

Life Is Pain, Highness

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Baccalaureate Service

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I. So – here we are at Baccalaureate.

A. What an honor it is to be able to speak here.

- We should thank all the people who worked to make this happen.
 - Thanks to the students and their families.
 - Thanks to the musicians for using their gifts.
 - Thanks to the speakers who already spoke.

B. Next week is graduation.

- What a great time to celebrate the accomplishments of these fine men and women.
- What a pleasure to remember the good things God's done in the past.
- How exciting is it to look forward to the future these graduates have in store.

C. I was trying to remember my high-school baccalaureate and graduation.

- **I can recall very little about it.**
 - **I remember a bunch of old guys standing up in front of us preaching or something.**
 - **And I remember being bored to death.**
 - **I don't remember what my speaker said.**
 - **I don't even remember who my speaker was.**
 - **I remember just wanting to leave.**
- Well – doesn't that make you feel good?
 - These guys won't remember what we say.
 - Or even who we are!

D. That's surprising, though, 'cause they have a pretty good memory.

- **Like, I'll bet they can follow up this sentence:**
 - **Hello. My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father....**
 - *(query the audience for, "Prepare to die."*

- **Stop this rhyming now! I mean it!**
 - **"Does anybody want a peanut?"**
- **Here's a quote from that movie you don't hear often:**
 - **Buttercup says, "You mock my pain."**
 - **The Man in Black replies...**
 - **Life is pain, Highness. Anyone who says differently is selling something.**
- **Do you think life is pain?**
 - I think life *contains* pain.
 - But I think pain can bring great benefit.
- II. **Steve and I would like to tell you three things about pain.**
 - Because we want you to embrace all of life – even the pain.
 - A. **You can grow through your pain if you let it make you stronger.**
 - The Bible says that pain, or suffering, produces perseverance, character and hope.
 - ✓ *Romans 5:3-4 (NIV)* ³Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope.
 - We don't have to tell you –a bunch of young adults who have persevered for over a dozen years to get your degrees – that pain can help you grow stronger.
 - Ask any athlete.
 - They know pain can make you stronger.
 - Ask a scholar how hard he works to get A's.
 - He knows pain makes you stronger.
 - Ask any parent about the pain they have had rearing their children.
 - Pain makes you stronger.
 - You will grow through pain if you allow it make you stronger.
 - **Embrace all of life – even the pain.**

B. You will grow through your pain if it leads you to care about others.

- As a kid, watching the Steelers, I'd often cheer for the opposing players to get hurt.
 - I stopped doing that when I broke my own ankle playing football.
 - The pain of the break helped me care for others who experienced such things.
- The Apostle Paul called God...
 - ✓ *2 Corinthians 1 (NIV) ^{3b}the God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.*
 - **God says that when you go through pain, you can use it to help others in pain.**
- From the Christian world-view, God can help in times of pain because he's been there.
- For about a decade, I served as the campus pastor at a branch campus the University of Pittsburgh.
 - That university worked to call in world-class speakers at graduation.
 - World-renowned journalists
 - The Governor of Pennsylvania
 - Betty Friedan
 - Something that amazed me was that whoever spoke, they always brought the same message:
 - *You've earned this degree – go indulge yourself.*
- If all you've learned in your years in high-school is how to indulge yourself, any pain you've experienced has been for nothing.
 - Whenever they gave me the microphone during those years, I would say the opposite of what the speakers said.

- ***“Use your degree to help others. Love your neighbor as yourself.”***
 - You may not learn that in a classroom.
 - ***But life is pain, Highness. Anyone who says differently is selling something.***
 - If, as you experience pain in life, it leads you to care for others, in their pain, you'll grow through your pain.
 - Embrace all of life – even the pain.
- ## C. You will grow through pain if you hear its message.
- The author of the Narnia tales, C. S. Lewis said, *“God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”*
 - Pain often has a message for us to hear.
 - Sometimes it's the only way God can get our attention.
 - I want to warn you, you will experience some heartache in the years that are ahead.
 - You'll experience some injustice.
 - You'll be confronted by some serious obstacles.
 - If you have a headache, you can go to the doctor.
 - If you had a problem with your car, you'd go to a mechanic.
 - If you have trouble with your computer, you'd take it to a computer specialist.
 - If you have trouble with your heart – with heartaches, take them to God.
 - It might seem kind of strange to have spoken of pain here at graduation
- ## III. But the fact is, The Man in Black was right:
- ***Life is pain, Highness. Anyone who says differently is selling something.***
 - We would love to see you embrace all of life – even the pain.
 - You do that when you...

A. Willingly take risks, without fearing the pain.

- **That's kind of what the heroes in *The Princess Bride* did when they stormed the castle.**
 - **And on a much more serious note, that's what the Bible says that Jesus did, when he went to the cross and willingly faced its pain for you and me.**
- **One of my favorite Bible verses is**
 - ✓ *Romans 8:32 (NIV)* ³²*He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?*
- **Take the risks.**
 - **Embrace all of life – even the pain.**
- Many of us have lived a lot longer than you have and we want you to know it is a wonderful life.
- You embrace all of life – even the pain – when you...

B. Look for a miracle along the way.

- Oh – and you'll not find miracles from Miracle Max.
- **God** is the one who can give you a miracle when you trust in him.
 - You embrace all of life – even the pain – when you look for the miracles God places along the way.
- The greatest miracle you can find is the miracle of eternal life with our Heavenly Father.
 - We want every one of you to enjoy life now.
 - But we also want to encourage you to prepare for your future life.
- In the years that are ahead you'll be making lots of decisions.
 - Vocation.
 - College.
 - Marriage and children.
 - Military.
 - Investments.
- But the most important decision anyone makes is the decision about what they do with Jesus.
 - Jesus said...

✓ *John 14:6 (NKJV)* *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*

- You embrace all of life – even the pain – when you embrace the One who gave his life for you.
- And you embrace all of life when you...
- C. Learn to lean on the One who helps us grow.**
 - **God cares about you, your joys and disappointments, your accomplishments and your failures, your victories and your insecurity, your pleasure and your pain!**
 - **The Apostle Peter said...**
 - ✓ *1 Peter 5:7b (NKJV)* *[cast] all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."*

Conclusion

- *The Princess Bride* ends with the heroes riding away on four wild horses.
 - Let's ask God, as this class prepares to ride from Curwensville High School, to help them embrace all that life has for them.
- God bless you!