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What Would You Say in a High School Graduation Speech?

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#STRask - Stand to Reason

Questions about what we would say in a high school graduation speech if given the opportunity, how to talk to talk about eternity with a six-year-old who is disturbed by the thought of Heaven never ending, and where Jesus is now if he has a body.

- * If you had the opportunity to give the high school graduation speech, what would you say?
- * How should I talk to my six-year-old about eternity when she struggles with the thought of it never ending and says she wishes she would have never been born so she didn't have to live in Heaven forever?
- * If Jesus has a body, where is he?

Transcript

I'm Amy Hall, and I'm here with Greg Koukl today for the hashtag S-T-R-Ask podcast. Welcome. Thank you for listening.

Greg. Amy. We're going to start with a question from Louise today.

Louise. If you had the opportunity to give the high school graduation speech, what would you say? Um, which high school? A Christian or a Christian? A Christian or a secular? He doesn't say. Actually, I did a baccalaureate this year, and it was at a Christian high school, and I'm trying to remember what I said.

What I did was I talked about the challenges that they were going to face in the culture, given that they're faithful followers of Christ, and that's going to take courage. And information, knowledge, and information, and information. And knowledge breeds courage.

So, how many people like to take tests? Nobody, almost. Except for a couple of people, raise their hand, and I know why they're raising their hand, because they're prepared.

And if you knew the answers, would you like to take tests? Everybody raises their hands.

So, you're not afraid of challenges that you know you can cope with, all right? And so, this is why it's so important to be able to defend, or know why Christianity is true in the deep sense, true in the way gravity is true, okay? And so, then I gave the case for the resurrection based on minimal facts to make it clear that we stand on solid ground, regarding the most important feature of Christianity or evidential feature, I should say, justification for the truth of our convictions. And that is the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. And with that in mind, if you are confident that Jesus rose from the dead, then it is going to give you the kind of courage that you need.

And then I ended just the way I end with the reality conferences when I give the charge to the Christians, and I have some challenges for non-Christians, but regarding the Christians. And there are nine Christians. Obviously, in any Christian school graduation, this one, particularly, they don't make any requirements for faith to be part of the high school, but it is a Christian school.

So, a lot of non-Christians there, and I gave the gospel in a very straightforward sense. You know, one day you're going to stand before Jesus and give an account. The books will be open, and everything you ever did will be written down there.

You're not going to have a prayer. No pun intended, actually, there, but it is not. It's over with.

Unless your name is written in the book of life, because you put your trust to Jesus. And the simple calculus is either Jesus pays or you pay. That's it.

Either Jesus pays or you pay. And then my final word to the Christians comes out of Mark 15:15, where you see Pilate, and the text there says, Pilate, wishing to please the crowd, wishing to please the crowd, released Barabbas and had Jesus scorched and crucified. And my point, the final point is there are many Christian young people that care more about what the mob thinks about them than what Jesus.

They side with Pilate, they turn their back upon the Savior. Don't let it be you. So that was my presentation.

Well, Greg, my ideas go right along with that. There are two things I would want to communicate, because I agree students are going into a very difficult world right now. There will be a lot of temptations, a lot of pressures.

So how do you withstand those? And I think the first point I would make is that you have to know and love Jesus if you want to endure persecution. I've looked at so many people from the past who have endured all sorts of awful things, because I really was interested in knowing what is the common denominator. How did these people endure all this suffering? Who are they? What do they care about? How did they do this? And the

common thread I found is that they really love Jesus.

If you love him above all else, you can let all other things go. Let goods and kindred go. This moral life also, right? If you have something greater than that, you know, Jesus said, you know, you can't don't turn back.

You know, you have to, if you don't hate your father and mother by comparison, then you're not worthy to follow him. And I think the problem is if there's something you love more than Jesus or someone you love more than Jesus, you'll end up going after them instead of Jesus. Yeah.

So in order to love him, we have to know him. And that's why you have to put your time into reading the Bible, reading about him, thinking about him, you know, being in fellowship, being in worship, all these things, you have to seek to know him. Prayer.

All everything that we do to seek to know Jesus better. I think that is above all else what we need to do. My second point, and I think this is something, again, this is very hard to do, and it goes against everything in our society.

They need to love truth above all other agendas in this world. Now, I put this below the glory of God, but I think the truth is always serving the glory of God. So I don't, I don't want to pit those against each other when I say that's the most important thing you have to seek.

The reason why I say this is because now today, truth is just a tool people use for something they love more and care about more. So they have an agenda. If the truth serves that agenda, then all well and good.

If the truth doesn't serve that agenda, they'll just massage the truth, they'll hide the truth, they'll do all sorts of things in order to promote their, their own ideas. Now, the problem is, truth is not a tool that we can abandon for something more important. And the reason for this is because God is true.

