

Baccalaureate Speech to Class of 2009 by Doreen Bowie

Pray thanking God for the privilege and honor
Pray for the graduates 2009 and all those who have come to celebrate this occasion, their family and friends
Thank God for CUBM students and faculty and the Board of Directors.
And thank Him for this evening
And ask that He bless His Holy Word.

Good evening everyone.

The subject of this message is PRAISE!

We are here tonight for a celebration.
This is a time of great joy.
We are here to celebrate the graduation of the class of 2009.



This is a day that has finally come
This baccalaureate service is to address the graduating class and those who have come here tonight support them
And to reflect on what marvelous things God has done for them.

- Baccalaureate service, "a farewell address in the form of a sermon delivered to a graduating class" (in the United States)

This is your day...

Joseph D Burke Sr.
Roamell Edwards
Ebony Fuller Nelson
Robert Leon Green
Victoria Raysor
Ken Duane Russell
Aaron LaMar Watt Sr.
And
Jonathan M. Wilson

This is cause for celebrating one of the biggest accomplishments God has determined for your life.
As you well know this won't be the last of the great things God is going to do for you.
And the best is yet to come.

This is like the great moments that come once in your lifetime,
Like when you graduated from high school
Your first job
Your 21st birthday

Your wedding day
The birth of your first child
The first time you graduated from college

This is one of those important and momentous events
And the significance is great.

Take a moment to reflect on the first time you walked through the doors of
The Center for Urban Biblical Ministry.
You were stepping out on faith
Being obedient to the call of God

2 Timothy 2:15

Study to **shew** thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

You have done the work
You have been diligent
And most importantly, you have been obedient

And now it has paid off
You are graduating!!!!

It's time to praise the Lord
What better describes praise than PSALM 150?

It is the Psalm that closes the book of Psalms
It is the end of the Psalms
It is a perfect ending to this portion of your story.
And its cause for praise.

Lets go to God's word

The King James Version reads this way

Psalm 150

¹Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power.

²Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.

³Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp.

⁴Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.

⁵Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.

⁶Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.

May God bless the reading of His Word.

What I like most about this Psalm
Is it sounds like a party

And it is. It is a party of triumphant victory.

Yet it is better than any other party in the world
This party will never end.
Our celebration with God is eternal.

So now I have told you the end of the story – Victory
But I haven't ruined the story for you
Because you already knew how it would end.

The end of everything with God and His children is victory.
We win and that is why the Psalmist closes it out with a procession of Psalms declaring the praises of God.
PSALM 145 and the ones that follow are a crescendo of praises that lead up to Psalm 150

You have experienced victory with your God
Your God brought you through
CUBM graduates
To get to this point in your life.

Let's go even further
Let me talk about one of the beautiful tools that God used to educate you.
He used CUBM

This school first began in 1988.
Their mission has always been to educate leaders, church workers, and pastors to work in the urban areas of our communities.

Because Geneva College is also committed to the urban community,
They worked together with CUBM to put together the Associate of Arts Degree in Christian Ministry.

The degree you have earned

Karla Threadgill Byrd became CUBM'S first full time director in 1997.
She along with the Board of Directors has been instrumental in the growth of this wonderful school.

CUBM and its faculty,
have for over 20 years
successfully equipped workers for God's Kingdom.

God's process of struggle will in the end result in victory

Psalm 150 has a history behind it.

There is always a story behind praise

King David, the servant of God, is a good example to identify with.

You know David as one of the most identified writers in the book Psalms.

Most of David's life is filled with heart wrenching pain

And he struggled a good bit of it.

He pours out lament after lament

Sometimes he asked God, "Are you there?" "Do you hear me?"

We know David was not perfect, yet God's word says this concerning him.

In

Acts 13:22

After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse a **man after my own heart**; he will do everything I want him to do.'

In David's life throughout 1st and 2nd Samuel

Saul relentlessly went after David and sought to kill him.

David had to flee continually from Saul

David however found one of his most loved friends in Jonathan

He was Saul's son.

God used Jonathan, the son of his enemy, to protect David.

God works in all things for the good of those who love Him.

But the difficulty did not stop here

David had tremendous struggle within his own household

David's first born son, Amnon, raped his half sister Tamar

Tamar was the Absalom's full blood sister

Absalom avenged his sister and had his half brother Amnon killed.

Absalom takes over his father's kingdom

He sends, King David, out into the wilderness fleeing for his very life.

Absalom further disgraces his father and lies with his concubines before all of Israel.

David seemed to always have his fill of trouble.

In Psalm 3 David pours out his heart to God in the midst of his difficulty

Psalm 3

¹Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me.

²Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah.

