

CONFIRMATION 2008
A FAITH THAT STICKS

(PT)I. INTRODUCTION

Today at First UMC of Aberdeen we celebrate Confirmation.

These Confirmation students want reaffirm the Baptismal vows taken for them. They will confess their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and promise to serve Him.

The Holy Spirit is here to confirm the validity of those Baptismal vows taken by their parents. And the Holy Spirit is here seeking to empower these students in their lives and in their ministries.

Pastor Don and I are here to thank God for you Students, parents and church family, the good year we've had, for the growth we've experienced, and to encourage you to stick to the faith.

This life of faith you're called to, as most of you already know, is not Easy Street, it's not a pie in the sky faith. You can't just say Jesus is my Lord and live happily ever after, you will live happily in the ever after, after living the ups and downs of this life. This life can be tough...no matter how old you are.

It's tough for some of us to keep the faith,
it's tough for some of us to stay with it,
it's tough for some of us to stick with it.

(PD) Pastor Tom, we need something that will help us stick. We need something like glue. We could call it spiritual glue.

(PT) Pastor Don, you always come up with these brilliant solutions. So, tell us more about this glue?

(PD)It has to be good glue, strong glue, lasting glue, SUPERRRRRRGLUE!
If we're going to have a good faith, strong faith, lasting faith.

(PT) That makes sense. How will we know if we have the good glue?

(PD) Well, obviously the ingredients.

(PT) So what are the ingredients for the superglue of faith?

Let's ask Paul. He wrote to churches encouraging them to keep the faith, to stay with it, to stick with it.

(PT) II. THE INGREDIENTS OF GOOD GLUE

One of the ingredient is **GIVING UP STUFF** Paul says in Philippians 3.10-11
***'I gave up all that inferior stuff so I could know Christ personally,
 experience his resurrection power, be a partner in his suffering,
 and go all the way to death itself.***
***If there is anyway to get in on the resurrection from the dead,
 I wanted to do it."***

(PD) Paul says I'm throwing the stuff out with the trash, he calls it junk or worse.
 This inferior stuff that Paul is giving up wouldn't sound like junk to us.

It would be like you being one of the cool kids at school
 or being part of the in-crowd,
 or even being elected prom king or queen.
 It would be like your family having a lot of money,
 or your parents being the pillars of the church and community.
 It would be like your school having a prestigious name.
 It would be like making all state in Basketball, Football, and Volleyball;
 winning the debate tournament, writing for the school paper,
 and being the student council president.
 And let's not forget you get strait A's in all the advance classes and
 of course you are the valedictorian of your class.

You are and you have all those things
 and then you shrug your shoulders and say,
 this stuff doesn't mean anything to me, but Jesus means everything to me.

Paul tells us we have to be able to give up stuff to stick.

(PT) Another essential ingredient that we need is to **ACCEPT JESUS**
 Jesus is an essential part of the glue. Check out verses 12-14.
***"I'm not saying that I have it all together, that I have it made.
 But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ,
 Who has so wondrously reached out for me.
 Friends, don't get me wrong:
 By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this,
 but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—
 to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back."*** (sticking to it?)

(PD) We need to reach out,
 to accept his hand that has so "wondrously" reached out to us.
 And then we need to hang on.

In Revelation 3.20 Jesus says, ***“I stand at the door and knock. If any hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in and eat with them, and them with me.”***

Jesus wants to be part of your life.
He wants to free us from the bondage of sin and bring light into our darkness.

There is no other way for us to stick. We'll come unglued and without him.

(PT) Next once we accept Jesus, we need to **KEEP OUR COMMITMENT** to him.

Let's read on in verses 15-16.

***So let's keep focused on that goal,
those of us who want everything God has for us.
If any of you have something else in mind,
something less than total commitment,
God will clear your blurred vision—you'll see it yet!
Now that we're on the right track, let's stay on it.”***

(PD) The phrase, “Let's stay on it” is the phrase used in the story of Philip and the Ethiopian. Remember the Spirit tells Philip in Acts 8.29, ***“Go to that chariot and stay near it.”***

To “stay on the right track” or “stay near it” means to stick with it, to be committed to it.

