

"I, thy servant, fear the Lord from my youth."

Introduction

There are some, no doubt, who would question exactly the period in life making up the time of opportunity, of purpose of choice, of decision, as well as the time that seems to be the most delightful. I propose today to direct this message since this time of graduating from school and other activities. For someone wrote, a young man, make no mistakes about it. Your student days are the best years of your life. Life will never again pack so much happiness into so little time. The thrill, the pleasure of seeing, the colorful parades, the games, and even the examinations. All of these joys and many more are to make these the best years of your life.

Young people, once upon a time Pat Boone refreshed many hearts because of his strong stand for decency. He wrote the books for teenagers, he pursued church activities faithfully had the reputation of a model husband. In "April Love", Boone refused more, to do more, than just hold the hand of the leading actress. But in his latest film, "State Fair", he becomes a sordid product of Hollywood. Side show girls dance and Boone is stripped to his waist in a torrid, violent love-making scene with suggestive dialogue and at last comes home drunk. Thus, the teenage idol, has collapsed. And instead

Elijah had been hurried from one place to another. And by the spirit of the Lord, he supposed that the prophet would again make his escape and that Obadiah would be left and have to forfeit his life. For if Ahab were disappointed, he would probably execute Obadiah as vengeance. It shall come to pass as soon as I am gone from thee that the spirit of the Lord will carry thee where I know not. So that when I come to tell Ahab and he cannot find thee, he will slay me. But I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth.

This expression of Obadiah is not to be considered as one that is boastful. He was not boasting of his piety. But was intending to give an assuring reason why Elijah should entreat him with the truth. I fear the Lord from my youth.

It is very obvious to the remark that fearing the Lord as used in this text, we are not to understand or to dread the character of God or his presence. But to welcome it. Now it is from this scripture text, I should like for us to think up on this subject today.

I. The Estimation God Places Upon Youth

God's decisions cannot be incorrect. And when God gives His opinion and his stamp and seal upon something, it must be truth. There are a number of testimonies which are given in favor of a consecration of our first days to God. These commands are by the authority of God. God said, Remember now

because of that decision which he made that day.

Roland C. Doll who has organized and directed the program of administration of supervision of elementary and secondary schools in New York. He was formerly a professor of education at New York University. Made a statement or two on the subject of knowledge versus wisdom in behalf of young people. He said there was a crisis that in 1946 to 56 adolescence had gained a knowledge. Curiosity, understanding of other persons. Occupational certainty, political insight and interest. But however, they had demonstrated more concern for the present than for the future. Less respect for adults, more cynicism about their role in improving society and less patience for being alone. One can hear them say we told you so. Young people in our day were superior. But what shall we say of American youth at mid-century? We may be sure that they possess much knowledge. Most parents realize that when they themselves were young, they knew less. Statics tend to support this realization. For several reasons of course. Today's younger people should know more. Exactly as Daniel prophesied. Knowledge is steadily increasing. While many run to and fro schools are offerings of varied experiences in breadth and depth. The printed word surrounds us. We are reinforced by television, radio, motion pictures. Never in the history of the world has there been so much information. A hard truth is in 1962 is this. Young

thy creator in the days of thy youth. Again he said, my son give me thine heart.

God also has given extensive promises to the youth. Those that seek me early shall find me. To the youth who seek for wisdom as they would search for silver, search for a hidden treasure, he said. Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

God also makes entreaties. He commands, he promises, and he entreats them to come. Come, ye children, harken unto me. I will teach you to fear the Lord. Will thou not, from this time, dry unto me. My father, thou art the guide of my youth.

God also is faithful to give warnings to the incorrigible youth. Rejoice, o young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart fear thee in the days of thy youth and walk in the ways of thy heart and in the sign of thy eyes. But know thou that for all of these things, God will bring thee into judgment. These warnings and these judgments are given special promises and special blessings that will be sent upon the youth and if God gives illustrations and examples.

David, the future king and psalmist of Israel, is a friend of God while he tends his father's flocks.

Samuel, even when a little child, in the midst of a corrupt age and a degenerate priesthood is favored with the message of heaven. And God addressed him and he said speak

The religion of the gospel is a system of self-denial. There can be no real dependance upon Christ until every other dependance fails. We shall never cast the sure and steadfast anchor within the vale til all others have torn away by storm.

The more we relinquish for the gospel, the great confidences we have in its promises. He that will lose his life shall save it.

To I, the inexperienced youth, the world is covered with the mantel of deception. It groans and disappoints, brings tears, riches and honor, pleasures attend on every step and happiness seems to flow from these elements. The deception reaches and penetrates and poisons the heart.