³But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.

⁴I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.

⁵I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me.

⁶I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that have set themselves against me round about.

⁷Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

⁸Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.

So we see David, who is going through some great difficulty
Yet in his struggles, he still praised God.
Because he has faith God will bring victory from his struggles

With further study of the Psalm
Halel – is the verb of Psalm 150 - it's the hallelujah chorus
The Hebrew word Tehillim is a noun describing the Psalms as a Book of Praises

In Psalm 150 each verse has an additional meaning to ponder

1 *Praise Ye the Lord* is a call for everyone to join in and praise God,

Praise God in His sanctuary, where is God's sanctuary- its in the heavens and on earth-God owns everything and is everywhere. Everybody, everywhere should praise God.

Praise Him in the firmament of His power- Praise God for what He has made. It is established and it will last forever.

2 *Praise Him for His mighty acts, Praise him according to His excellent greatness.* God is great. No One is greater and there is no end to His greatness.

3 -5 *Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet,*
Praise Him with the psaltery harp
Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs
Praise Him with the loud cymbals
Praise Him with the high sounding cymbals

These verses continue to add on all the instruments of a full orchestra.
There is a wind section, the string section and percussion
It is a melodious melody
God is please with this and His people and His word tells us to praise Him with completeness with everything we have
The full orchestra of your heart.

6 *Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise Ye the Lord-*
The glorious end to this Psalm.
Its an invitation to praise God
God's people all in one accord called to praise Him.
Praising God in unified praise

We are witnesses and spectators of His greatness
For what He has done
Not just for this moment,
BUT for every moment of your life

Let us celebrate the victory over the devil and how God has overthrown the devils plans to defeat you.

You are still here standing on God's promises

This Psalm is the climax
A doxology
Its our hallelujah chorus for God overcoming all that went on previously to get you to this place.

Our lament now shifts to praise, shouting and songs to the praises of our God.

Like David,
You prayed continuously
The process of this education has been long
It was hard
And often painful
The blood, sweat and tears
And all the sacrifices
The times when you thought, am I going to make it through?

I will be honest. I used to ask God why He just couldn't pop it all in my head.

Why did this process have to be so hard?

Couldn't you make it easier God?

I thought about the promises of Canaan. When the generation of Israel who made it to Canaan went to conquer the land, they had to go through a process.

They took each territory by a struggle through a battle with the people who were in the land. God's word tells He didn't give them the land all at once.

Deuteronomy 7:22

22 And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee.

Rapid possession of the land would leave a lot of areas desolate and cause the wild animals to have the freedom to run ramped throughout the territory and devour God's people.

God has a good reason for the things He does.

I thought of each semester, like the territories of Canaan, they are promised to us.

We have to go in and take possession of them. Fight hard through work and study to gain them.

If God gave you the semester by popping it in your brain, would you appreciate it as fully as you do now?

I believe the way God does it, makes us appreciate it all the more.

Through all your laments,
Like David,
You kept hoping
You kept trusting
Kept on believing
Kept on working
Kept at it
You pushed and pushed
You pressed on believing in what God promised you
And you ventured out in faith
That God would reward your efforts.

And praise God He did.

God brought you through

He brought you through the assignments
Through the papers
Through all the studying
Through all the semesters
Through the deadlines
Through everything
Through it all,

All the in betweens

You all have lives outside of school

The demands of

The job
The family,
Juggling the husband, the wife, the children
And the duties of the church

It was beyond your power
He brought you through life and all it throws your way

And despite this you made it, and you never could have without God.

You never would have made it without Him

In all that's said and done
With everything you have ever gone through
God saw fit to preserve you

To keep you
And protect you
Until you finished
You made it because of Him who loves you.

Jude 1:24-25 (New International Version)

Doxology

²⁴To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— ²⁵to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

And now what time is it Graduates of 2009?
Its time to praise Him!

Because of this struggle to get to this place and the One who kept His promise and did what He said He would do.

Ephesians 3:20 (New International Version)

²⁰Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

He planned this day for you.

Jeremiah 29:11 (New International Version)

¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

And we are all here to rejoice and throw a party to celebrate with you.

Let all of you here, everyone of you with the breath God gave you

Praise Ye the Lord.

Psalm 150 describes the finished product, this moment. Your Kairos moment, your appointed time and season. Set and established by God. Its why we are celebrating this graduation.

And Psalm 150 is a perfect ending to the struggle that produces Victory.

God bless you and join me in congratulating the class of 2009 and in praising God for the great things He has done and will continue to do for each of your lives.

To our God be all the honor and glory He so richly deserves.

Praise Him Praise Him Praise Him.....

Thank for your time.