Think for a moment about the great works of art, pieces of music or poetry, or inventions

There are the jobs that get done well because someone stuck to it.

Thomas Edison was committed to inventing a light bulb that worked.
He tried and failed over 3000 times. Aren't you glad he kept trying?

Oswald Smith dreamed of becoming a missionary.

The dream dominated his life.

Over and over again he prayed, “Lord, I want to go as a missionary for You.

Open a door of service for me, please.”

He appeared before the examining board for selecting missionaries and was turned down.

He had failed. What would he do? Give up? Quit? Not Oswald Smith.

As he prayed, God planted another idea in his heart.

If he couldn't go as a missionary, he would build a church, which could send out missionaries.

And that he did. He pastored The People's church of Toronto, Canada.

That church sent out more missionaries than any other church at that time.

A book by Harold Sherman "How to Turn Failure Into Success."

He gave what he called a code of persistence:

- (1) I will never give up so long as I know I am right.
- (2) I will believe that all things will work out for me if I hang on to the end.
- (3) I will be courageous in the face of overwhelming odds.
- (4) I will not permit anyone to intimidate or deter me from my goals.
- (5) I will fight to overcome all physical handicaps and setbacks.
- (6) I will never surrender to discouragement or despair no matter what.

I don't know if Sherman read the Bible but it was in the Bible first.

1 Cor 15:58 "Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

Heb 12:2 "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Its easier to go out and play than to practice that instrument.

It's easier to watch TV than to attend a Bible study.

It's easier to walk out on an argument than work through it.

It's easier to give in to temptation than it is to resist.

It's easier to quit following Jesus than to take up your cross and follow Him.

Don't you want to follow through and be committed to God-given tasks.

Some of those are being a godly parent,

being a obedient child

being a faithful spouse

being a Christian in a hostile world

being industrious as a leader in the local church

(PT) THE BIBLE CAN STRENGTHEN OUR COMMITMENT.

We have a lot of "How to" books that deal with marriage,

raising a family, happiness, successful careers, and retirement

But it is the only the Bible that can tell us how to truly live and how to die.

You need to know the Bible must be read as though it was personally written to you!

Take John 3:16. Put your name in the blank.

"For God so love _____ that He gave His only begotten son..."

Jesus also says to you and I, "If you **continue** in my word (he could have said,

if you stick to my word), you will know truth, and the truth shall set you free.”

Know too, the Bible is meant to be bread for our daily use,
not just cake for special occasions.

(PD) Another ingredient of the good glue is **BEING WITH OTHERS.** Verse 17

“Stick with me, friends.

Keep track of those you see running this same course, headed for this same goal.”

It is the genius of God that we're in community.
We need parents, teachers, and mentors to bless and to guide.

We need to love our children with everything we have,
but we don't need to give them everything we have.

Paul Harvey says it this way,
We tried so hard to make things better for our kids that we made them worse.

So he writes to his grandchildren;
I'd really like for you to know about hand me down clothes, homemade ice cream,
and leftover meat loaf sandwiches. I really would.

And I really hope nobody gives you a brand new car when you are sixteen.

I hope you learn to make your own bed, mow the lawn, and wash the car.

It will be good if at least one time you can see puppies born and your old dog put to sleep.

I hope you get a black eye fighting for something you believe in.

I hope you have to share a bedroom with your younger brother/sister.
And it's all right if you have to draw a line down the middle of the room,
But when he's scared, you'll let him crawl under the covers with you.

I hope you have to walk uphill to school with your friends
and that you live in a town where you can do it safely.

On rainy days when you have to catch a ride, I hope you don't ask to be dropped off
two blocks away so you won't be seen riding with someone as un cool as your Mom.

