**15486, Rodney Berry**

Good Afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls

I want to welcome our students who are graduating today. This is a very important day in your lives students. You have all been taught that you are the children of God. As such, you must know that God has a purpose for your lives. Your life is important; your story is important; your dreams count; your voice matters; and you were born to make a difference in the world into which you live.

In Jeremiah 29:11 scripture tells us God said, “For I know the plans I have for you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” And again in Esther 4:14”…And who knows whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this.” And in the New Testament Jesus gave us the Great Commission in Mark 16:15 “And he said unto them, God ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”

God created each of us with a purpose in mind before we were born. Not one of us was created to simply exist. We are each created with unique gifts and talents and a calling on our life, whether we go into ministry or whether our ministry is to the world around us in our neighborhood and our job. It is important that we stand for what we believe in this world of ever changing morals and standards.

There are many people in the Bible who were not rich or powerful in the world’s sense, but they are told about in scripture yet today because they answered God’s call to do something to honor him in their lives. Whether it was witnessing to their community, giving a cup of water to the least of these, pouring oil on the feet of Jesus or becoming a leader in their community like the apostles and other early followers in the first church. None of them were famous in their own right. But, they humbly obeyed God and spread his word to the world around them, spreading the gospel so that now it is known all over the Earth.

What will you do with God’s call on your life? What will you do to honor God with the things you have been taught? Regardless of your age, you can do something with the gifts and talents that God has given you. No matter whether you are children or adults, boys or girls, you each have a purpose in God’s kingdom. You can share what you know about Jesus with your school friends, your neighbor friends and even members of your own family.

Each of you was created with a promise and a possibility to make a difference in the world around you. I encourage you to seek out what it is that God wants you to do as you go about your daily lives. It’s not always one big thing. It could be little things as you go about your day. But, if God gives you a big dream, then don’t be afraid to go after it. God will help you to make it happen.

Congratulations and God bless you