

## 2014 Valedictorian Address: Lynae Dadisman

Class of 2014, after many quizzes, tests, papers, projects, and presentations - some of which were all in the same class...cough, Mr. Caves - we will finally receive that diploma that tells everyone, "Hey, look at this! I survived high school!" So to fulfill one graduation speech cliché, we made it! And in the words of Mr. Luscombe, "Good job."

But one thing that I noticed most about our journey through high school was all the change we experienced along the way. We survived two choir directors and two band directors. We survived two principals, three English teachers, and four art teachers. And we kind of survived five science teachers. But, most importantly, we survived seven Spanish teachers, or at least a few members of our class did. Some of us just learned our Spanish from Mr. Luscombe: "Fácil, fácil. That's Spanish for fácil." And a shout out to Trey, who survived getting dunked on by Mr. Caves for being late to 4th hour Bible yet again. This adaptability is commendable; because we didn't just adapt, we *thrived* - we "locked in." And we turned down for what? [Sara: Nothing!] And I hope as we leave this school, we continue to do so.

For those of you that know me, I'm a perfectionist. And I'm not sure that I'd be standing here if I weren't. And I also know, as Autumn said, that I don't need to be perfect. None of us do. But this can be very hard. For me, this brings about a fear of change. I don't like change when I'm already used to something, but I'm not sure that any of us do. To those few people that actually like change, I don't know how you do it. Maybe the rest of us just need to take a zero. "There, we're all caught up."

We need to understand that change is not a bad thing. In fact, we are *called* to change. How else are we supposed to improve or become "set-apart"? Romans 12:2 instructs, "[D]o not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." We are supposed to *transform* our minds! We cannot do this if we remain the same and cling to the way things are.

However, in the midst of all the change that we are supposed to experience, God does remain the same. God never changes - He is immutable. Hebrews 13:8 proclaims, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." We must take comfort in this: no matter what is going on, no matter what we are doing, God is steadfast in Himself. Thus, we are made a promise in verses 5 and 6 of Hebrews 13. "[F]or He Himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,' so that we confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?'" So as we go out into the "real world" - though high school got pretty real - we need to remember these two things: we need to be transformed and we should praise God because He stays the same.

At the Best of the Class luncheon, Bill Fennelly, the head coach of the women's basketball team at "Iowa Straight," spoke. And one sentence stood out to me. He said, "If the best thing you ever accomplish is becoming valedictorian in high school, you are a disappointment." And I agree. So I say to myself, "Self, if the best thing any of us accomplishes is in high school, *we* are a disappointment." If the best thing you accomplish is being on homecoming court, or going to state basketball, or becoming track conference champs, "black dot on your forehead." Because in the words of John Steddom, "We can do better."

Some people say that high school is the best four years of your life. But if we grow and change and become better, we can use our talents - that we may have *discovered* in high school - to encourage others and serve God in whatever He has called us to do. In this way we will leave our mark on the world - not with trophies, medals, and titles, but by shining God's light on others. This is how we know that the best is yet to come.