

SURE FOUNDATION
Graduating Class of 2004
Charge to the Graduate, Claire E. Burford
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It was Christmas time in Hilliard, a small midwest suburb of Columbus, Ohio, and Claire, our 18 month old, was busy enjoying playing with her toys on our living room floor. Our *then* small family of three was about to go shopping for presents.

I called to her to come get her coat on, but Claire kept playing with her toys. She was having far too much fun to leave right then. And Pam and I were a bit preoccupied discussing our strategy for the evening... We'd first head to Toys-R-Us, then perhaps the mall, and so on.

Though I called to Claire several times, she showed no signs of leaving her play. Finally I went over to her and tried to put her arms in her coat. Claire wouldn't have it. Rather than the usual eagerness to put on her coat, Claire put on a full show of resistance. It was quite a struggle, but through the wails and tears I finally succeeded in getting our little girl suitably dressed for venturing out into the winter weather.

We tried to assure Claire this would be a fun and rewarding trip. But she was unconvinced. The cries continued as we drove in the busy, seasonal traffic that evening. But as Toys-R-Us came into view, Claire's cries subsided and were soon replaced with expressions of excitement and delight.

Pam and I commented on the transformation that took place in our little one. "If only she had realized what we had planned," we reasoned, "she surely would have come along gladly." Still it was worth all the struggle to see her enjoying our shopping expedition, in which she was now fully engaged.

Claire, your mother and I are filled with a deep sense of gratitude that you have been such a great student throughout your formal education in Sure Foundation. You have been a motivated, self-directing student who has set high standards for herself and achieved them, especially in the field of music. And your hard work has paid off, as evidenced by your being selected for receiving a Presidential Scholarship at Friends University.

Now its time for you to venture beyond our home. Its time for you to pursue your calling in the Lord outside of your life in our family.

This time, however, I must admit I am the one who is not so eager to get you all dressed up to go on this new trip in your life, to take this next journey with you. Even still, your mother and I know the Lord has many blessings in store for you, and we want you the go and receive them as He has them planned. Isaiah, the prophet, wrote:

For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him. (Isaiah 64:4)

Like our shopping trip so long ago now, someone who cares for you has something special in store for your life (Jeremiah 29:11-13). And you must leave the familiar to go and find it. This time the Lord will be taking you on a journey, not we as your parents. Follow Him because, as it is written, He truly does care for you (I Peter 5:7).

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, will reveal His purposes and plans according to His wisdom and will, and importantly, according to His own timing. Sometimes His direction in your life will lead to changes that are unsettling at first. But seek Him diligently, especially in such times, and He will both comfort and lead you.

While Isaiah wrote that God alone knows what He holds in store for us, the apostle Paul tells us God reveals these wondrous plans by His Spirit to those who love Him.

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. (I Corinthians 2:9,10)

Therefore, put your trust in that Spirit “*which leadeth to do good; yea, to do justly, to walk humbly, to judge righteously,*” as we have been admonished in these last day, for this is the Spirit of the Lord (D&C 10:6). Jesus said His Spirit of truth, the Comforter, would guide us into all truth (John 16:13), and that the Comforter would bring all His words to our remembrance (John 14:26). This is most important because Jesus’ words are spirit and they are life (John 6:63). So, as Nephi wrote, “*...feast upon the words of Christ; for behold the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do*” (II Nephi 14:4).

May God bestow His richest treasures in Christ Jesus upon you as you take your new journey in this life. Receive them with all thanksgiving so that He might more abundantly lead you in bringing forth the fruits of righteousness whereby you are granted to walk in the way of everlasting life (Philippians 1:11 & Ether 5:29).

May the Lord keep you from harm and evil, that you might safely enter into His kingdom rejoicing in the glory of Jesus Christ. Be vigilant that you might overcome this world by faith in the Lamb of God.

Thank you for being a wonderful daughter and friend. We love you, and pray you will be found forever blessed of the Lord, and ever blessing His holy and precious name.