

My High School Commencement Address

By D. A. Sharpe

Suzanne and I had already moved to our new home in [Aurora, Wise County, Texas](#) in preparation for our retirement living. The date for my retirement was November 1, 2004. We'd purchase the home on 10 rural acres to be in vicinity of the church we'd decided to attend, [Eagle Mountain International Church](#), on the northern edge of Fort Worth.

Suzanne had already joined EMIC, while my church membership remained at [Highland Park Presbyterian Church](#) in Dallas where I served as Executive Administrator for the Senior Pastor. My retirement was concluding 22 years of service at what had been the largest membership Presbyterian Church, reaching about 7,200 at one time.

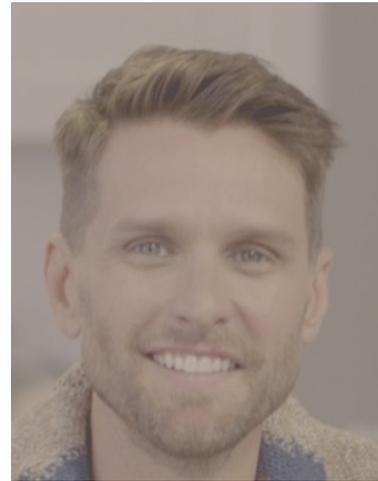


This story took place Saturday, May 22, 2004. I was sitting on our front porch, enjoying a warm cup of coffee, thinking to myself, what a wonderful day this was going to be. There was absolutely **NOTHING** I had to do that day! I could do whatever I wanted to do, or to do nothing and rest.

About 9:00 AM, the phone rang. It was Miss Iva Bennett. She was a member of EMIC, and had become friends with Suzanne through the Prayer Ministry there. However, I'd just met her, and really didn't know her.

She was an educator, and conducted her own Christian private school.

Miss Iva told me that they were having the commencement service that day for the high school students graduating from her school. Her speaker, Mr. Jeremy Pearsons (young adult son of the EMIC Senior Pastors), had stepped off a porch, and injured his ankle. Could I be her commencement speaker?



I'd never in my life thought about doing a commencement address. My thought was, this could take some time preparing for the service, which probably was that evening. Always trying to be positive and helpful, I told Miss Iva I'd do it. When do I need to arrive and where?

She told me the service was at NOON! Just three hours away, and the graduation location was 45 minutes from my house! This is when my realization focused upon the need for Divine Provision to endow me for this task!

This is where having a somewhat active life of Bible study comes in handy. In my past, I'd memorized Psalm 8, focusing on the majesty of God in the heavens and in creation. My initial attraction to memorize it was that a verse from Psalm 8 was quoted by one of the Astronauts in the 1960s when the moon orbits and landings were being accomplished. This would be the basis of my address, embellishing the majesty of the Psalm, verse by verse.

Upon arriving, I learned that a couple of the EMIC associate pastors were among her Board members. I also learned they were in the process of trying to qualify as a 501(3)c tax exempt non-profit organization.

The graduating class was only three students. The valedictorian was a young lady named Dara Maclean, who some dozen years later became as associate pastor of EMIC in the Music Ministry area. There was another student, along with a young man named Micah.



In the opening remarks, I gave good wishes for their quest for non-profit status. Then I asked whether there would be any other students at the school with names of prophets from the Bible after Micah graduated that day. Questioningly, she said there were none others with prophet's names. My conclusion was that the school was becoming a *non-prophet* school that day when Micah graduated!

That would have been the first time Miss Iva had realized that she might not know what to expect from me! Good humor!

Here is the [Psalm 8, the RSV](#) that I used. It's a beautiful Psalm about the majesty of God and His creation. It's one that still is close to my heart, and is recited to myself from time to time, just for spiritual comfort and appreciation. God's Word is always a timeless comfort and blessing!

Time has rolled on. This story is being composed in 2017, some 13 years after its incidence. Miss Iva subsequently came onto the EMIC Church Staff, supervising its Prayer Ministry. This year, with the merging of the EMIC ministry workings with those of the umbrella organization, the [Kenneth Copeland Ministries](#), Miss Iva has been given leadership responsibilities over all the Prayer Ministries of the KCM and EMIC organizations. She has become a dear and blessed friend of Suzanne and myself, and we treasure our relationship.



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[Biographical Background](#)

