



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

May 25, 2022

Pastor James Enderle

Graduation Service

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 115

Lesson: [Ephesians 6:10-18](#)

Sermon Text: [2 Timothy 4:17a](#)

### Remember...

1. Why you need strength
2. The Lord is at your side
3. You always have a purpose
4. To keep growing so you can keep proclaiming

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Amen.

***But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it.*** ([2 Timothy 4:17a](#))

As you sit here for your 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation, what things will you remember about your time at Morrison Zion? Think back about all the years, all the different grades, all the different events. Maybe you remember things from this year very fondly or maybe years ago. Maybe you are going to remember your trip to Chicago—maybe there was a lot of fun from that. Maybe from the track meet—there were some records set at the track meet. Maybe basketball or a lot of other memories; maybe someone will even remember this week for some injuries this week. That would maybe be a little memorable. There are probably a lot of things as you go through graduation that make you think of the memories.

But there is also something that probably your teachers and your pastors want you to think about when remembering. What things that you've been taught are you going to remember? Maybe some things (hopefully) from some of your classes, maybe from science, maybe from math, maybe something from history; maybe you remember a few of Mr. Muchka's things about etiquette. Every morning learning how to eat right and how to walk right or to treat others with respect; maybe you'll remember a few of those things. Maybe you'll remember a few things from (hopefully) religion class and a few

other things, but think about the things that your teachers and your pastors would want you to remember. What have you learned?

In the text that you guys picked for your graduation verse, I think there are some things that you can think about remembering. Remembering is in the past, things that we remember, but also when we talk about remembering, there are a lot of times when people will say "Remember to do this..." "Don't forget this." "You learned this. Remember what you've learned." When I look at this Scripture that you picked for your graduation verse, I think there are a few things that it's really good for us to **remember** for your years as you go forward.

So what does Paul want you to **remember**? He starts out saying ***"But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength..."*** He's talking about the Lord being by his side and giving him strength. I think the first thing that we need to **remember** is that you're going to need strength. So remember (1) why you need strength. Why do you think Paul is talking about it and saying "The Lord was by my side and gave me strength?" Do you need strength when something is easy? Not really.

You're graduating 8<sup>th</sup> grade and going on to high school and college. Are things going to get easier? I see a few shaking their head no. Of course things are going to become a little bit more difficult. Classes are going to get more difficult. Right now you guys get to have your parents make a lot of your decisions. You are going to become more independent and start making your own decisions. Sometimes that's difficult. So he says to remember that God is by his side and gives Him strength.

So why do we need strength? It's going to get harder. Why is it hard? We live in this sinful world and we're sinners. If you pay attention to the news, there was a tragedy that happened this week—another school shooting. I saw someone post on a page that said this: Dear children of the world, it's not supposed to be this way. I think that's true. Of course, we want to be safe in the classroom. You shouldn't have to fear in the classroom. But is the fact that there is evil and hatred and pain and suffering and war a surprise? Not at all! These things that happen in the world, the difficulties that we face in the world are nothing new. These are things you are going to face day in and day out because we live in a sinful world.

More than that, we're sinners. So as you go forward, are you going to make mistakes? Yes. You're going to make mistakes and there are going to be people who sin against you and it's going to be hard. There are going to be times when you feel like giving up, so you need to remember that it's going to be difficult at times. We live in this sinful world and we're sinners, but notice right away that Paul gives that comfort. He says, "The Lord stood at my side." So even though things are going to be difficult, remember that (2) the Lord is by your side. Why is that important? Because we know that He is in control of all things. And even if you might feel like a failure at times or struggle with

things or even look at the world and say “How could this happen? How could things get this way?” we know that the Lord is with you. The Lord is by your side and is strengthening you and He has great power. When we talk about remembering, He doesn’t forget you.

We forget a lot. You’re probably going to forget a lot of things that you’ve learned at school. But the Lord doesn’t forget you. He loves you and will always remember you and He’ll never leave you nor forsake you. So even though the world is difficult and there are all these problems, the Lord is with you. But do you know what it says that He does forget?

He forgets your sins. He says, “Because of the work of Jesus, of Him dying on the cross, He sends your sins as far as the east is from the west. He remembers them no more.” What greater news than that? When we’re struggling in the world, when we’re struggling with our own sins, to know when I struggle with forgiving myself, the Lord forgives us. The Lord is with you and is always giving you that reminder of the Gospel and His love, the work that Jesus did for you, to die for you.

So as the Lord stands by your side knowing things might not always be easy, Paul talks about what his purpose is, what he is meant to do. He says, “**...so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it.**” He knew what his job was—to proclaim a message to the Gentiles. He’s saying a little bit of what every Christian’s job is. Remember that (3) you always have a purpose. Just like Paul, who knew that his job, his calling was to share this message, I think you guys chose this verse because you knew that this is also your purpose.

We talked about the purpose of our church in school—to glorify God as we gather around the Gospel, we grow in the Gospel and we go with the Gospel. You can go to all sorts of schools and you can learn all sorts of things, but I think your parents sent you here so that you can grow up in God’s Word and you can go with that Word; to know that you (as a Christian) always have a purpose, no matter what.

That’s for you all here as well. As long as you’re here on this earth, God has a purpose for you. We are here to spread that light and to share God’s message—a message of that Gospel, that salvation, that peace; the peace that this world needs; the peace that the world is struggling to find and to know of forgiveness and real hope. You do that with your words and with your actions, showing love to others, but also speaking that Gospel to others.

He says “**...through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it.**” As you remember this purpose that you have, also remember that there are going to be a lot of things you are going to be able to do in the future. There are a lot of things you are going to be able to focus on and excel in. We’ve got graduates

recently in high school that just won regional track. You can focus on track. You can focus on theater. You can focus on music and sports. You can get really good at these things. In college you can get a degree in whatever you want. If you want to go into the workforce and be a farmer or raise ducks or whatever you'd like to do, you can excel in anything. But remember you always have a purpose. But, if you don't keep growing in God's Word, what happens? How well or how focused are you going to be able to accomplish that purpose?

There are going to be things you can decide on what to do and to become really good at. Remember (4) to keep growing (in God's Word) so you can keep proclaiming the Gospel. You are graduating from school here, but you're not graduating from being in God's Word. Some of you might be going to public school and it will be harder to be in God's Word all the time, so you have to work all the harder to be in God's Word at home and to be in God's Word at church. But never stop growing. We think that our faith can kind of be neutral. But you are either decreasing in faith or growing in faith. So remember to keep on growing.

You know that you can do that through devotions, through time in God's Word, but also you know who wrote this letter, right? Paul wrote this letter to Timothy. Think about how you can find a Paul. Paul was a mentor for Timothy. He trained him and brought him up and encouraged him. It's good for Christians to think about who is encouraging me. Who can I learn from? Who can I grow in the Word from? Who can you continue to grow from? You can do so in church. Maybe from family members, maybe from someone in school, but continue to grow.

There are a lot of things that you are going to remember from school. A lot of good memories I hope, and a lot of things that our great teachers have taught you, but I know what they want most of all is for you to remember God's love for you. You are a loved and redeemed child of God. But in that, remember you have a great purpose and a great job of sharing that good news with others. It's not hard. You know the words. It's simple. What a blessing it is that you have these words and can continue to grow because this is so important; to know your Savior, not just today but every day and on into eternity. So remember today who you are; you are a loved, redeemed child of God. Amen.

***And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*** ([Philippians 4:7](#).) Amen.