

## You are Never Alone



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To our distinguished guests, faculty, staff, students, family, friends, my fellow graduates, and most especially, to my beautiful wife Rebecah, Mabuhay and Aloha!

I stand all amazed at the view I behold before my eyes! Do we not all look great with the cap and gown? From up here, I can see your bright smiles and the joy in your eyes! We have finally made it, my fellow graduates! We deserve it!

Enter to Learn

Like many of you, I started my preparations in coming here to BYU–Hawaii when I was a young man. I first heard about BYU–Hawaii from my father. He told me how he wanted to come here, if only he had the financial resources back then. What interested me the most about this school was the opportunity to receive instruction from the General Authorities of the church, according to what my father said. Since then, I prepared myself physically and spiritually by attending seminary, institute and eventually serving a full-time mission. After I returned home, I was admitted as a student and blessed with the opportunity to attend this great campus. I then realized the huge amount of money I needed to get from the Philippines to Hawaii. My father came to the rescue, he sold his car and other properties to pay for my expenses. My parents understood the vision of this special place and they gave everything they could so I would be able to “enter to learn.” Thank you, mom and dad, I love you.

I misunderstood what my father said about the General Authorities of the Church being my instructors. I thought that the Apostles and members of the Seventies would come here from headquarters to teach me, which does happen in occasional Devotional addresses. However, I came to learn that my professors functioned like General Authorities in many ways. I will never forget one of my cheerful professors because every time we make a mistake, he will say this phrase, “It's okay. You are still a good person.” He provided me encouragement and support. Another professor also shared how she studies the scriptures and prays together as a family at the table just before they eat their breakfast. What a great way to be filled both spiritually and physically every

morning. There are many more faculty, staff, and church leaders who greatly influenced me when they shared gospel insights and values in class and in church. Every person and experience we encounter in this university helps to shape us to be a better person. In behalf of the graduating class, our heartfelt gratitude will be eternally yours!

### Go Forth to Serve

BYU-Hawaii was built on two things: first, “pertaining to God and his Kingdom... Secondly, those noble men who cannot be bought or sold, men who will scorn to violate truth, genuine gold... More than that, they’ll be leaders” (McKay). Allow me to remind you, my fellow graduates, that not all of us will be seen in the limelight as we ‘go forth to serve’ in different positions, as President Hunter once said:

"Most of us will be quiet, relatively unknown folks who come and go and do our work without fanfare. To those of you who may find that lonely or frightening or just unspectacular, I say, you are “no less serviceable” than the most spectacular of your associates. You, too, are part of God’s army.”<sup>1</sup>

My dear friends, we have our unique contributions to make in building the kingdom of God.

### Final Words: You are Never Alone

Graduates, as we embark our journey to the real world, there will be sunrise and sunsets. It will not always be happy and fulfilling. There will come a time when challenges and setbacks befall us. Allow me to share my experience this semester. My one-year-old son Eli had a seizure and became very weak; we thought he was dying. His fever was getting higher throughout the week and we rushed him to three different emergency rooms. Finally, he was admitted to one of the hospitals in town for four days. At this time, I was very down and troubled. I thought to myself, "If I lose my son now, how can I bear it." I felt broken and hopeless. In those dark moments, a Mormon-ad popped into my mind. It was the one with the image of the Savior. The message was very clear in my head, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” My dear friends, regardless of any challenges or difficulties we may face in our careers, in business, in our families or in other aspects of our lives, let us not fear because Christ has overcome the world and will bring us His peace.

Let us remember President Monson’s words in his April 2009 general conference talk, “...fear not. Be of good cheer. The future is as bright as your faith.”<sup>3</sup> In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

[1] President Howard W. Hunter, April 1992, Ensign, "No Less Serviceable".

[2] John 14:18

[3] President Thomas S. Monson, April 2009, General Conference, "Be of Good Cheer".