Landmark Christian School MS/HS Chapel – January 10, 2012

Good morning, and thanks, . . for allowing me to come, and share with you, this morning. My name is Wendell Burdette, and I am the Pastor, at Shadnor First Baptist Church, in Union City, just two miles north.

My wife and I, have had children, here at LCS, for 11 years, now. My wife, teaches 2nd grade, at the PTC campus, and been here, for 8 years. I have served as Outreach Pastor, for LCS, for 6 years. We love LCS!

 We have 4 boys, . . . two in middle school, Nathan and Micah.

Thanks to Pastor Paul, for letting me come. I used to be cool, like Paul.

Back, when I was a Youth Pastor, before being demoted, . . . to Pastor.

 Now, I’m just old, . . as my kids remind me, almost, every day.

Why am I here? I want to share with you, about a couple of events, in my life, that really shook me up. I want to tell you, about a blind date, that, I went on, one time, not long, . . . after getting back, in to church.

You see, I was raised in church, and saved at a young age, but when I was a teenager, I wandered away from the Lord, . . . and, did my own thing for many years, . . before, the Lord, miraculously, turned my life around, and blessed me, . . . more, than I could have ever imagined.

Have you ever heard, . . . that, we learn, from our mistakes? Well, did you know, . . that, you can also learn, . . . from the mistakes, of others? You can listen, to some stupid decisions, that I made, and learn not to, . . . make those same mistakes. Pray for . . . wisdom!

Not long after getting back in church, some supposed friends of mine, set me up, with a blind date. Don’t ever, . . make that mistake!

\*\*\* She was rather large, . . . speaking in tongues, . . . lizards, etc.

\*\*\* Let me briefly, . . . tell you about, just, some of the things, . . . that God, has done, in my life:

I was, born and raised, in a Christian home. Youngest, of four. In church, every time, . . . the doors, were open.

Age 6: I was led, to the Lord, . . . at home, by my mom and dad, . . . on a Sunday night, . . . in January of 1969. Yes, . . . I’m old!

 **Jesus reached down, in mercy, and . . . .**

Ages 11 – 14: I remember growing, . . . in my relationship, with the Lord. (Bible with, . . . underlined verses.) YOUR AGE!

Age 14: Felt God’s call, . . . upon my life, . . . to preach. Professed that call, . . . and, preached twice, in two churches.

Ages 15 – 28: Started wandering, . . . away from the Lord, . . . and, experimenting, with alcohol and drugs. (Video: Pot leads to more???)

I found an acceptance, among these kids at school, who were using drugs. Why? Made fun of, a lot. Bullying???

Though, I was saved, . . . I went down this road, for 13 years. (Prayed every day, church, not, so often.) Satan’s greatest tool, is **deception!** (Thought, I was having fun, though, my life, was falling apart.)

Greatest sin, . . . was that some of friends, were dying all around me.

 Car wrecks, . . . and suicides.

Sister and family, praying for me. My family, never gave up, hope. (Some of you, need to never, give up hope.) My sister, would threaten me, . . that, God would just, take me on home. (Tractor trailer trucks.)

Three close calls, on my life, in 1990. 9mm gun, going off, in the cab of truck, . . . knife held to my throat, after several threats, on my life, . . . and, then, thought that I was going to, have a heart attack.

October 1, 1990: Fell on my face, and begged the Lord, to help me, turn my life around. **His grace and mercy!** Jesus, with open arms, bringing me back, into His fold. (Called my sister, . . and she didn’t, believe me.)

Next few months, . . . I began to re-establish, a personal relationship, with the Lord. Began, to get back, in church.

3 keys to having, an intimate relationship, with the Lord: Talking to God – prayer, . . . listening to God – Bible, . . and, getting involved, in the church. (1 Kings Chapter 3 – Pray for the wisdom, . . . to understand God’s Word!)

How do you, get to know, . . . another person? By talking to them, . . . and, listening to them, . . . and, spending time, with them. And, this can happen, slowly, . . . or, it can happen, real fast.

