

“REMEMBER YOUR CONFIRMATION COMMITMENT!”

Proverbs 23:26

My son, {daughter} give me your heart and let your eyes keep to my ways.

Dear Friends (in the Lord) // & Families & Parents of our confirmands, and especially you the members of the Confirmation Class of 2014:

“TODAY IS THE 1ST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE”. Ever hear that before? I attempted to search the original author of that phrase and there is no clear cut answer. It’s said to have been around since the mid-60’s to remind us that our life is one day longer from its beginning and one day closer to its ending.

But let’s change two words so it reads: **“TODAY IS THE ‘MOST IMPORTANT’ DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE”**. That’s a whole different meaning.

It’s confirmation day weekend on our calendar. This is the annual celebration of another class of Christian youth who have been in Catechism instructions for the past 2-3 years. They have plowed through Luther’s catechism page by page, notesheet by notesheet, chief part by chief part a couple of times over. Pastor Mahnke thoroughly questioned them about their knowledge of Christian doctrine (*and I might add – you did very well in your answers*)

Their journey has been like a farmer and his field. Pastor Mahnke and I along with you parents first **dug up** the soil, **worked it** over thoroughly, **planted** the crop, **weeded** the crop, **irrigated** the crop, and finally [FINALLY] today **we harvest the crop!** That’s the way it’s been for all of us whether confirmed years ago or today.

While it takes work to get to this day, it takes as much, if not more work, to continue in what you have learned for the rest of your life. That takes commitment, the kind that Proverbs speaks of in our text today. Confirmands, past and present----

“REMEMBER YOUR CONFIRMATION COMMITMENT!”

That involves...

1. YOUR HEART
2. YOUR EYES

1

Young people at confirmation age are starting to understand what commitment is about. What did you commit to years ago? Perhaps a summer softball. Perhaps some music lessons or swim lessons. Maybe it was a summer babysitting job 3x per week. Maybe it’s just something simple like committing to make your bed every morning!!! Seems to me we had a Catechism lesson about that! I remember committing to a grass cutting job for four of my Mom’s older friends who wanted their grass cut & trimmed each week. Mom reminded me when commitment lagged.

Then as we got older, the commitments became much bigger and involved our lives to a much higher level. Confirmands will find that out soon enough. But today is the **1st day of the rest of your life** and the most important day too. So we need to **REMEMBER OUR CONFIRMATION COMMITMENT** which involves first our hearts.

Proverbs says: **MY SON (DAUGHTER), GIVE ME YOUR HEART...** In the Bible, the heart is not just a muscle that beats 75x per minute. The heart is the center of our being, the very fiber of who we are. It houses our emotions, our thoughts, attitudes, and feelings. You can fill a heart with joy/delight OR you can break a heart with sorrow/disappointment.

Jesus Himself spoke to the Pharisees about their lack of commitment to him when he said: **“These people honor me with their lips, but their HEARTS are far from me. They worship me in vain.** (Mk 7:6) Jesus made it clear that it’s not what we put **into** our bodies that makes us unclean but what **comes out**: **For from within, out of men’s HEARTS, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, etc...** (Mk 7:21) Sometime Easter afternoon, two fellas discovered that their walking partner for a few miles to Emmaus ended up being the Risen Lord! And when they realized Jesus was alive and made a call on them, they couldn’t contain their enthusiasm: **They asked each other, “Were not our HEARTS burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”** (Lk 24:32) Jesus encouraged the disciples before He left them for the cross and grave by reminding them: **Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your HEARTS be troubled and do not be afraid.** (Jn 14:27)

Your confirmation commitment involves your heart. **MY SON (DAUGHTER), GIVE ME YOUR HEART.** God, the maker of all things, the creator of man & woman, the one who controls all things says: Give me your attention. Give me complete focus, your entire heart---not a ½, not a ¼, not a slice, but all of it. Jesus once said: **Love the Lord your God with ALL your heart, and with ALL your soul, and with ALL your mind.** {Matt 22:37} God is not content with anything less than 100%.

A long time ago, the Lord claimed your heart. On your baptism day, the Spirit worked through the washing of water and the Word to cleanse your souls from sin and claim you as one of His. (*P.M baptized 2 of you, P.D. 1 of you.*) Those baptism dates listed in your biographies are not just statistics. They are the start of your commitments which today you renew on your confirmation day. Through instructions of the 6 chief parts, you learned and relearned what **God's commandments** mean, what **work the Trinity** has done, what two **special sacraments** we celebrate (one of which we repeat often), what the **Lord's prayer** means, and how **the Keys** open and close heaven's door.

But knowing this is one thing. Committing to it is another. Jesus Christ loves you. He came for you to step into our sinful shoes and walk our steps holy and perfect. He suffered for you with his blood to pay God's just penalty for sins. He died for you to satisfy God's justice that life be sacrificed to set souls free. He rose for you to come full cycle through the jaws of death only to return to live to assure us that we too will live after those jaws bite us.

Jesus committed his heart to you. Now this day, he says **GIVE ME YOURS** back and trust me with your life for an entire life because Jesus himself says: **WHOEVER BELIEVES IN ME WILL NOT PERISH, BUT HAS ETERNAL LIFE.** (Jn 3:16)

2

Committing your hearts for life? That's a long time. How are we going to do that? Well, involve **YOUR EYES.**

My son, {daughter} give me your heart and let your eyes delight in my ways. Here's a scary thought, parents. Your kids are what?---14 yrs old? Guess what they're going to be asking for in two years. That's right...their temps so they can learn to drive. Today, you say "**NO WAY**". But then they will bug you to find a way to make it happen. And when it does, kids, there'll be rules of the road to learn, hours of classroom instruction, and then those sessions of behind-the-wheel followed by those dreaded hours of practice with the parent in the passenger's seat. I've been there, done that 5x and I don't envy you.

The instructor will say **KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE ROAD.** No talking on the phone, no texting, no waving at friends, guys, no brushing hair, no checking your makeup, ladies. Keep your hands on the wheel and your eyes on the road. Stay focused because there are distractions that will get you off the road right into a crash! I join your instructor and your parents in not wanting that to happen to you!

Well, God joins your parents and me in not wanting you to veer off the road of your Christian faith! **Your examination last Thursday was the easy part.** Today the hard part begins ---- following what you confessed, living what you answered, keeping your eyes on the road God wants you to take.

So **let your EYES delight in God's ways.** The Spirit tells you confirmands to stay faithful to Christ, to trust Him everyday during good times and difficult times, to remember how he gave His life in love for you to wash you clean and **redeem you** with His precious blood. **Follow him in your life** for the next 50? 60? 70? years or how ever long the Lord lets you live on earth. (*Bulletin list of past classes...class of 1939, 75 years ago > I know one of those listed because I see her in her home every month (Grace Messerknecht, still faithful watching our TV services every wk, communes, prays, etc...still living her confirmation commitment)*)

If you're still alive in 2089, will your eyes still **delight in God's ways** when your name appears on the 75th anniv list? Will you still be living **your confirmation commitment** you make today? Will you still hear God's word, receive His supper, praise his name, and worship in church if you can? Your parents and pastors won't be around to know, because we'll be in glory waiting to see you there.

So members of the class of 2014 and any other class, **"TODAY IS THE 'MOST IMPORTANT' DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE"**. Remember your confirmation commitment, **the heart** that believes in Jesus Christ and **the eyes** which delight in His ways. That's the best remedy to avoid spiritually crashing. And that's the only way we'll all be in the class of glory - together - forever - in heaven with Jesus! **God bless you today & always!** **AMEN**