When you talk back to your mother I hope you learn what ivory soap tastes like.

And if a friend offers you a joint, I hope you realize he is not your friend.
I hope you make time to sit on a porch with your Grandma/Grandpa.

I hope your mother punishes you when you bug your neighbor
And hugs you when you give her a plaster mold of your hand.

These things I wish for you - tough times and tender moments,
disappointment and delight, hard work and happiness.
To me, that is the only way to appreciate life.

(PT) Our children need parents that are firm without being forceful,
that are responsible without being rigid.
That is a tough line to walk.

You know we can't shove faith down anyone's throat.
We know we're not telling you anything you don't know.

We're grateful you've gotten your children to worship and Sunday School,
Some parents want to give their children a choice.
The problem is later there really is no choice.
If they're not here as children, chances are they won't be here later.

Thank you for praying with them, setting the hour they need to be in at night,
making them be responsible, and giving them chores to do.

They need to know you care about them in all these areas of life,
especially their spiritual lives.

We need good parents but we also need friends to help us stick in our faith,
and to give us support, encouragement, and direction.

The class of 2008 truly exemplified that, they did that well.
Five or six of them mentioned the closeness of the class.
And some of them helped one of your classmates write a statement of faith
so he could go on a mission trip.

We need each other not only for encouragement and direction but protection as well.
Have you watched animal kingdom lately?
There was a show on lions.
They prey on those who are young, weak, and off by themselves.
I want to say that again, they prey on those who are young, weak, and off by themselves.

Those off by themselves not only will have more trouble sticking to their faith,
resisting temptation, and the devil.

Jesus loves the church and gave His life for it.
Jesus promises that the gates of hell will not prevail against the church.

The church is a place to be with others, so stay with it so you can stick with the faith. Remember Confirmation is not a graduation from the church. Confirmation is an experience you to stick with the church.

(PD)

III. Now **THE INGREDIENTS OF THE WRONG GLUE**

There are plenty of glues out there but they prove to be the wrong glue. They are ineffective and superficial. They'll at some point dry out, not stick, and then things break apart.

The first non-helpful ingredient is to always **TRY TO PLEASE OTHERS**. You may have heard of something called "peer pressure." Verse 18
"There are many out there taking other paths, choosing other goals, and trying to get you to go along with them. (that's peer pressure) I've warned you of them many times; sadly, I'm having to do it again. All they want is easy street. They hate Christ's Cross."

There are those that feel threaten by what you have. They feel discouraging, so they discourage you. Others have been deeply wounded in life and find faith to be difficult. they are going to make fun of you, laugh at you and put you down, because you have it and they don't.

Don't allow the devil to block out your memory of how God has worked in your life and those sacred moments when you first met.

Don't let others take away from you what you know to be true, God loves you. So do not fear, you belong to Jesus.

Don't use the glue with peer pressure, it'll dry out become brittle.

(PT) The second un-helpful ingredient is simply **SELFISHNESS** Verse 19

"But easy street is a dead-end street. Those who live there make their bellies their gods; belches are their praise; all they can think of is their appetites."

It makes it very difficult for us to stick to the faith if we always want our own way.

When we say, I don't care what the preacher or the teacher says, I don't care what mom and dad say, I don't care what the Bible says, I just want to do it my way, I just want to do what I want to do.

Well obviously, the glue isn't good glue, it won't hold. It'll become brittle and break.

Don't let the cares of this life, discouragement, fatigue, fear and failure dry up and loosen your faith in Jesus.

Don't let the pursuit of money, success, and ambition dry up your love for Jesus.

Don't let the hurts and failures of the past dry up your gratitude for Jesus.

(PD)

IV. **CONCLUSION**

So which glue will help us to have a faith that sticks?

Obviously the one in which we've given up stuff, accepted Jesus, made a commitment, read our Bible, gone to church, and have parents, family, friends, and a church that care about us?

Let's have you Confirmation Students stand before God, family and friends, and one another and take those vows now.