

BYU COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS AND COMMUNICATIONS
CONVOCATION ADDRESS

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Assistant to the President Michael Orme, Dean Jones, Faculty and Staff, Graduates, Brothers and Sisters:

I am honored to be here this morning. It's difficult to believe that during the summer of 1965 I was going through this same process. The greatest difference being, those who graduated with me were from the first class to graduate in this building. We had moved into the building during the fall semester of 1964. It was an exciting year with activities for the dedication, tours, plays, concerts, etc. I remember that the final concert of the year was Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

Like you, those graduating from the college in 1965 were filled with dreams. For some, of course, it was something unrealistic like winning millions in a lottery. For others it was to paint a work of art, to compose a beautiful piece of music, to perform in a major orchestra, to perform on Broadway, or to anchor a newscast.

For most people their dreams have to do with their everyday jobs and personal lives. Today you are graduates, each with your own particular dream. The very fact that you are graduates gives you the opportunity to make those dreams come true.

Many of you may be saying that you never want to see another textbook. While I hope that is never the case, it is somewhat understandable. Having come this far, however, hopefully you appreciate the fact that the more you are open to learning, the greater will be your success.

Learning has many different faces. What you gain in new found knowledge may not be applicable to your particular job, but it could change the way you look at life. There are no experiences, even those that hurt, that don't teach you something.

I vividly remember taking a lesson from Brother Jacob Bos in the E-wing of this building. Brother Bos joined the church in Holland and for many years played bassoon in the Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam.

After joining the church, he and his family immigrated to Southern California. Sometime after immigrating, he was asked to join the faculty at Brigham Young University. Because of his great love and understanding of classical music as well as his honesty and interesting way of teaching, many instrumental students took lessons from him. He could talk for hours about a particular melody and he had a peculiar way of humming and conducting while talking about his beloved music.

During my senior year I scheduled a few lessons from him to cover some clarinet orchestral excerpts. How well I remember playing the clarinet part from a Mozart symphony for him. It was obvious he didn't like my manner of playing Mozart. During the second playing he became agitated and in a moment of frustration kicked me very hard in the shins and said that I needed to get out of orchestral playing unless I could come to understand the individual style of each composer.

My shins hurt for several days, but I have never forgotten the lesson. I came to understand that each composer is different and needs to be understood for what he or she has to say. I also discovered, from an honest yet forceful teacher, that there was much yet for me to learn and work on.

Your parents and families are proud of you and rightly so. I hope you are filled with gratitude for them. They

have encouraged and supported you in everything you have done up to this point. Now it is your turn to show them your appreciation by doing something worthwhile with your lives.

In my final interview with returning missionaries, several things were emphasized. I mention a few because, somewhat like a returning missionary, you have taken time to shore up your foundation and are now building a life dedicated to spiritual understanding, intellectual development, character building, and lifelong learning.

Never forget the rock upon which you are built—the rock of Jesus Christ our redeemer and savior. Remember that a wise man or woman builds his or her house upon a rock. Never find yourselves being washed away because you built your house on sand.

The city of Yellowknife is located in the Northwest Territories on the Northern shores of the Great Slave Lake more than 1,000 miles north of Edmonton, Alberta. During our three years in Canada we had the opportunity to visit the Yellowknife Branch of the church several times. The city itself is twenty thousand strong and is built on the Canadian Shield.

The northern most part of the shield has a very rocky surface of mainly igneous rock. Millions of years ago there were mountains in the region and through water movement, freezes, thaws, and glacial erosion the mountains eroded into hard, comparatively flat land with little vegetation of any size, and almost no dirt in which to grow things. Constructing a foundation in that cold northern land literally means that you are building on rock, rock that has been hardened because of heat and years of weathering.

The savior is our rock. We must build our lives on him. He literally gave his life that we might live.

Stay close to the spirit. Don't become like the Nephites of old who, as related in the Book of Mormon, no longer understood the spirit of prophecy, nor the spirit of revelation.

