

“Confirmation Sunday”

Pastor Jacob Hanson

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## Opening Prayer

Good Morning, it is certainly a blessing to see you all here today. It has been a long time coming for us to be in worship together once again. In all of this time that we have been apart, know that you have been prayed for more than you could imagine. While online worship was worth something, I think most of us can agree that it just isn't quite the same. Now that we are here together today, and for the rest of the month in this fashion, hopefully your faith will be strengthened even more in this crazy time we live. This is not the 2020 that we expected perhaps, but it will be one of the most memorable years in our lives. We are going to make the best of it, seek the Lord through it, and when tough times come again we will remember how the Lord saw us through this. With all that said, this morning is a joyous day, as it is Confirmation Sunday!

Reagan, this morning you reaffirmed your Baptism in the midst of your fellow members, and you acknowledged the faith that you hold as your own. Additionally we, as your fellow members, affirmed that we are going to stand with you and worship with you well. For you and for all of our other wonderful confirmands, at least you will have the most interesting confirmation class in history! The scriptures you recited for us today are a good reminder for all of us that although 2020 might be a difficult year, our Lord still reigns. As you said, “We live by faith and not by sight.”

2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians is an interesting book within the New Testament. (I probably say that about all of them... but whatever.) In it the Apostle Paul is writing to the Corinthian church for a second time, a little bit differently from his first letter. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians has much to say about the basics of our faith, how we are supposed to act, and what a healthy church looks like. It is a pretty big condemnation of many of the Corinthians' practices by the Apostle Paul. However 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians is in many ways a follow up to the first letter. The concepts are a touch deeper, the words a bit gentler, and Paul spends time defending his first letter to these folks. In the middle of the book is what we read today, a good amount of information about the hope we hold and the reason behind our actions. The highlight is what Reagan recited, but the whole chapter has much to say to us Beloved.

“Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord... for we walk by faith, not by sight... we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.” That was 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:6-8. In there Paul is telling us that our home here on earth is not really what we long for the most, but that we look forward to the day when we are called home. This isn't a

suicidal longing, nor is it weak-willed, it is an honest yearning for (in God's time) when Jesus will set everything right as it was created to be. Paul tells the Corinthians and us that this longing, which we all have, spurs us on the good works that we were created to do. In verse 9 he states "Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him." Because we look forward to that day, because we know where we go, because we know what God has called us to do, we therefore take seriously our calling and work to please our maker. After all in verse 10 Paul reminds us that we will all sit before the Lord one day and have to give account for our actions. We are forgiven our sins by Christ's blood, but we are still behooved to act in a righteous manner.

Beloved Congregation, wonderful Confirmands, and Reagan, you have a purpose in this world. You are called to be pleasing to the Lord, by taking seriously that calling He has given you. "For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer lived for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf." Our Creator went to the cross in our place because He so loved us. To the grave He took with Him our sins and the punishment our sins entailed. When He rose He set the precedent that we too will rise. Our lives are tied to His, and so our lives should be reflecting His. On this morning when we celebrate Reagan's confirmation, I am happy to tell you that her life indeed reflects His in many ways. I want you folks to know that you should be very proud of her and our other confirmands. They know how to pray, they know their Lord, and they continually impress me by what they know and take seriously. While this may just be the beginning of your membership in the church Reagan, this is definitely not the beginning of your walk with Jesus. When you began your walk, and when all of us began ours, we tied our lives to Christ as Paul talks about. We are new creatures in Christ.

"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation." That came from verses 17-19 out of our readings. Paul tells the Corinthians, who previously had been all manner of things, that they are now new creations in Christ Jesus. That is true for us too, Beloved Congregation. We are made new in Jesus. What does this look like, and what does it mean? It means that the things that formerly would have defined us according to the world are at best secondary to who we are in Jesus now, and the sins that formerly defined our relationship with God have been wiped clean by Jesus's blood. You are no longer just a farmer, a truck driver, a student, a husband/wife, a golfer, a retiree, etc. You are now a Christian farmer or a Christian truck driver or a Christian student, etc. You are defined in this world not only by your own actions but also by the one who died for you. That is a big deal. Similarly, you are no longer defined by your sins in God's eyes. You are not a liar, or a thief, or an adulterer, you are defined by Jesus. The Lord Jesus has done all this for you so that you can be who you were created to be. As Paul then says in verse 20-21:

“Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us, we you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

So what should you remember on this Confirmation Sunday? What is the important piece? Well Reagan, and Beloved Congregation, you are to remember that you are made new through Jesus’s blood. Don’t be held back by the garbage of this world, and instead walk with Christ. Reagan, this isn’t the end of you Christian journey... it is much more akin to the beginning! You, we dearly pray, will grow in the Lord for the rest of your life until He calls you home along with the rest of us. For all of us who are walking in the Lord now, we have to remember that we too should be walking according to Christ, seeking out the Lord’s will, doing what He calls us to do each day. Beloved, if the highlight of your Christian walk was your Confirmation day forty years ago, you need to step up your game. All of us, whether it is you Reagan who is our newest member, or John Brandli who is I believe is our oldest, are called to “Walk by faith” in this life, seeking after the things God has set out for us. Let us celebrate Reagan’s confirmation, remember our own, and go into the world this week walking according to the faith that God has given us. Let us pray.

### **Closing Prayer**