember graduating high school, to an extent, it was 2004, we had survived y2k, ask your parents, the country was only a few years into dealing with our post-traumatic stress caused by 9/11 but the world was looking pretty decent to start of into. Not going to say the world was my oyster or some other pointless platitude but possibilities were out there.

I was going to college with some plan in mind for my future, admittedly a very loose plan that ended up changing a lot. So, if I can give a little advice don't hold onto your own plans your own too tightly.

I was also leaving home with a strong faith that had been passed down to me from family, friends, and faith community.

I know that you all have had that same incredible faith passed down to you. I know that you attended confirmation and middle school gatherings. You had amazing mentors, teachers, and leaders. I know that Dave and Christine did an awesome job with you all. They lead meaningful discussions and helped you really grapple with your faith, though I hope the boys versus girl's thing has lessened a little. You all were my first confirmation class as a pastor, and it's been an honor to see you grow. I was blessed in being able to go with a lot of you when we went to the national youth gathering in Houston. There I got to see so many of you dive into your faith and seek the deep and rich waters that are present there.

For 18 years you've been dreaming and thinking about the scenarios of your future, and all of a sudden, you've had to change 90 percent of the parameters going forward. Nothing is as you have been

expecting. And that's hard. That's really really hard. I wish that there were some magic words I could say that would change all of this.

But in the midst of all of this, there are things in your life that haven't changed and will still be a strong foundation for you no matter where you go and no matter what you do, like your faith and our God.

I would even say that you all have a little in common with Paul. How is your life like a wandering tentmaker who lived 2000 years ago you might ask? Well I'm glad you did. Your world has been flipped just like his. He was raised a Jew, in a Jewish world, with Jewish laws, a Jewish view on life, he had his place in his society amongst his people, and then with the coming of Jesus all those things which he thought were rock solid, all those things which he had built his life upon, they were gone. All of a sudden, he had no idea about what the future held for him. He went from the man with the plan (though maybe not the best plan because it was killing Christian's) but a man with a plan to being thrown into this wild, amazing adventure with an unknown ending. He

ended up traipsing and sailing all over the eastern half of the Mediterranean. He got shipped wretched, caught malaria, got thrown in prison a few times, had a chance to break out of prison and didn't, met people and made friends in dozens of countries, inspired thousands, he lived his call through using his gifts, that's all any of us can do.

Paul starts his story at every point of his travels by speaking to lost people, people who are looking for hope and solitude from anywhere they can get it, in any way that they can get it. He is talking to people who are just looking for some sure footing in their lives. These people are looking for the unknown that can give them peace and hope. Paul goes to these lost and unsure people and shows them they are found and on firm bedrock no matter where they are in their lives because of Jesus Christ.

You are not going into the world looking for the unknown hope or an unknown God, you are not taking chances and making big leaps alone. You are not going to be striving and fighting solo. Your God goes with you. You are forever a part of God's family and this family. We have been here for you and will continue to be here for you. We will be here. God has been with you since you were born and will be with you wherever you go, and will be with you until the day you die and beyond into God's kingdom. You do not go out into this strange land without a companion. You go out into the world with the good shepherd, with the alpha and the omega, with the prince of peace, With Immanuel, with Messiah, God with us who is the savior of the people. You go out with the light of God surrounding you and guiding you and the Holy Spirit filling you. The Advocate, your Advocate, goes with you. And you go out carried on the whispered daily prayers of this entire congregation. You will not be forgotten or forsaken. You will go on in the love and Grace of God.

This is the same message that God gave Paul when he set out on all of his journeys into the unknown. This is the same message that Paul gave to city after city, town after town, nation after nation.

The spirit of truth is with you and within you. the spirit of the Lord God Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth resides in your hearts and strengthens you and keeps you.

I'd like to end with the blessing that every one of you received at your confirmation.

The Spirit of the Lord will rest on you

the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,

the Spirit of counsel and of might,

the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord