

Affirmation – not Perfection

King of Glory Lutheran Church

October 31, 2021

Confirmation Sunday

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*John 8:31-36 Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.' They answered him, 'We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, "You will be made free"?''*

*Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.'*

You have a home in God's house – with Jesus. With God.

You don't have to be perfect. Only forgiven.

You are known by God and loved by God.

Saying yes – and God says yes to you!

God's grace and love be with you this morning!

Right off the bat, congregation, I have to tell you what fabulous youth we have in our church! Zoe, Robert, Audrey (who couldn't be here today), William and Nate are just incredible youth. They each have unique interests. They have a sense of humor and are smart. They wrote great Faith Statements included in your bulletins. They are kind and come from great families. Can I ask for a round of applause for these students?

Also, on this Confirmation Day, I want to recognize their parents and grandparents, god-parents, mentors, siblings, and any other special people they have brought with them this morning. These are the people: parents and god-parents in particular who made promises so many years ago when these youth were baptized. They made promises to bring their children to church, to give them Bibles and to pray for them. They promised to bring them to confirmation, which I know can be more like pulling teeth than fulfilling a joyous promise. Yet, here we are! Let's offer a round of applause for the adults in these youth's lives who modeled faith for them and fulfilled promises.

Confirmation youth, this sermon is for you. I'm just going to talk to you and let the rest of the congregation listen in. Because today is too important, and I have some things I want you to hear.

Today we are continuing what began years ago when your parents got you baptized. They made promises to bring you to church and teach you about God. When you wanted to sleep in on Sunday morning and they were bugging you about getting out of bed to come to church, they weren't trying to punish you. They were fulfilling a promise they had made to you and to God.

Now, today, it is your turn to take over those promises. Instead of your parents, now it's your turn to say, "Ok, now I'm in charge of my own faith life. They're not going to drag me to church, I will choose to come. I can read the Bible on my own and ask questions when it's confusing." In short you are saying yes to God and God is saying a huge yes to you! God says, "I choose Zoe. I choose Nate. I choose Robert! I choose William!" So stick around! Confirmation isn't graduation and you are a part of this faith community.

You've just gone through 2-3 years of confirmation classes. We've helped you connect faith and daily life: remember when we went to the police station and the funeral home? We've read Bible stories of all kinds of folks who loved God and quite honestly kept messing up. You've learned about Lutheran theology – where we believe God has more grace and love for us than we often have for ourselves.

Today, you are not promising to be perfect. There might be times when you pressure to perform at school or in your extra-curricular activities. The truth is whatever we're doing at school or in relationships, chances are good we might mess something up. You and I can never be perfect. There was only one guy, named Jesus, who was perfect, and look what they did to Him. Right? They killed him. So perfect is out the window. But forgiven is in, because God says yes to you. God is full of forgiveness. Jesus also said, "I forgive you. You'll ask me to make it right and I will forgive you."

Secondly, God knows you and loves you. Think of your best friend. Now think of your mom and dad. Your best friend knows things about you. You have fun sharing those things together. Your parents also know you. They know you in another way.

God knows us even better than our best friends or our parents. God knows everything about us. That might be fun or that might sound a little scary. Here's the deal. God knows everything about us and still loves us!

There was a man who wanted to date a woman. He said this, "I could have gone to the library and gotten a book about this lady I was interested in. There would be a chapter on her lovely eyes and another on her curiosity and her interests. But I didn't read a book, I asked her out on a date. I got to know her one date after another. I looked into her eyes and I listened as she excitedly told me about her interests. I learned to love this lady as I learned all about her."

This is the way it is with God. Now you're not dating God. Then analogy ends there. But God knows you – all about you. And God loves you. God longs to hang out with you and enjoys when you hang out with God. God loves the way you trust Him, Nate. God loves your interest in helping people, Zoe. God loves the way you let your light shine, Robert. Will, God loves your kindness towards others.

Never ever forget, God knows you and God loves you. Completely. Perfectly. Always.

Last thing: You always have a place here. Of course, at King of Glory. But I mean you always have a place with God in Jesus. Jesus says He has a place in God's house forever, which means that we have a place, a home with God forever. Scripture tells us that we are a temple of the Holy Spirit. God lives inside of us. God is at home in you, and you will always have a home with God.

OK – quick review!

Today, you are saying yes to God and God is saying a huge yes to you!

Perfect is out and God's forgiveness is in.

God knows you and loves you.

You always have a home with God.

Amen.