Camp fire for 5/6 on 6/22

Dress for success

 Intro

 Hey! Let me start off by saying I’m so thankful to be here. I started coming to this camp when I was just 14 and I’ve gotten to come here almost every year since either as staff, worship leader or speaker. This camp has been a big part of my life. I broke my ankle jumping off that dorm right there. And I broke it again right over there by that pavilion playing frisbee. Yep lots of good memories here. I want to encourage y’all to pay as much attention as you can while you’re here. I can tell you that this week, focused on God and surrounded by people who will always be there for you, lifting you up and encouraging you will have a lasting impact on your life. So again I am always thankful for being here and I thank God that you’re here right now.

 Let’s have a with a quick word of prayer and jump into our topic of identity.

 Dear God, Thank you for the opportunity to be here. Please bless everyone who’s hands have gone into making this camp happen for these kids. Lord I ask that you continue to open hearts and minds this week so they came come closer to knowing you. Amen

 Now one thing I always emphasize is that you need to have your bible with you. I understand being that this is a camp fire that makes it a little more difficult. Ya know there’s not a lot of light and there’s that danger of how easily paper catches fire. But the reason for having your bible with you is so important is because you have to be able to make sure I’m reading you the right scripture and not just making stuff up. The second thing is I always like to share a little story before I get started. So I’m going to tell yall how I kicked my own butt with a smoke alarm. This part is 100% true. I…..kicked…..my……own…….butt with a smoke alarm. So, we we’re cooking dinner and I use the smoke alarm as a timer. It started going off so I took it down off the wall while we ate and the smoke cleared. After dinner I went to put it back up on the wall. But unlike everything else in America, my smoke alarm isn’t righty tighty lefty losey. An important piece of information I didn’t realize. So I slap this thing back on the wall twist it to the right and let go. That thing comes flying off the wall like someone just shot it out of a cannon and hits me right in the nose. And being naturally gifted with great judgement and quick reflexes I didn’t want it to fall and break so I tried to catch it. With my face. Again. But this time with more a little more force by slamming it back into my face with my other hand. I hit myself with it hard enough that it took the hide right off my nose. Literally there was skin stuck to the smoke alarm. But it didn’t hit the floor haha!

 Right away it started bleeding pretty bad. And continued for about an hour. My wife in between giggles is trying to help me to get the bleeding stopped. At one point she goes “We might need to go the ER” And I was like there is no way in the world I am going to the emergency room and telling them I just kicked my own butt with a smoke alarm!

So there’s my fun little story to start with, you wanna talk about feeling dumb.

How can you tell

Any way this week yall have been talking about identity. Which is a great, important concept. There’s a lot of different ways to identify yourself, your name or nickname, your beliefs, sometimes you can identify yourself with an id like a driver’s license or sometimes by who you hang out with like part of a team. But one of the most common ways to identify someone is by how people dress.

 We can identify police officers, fireman, military, doctors, nurses, postal workers or waitresses all by the way they dress. They have a uniform, or a label or a badge but what about a Christian? Now I’m a Christian but do I look like one? I’ve got tattoos and scars, one of my tattoos is my favorite bible verse. I play high adrenaline sports like paintball. I play guitar. I don’t like to wear a tie or fancy shoes. But can you tell I’m a Christian by just looking at me?

 No right? It’s hard to tell if someone is a Christian just by looking at them. We don’t have a specific uniform or a badge but the bible tells us that there is a way for people to recognize us and that’s how we dress. Not just physically as in appropriate clothing but also in how we behave.

How should we dress

 Listen to Colossians 3:12-14 **12**Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **13**Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. **14**And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

 That is what our uniform should look like. Now don’t get me wrong you can’t just go to Walmart and buy some gentleness to put on but we can wear it by demonstrating it to others right? The same is true for all these character traits. Since we are holy and dearly loved, meaning set apart and loved with a passion we need to demonstrate these for the world to see. We need to be compassionate meaning understanding, we need to be kind to everyone regardless of whether they deserve it or not. We need to be humble, meaning putting others first and not thinking to highly of ourselves. We need to be gentle, meaning not harsh or rude and patient. Willing to put in the time to invest in people. Be forgiving because we all need forgiveness and the last one is really important love. It holds all of them together. Love is why we turn the other cheek, love is why we don’t have to worry about death, love is why God accepted us as part of His family. And We need to demonstrate this to the world so when they look at us they don’t just see some person they see some person that is different. Someone who is wearing a different uniform than the rest of the world.

 I think you guys are old enough to recognize that this world is a little crazy. It’s going to tell what kind of words are cool to use and what kind of clothes are in right now. To give a couple examples of this you ever see people wearing yoga pants? You know what we call those where I’m from? Long johns. You wear them during winter. And Hey dudes are in right now. My papaw used to wear shoes just like those. And don’t get me started on the weird words. My son says things all the time that I have no idea what he’s trying to say. Words like yeet and nubbie. But what the world really needs is more people wearing the Christian uniform show things like forgiveness and love.

Why is this so important.

 Since we know how to dress as Christians, I have a follow up question why is it so important to dress right? When people look at us and see us being different we have the opportunity to show people why being a follower of Jesus is so great. That God is offering love and forgiveness, kindness and humility.

 Another reason dressing right is so important is because people are watching. You’ll find as you get older people are always watching you. Some people are watching to see you succeed others are watching to see you fail. Case in point, you ever watch America’s funniest videos? Do you watch to see someone pull off a great trick shot or do you watch to see someone spin around a bunch of times and crash through a fence? Don’t get me wrong, watching people fall down is funny but it’s a lot like that in life. People enjoy watching failure but sometimes we need to see people succeed. So we know it’s possible to do better.

Listen to Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,

 People are going to be watching us, seeing how we are dressing ourselves, seeing how we are behaving and it’s important that we set the best example for that. So that when people look at us they don’t just see me or you they see an imitator of Jesus.

Closing

 So I’m going to leave yall with this. You’re the future of this great country, you’re the future of this great church. You’re going to have many ways to identify yourself, your job, your hobbies, who you surround yourself with. All kinds of different ways to set you apart but the best way to make sure people can identify you is by how we dress. What kind of uniform we put on. Do we dress how the world says to dress where we chase money, fast cars and fancy clothes or do we dress like Jesus did and wear compassion, kindness, humility, forgiveness, gentleness, patience and love? So when you get dressed in the morning make sure you put on these virtues so that we can represent God in the best way.