To an unconverted youth, the world is everything. It is his heaven, it is his eternity, it is his God. The story of the young man who came to Christ for instructions inspired a particular interest. What was said of him is true of every youth. He went away sorrowful and he was very rich. The young are rich in prospect, the promises of the world are their treasures. They may be worth nothing in actual possession but only in anticipation they follow these deceptive prospects. And yet youth is a time that offers us greater hope if only Christ could come in then there would be less tendency to collect all of this corruption.

people between the ages of 12 and 25 have more knowledge than youth have had in any previous generation; but they are somewhat confused as to what to do with it, professor Doll says.

Unfortunately the information the young possess does not substitute for wisdom. Most youth today have contact with some human wisdom but with little of the wisdom that comes down from above. Schools are secularized. The home may have no family altar. The church has too frequently lost its message. A generation that knows not what it believes, that lacks valid principles against which to make life's decisions.

In 1957, Philip Jacobs, writing in changing values in college, reported that American college students showed marked uniformity. That 3/4 of them were gloriously contented with things as they were. They they aspired mostly to material gratification. And they fully accepted the conventions of their society and they believed in sincerity and honesty and loyalty but winked at moral laxity. That they were well-informed, and they expressed hallowedly their need for religion.

About the same time Gillespie and Allport published a study of the values of college youth in ten nations. They found American students in comparison with their foreign counterparts frank, open, unsuspecting and cooperative; but self-centered, passive and unadventurous.

George Gallop and Evan Hill, who discussed the "cool

of the first sentiments inscribed in a human mind. Preparation for this day is necessary. The Christian looks beyond the present scene while he rejoices in the temporal interest of man. His great interest is that of the distance - out in eternity. There is heaven or hell. And we know that a young person may know all about the social relationships, the political systems, the human governments, the wars and he may burn the midnight oils. But what of human effort remains when the end comes to this world? Young people trace this history in the affairs of salvation. We all have something to do. Something for ourselves and something for others.

V. The safety of youth hinges upon accepting Christ in the best years. In the present state of your pilgrimage you are not in your final home. The road to the grave, whether it terminates in happiness or misery is a road that is skirted with dangers and planted with thorns, human afflictions on the margin of this ocean there will be trials. The history of man and the history of temptation. The history of sufferings and of death. And these youth are particularly exposed.

The Christian youth is safe against temptations. The world is full of snakes. The age of opportunity for man to be able to resist temptation is that God's grace can save him in the youth. When the overwhelming tides of infidelity and vice come upon, the youth will be boated and find that he had

IV. Youth is time of great usefulness. In this universe of material and immaterial when you know about the sun and the planets as they move and revolve in the heavens. You know about the sunrays and so accurately is the material system balanced with such action and the reaction of one body upon another is known. We should consider another realm.

In the moral system relation and dependence are also obvious. There was an open letter published by Juvenile Judge Phillip B. Gillam of Denver. He said we often hear teenagers complain what can we do, where can we go. The judge gives the answer. I quote "Go home, hang the storm windows, paint the woodwork, rake the leaves, mow the lawn, shovel the walk, wash the car, scrub the floor, help the minister, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, visit the sick, the poor, study your lessons, and when you are through, if you are not too tired, read a book"

Your parents do not owe you entertainment. Your city doesn't owe you a recreation center. The world does not owe you a living. You owe it your time and your talents so that no one will be at war or in poverty or sickness or loneliness. You're supposed to be mature enough to accept some of the responsibility your parents carried for years. They have nourished, protected, excused and tolerated you. They have denied themselves comforts so that you could have luxuries. This they have done gladly for you are their greatest treasure

young man and now is an old man. An enemy of God. Hardened. And the thunders of God rolled by without even touching his ear. He has nothing would pollute his blood or chill him. He is as hard as a millstone. He is colder than a mountain of ice.

How tragic it is when not only young man; but there is a prospect of young women. For even the Bible would say it had been good for that man if he had not been born. But here is a young girl who feels unprotected. Dependent and timid. When she is young. And feels the necessity of the home. But how often does she read the story of Jesus and there are tears? She is impressed. Young companions ^{smile} and the world prevails and soon she seeks dress and amusement and vanity. And she follows the footsteps of sin until the messenger of death knocks at her door and it is too late.

It sounds very much like what had happened in San Francisco recently. There was a called prayer meeting and these people gathered to pray for deliverance from violence on our streets, our beaches and in our parks. When some young people were committing horrible crimes, stealing and all sorts of violence. One young woman lost her eye in an attack in a park. And these prayer meetings they trust will be meaningful protests against the terrible things that are happening.

Young people, in this opportunity in your life, many of

power against Sabbath breaking, profane swearing, blasphemy, intemperance, gambling. In every direction you meet the eye and it shocks your heart. You take away the restraints of the Christian religion and you leave your sons and daughters liable to become curses to their parents, scourges to the world; when you abandon them and they become prey to every vice.