As we stay close to the spirit and live righteously, we are entitled to prophecy and revelation in our personal, family, and church affairs. I am confident that God will guide you in making life's decisions as you learn to receive and follow personal revelation.

Sister Randall and I have heard missionary after missionary teach the story of the Restoration. Each time we were thrilled. Our joy was increased as we heard and felt their testimonies. The Restoration was built on prophecy and revelation. Build your lives on that same principle. Stay close to the spirit and God will shower his blessings down upon you in His own time and way.

Be prepared. Life has the potential of being filled with discouraging moments—moments when there is little or no hope for peace, happiness, or meaning. But if you and I are prepared we will be able to get through any trial or test.

A young man applied for a job as a farmhand. When the farmer asked for his qualifications, he said, "I can sleep when the wind blows."

This puzzled the farmer. But he liked the young man, and hired him.

A few days later, the farmer and his wife were awakened in the night by a violent storm. They quickly began to check things out to see if all was secure. They found that the shutters of the farmhouse had been securely fastened. A good supply of logs had been set next to the fireplace.

They went to the young man's cottage and found him sleeping soundly.

The farmer and his wife then inspected their property. They found that the farm tools had been placed in the storage shed, safe from the elements.

The tractor had been moved into the garage. The barn was properly locked. Even the animals were calm. All

was well.

The farmer then understood the meaning of the young man's words, "I can sleep when the wind blows." Because the farmhand did his work faithfully when the skies were clear, he was prepared for the storm when it broke. Thus, making it so that when the wind blew, he was not afraid. He could sleep in peace.

On one occasion Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us pass over to the other side" of the sea. After he had sent away the multitude he, along with his disciples, entered their ship and began their journey. During the crossing, a great storm arose and the waves beat against the ship so that it began to fill with water.

Where was Jesus during this time? He was in the back of the boat asleep on a pillow. Sleeping while the disciples thought the ship was sinking. He was awakened by his disciples and rebuked "carest thou not that we perish?"

Why was Jesus able to sleep through the storm? It was because he had taken the necessary precautions. Because he did his work faithfully, he was prepared for the storm when it came. Thus, when the wind blew, he was not afraid. He could sleep in peace.

Finally, I would encourage you,

To continue setting goals and making plans. You have reached a milestone today. Don't let that become the most significant accomplishment in your life. It is just a beginning.

In Lewis Carroll's book, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice is found following a path through a forest when suddenly it divides into two directions. Carroll writes:

Alice, confused and befuddled over her precarious adventure, asked the Cheshire Cat: "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to walk from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," says the cat.

"I don't much care where—" responds Alice.

The cat then says, "Then it doesn't matter which way you walk."

When Alice adds that she doesn't care as long as she gets somewhere, the cat says,

"Oh, you're sure to do that, if only you walk long enough!"

Alice's approach of simply walking around and hoping that somehow she would get some where, must be avoided. If you don't know where you want to go or what you hope to accomplish it doesn't make any difference how you travel. It doesn't make any difference how you use your time, talent, or education.

During my early Aaronic Priesthood years, one of our leaders gave each of us a 3"x5" card and asked us, during the next week, to think about and then write down on the card some of our goals. During the next week I took time to write a few things on that card. After over 50 years, I still carry that card in my wallet. Those goals became a vision for the rest of my life.

Each of us must come to understand that our goals reflect the desires of our hearts and our vision of what we want to accomplish. We must also realize that by setting goals and making plans our hopes and aspirations will be transformed into actions. In addition we must remember that the ultimate measure of success is not in

...ing goals alone but in the service rendered and the progress of others.

...iness—the feeling that you have done something worthwhile— is closely linked to achievement. Whether that
...iness results from having a good life as a family, serving in the church, or building your business you will feel a sense
...omplishment as you go about doing good.

...days ago, as she was leaving our house, our three-year-old granddaughter Emma gave me some great advice. As I bent
...n to give her a kiss goodbye, she simply said in her soft, yet serious voice, “Grandpa be brave.”

...to you well done, congratulations, and be brave!

...e name of Jesus Christ, amen.