

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

Good morning.

Speaker 2:

Good morning.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

Welcome to our daily morning prayers here in Appleton Chapel. Welcome to all of you. We're so grateful that our speaker today, who is a graduate, is Michael Mantello from Pforzheimer House, also known as PfoHo. We're so glad you're here. Please stand all who are able for our responsive reading. Psalm 148 in your black psalter. And we will read responsively.

Hallelujah. Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him on high. Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts. Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all bright stars. Praise him, highest heavens and you waters that are above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord, for it was He who commanded that they be created. He made them endure forever, establishing an order that shall never change.

Praise the Lord, O you who are on earth, all sea monsters and ocean depths. Fire and hail, snow and smoke, storm wind that executes His command. All mountains and hills, all fruit trees and cedars, all wild and tamed beasts, creeping things and winged birds, all kings and peoples of the earth, all princes of the earth and its judges, youths and maidens alike, old and young together.

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for His name, His alone, is sublime; His splendor covers earth and heaven. He has exalted the horn of His people for the glory of all His faithful ones, Israel, the people closest to Him. Hallelujah. You may be seated

Speaker 2:

(singing).

Michael Mantello:

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Michael Mantello:

I want to start by sharing a few words credited to John Lennon. When I was five years old, my mother always told me that happiness was the key to life. When I went to school, they asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I wrote down happy. They told me I didn't understand the assignment, and I told them they didn't understand life. Earlier this month, a friend of mine who graduated last year came to visit campus and we caught up over ice cream. I asked her if when she had been just over a month away from her own graduation, she had known where she would be after college. She told me that she left campus with a chemistry degree but without a plan. She spent the summer traveling Europe, started dating her best friend, and moved to New Haven, of all places, with no job and very little money.

Now she works as a barista in a local coffee shop, making minimum wage, and lives with her partner. Eventually, she wants to go to grad school, but for now, that isn't her priority. Most importantly, she

told me for the first time in a long time, she is happy. Throughout our lives as students, we've been conditioned to believe that long-term success and short-term happiness might be mutually exclusive, that we must choose between pursuing our goals and, to put it simply, having a good time. I remember a conversation I had with a good friend of mine, both of these friends are faux homies, by the way, very wise, on a night when my friend was feeling particularly unhappy. He was worried about not succeeding in college and beyond, getting good grades in all his classes, finding a respectable and high-paying job, making his parents proud. I asked him where happiness fit into his vision for the future. It didn't. In fact, he told me that he knew that chasing his definition of success was making him miserable, and yet he felt that it was simply the price he would have to pay for success.

Over the past four years, I've had many highs and many lows. Midway through my junior year, I found myself pretty unhappy. I couldn't pinpoint any single reason for this unhappiness. I think I had spent so long neglecting my mood that I burnt out. And suddenly, everything else seemed so trivial, grades, extracurricular involvements, job prospects. What use was so-called success if I wasn't even happy? Since then, I've been trying to make happiness more of a priority in my life, but it's not as easy as it seems. I've tried to find happiness in romantic relationships, in friends, in good times. Desperate for an answer, I even enrolled in a psychology class on happiness. I kid you not, I nearly failed. Though I feel like I have more questions than answers, I want to encourage you, especially my fellow graduating seniors, to reflect on the relationship between happiness and your long-term goals and aspirations.

On the journey towards this abstract notion of success, I've seen my friends and peers do things that they know will make them unhappy because they think success will make them happy in the long run. But endlessly pursuing success could be the very thing that holds you back from happiness. So as we prepare to turn to prayer, I pray that we may all find room for joy in our day, in our week, and for some of us, in the next chapter of our lives,

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

Let us recite the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples saying-

Speaker 2:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

Now let us sing together hymn number 230 found in your hymnal entitled O Thou Great Friend to all of us below.

Speaker 2:

(singing).

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Jones:

As we leave this place, but never away from God's presence, as we leave this gathering, but never away from God's love, may you do the things that make you truly happy. Let us bless the Lord.

Speaker 2:

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Blessed be to God.