

"A SOUND TO REMEMBER"
Confirmation Sunday, February 26, 1995

Proverbs 22:6

* Robert S. Wilch

Confirmation! Another milestone in your life. Two years of study are over. In a year or two, there will be another major milestone. Graduation from high school. Then there will be some important decisions to make. College? Which one? Far away or closeby? Or maybe a job? Your own apartment or stay at home for awhile? Little by little you're moving on to your independence. Time to make your own decisions. Less and less advice from parents or anyone else. Your own money, maybe? And all the parents say, "Amen."

My goals this morning are to urge you to establish a connection with your life today that will stand you in good stead for the perilous period ahead when you will, with great intensity, determine and shape what you will become AND to urge you to take steps to help the spiritual side of your life grow along with the growth of your body and your mind.

Let's take the second one first. There is no stopping the maturing and the aging of your body. It will take place no matter what you do. A wise young person starts early to treat her/his body right. Some very old people have wonderful lives partly because they took care of themselves.

Jobs today require continuing education. Computers, I've heard, are generally out of date when you buy them, so fast is their progress and development. Anyone who thinks they know enough after high school or think they know it all after college will be left hopelessly behind. In order to survive today, you will be asked to keep learning and adapting. If you don't keep up, you'll never catch up.

But now your spiritual side, your body and your mind have been treated right and all of a sudden, you're 35 years old. If you do nothing more between now and then, I will pity you. The faith you have now is great for a teenager, but nothing about a teenager will be enough for a 35 - 50 - 75 year old. Don't stop now! Do yourself a favor and stay close to this church's worship and its Christian education. You will be glad if you do.

And now Goal #1: make a strong connection with something to remind you of your life now as the years go by.

I chose the text about Peter and a young girl purposely for today. Jesus warned the disciples that when the going got tough, all of them would fall away from him. Boisterous and brave Peter said, "Maybe they will but not I." Jesus answered, "Peter, Peter, this day you will deny me three times before the rooster crows." Sure enough, Jesus was arrested, pushed around, insulted and led to the high priest Caiaphas. Peter followed as closely as he could and sat with others around a fire in Caiaphas' courtyard. All at once a young woman said, "You were one of them, too." Peter denied, "No, I

wasn't." "I don't even know the man." And again he denied being a disciple. Then the rooster crowed. And Peter wept.

There is no question in my mind that for the rest of his life, the crowing of the rooster made Peter wince at the memory of his denial but it surely made him determined never ever to let it happen again.

This is what I want for you - like the rooster was for Peter. I want some sound to creep into your consciousness each time you come close to your breaking point. I want some sound to jar your determination to make a good, proper decision as you teeter back and forth between something you know is right and something you know is wrong. In fact, I'd like something like the chimes here; your mother's voice; your father's disappointment; your grandmother's pride; your brother's or sister's obnoxious teasing; the choir; my voice; just anything to help you past those tough times of temptation. Frankly I wouldn't mind it if these sounds made you miserable at the memory of one of your life's bad decisions; made you so miserable that it helps you to never let yourself get so tested again. I want this sound to haunt you. *I want for you a sound to remember.*

I know it has felt to you that your parents have kept you on too short a leash. I'm sure you think you'd like more freedom. It's on its way but be patient. A little boy about 5 or 6 got angry at his Mom one day and stormed out of the house. A neighbor saw him pass her house a couple of times and concluded that he was walking around the block time after time. She went out when he next came by and asked, "Where are you going?" "I'm running away," he answered. "But you're only going 'round and around the block. How can you run away like this?" "My mother won't let me cross the street," he replied.

You're on your way to crossing any street you want to. Nobody will stop you again. I only hope that the sound you remember from today will keep you from crossing the wrong street or crossing without taking a good look in both directions.

* Although this manuscript was prepared by Robert Wilch, the actual delivery of the sermon may have added or subtracted from the manuscript or varied from it to some degree.