



End of Term 3 Assembly – Rector's Address

Mark Wilson

Friday 25 September 2026



E nga mana

E nga reo

E nga iwi

O te motu

Tēnā koutou katoa

nau mai, haere mai.

A very warm welcome to you all. It is good to be able to gather as a secondary school, at the end of a very busy and hugely successful term.

A very warm welcome to our parents and guests this morning who have joined us to celebrate the accomplishments of our young people. A warm welcome to our new Deputy Chair of the Board of Governors, Peter Nelson, who has just taken up this important role, after the retirement of Felicity Odlin after a wonderful five years as Boad Chair and more than 10 years on the Board of Governors. Nick Letham has taken up the role as our new Board Chair. Thank you Peter for taking on the Deputy Chair position. I also acknowledge you as an Old Collegian, and the Presbytery Nominee on our Board.

Last week we had an extra special assembly; to provide the time to recognise and celebrate the incredible successes a number of large teams and groups who have achieved so well this term. Our assemblies are so often about celebrating accomplishments and many remarkable young people, and it is right and good that we do.

Last week in my address I shared with you all a parable, or story, of a young and talented archer. Hopefully, you remember that in this story the arrogant young archer thought they were so talented, until they had to perform in difficult conditions and when under real pressure. That story reinforced what I believe is most important in life, and that is getting our processes right, and then the good outcomes will be achieved. We should not be simply focused on the outcomes, as that can create the wrong behaviours and processes.

Today I would like to reinforce this message with another story. With the aim of reinforcing what we mean here at St Andrew's College by winning. I like to win, and the medals, awards and honours are impressive and can be very rewarding. But, what do we really mean by



winning? Listen to this new story, or parable, and understand what we believe winning means here at St Andrew's College.

There was a young athlete who had been preparing for weeks to compete in her first 100-metre sprint race. She then goes on to her first race, and lines up with another seven kids.

"On your marks, set, go!"

She runs the track and finishes at the line, eighth out of eight, in 18 seconds.

She comes back and says, "Oh dear Coach, I was last."

But he says, "No you weren't last, you were 18 seconds."

"What do you mean?" she asked.

Her coach replied, "well you smashed the 20 second barrier, and I had you down for 19 seconds, you're a whole second faster than that. Do you know what this means? This means this is your lifetime best performance, your own personal world record."

"Really?" she responds.

"Yes," he cheers, "in some ways you're a first".

"What do you mean?" she asks.

"You are the first athlete I have ever coached to break 18 seconds in the 100m in their first race."

If this young athlete has another race, what does she think winning is now? If she runs the 100m in 17.9 seconds she'll grab a flag, and she'll run round the track.

Because that's what winning is. Winning is being better today, than you were yesterday. Every day.

If she keeps on working at that, in a few weeks' time she's fighting with other kids to get to the line first, and you might think to yourself – well winning now is beating them in a race.

I'd argue that it's not winning, if she is running more than 19 seconds to beat them. That's not winning, or we've killed our definition.

The reason you go into tough arenas in life, is to be challenged to perform better. You cannot perform better, if you're not challenged.



You don't learn to climb mountains in life by going round them, or asking somebody for a ladder, you'll learn to climb mountains by climbing mountains. We grow and learn by seeking out the really toughest challenges. Because that makes you perform better.

This all comes back to the message about the importance of having strong processes.

Greatness comes from the process:

- the hours of practice you commit to;
- the way you respond to a setback;
- the discipline you build;
- the mindset you bring every day.

If you focus on the process, the outcomes take care of themselves. That is how we grow. That is how we excel. That is how we discover what we are truly capable of.

That is when you truly become a winner.

This is why we are gathering here today to celebrate the achievements and successes of all these different students across such a wide range of activities. Students who have worked so hard, shown great dedication to their skill, had the humility to learn and grow and ultimately over time they have excelled.

So let us celebrate them and everyone seeking to continually improve and grow each and every day.

No reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.