Being a Christian in youth gets you ready for sufferings of life. Sin is transformed the earth into an abode of tears. The cup of affliction passes from one hand to another, to the impenitent sinner this seems despair. How little do you consider the pangs which will by ~~by~~ rend their bosoms. These hearts are gay and they are having a big time. Should you live a few fall by your side.

And you will stand by the bedside of a brother or a sister or an affectionate son with a trembling step. You will follow your father to the grave. The distracted daughter will wipe the cold sweat of death from the cheeks of an expiring mother. And many who know experience all the expressions of parental care will be enrolled on the register of orphans. In these scenes, dear youth, who will support you? Can you with safety lean on any arm except the omnipotent arm of Jesus Christ?

Sustained by him you may walk upon the waters of tribulation. And you may face the storms that roll in and would dash upon you. Every youth is exposed to the shaft of death and oh, how

our observations that we have stated this morning, addressed to you. They do not need additional force. You cannot deny them. With the joys of heaven to invite you home and the flame of the pit to drive you from that fearful brink, can you not hear the still small voice of God's spirit which will come and now touch your heart?

What answer shall I give? Shall I return to him that sent me? Obadiah said. What shall I tell him? Shall I tell your God that another message is rejected? What shall I tell God today of your heart? Shall I tell him that the book of heaven whose leaves are unfolded and testify of Christ - that they mean nothing to you? The hand is now extended to lead you to Christ. But to the unrelenting sinner, whether old or young, God will send another preacher. I see him already on the way. He rides upon a pale horse and his name is death. His message you must listen to.

50-100-Student Program - Dec 27, 64 A.M

Clayton May 20, 62 Am.
S. Roy. May 20, 62 Am.

The Best Years of Your Life

1 K. 18:12

Question: time of opportunity - Purpose - choice - occasion

Youth - Thrills - student days - pleasure -

Text: Ahab - Crochet / Drought 3yr 1/2 - Search for water - v.5

Obadiah - Sheward of Ahab - meets Elijah.

Elijah - Go Tell -

I. God Invites Youth

Promises - warnings

1. David - Flocks of sheep.

2. Samuel - Addressed as youth.

3. Obadiah -

4. King Josiah - 16 yrs.

5. Jeremiah - Consecrated Before Birth

6. Daniel - captivity

7. John Bap. - Birth

8. Timothy - Scriptures from a child.

II. Time of Great Usefulness

Judge Gillan - Denver - Complain What can we do? Where can we go?
Go home, hang the storm windows, paint the wood work, rake the lawns,
mow the lawn, shovel the walks, wash the car, scrub the floor,
help the minister, the old cross, visit the sick, the poor,
study your lessons, & when you are through, if you
are not too tired, read a book!

Your parents don't owe you entertainment
in city recreation -

You owe the world your time & talent -
Be mature enough to accept responsibility Parents have
carried for you -

A RECENT BOOK IS ENTITLED

"Art Adventures With Discarded Materials." In it are suggestions of how one can take such unpromising materials as old newspapers, rags, tin cans, flour sacks, etc., and turn them into useful "creations". A treasure hunt in the attic or cellar turns up dozens of discarded items that may become useful. Many great achievements have come from "discarded materials". Paderewski was told by his teacher to give up all hope of becoming a pianist. Jerry McCauley, a drunken bum in the gutters of New York, was passed by hundreds of people daily as worthless. McCauley, after his conversion, founded a mission that led to the salvation of thousands. Jeremiah's potter took the vessel that was marred and made it again. So our God is in the business of taking the refuse of humanity, and making new creations out of them. We preach a gospel of redemption; a gospel of the second chance. We have a God who can take that which is worthless and make it new. See what he can do with you!

SEE YOU SUNDAY, BIBLES IN HAND!

This story from Cecil Sutley reminds us of our Baptist heritage from the past in the missionary enterprise. *young people sent -*

Three men were discussing the most inspiring services they had ever been in.

One spoke of a revival service in his church with a famous preacher.

Another remembered a brush-arbor revival meeting from his youth when the people shouted.

The third said: "In the highest worship experience of my life I do not remember that there was any weeping or shouting. Understand, I don't particularly object to either; I just don't remember that as a part of the service. In fact, strange as it may seem, I do not even remember the preacher's name. I only remember that there was a message on missions, and when the offering was received, in it there was a man's gold watch and a woman's diamond ring. That winter mother didn't get the new coat she had been saving for and we drove the old car another year."

*Best years -
Time give God your life -
III III*

*Student Program
Dec 27, 64 AM -*