

Successful student (Matt 16:21-27)

- ❖ It is a graduation season
- ❖ Congratulations to all graduates!!!

- ❖ Whether you are graduated from elementary school, high school or colleges, or even higher education, we congratulate them for their accomplishments
- ❖ Good job!

- ❖ But we all know that graduation is not the end
- ❖ It is just a beginning

- ❖ So most of graduation speeches talk about their futures
- ❖ Graduation is special because of great expectation of those who graduated

- ❖ Today I would like to compare our school life with the life of disciples
- ❖ The word “disciple” means student

- ❖ So they entered the school of Jesus Christ when Jesus called them
- ❖ Instead of applying to the school, they were chosen by Jesus

- ❖ Jesus taught them for 3 years
- ❖ Jesus ate with them, laughed with them and spent time with them

- ❖ He explained to them about life, death, heaven, hell, money and about God
- ❖ He showed them what Jesus could do thru many miracles

- ❖ He preached to people and healed people
- ❖ Jesus reviewed what He taught with His disciple in a final exam week which was His last week with them

- ❖ Jesus’ dying on the cross was disciples’ final exam
- ❖ But disciples failed the exam by disowning Jesus and running from Jesus

- ❖ Jesus also gave the graduation speech (연설)
- ❖ He did it on the cross

- ❖ The shortest message is the strongest message
- ❖ And Jesus did exactly that

- ❖ He said “It is finished!”
- ❖ I have done everything I came for

- ❖ I came to take care of your sin problem and I am about to do it now
- ❖ I came to teach you on who God is and what you should do to my witnesses, I did that

- ❖ That is nothing else I need to teach you
- ❖ After Jesus’ resurrection, He ascended to heaven

- ❖ Earthly teachers send students away
- ❖ Heavenly teacher left Himself

- ❖ So He can send another teachers, the Holy Spirit
- ❖ The school of Jesus is a school of grace

- ❖ So Jesus gave His students another chance by showing Himself to them after His resurrection

- ❖ Jesus said “**now can you pass the test? Stop doubting and believe**”

- ❖ After seeing Jesus, Thomas who doubted Jesus’ resurrection said “**My Lord and My God!**”

- ❖ Jesus said to him “**Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed**”

- ❖ Jesus came to Peter and disciples in John 21
- ❖ That was Peter’s job interview

- ❖ Do you know when you will know how much you’ve learned?
- ❖ It is a job interview

- ❖ You have to be able to show how much you've learned for last 12 years in a few minutes
- ❖ You should be able to sum up your knowledge and experience
- ❖ Jesus asked “do you love me?”
- ❖ All 3 years of teaching can be sum up with this “loving Jesus”
- ❖ Peter's job was to take care of Jesus' sheep
- ❖ Sunday school is a building that has four walls with tomorrow inside
- ❖ Sunday school teachers – the world's largest volunteer force (4.1 million – 20 years ago)
- ❖ Just like Jesus' disciples, we all were invited by Jesus
- ❖ That is why we are here and worship God
- ❖ We all entered the school of Jesus Christ
- ❖ What kind of students are we?
- ❖ Not so good students who are not interested in Jesus' teaching?
- ❖ Good students who are good at classes?
- ❖ Successful students who not only learn, but also be fruitful?
- ❖ How to be successful students?

1) Understand the heart of teacher

- You not only learn about what, but also about why
- Most of elementary teaching is not about why
- They are about what
- You need to know this, but does not explain why yet
- OT teaches us about what we should do
- 10 commandments for example
- Jesus came down in NT and taught us about why
- Now it is time for you to understand
- Today's scripture is a conversation between teacher Jesus and a student Peter

- Peter could not see why Jesus was saying this
- Peter didn't understand why Jesus had to die
- Peter could not understand the heart of God
- **Matt 16:21** "From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."
- Jesus said "time has come. Now I can tell you more clearly why I came down"
- He must go to Jerusalem, suffer, be killed and be raised to life
- This is God's plan
- This is the only way for us to have salvation
- Peter heard, but didn't understand it
- Peter thought He was helping Jesus by saying this
- **Matt 16:22** "Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"
- It is like Peter saying "come on Jesus. I need to talk to you. What is this crazy you are talking about?"
- Peter rebuke Jesus
- **Matt 16:23** "Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."
- Peter just called Jesus the Son of Living God
- Jesus just praised Peter on what Peter said
- But now Jesus called Peter Satan
- Peter was not Satan, but he was doing what Satan would do
- Peter was behaving as a stumbling block to Jesus
- Because Peter didn't understand the heart His teacher, Jesus

- Successful students not only learn about what, but also about why
- Peter should say “I don’t understand. Why do you have to suffer and die, Jesus?”

