

Read the Speech a School Banned Because It Mentioned the Cross of Christ

Sam Blackledge was told just 10 minutes before graduation that he would not be permitted to deliver his valedictory address because it was too religious.

"They said they didn't want to make it a religious ceremony," Sam said on "The Todd Starnes Radio Show." "They told me that if I took out Christ I could say everything else."

Sam, who had been preparing for months to deliver his speech, was devastated.

"I never felt that feeling before," he said. "It was terrible. I felt like I wanted to cry. I had basically—for months—I knew I wanted to talk about Christ in my graduation speech. For that to be taken away ..."

The school district has refused to comment on the matter. They invited Sam and his parents to a meeting this week, but when they told school leaders they would be accompanied by legal counsel, the meeting was canceled.

"School officials should remember that students retain their constitutional rights to freedom of expression from the schoolhouse gates, all the way through the graduation ceremony," First Liberty Institute attorney Jeremy Dys told me.

The nationally-renowned law firm is representing Sam, and they are considering taking legal action.

"These school officials ruined the only high school graduation Sam will ever know," Dys told me. "How many more graduations have to be ruined before school officials will learn that the

First Amendment protects student remarks at graduation?"

In the meantime, we have acquired a copy of the speech the school deemed inappropriate for the graduation ceremony. I hope you take a moment to read his beautiful remarks.

Sam wanted to share his heart with his fellow graduates—but now he will have the opportunity to share his message with an entire nation.

By Sam Blackledge

Sherlock Holmes and his partner Watson were out camping and after a long night they quickly fell asleep. Awakening in the middle of the night, Holmes asked, Watson what do you see?

He responded by saying, "I see millions of stars."

And Holmes proceeded, "Well, what does that tell you?"

Watson then pondered the question and said, "Astronomically speaking, it tells me there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically it tells me that Saturn is in Leo. Timewise, it appears to be approximately a quarter past three. Meteorologically, it seems we'll have a beautiful day tomorrow, and theologically I see that this is a vast universe and we are just a minute part of the great whole. Why, Holmes what do you see?" Holmes was silent for a moment and then speaks, "Watson you idiot, somebody has stolen our tent." We as humans are really good at focusing on useless details all while missing the essentials.

Class of 2018, we are all branching out into our own paths, each in different directions, yet todos estamos buscando para las mismas cuatro cosas. I am convinced that each of us are in pursuit of the same four things. A life devoid of evil, full of justice, full of love and full of forgiveness. Evil, justice, love and forgiveness.

First, a life devoid of evil. Parents, I know that you greatly desire that your graduate's life would be devoid of evil and full of good. No one wants life to consist of unfair circumstances. What do we see in the news almost every day, we see mistreatment, murder, evil. And why do these things receive so much coverage? I believe that it is because people are obsessed with this longing for goodness.

Second, justice. If we stay on the topic of news for a second, we realize another reoccurring theme, and that is equality or justice. Race, gender, equal pay, sexual orientation, the list goes on and on. Every person wants to be treated fairly. And graduates, I know that when we leave from here we want a fair shot at life.

And thirdly, love. I imagine that the next time I see some of you, you will be married, and maybe even have kids. And I know that the driving force of that is love. We all look for love, from our parents, our friendships, and maybe in the future, our spouses. Finally, I hope that you guys are successful in all that you do, but I'd be mistaken not to notice that we are bound to make mistakes. I find it significant that even the word "human" has become the definition of messing up and being imperfect.

With that in mind, we all need forgiveness. So, we all want lives devoid of evil; we are looking for justice; we'll miss our families and make new ones because of love, and some of us are going to blow it big-time and hope the rest of our peers are willing to forgive us. Evil, justice, love and forgiveness.

I want you to think for a moment, is there any event in history where these four converged in one place? Where did evil, justice, love and forgiveness converge at a moment in history? Can I take you to a hill called Calvary and show you the person of Jesus Christ?

The cross of Christ shows us our own evil hearts, that we would put an innocent man there to die. Christ came to show us God's justice in dealing with the unfairness of the world. The cross demonstrates to us the very love of God who died in our place and how we find, at the end of the day, that without His forgiveness, we would never make it.

Graduates, I hope your life is devoid of evil, full of justice, full of love and full of forgiveness. I think our parents however, could attest that trying to manage this on our own is more than difficult. The most important thing in your life is to find that intimacy with God. He will guide you, He will hold you, and He will take you through safely in your journey. As you search for goodness, justice, love and forgiveness, know that only God is big enough to provide that for you.

Thank you, Class of 2018, it's been real; it's been good; it's been real good.