

So, You Think Your Done

Pastor Matthew Ude

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INI - SDG

1 Peter 5:6-11 ⁶ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, ⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. ⁸ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. ⁹ Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. ¹⁰ But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you* . ¹¹ To Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Four years ago, this fall, Elijah started confirmation class. After two years we made it through the catechism. At the end of that second year, Elijah asked me, "Does that mean we are done?" The answer of course was "No." Two years later and the answer is still, no. Your done meeting with me but God is not done with you. Confirmation is not the end but just the beginning.

The purpose of confirmation class is not to teach you all that you need to know but to get you started in the right direction.

Confirmation isn't a two year or a three year or even a four-year thing. It is a lifelong commitment to learning under God. As Peter reminds us in our text humble yourself before God and allowing Him to teach and guide and lead you your whole life.

Jesus reminds us that He will send the Holy Spirit who will guide us into all truth.

After Moses died Joshua lead the people of Israel as they crossed over and attacked the people of Canaan. God destroyed Jericho through their trumpets and God blessed their attack at Ai. At this point they were feeling good about themselves. When a group of men came supposedly from a far-off land offering them a treaty, they were really pleased with themselves. They thought to themselves, why not. Surely this is a good thing. So without checking with God, they signed the treaty. Turned out it was the Gibeonites pretending to be from a far-off land but were actually just a city next door.

The Israelites were not humble before God. They thought they could do it themselves. They thought they had it covered.

When we think we've got it covered, when we think we know it all, when we think we are done with class. That's when we often fail to see the trick, the trap right under our feet.

You might be done with confirmation class with me. But you should spend your life sitting at the feet of the Lord.

The Bible tells us that Enoch walked with God. The life of a confirmand is a life walking with God.

However more important than your vows to God are God's vows to you. He has promised to send the Spirit of Truth who is a much better teacher than I am. He will lead you and guide you and teach you. You might not always like the lesson God wants to teach you, but you will always come out of them a better person, if you humble yourself before God and accept in repentance His promises.

Of course, everyone's favorite part of confirmation class is memory work. You, confirmands may never again be forced to memorize a passage or a hymn. But being confirmed should not mean that you are done with memory work. You have learned to store passages in your mind, but the hope is that you will learn to store these and many more passages in your heart.

Remember what the scriptures says about Mary, "She kept all these things and pondered them in her heart."

It is hard when you are young to understand why you need to memorize these things and what good they will do. The time will come when you will struggle, and you will greatly desire the comfort and strength which God gives through these promises.

When Samson was a young man, he went to a certain city to take for himself a wife. While he was walking a lion sprang upon him. But the Lord gave him strength and he tore the lion apart and left its dead carcass there.

You don't have to worry much about lions, even if you were to travel to Africa there are not many left. But Peter reminds us that Satan walks about like a roaring lion. God has not promised to give you physical strength like he gave to Samson. He has promised spiritual strength to all who ask it. This strength is given to you in these words and promises which we have spent the last years memorizing.

There are tribes in Africa that believe that if you eat the heart of lion, you will gain his strength. If you digest these words of God, ponder them in your heart, they will comfort and strength you when you struggle with the temptations of Satan and of this world.

You both did well on Thursday's questioning and on your test the other week as well. You may be done with my tests, but there are much harder tests to come. Test which will not come from me, but from God. Tests that do not require a number two pencil but strength of faith and of heart.

The ultimate example of God testing an individual's faith is Abraham. Time and time again God tested Abraham's faith until Abraham become the father of all believers and trusted God even to sacrifice his own son.

The Lord wants to give you a faith like that of Abraham's and may well send tests in your life to strengthen you and build you up.

As Peter reminds us in our text you may suffer for a little while, but only so that God can strength and establish you firm in the faith.

The thing about God's tests, they are a lot harder, but they are also already graded. I know you were worried about passing your confirmation test, but you don't have to worry about passing God's tests. Through Christ Jesus you already have access to heaven.

When God would test Abraham, every time after the test God would appear to Abraham and tell him "I will bless you, I will make your name great."

If Abraham failed God would forgive his sins and renew his covenant promise with him. If Abraham passed God would bless him and promise to be with Him. Pass or fail God blessed Abraham and strengthened him in faith.

You may fail many of God's tests, but God will not fail you. He will not take His promises from you.

This is one of the reasons we come to church every week. After a week of failing to keep God's laws, after a week of temptation and struggle, we need to hear again God's gracious promise of forgiveness and be strengthened again by His blessings.

Matthew 9:2 "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you."

Jude 1:24-25 ²⁴ Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present *you* faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, ²⁵ To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, *Be* glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.