And truth will always glorify God. And when we adjust that, we throw away the guardrails protecting us from bad ideas. And this is the thing that human beings have to fear the most is bad human ideas.

And that's what happens. If you get rid of the guardrails, you have nothing protecting yourself from those bad ideas. Now, the reason why this is so hard is because truth doesn't just advance good things.

Truth also will fight against you. It will show you your sin. It will show you that you're wrong sometimes.

And we don't like to admit that, but you have to care about truth. And again, I think that

love of truth comes first from a love of God. So that's why I put loving Jesus first and knowing God, knowing who He is, loving Him.

And then putting truth above all your other ideas, the truth you find in the Bible, the truth we find in the world, whatever that truth is, that has to come first. So this is not something that happens automatically. I think we have to be very intentional about this and we have to fight the kind of the ideas in our society that would say otherwise.

So I had been praying about this and I realized that there were basically six areas that my prayers kind of fell into. So I actually summarized it in a short prayer. And sometimes I pray this prayer.

Sometimes I just use it as a guide to pray in those different areas. But here's the prayer. And this is on our website.

If anyone wants to look for the prayer about truth there at str.org. Is that the way it's titled? The title of it is a daily prayer for this cultural moment. And I talk about all of these things there. But here's the prayer.

Father, move my heart to desire truth, sharpen my eyes to see truth, mold my mind to think truth, embolden my mouth to speak truth, strengthen my hands to serve truth, grant me love to adorn truth. And if we can just keep that in mind, we will make it through this time. But this is going to be a very tough time.

And so those are the two points that I would make. And that second point you could make to a secular audience. Of course you don't have the idea of an objective God who is true to back it up.

But you can certainly make that appeal. Yeah, our conviction is that if people, this is a prayer. But if they just make it a goal for their lives, even their secular lives, truth is when your beliefs about the world match the way the world actually is.

What world is that? That's the world God made. And so if you are seeking the truth about the way the world actually is in a whole host of areas, you're going to be learning how God made the world. And if you are living consistently with that in a whole bunch of areas, your life is going to be better because it's going to be aligned with reality rather than fighting reality.

It's not going to get you heaven. It's not going to get you forgiven. But what might get you forgiven is you acknowledge the reality of your own guilt, which you're already aware of.

And realize that the answer to guilt is not denial, but forgiveness. And that's where Jesus comes in. All right, Greg, that was advice for high school students.

Now we're going to go to a question from a young person. This question comes from Brianna. How to talk with my six year old about eternity.

She struggles with a thought of it never ending and said that she wishes she would have never been born so she didn't have to live in heaven forever. My husband is a pastor and we've tried all we know to do to calm her mind. Well, this may sound a little bit unusual, but I would say don't press this point.

And the reason is there are there are conceptual concepts. Abstract concepts. There are abstract concepts.

Thank you. That it takes a degree of maturity of mental physical development to be able to understand. I remember reading about this.

This is just had to do with nothing spiritual, but just take the notion of irony. Kids don't understand irony because it takes a sophisticated an ability to see reality in the world and language and circumstances in a more sophisticated way to be able to understand what irony is. And that just comes with time and development.

I'm 74 years old and I still struggle with the idea of eternity. Sometimes if I think about it too much, it freaks me out. And I cannot.

I want to take a rest. I could think way into the future and then I went, okay, I'm going to sleep now. So that especially is a difficult thing.

All that pressing the child here to understand is just creating difficulty for the child and anguish, anxiety, whatever. So don't worry about it. Just say, you know, honey, we're going to be in a new world with Jesus all the time and it's going to be good.

It's never going to be bad. And every day is going to be with Jesus. We don't have to push them out to every day that never ends in accounting the day.

So that's too difficult for her. And like I said, even as an adult, there's a certain kind of agrophobia that, so to speak, that I feel when I try to contemplate eternity. So I would just keep it in very simple terms.

I wouldn't press on that issue. I just mentioned the kind of quality of it that will be satisfying. We will never be alone.

There will never be hardship and difficulty, pain, anguish, no tears. There'll be just, you can even put it this way, fun things to do with Jesus with us every single day. What's wrong with that? It's so interesting to me.

This isn't the first time I've heard a question like this and not even just from kids. Like you said, you have an issue with it sometimes. I've heard adults say this.

I can't really relate to it. So I don't, it's hard for me to kind of enter into the feeling to kind of give an idea of how to do it. I don't want to respond to it because I've never thought about it for myself.

But one thing that might help is just to assure her, you know, you're just going to be living one day at a time. You'll only be living in one day. Just like right now, you're experiencing one thing one day.

