

I was a little sorry that the Scripture reading was so far in advance of the time that I was to speak, because there was so much in it that I felt was particularly appropriate. But I imagine that the graduates thought that one particular phrase in it was most appropriate. I wonder ~~how~~ how many noticed what it was. It is 2 Tim. 4:7ff. It is "I have finished my course." How could you get a more appropriate verse of Scripture for commencement than that? "I have finished my course."

So tonight I am very happy to congratulate you on having finished your course. But I think the rest of that verse is also appropriate. It begins, I have fought a good fight. Thirty years ago the general education standards in America began to deteriorate. About 10 or 15 yrs. ago we heard terrible stories about the level of education in many of our public schools and I remember when many of the Christian schools in this area were founded, that the founders quite generally had two purposes in mind. One was to have a really Christian school. But to some of the founders almost equal to that desire was to have their children in a school where they would really study, where they would really learn something. So my guess is that each member of this class feels that in the last four years they have fought a good fight. They have accomplished something; they have reached a goal; they have finished the course.

I hope also that the last part of the verse is true, of every member of this class. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." America was founded upon the Word of God. In this country 50 yrs. ago in all the schools the Word of God was honored, in all the schools Jesus Christ, if He was referred to, was referred to with reverence. In all the ~~XXX~~ schools the existence of God was an established fact. In most of them the Scripture was read with reverence.

President Andrew Jackson said toward the end of his life, pointing to the Bible, he said, Upon that book hangs the foundation upon which our liberties rest." But today God has been pushed out of most of the schools of America. Many of the institutions of the country that was founded specifically to ~~xxx~~ train people to stand for the Word of God, as were Harvard Yale, Princeton, most of our great universities, in many of them today God has been pushed out. His Word is denied. The faith of Christ is being undermined. How wonderful it is when a school near at hand to which we can send our children, where the Bible will not only be denied but will be presented and where the Word of God will be extolled, and Jesus Christ upheld. This class indeed deserves congratulation ~~x~~ that it has finished its course in a Christian school.

Well now somebody says to me, A text ~~x~~ without a context is a pretext, and you have taken a verse ~~w~~ right out of its context and you've drawn something out of it that isn't there at all. Paul isn't saying anything of the kind about finishing a high school course. Paul isn't writing this as a young man.