

Northwest University's Student Magazine

TALON


[HOME](#)
[ABOUT US](#)
[THE SCREECH PODCAST](#)
[CAMPUS LIFE](#)
[OUTSIDE THE BUBBLE](#)
[ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT](#)
[OPINION](#)
[AUDIO/VISUAL](#)

by northwest7
on December 3, 2016
under In Focus
∞ Permalink

DR. THOMAS GIVES "LAST LECTURE" CHALLENGING SELF-CENTERED CHRISTIANITY

Posted: Wednesday, October 21, 2015 9:00 pm

By Siobhon McManus

Photo credit: Alec Bailey



More than 80 students filled Perks lounge to hear Dr. David Thomas, a Northwest University College of Ministry professor, speak at NU's first Last Lecture event on October 15th. Hosted by the GPC residence life team, this series challenges staff and faculty with a simple prompt: what wisdom would you try to impart to the world if you knew it was your last chance? Throughout the evening, Thomas' reflections on this question transfixed students as he meditated on themes of fertility and faith in the Christian life.

"The mortality rate in this room is 100 percent. We're all going to die," said Thomas. His introduction began with a poignant warning from Ecclesiastes against human vanity. Nervous laughter from the audience interrupted the room's deadening silence.

"Everything this society says that you should work hard to get and pursue, you can't keep any of it," said Thomas. "Everything that you have and are has significance and value only insofar as it is fuel for the fire of God in your life. Beyond that it is worthless, forgettable, vapor."

Thomas spoke against the culture of self-determination and rugged individualism that plagues American values. His message was compelling for the room full of young, ambitious college students familiar with the modern church. "It's easy for us at NU to get caught up in our own agendas," said Nathanael Smith, a senior at NU. "As American consumers, we tend to focus everything in our lives, including faith, back to how that serves us and our comfort. Even our communal service can be used as a selfish means to make us look better."

As Thomas denounced this type of indulgent Christianity centered on personal happiness and instead pointed his audience toward Christ's satisfying joy found in complete surrender to God's purposes.

His proverbial advice for students included many practical applications. "Worship when no one's looking. Saturate yourself in scripture. Learn to pray and learn to embrace solitude," said Thomas.

When Thomas spoke on more controversial topics, like whether or not Christians should drink, he constantly referred back to this greater theme of self-denial and concluded with these words, "It's not about you. You are not your own. That's the paradox of the cross...It's not about determining your rights in Christ, it's about surrendering even those rights to God for Him, for the love of others, and for the love of the weak."

Students erupted in applause. While certainly not the end of Thomas' lecturing career at NU, his visceral response lingered in conversations throughout the room long after the night was over.

Next month's Last Lecture event on November 5th will feature Dr. Paul Kress from the School of Education.

