

THIS IS ONEIDA MOVING MOUNTAINS Part 2

The valedictorian of the OBI Class of 2013 was Anna Davidson. What follows below and in the next two weeks' articles as well is the text of her valedictory address to the congregation that attended our graduation service on May 18.

“. . . the development of character through perseverance, the improvement of mental, social, or physical skills, or most importantly, the opportunity to inspire someone else, to encourage them and give them confidence in their God-given talents and ultimately in their value as a human being. To me, this is what a successful life is.

“All we need to do to confirm this definition is look at the life of Jesus. Jesus did not experience riches and true acclaim in his earthly life. He was born in an animal feeding trough, worked as a carpenter for most of his adult life, and died the object of scorn and derision by those he most desperately wanted to reach. What is readily observed in his life, however, is a love for and willingness to spend time with those the world had forgotten and those held in lowest esteem-children, women, tax collectors, adulteresses; the list could go on and on as well as his message of love to the world as it is written in John 3:16, ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.’

“His legacy was one of healing the sick and infirm, of sharing hope with the down and out and with those who had failed and had no personal vision of redemption and forgiveness; he loved the unlovable and made an eternal impact in the lives of everyone with whom he came in contact. I submit that no other course in life could be any more important and lead to any more success than the pathway that the Son of God and creator of the world chose.

“I firmly believe that Jesus has created each of us sitting here today with a special purpose. In Psalm 139:16, David wrote to God saying, ‘All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.’ Elsewhere, in Ephesians 2:10, it says, ‘For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.’ These verses make it very clear that God has a plan for each and every one of us (his masterpieces) - a good plan. The challenge, of course, is figuring out what that plan is- what we were custom created to do.

“James 1:5 says, ‘If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.’ This is the first and greatest key to figuring out what God created us to do. Often God has given you and me certain talents or aspirations that point us in the direction he wants us to go. Engineers, doctors, lawyers, plumbers, professional athletes, nurses, mailmen, missionaries, pastors, and pilots can all play an equally valuable role in the kingdom of heaven. The key is to look at the Bible to get an idea of the characteristics Jesus displayed as he went about his daily life and put them into practice everywhere we go and in all that we do. . . .”

(to be continued)



*First printed in the Western Recorder August 6, 2013.
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