I was growing, . . . so fast, reading God’s Word, for hours, at a time, . . and, praying, diligently, . . and, going to church, more and more, often. And, then, undeservingly, . . God began, to use me, once again.

I had been deceived, for all of those years, to think, that, I was having, a good time. If I had of known, how wonderful, life would be, back in the Lord’s hands, back in church, **serving Him**, . . . 10 years earlier.

(Just like, Tom Papania, . . “God reached into hell, and found, the most rotten thing, he could find, . . .”) Been down, both roads!

I started working, . . . in the church, . . . in Awana, and then, Sunday School, . . . and, then working, with the teenagers.

 (“I can’t, do that!” Don’t let Satan, hinder you, . . . from what God, wants you to do.) Right Step!

I cannot explain, why the Lord, . . . would choose, to use me. I’m not, at all proud, of all those years, . . . but, I am so thankful, that He chose, to turn my life around, and, then allow me, to serve Him, once again.

After a year and a half, and being ordained as a Deacon, I was asked, to go on staff, full time, at my church, as the Youth Minister. I served in that capacity, . . for several years, . . and, then, after getting married, . . . I became, an Associate Pastor. Now, a Senior Pastor, for 12 years

\*\* During my time, as a Youth Pastor, a little girl, in my youth group, had an aunt, that lived in West Virginia, that, later became, my wife. Patty, is the greatest gift, apart from my salvation, that God has ever, given to me.

And, she and my boys, are the greatest asset, . . . to my ministry. (17 years later: Nathan 14, Micah 12, Levi 10, & Josiah 8.)

 (I lost my dad, in 1999, and then, my mom, 13 months later. They are, in Heaven, . . . today.)

Miscarriage, . . . between first, and second child. Girl? Probably another, . . . knuckle headed boy. (5 guys & Patty!)

\* Halfway, through our pregnancy, with Josiah, we found out, that he would have, a cleft lip and palate, . . . like his dad. So far, he’s had surgery, 8 times, with a few more to go. I had 10, when I was a child.

But, worse than the surgery, we dreaded other kids making fun of him. (Hey guys, . . . we need to think twice, before we make fun of others, . . . who are, God’s creation.)

 Psalm 18:30 – “As for God, . . . His way is perfect!”

And, please don’t feel sorry for me, or even my son, . . . every single, one of us are different, and unique, in our own way. And, we are all susceptible, . . . to being called names, . . . and, being made fun of.

YEC or MOVE Conference: Who song, “Teenage Wasteland” None two alike. All shapes and sizes. Some very weird, . . . neon hair, etc!

 Lizard woman! Bald headed kid! Skinny kid!

**Let me tell you, about** **One**, who was made fun of, . . though, He was truly, . . . the Son of God. He was ridiculed, and mocked, . . and made fun of, and laughed at. He was spat upon, and beaten, . . . as He was on His way, to the cross, . . . to die, for you and me.

 His name, . . . is Jesus. (He could have called, 10,000 angels.)

He came, and laid down His life, . . . to take away, our sin. And, even in the midst, of all the physical pain, and suffering, . . . that, He went through, in our behalf, . . people verbally, . . abused Him.

\* A favorite verse, of mine, is Romans 8:1 – “Therefore, there is now, no condemnation, for those, who are in, Christ Jesus.” (And, that’s why, we should, reach people, in love, and, not, by condemning them.)

What a joy, it has been, these last 21 years, . . serving the Lord. Now, almost 20 years, . . . in full time ministry. I will never, . . be the same!

The greatest thing in my life, is when I realized, that I am forgiven! Even though, I was knee deep in sin for all those years, . . . I am, now righteous! Because, . . . of Jesus.

Some of you, may have already, . . . made some big mistakes.

It doesn’t matter, who you are, or what you’ve done, . . . Go loves you unconditionally, . . . He will forgive you, completely, . . . and He will direct your paths and bless you all through life, . . . if you follow Him.

Don’t make the mistakes, that I did! And, if you do, or if you already have, He will cleanse you, from all unrighteousness, . . . and, give to you, . . . His righteousness.

\*\* “Not Guilty Anymore” by Aaron Keyes