That's how it is. But you wake up again tomorrow. But you're only, you're not living in eternity.

You're not living all this, all this time at once. It's just like now. It's not going to be your experience of time won't be any different from now.

I don't think. So maybe, maybe just equate it to how we're living now. And, but what if you're, what if you didn't have to go back to school after vacation and your vacation went longer? Is that, would that be great? You want vacation to go longer? That's that in June, not in September or late August when they're tired of summer and they want to see their friends again.

But no, the point is a good one. As long as you don't stress about Nick, you'll have another day and you'll wake up with a brand new day and wait, I don't know if they're days in heaven. Don't worry about that.

That's not really the point. The point is that it's moment by moment you're experiencing this. You don't have to worry about the whole thing.

Yeah. So just kind of shrink it down to a shorter thing. You know, are you ever on a trip and you wish it would go for longer? Well, heaven will go for longer.

You'll be that day and you're like, I wish this would go for longer. Well, it will go for longer. But just keep it confined to a shorter period of time.

Again, I'm not sure if that works because I've never dealt with this, but I do hear this. She's not alone. So you can tell her that too.

Especially at six years old. It's just too much. It's too big of a burden to carry.

Okay, Greg, here's a question from Abraham. My five-year-old just asked me this. If Jesus has a body, where is he? I don't know.

That's a completely fair question. And it's a mysterious one too. It's actually quite precocious of a child to ask this question.

It seems to me because they're thinking about implications of our beliefs. And we could say, well, he's in the Father's presence right now, but he has a physical body. He has a

glorified body.

Maybe this is a better way to put it. His body is glorified. It is his body, but it has been transformed into something special.

And so that's all we know. There's no place in the universe, physical universe, where you're going to be able to travel and find Jesus's body because it's not physical in that sense. It's not located in the universe in that way.

But it is real. And even Stephen saw Jesus in a vision standing there next to the Father when he was being martyred. So these are the things for a youngster that I would point to.

They can, okay, he could see him. He's somewhere, but he's not in this physical universe. Well, why not? Because he has a body different than ours.

He has a body different than ours. What grows out of that does not is not exactly the same as a seed. It's a, the spiritual body will be the same body.

It's not that we're just spirit. We will have a body, but there will be something different about it. And I agree, Greg, I don't think, I don't think he's in this universe right now.

I mean, is it impossible? It's not possible, I guess. But I, but I just have no reason to think so over there on colob. Oh, no.

That's a warming concept. I'm sorry. Just poking Amy on this one.

But yeah, I don't, I would just leave it at that. It's kind of a mystery. And by the way, when you read 1 Corinthians 15, this section that you're talking about, no more chapters about the resurrection.

It even seems that Paul is kind of straining a little bit to try to clarify a very obscure concept. And so he gives us some things to work with, like you mentioned. But even after I read that passage, I still have questions.

And I'm just trying to imagine what he just described. And it's, it's difficult to imagine that. What he does say there is that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom.

And what he means by that is our physical bodies as they are constituted now. And that's what flesh or flesh and blood often refers to in scripture. It's our, it's our, it's our physical self.

Sometimes the word flesh by itself, in the Greek is referring to our fallen self, but sometimes not in the flesh, but in the spirit. Paul talks about, I don't know if I was in the flesh or this happened or in the spirit. He, he doesn't know if he is in his physical body or whether he was, his soul was transported.

Okay. So I'm just saying that the word flesh can be used in different ways. It's our mortal bodies, flesh and blood.

Just like he told Jesus told Peter, flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my father who is in heaven. Okay. And flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom.

This is why we have to be resurrected. There's a transformation and some people are going to be resurrected from the dead, but there's also going to be a generation that doesn't die, but it's just simply resurrected from the living state. This is what, and this is the, this is, this is one feature of the final resurrection and we are gathered up to you with the Lord of the air.

So, but that, that's a transformation into a totally different kind of body, a spiritual body Paul talks about, but we know it's a flesh and blood. It's a, it's a physical body. Forget the flesh and blood part.

It's a physical body that's of a spiritual nature that it's not a ghost. And when Jesus returns, he says, look at him. I'm not a ghost.

Look at it. Touch me. Feel me.

I can eat. Watch this. You know, so, but, but there's still a lot of mystery there as to what's involved.

So he's with the father and that's really all we know right now. Somewhere out, not in this physical dimension. Yeah.

I, I, it's a hard question to answer five year olds for anybody, actually. But thank you Abraham and Brianna and Luis. We really appreciate hearing from you.

And we hope you'll join us again on standard reasons. Hashtag SDRask podcast. This is Amy Hall and Greg Coco for Stand to Reason.