- We might say “why couldn’t Peter be wiser?”
- We probably would do the same if we were Peter

- We react to what we see at that moment
- We don’t see far enough to understand why God allows certain things

- We should meditate more
- We should try to see further

- **Isa 46:9-10** “Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me.”

- How much do we know the heart of God?
- We would if we are successful students

2) Do best on little things

- Successful students know that everything begins with little things
- Life is about taking care of little things

- You have to study a little every day to get a good grade
- You cannot just ‘A’ in final exam to get an ‘A’

- To get an “A” in final exam, you have to study throughout the semester
- That is why one of the most honorable award in Korea was to get perfect attendance

- Perfect attendance is not the greatest accomplishment
- But it is the beginning of the greatest accomplishment

- **Matt 16:27** “For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.”
- God will reward us according to what we have done
- It is what we do in everyday of our life
- There is a story of talents in Matt
- Master gave 5 talents to first servant, 2 talents to second one and 1 talent to third one
- When he came back, servants with 5 & 2 talents came to him with 5 and 2 more
- The master said the same thing to both of them
- **Matt 25:21** “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’”
- Being faithful with a few things
- The servants with 5 and 2 talents didn’t care how much they had
- They did best with what they had
- The results were the praise from the master
- When you do your best on little things in life, you will get a lot more later
- What you have in your life seems very little
- What you should be seems very little
- It seems insignificant
- But good students do not overlook little things
- Homework seems like little things
- You might say “what can I learn from home work”?
- But good students always do their home works

- Good students can catch all the little hints teachers give
- They don't play around while teachers are talking

- They focus on daily learning
- So they are not afraid of pop quizzes

- They don't have to play catch up games
- They don't have to study hours for the exams

- Are you a good student?
- Do you overlook any little things in life?

- There is no such thing as insignificant thing in life
- There is no such thing as insignificant thing in ministry

- Do your best with what you have
- God will reward you according to what you've done

3) Focus on what is important

- There are a lot of things you can do in your life
- Do you focus on what is important?

- What is the most important thing in your life?
- The most important things that you can take to your eternal life

- Do not focus on temporal, but on eternal
- And God gave us an eternal life

- **Matt 16:26** “What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?”

- You can gain the whole world, but it does not mean anything if you are not here
- When the time runs out, you have to leave everything behind you

- That is why our time is so essential for us
- Do not waist it

- There is a famous quote
- “So many people spend their health gaining wealth, and then have to spend their wealth to regain their health”
- We don’t know what is important and try hard to chase something
- God gave us the most important thing to us... our eternal destination
- Do not lose it
- The only way to secure that is thru our faith in Jesus Christ

4) Remember what you’ve learned

- By graduating from schools, you earned a degree (학위), knowledge and experience, what are you going to do with them?
- How are you going to use them?
- Our schools teach us how to gain
- The purpose of schools is giving us tools to gain for ourselves
- The school of Jesus teaches us the opposite
- It teaches us how to let go
- **Matt 16:24-25** “Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.”
- It is not about our well being
- It is not about our reputation (명성)
- It is not about how much we can gain
- It is about Jesus Christ
- It is about how to let go what God gave us in first place
- When you let go, God will fill it again as much as we need
- Jesus taught us the principle of life

- Deny yourself
- Take up your cross

- Follow Jesus
- Live for eternity

- This world teaches us how to grab things
- How much we can gain?

- Jesus teaches us an opposite
- He teaches us how to let go

- Deny yourself is the beginning of following Jesus
- Taking up our cross is also a part of it

- Of course, the cross we have to carry is not the same cross Jesus carried for us
- We know ours are so little compare to Jesus'

- But Peter and disciples didn't know that
- During that time, the cross is for the worst criminals

- It is the way to death
- Peter would wonder why I need to carry the cross

- What did I do wrong?
- If Peter would understand the heart of God and what Jesus taught him, he would know the cross he needed to carry

- If we want to follow Jesus, we have to remember what we've learned
- If we want to practice what Jesus taught which is how to let go, we have to remember what we've learned

- Congratulations to all the graduates!
- Be not only be successful students in this world, but also as a student of Jesus Christ