

Chapel Talk  
Chip Roberts  
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Good evening everyone. Thanks to Jay Hutchinson, Will Speers, Russ Perry, Curt Marsh, Joe Kalmbacher, Sandy Abbott, Dave McKelvey, Wes Galloway, Carol Simendinger, Stacey Duprey, my wife Becky and my family. I would like to talk to you about faith in God. As we go through life, there are many times we will do something trusting in God to lead us in the right direction. In my senior year of high school, my English teacher, Mr. Cliff Towe, gave us a term paper to do. It was to have three drafts and be 10 pages long. The paper was to be on "The Great Cop Out." For two months I tried to write that paper. Each time it just didn't make sense to me. The day we were to turn our papers in I still hadn't done anything worthwhile. I had prayed many different times for help to get my thoughts together. As I was sitting at lunch with some friends it just came to me. The first draft was – "I don't think I am going to do this paper." Second draft was – "I'm not going to do this paper." Third draft – "I quit!" Final draft. When I turned the paper in to Mr. Towe, he gave me "the look." He later called me back to his desk. We had a short talk. I ended up getting an A+ for my paper. I don't recommend trying this approach with your teachers here at St. Andrew's. I don't think it would fly with them.

In 1992 I had my first heart attack. In 1997 I had my second heart attack while on the operating table. I had tried to keep up with the guys at work taking our "health walk." When I couldn't keep up, I knew something was wrong again. They were to do a cardiac catheterization, but before the surgery I told the doctor to fix whatever was wrong. They found two blockages in one of the main arteries. He had told me the odds before the surgery – one in a hundred thousand that angioplasty would fail; one in a million that a stint would fail. They did one of each in the two sections of my artery. I was awake for this as you need to tell the doctor how much pain you can take - the more, the better. I have - what others have said - is a high threshold for pain. The doctor said the pain level that I withstood was exceptional and everything looked good. They took me to recovery and my wife, Becky, my children and my Mom were there and we talked a little bit. They then decided to go home after talking with the nurses. By the time my wife got home, the hospital had called and told her that I had flat-lined.

She turned around and came back up to the hospital. I underwent surgery again. This time I could hear Dr. Kathleen McNicholas say to Dr. West – “He’s had enough – his heart’s had enough – I’m doing bypass.” Then I heard someone say, “He’s going flat again.” Dr. McNicholas said, “Give me the needle.” It was not until the next morning when I awoke that Dr. McNicholas said to me, “You are a tough S. O. B. - God must have been watching over you.” My heart was so irritated by the surgery that they couldn’t get it to stabilize. They had to bring me back eight times. I know that God saved me for some purpose.

Throughout my life I feel God has had a hand in everything I do. As a child of 15 months I was burned over 90% of my body, and yet I survived with only minor scars to show that it really happened to me. Somewhere between the ages of 8 and 10 years old, I ate over two pounds of chocolate chips. I was in a coma for three days. Again I survived by God watching over me.

As a young adult of 20 with a brother of 17, life hit me hard for the first time. My brother, Clayt was in a car accident that eventually took his life and the life of his best friend, Kenny Bundy. They had gone to a dance at Odessa Firehouse with a friend of mine driving them. He later told me he had reached into the back seat to get an 8-track tape, and when he looked back to the front, they were headed for the concrete bridge abutment. Kenny was killed instantly – his head hitting the concrete abutment. My brother Clayt was severely injured – his head hitting the rear view mirror and dashboard. His thigh bone was broken by the tape player and the underside of the dashboard. They put him in intensive care and he was there for seven days. The bone marrow from the compound fracture of his broken leg got into his bloodstream and caused his kidneys to slowly deteriorate. Throughout this ordeal, Carl Kunz, who was the rector at St. Anne’s Church and later became the Chaplain here at St. Andrew’s School until he retired two years ago, was there for our family. We talked and prayed a lot during that week. I asked Carl a lot of questions. Why did this happen to Clayt – why not me? Why him at all? Will he get better? Will prayer help? Would he die? Could I make a deal with God? If I promised Him many different things - going to church activities, praising Him, praying, giving myself to Him – these types of things; would any of these help my brother? Carl said, you cannot make these types of deals with God. He said, “Our faith was what would carry us through this time of trial and tribulation”. On Friday afternoon the doctors came to my Mom

and Dad and told them that if Clayt's kidneys did not improve, he would die. Later that evening Clayt's kidneys quit functioning and his organs started to fail. He died later that evening. I got very upset and mad at him, at God, at everything and everyone, including myself.

Later, when my brother's funeral was over, Carl and I talked again. He had told me that God was everywhere and that it was up to me to talk to God and that I would have to listen and pay attention in order to be able to understand what was going on. I tried to do this, but at the time I just couldn't believe strongly enough or hear well enough. Carl said I had to "trust in God and His will for us." The more I did this, the better I felt. I missed my brother then as I do to this day, but I know now that God's plan for Clayt was carried out. I still don't know all the answers as to why they happened, but God has His plan for all of us.

Recently, I again had to ask myself why someone so young had to die. I coach little league baseball and five years ago I coached a set of twins. Their names were Zach and Drew Laws. On Sunday, March 19, Zach was playing basketball with his brother and some friends. He fell and hit his head. He had had a heart attack. He was 16 years old and lost his life. This was another shock to me as well as many other people. At his funeral service, the Rev. Bob Harting expressed it best by telling a short story about a father and son during World War II. The place where they lived had come under a bomb attack at twilight, and the father said to the son, we need to take cover, jump in a hole. The father jumped in first, and then told his son to jump. The son said, "But Daddy, I can't see you." The father replied, "But Son, I can see you. Just jump." This act of faith is what each of us takes when we don't fully understand God's plans. We must trust that he sees us. We must put our faith in him and he will not let us fall.

Faith is what allows us to deal with the things in our life that we don't understand. Why do things happen? What is His plan for us? We must believe in Him and His grand plan. Have faith that He will show you the way, and that whatever happens, it is His vision for us. We must trust in Him, sight unseen. We must have that faith in Him. It is what makes us close to Him.

I hope some day each of you wakes up and prays and/or talks to God; that you have enough faith in Him to ask the hard questions and the patience to listen for His answers. Your faith in this regard will lead you and guide you through life. I wish all of you the best in life and that your faith in God carries you to great things. I hope you never take one minute, one hour, one day, one month, one year for granted. Thank Him for each of them; use them to the best of your abilities. We are here for such a short time. You need to do all that you can to enjoy life to its fullest. Best wishes

Thank you for the chance to speak here this evening. May God bless us all. Amen.