

## Westminster Graduation 2011

Whenever Martin Luther entered the classroom he would remove the hat that professors then wore. He said, "I never know what future Kings or Prime Ministers are sitting before me."

I mention that for two reasons. The first is that if I wore such a hat tonight I would remove it in front of you. It would be in honor of the future leaders there are sitting before me. It is astounding to think that you have fifty years to preach and to model the Gospel of our Lord, Jesus, and His Father, through the power of Their Holy Spirit within you.

The second reason I mention it is to display a necessary tool in your preaching. Whenever you can't find an exact reference for something, just say Martin Luther said it. He probably did anyway.

I'm not here tonight to give you advice. You have received enough of that already. I remember when I was a candidate.... By the way, isn't that a dumb thing to say, "I remember?" If I didn't remember, would I be talking about it? We preachers say a lot of strange things. Like why do we always ask, "Can you hear me in the back of the room?" Or another I heard a Pastor say, "I found it in the last place I looked." Well, what does he usually do, find it and look in three more places?

Anyway, "I remember" when I was a candidate I received so much advice that my eyes got crossed. They told me to keep my eye on the ball, my nose to the grindstone, my ear to the ground, my shoulder to the wheel, my hand to the plow. You know, it's hard to get anything done in that position.

The summer after my first year here at Westminster I worked on a loading dock. There was an old Christian man working there who had traveled all over the world. Several times he would say to me, "Young man, I'm glad I'm not your age."

When I see all the evil that is happening in the world, I'm glad I'm almost through."

You know what? There is a lot of evil happening in the world, and I'm not glad I'm almost through. You will meet so many people who are questioning the teachings of the Bible, and most of those who are don't have a clue about what the Bible teaches. Our Vice President and also a well-known businessman use foul language in public and there is no outcry for decency. A treacherous tsunami originating out of hell keeps churning up the lie that Christianity is just one of many equal religions. Isn't it fascinating that Dr. Ned Stonehouse spoke to us at our graduation fifty years ago and said our number one challenge would be to guard the "exclusiveness of Christianity!" And the nation most of you will be preaching in faces moral and financial and military challenges that fifty years ago would have given that old man on the dock instant apoplexy.

And you get to face it! Paul said some kind of envy is all right and I envy you tonight for your youth. I'd do it again in a heartbeat. You get fifty years, like I did, to storm those gates of hell with a Power—capital "P" Power—that nothing can withstand. You get a lifetime of loving your Savior and loving His Word and loving His enemies and loving His people, and yes, loving His battle, because it is His battle for His Father by the Power of Their Spirit. And you get to be part of that, a lifetime of that! And you have had the privilege of being prepared at Westminster. You couldn't have chosen better.

Five years ago my son-in-law died, leaving behind an eight-year-old boy. Last year at the Christian School he attends, that boy had to write about his faith journey. Among other things, he wrote that his Papa had helped him a lot. Then he added, "My Papa is taking good care of himself so he can be at my wedding." Yeah, Luke, I'll be there. And I do take good care of myself—I watch what I eat; I get good rest; I exercise. And I watch what I read and I watch what I look at and I watch what I think about and what I say and where I go and what I do. I am conscious of temptations to disobey my Master. I watch all of that carefully. I want to be at The Wedding, the wedding of the Lamb and His Bride. And not me only. I want to

take along tables and tables and tables full of new guests who do have a wedding gown, all to honor the Savior and His Father through Their Spirit.

There is a marvelous personal and professional promise in Proverbs 4:18. “The life of the righteous is like the dawning of the day, shining ever more brightly until the full light of noon.” That is your life story, waiting for you to live it.

Even longer than fifty years ago, sixty-four years ago I graduated from the eighth grade. Our class song became my life song:

Give of your best to the Master. Give of the strength of your youth.  
Throw your soul’s fresh-glowing ardor into the battle for truth.  
Give and to you shall be given; God His beloved Son gave.  
Give Him your loyal devotion; give Him the best that you have.

Ren Broekhuizen  
Class of 1961