

"Spirit Powered"

May 30, 2004 - Graduate Recognition

Acts 2:1-21 & John 14:25-27

This morning we have a lot of things on our minds. I am sure that everyone of you have your own personal and unique issues that you have been dealing with and even if you have set them aside for the morning they are still on your mind. Those things might include anything from the on going rain preventing the completion of planting plans to struggles in relationships or even what you are going to make for Sunday supper. Beyond those individual concerns we have Memorial Day weekend when our thoughts turn the sacrifices made by those who have served or are serving our nation. Our hearts can become very heavy as we think of what has been endured for our freedom. And our thoughts can be rightfully filled with gratitude as we think of the blessings we enjoy as a part of this nation. In the church it is Pentecost Sunday – and even though I would guess that very few of you woke up this morning with the events of Pentecost on your minds - still it is an important day in the church year and something to mark as we remember the receiving of the Holy Spirit by the disciples and the new confidence they had that led to the beginning of the Christian church. But perhaps far more of you have celebrations more close to home on your minds. Today we celebrate the baptism of Nathaniel Olson @ 11:00 and @ 8:30 we take some time during our worship of God to acknowledge the accomplishments of those from our midst who graduate from High School this day.

It is impossible to do any justice to an attempt to speak to all of these things in the short time I have. And as I pondered what approach I might take it struck me that often sermons can be so heavenly minded that they are of little earthly good [as the saying goes]. So I decided to be just very practical this morning. The thought that I decided to share with you may be a bit hard to follow [it is a problem with my confused mind] but try to hang with me. – So, in hopes of providing you with some practical advice that will serve you well no matter where your thoughts are this morning I decided to talk about fuel economy!

You may think that I am kidding - but with gas at \$2.10 per gallon it seemed to me that 'fuel economy' was a good topic. I thought it was especially appropriate for you who graduate today and begin to move off on your own individual pathways of life. At Baccalaureate last Sunday I asked you if you had any idea [Got any ID] of where you were going? But now I want to ask how you are going to get there? Fuel economy – yep, that's the key!

I want to tell you that the subject is just as applicable for all of us, but specifically I want our graduates to consider how you are going to get to your destination. ----- I read an article last week that made a comparison between various modes of transportation in relation to gas milage. It listed the distance that each mode of transportation would take you on a gallon of gas. Some of the things that made the list were a moped, Model A Ford, 1200 CC Harley-Davidson. A Maserati, Piper Cherokee plane, a diesel locomotive train, a Boeing 747, large crude-oil carrying supertanker and a Saturn V rocket. — Let me put you to the test – which do you think would be the most fuel efficient?

Moped (motorized bicycle), 120 miles.

Harley-Davidson 1200 (motorcycle), 50 miles.

Model A Ford (automobile), 25 miles.

Piper Cherokee (light plane), 15 miles (at 144 miles an hour).

Maserati Quattroporte (automobile), 8 miles.

GMC Astro (tractor-semi trailer combination), 5.4 miles.

GM (diesel locomotive), 632 yards (at 70 miles an hour, pulling 40 to 50 fully loaded freight cars).

Boeing 747, 280 yards (carrying 385 people at 39,000 feet).

Ultra-large crude-oil carrier (supertanker), 31 feet. (At 17 mph, fully loaded, needs 41 gallons of fuel to travel its own length.)

Saturn V (rocket), 10 inches to infinity. (consumes enormous quantities of fuel in its early stages, once it escapes the earth's gravitational field no more fuel is consumed.)

It would be easy to say that the moped obviously has the best gas milage. The Harley would be more fun and a 747 would let you take a few friends. But it seemed to me that the transportation with the best fuel efficiency is really the Saturn rocket. It takes a lot of fuel to get started but once it get underway – once it hits the heavens, it can travel forever for free. And that is the destination. You are not going to get to heaven and eternal life on a moped.

The disciples were gathered in a large room. They had witnessed the crucifixion of Christ - they had become witness to the resurrection. And they had watched as Jesus ascended into heaven. Now they waited - a bit in fear about what was supposed to happen next. They knew they could not stay in hiding forever. They had been 'in the classroom' with Jesus for 3 years and they knew there was a job to do. But how to get going?

Suddenly they received power – and courage– and joy. They burst out of their room as though rocket powered. In a way that we can not understand, they found themselves successfully living out what Jesus had called them to do. Suddenly they were carrying out their mission to Parthians and Medes, Elamites and residents of Minnesota. They had been afraid to over use their mopeds but God put them on a Saturn rocket powered by the Holy Spirit. For the disciples it was graduation day and they moved out in the power of God.

How will you get where you are going. What is the fuel that will take you there? A good education will take you far. Hard word is the back bone of America and will serve you well. Money will aid in a comfortable journey. Good looks - well you know that with your good looks you are bound to be noticed. But none of these will power you to a heavenly destination. If the destination is heaven you need the Spirit of God. A Saturn rocket requires a lot of fuel to get off the ground and it may seem at times as though the Christian life requires a lot of extra fuel as well. As a Christian you fight against all the resistance and friction that is a part of our world. The disciples fought against a world that did not know the Savior and had just crucified Him. You / we fight against a world that often chooses to walk away from Him. The urge will be to just stay in bed on Sunday morning instead of worshiping and many of you will not have your parents with you at college or wherever you find yourselves in the fall to tell you have to get up and go. You will fight against a world that prefers what the Bible refers to as "darkness" rather than the ways of God's light. It can seem as though it takes a lot of fuel to break free of those forces that cause resistance in your journey with God. But powered by His Spirit we lift off and ultimately find the best fuel economy possible - soaring free in the kingdom of God!

As Jesus gave His commencement speech to His disciples just before His crucifixion He spoke of one thing that He wanted for them. It is something that we want for you and something that God offers you. Peace! Peace! You will find it in the presence of God. Soar with Him.

