

I'm going to start off today's sermon with a quote - "Things happen for a reason, you have to learn from those things and when you look at the bigger picture, you know that you can build off this loss, and use this feeling of motivation to go out and find ways to win next time" - Patrick Mahomes after the AFC championship game. So other than the fact that the loss of the game hurt for all of us at home, and maybe I didn't have the "everything happens for a reason" mindset right after the game, I still think his quote is true. I think everything happens for a reason in all aspects of life, and you just have to find that reason.

I do think there is a time and a place for everything, but there are multiple ways of doing things. For example, there's a time to pray. Most people always think that there is one way to pray, with your hands together, head bowed, and eyes closed. Since going to midwinter in January which was at Tall Oaks and hearing keynotes from Delessalyn, I've learned that praying can take many forms, and you just have to cater it to your needs. Praying can be anything from having your eyes open, to writing your prayers, to singing, to artwork, the beautiful act of prayer is totally up to you, and you just have to find the best way for you. For me personally, one of the many ways I pray is by doing calligraphy, it is very therapeutic and every Sunday I usually get Rob's paper handout of the sermon and do calligraphy of all of the major things that stick out to me.

I have a few stories that have really proved to me that the statement "everything happens for a reason" is true. This past year when signing up for Student Council at my school, we had to pick our top choices of which committees we wanted to be in. When picking, I was influenced by my friend at the time, who was Abby, to put "Community Service" as my top choice so we could potentially be in the same committee together. Come in August to find out that we didn't

get into the same committee, and I was very upset. Continuing forward, I started loving the committee I was in, which is "Communications". I am so happy to be in that committee, and this year is, by far, my favorite year of student council. Being in the communications committee, I have found my closest friends, like Anthony Garcia - who is my exec officer this year which means he runs our committee. He has taught me so much and is probably my favorite person in student council. I have experienced so much self-growth and leadership this past year. In October of 2018 Abby and I had a huge falling out, and I have to trust the saying that "some people leave your life after teaching you a lesson and people aren't meant to stay in your life forever". Abby and I have known each other since second grade and I would never take away any of the memories that she and I had just because we aren't friends anymore. She taught me my worth and I'm so thankful for her. I also am so thankful that we weren't put in the same committee. I might've not seen it that way before, but now I really believe that it was for the best, and it happened for a reason. Since we weren't put in the same committee, I have found a love for my communications committee and I have decided to run for exec next year, which means I would be in charge of a committee. And I truly believe that without being put in my committee this year, I would have never met some of my closest friends and I would've never been inspired to do so much more next year.

A little small story that also teaches me that everything happens for a reason is meeting the one and only Maddie Holt. At the time when I met her, my parents were wanting me to go to Tall Oaks, but of course being the pre-teen that I was I didn't want to go without knowing anybody. Meeting Maddie was probably one of the best things that has happened to me, because since I've met her, she has brought me to do so many things that have made me so happy. She was the one who planted the idea in my and my sister's heads to get baptized. She was the one

who showed me the beauty of camping. Meeting her led me to go to Tall Oaks in 2015. And I'm convinced that Tall Oaks is the happiest place on earth, not Disney World. I am truly myself when I am at camp, and when I am around her. Going to Tall Oaks has been the best decision I've ever made because I've grown so much as a person there, and have grown a better connection with God. And, I am also happy to announce that I am applying for regional youth cabinet. Without her I wouldn't have done all those things and I wouldn't be the person I am today. I am so thankful that God put someone like her in my life at that particular time. So thank you, Maddie, for being one of my best friends, and for choosing to put up with me over the years, and for pushing me to do more.

To find the reason in why things happens to us may take years, or seconds, to find. I always used to think of what my life would've been like if I was never adopted? What if I stayed in China? Or if I was the first-born child? Or what if the government implemented the 2-child policy right before I was born? I also created scenarios in my head of what if I ended up with a different family? Or if I was born just a few days or years earlier or later. What if I had a brother or a sister out there? There are so many what ifs. I wondered if I would be different in those lives, or if I would even be okay. And, I've come to the conclusion of yes, I would be okay in those scenarios, but I wouldn't be myself. I no longer think of those scenarios because I have trusted that I was placed here for a reason, in my mother's arms on December 5th, 2004, for a reason. I was put in school a year early for a reason. I have met everyone in my life, for a reason. People have walked out of my life, for a reason. I have been through the highs and lows for a reason. I just have to trust that God knows what He is doing, because He has a path and a plan for us. And right now, in this very moment, that is enough reason for me. I also have to trust that

God has a plan to make the next year (the 50th year since we've been to the Super Bowl) our year for the Chiefs.