

## Valedictory Speech 2022

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Favour Adeleye, Vanguard College Alumni.<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

I just want to start by saying thank you. First to God, for existence and this wonderful thing we call life. But next, to my fellow graduates, who have voted for me to give the valedictory speech. Thank you to the faculty and staff who have worked hard for the past year, or four, or more, so that we can call ourselves graduates today.

“It is finished”

Incredible isn't it. When we set out on this journey it seemed like it would take forever. Admittedly some of us have been here longer than others, but we can all agree that it wasn't easy. We have survived what felt like demanding deadlines, anxiety-inducing assignments, and projects past our perceived pedigree. With all the difficulty though, we have experienced what we never thought we would find here.

### Calling

Some of us set foot in Vanguard back in September of 2018, not knowing what we would do come April 2022. We signed up for a school experience, you know a solid education. Maybe we would even get a job in ministry after. Or at least be eligible to do graduate work. Thankfully we received both, a solid education and equipping for ministry.

However, between projects and paperwork there were experiences.

Retreats, where we felt the Holy Spirit's presence. Chapels, where we felt the direction of our lives shifting towards God. Classes where our understanding of God was forever changed. The way we saw people and ourselves would never be the same. There were discussions with professors between classes that have set us on the path we find ourselves today.

I feel so blessed to say that I have seen the Holy Spirit move in your lives during our time at Vanguard, to witness you, my fellow graduates, find that call.

We have also found key relationships during our time at Vanguard.

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## Relationship

Quick story: I still remember our first year-pastoral, serve week trip where we went to Banff to minister. We were sleeping on the floor in a church, but we were excited to be doing practical ministry. As we were waiting for sleep to hit and talking about girls we liked, my friend said he liked this girl. We laughed thinking that he would never work up the nerve to ask her out. But then we encouraged him to pray about it and shoot his shot.

They're now married and expecting their first child. None of us that night expected that such a deep relationship would be found during our time here but this and so many other valuable relationships have been made.

For some of us, we've made life-long friends. Some of us have found mentors in professors or other staff. Their input has been a guiding light inside and outside of school. I know we'll be forever grateful for them seeing qualities in us that we never saw in ourselves. Not only did they identify those qualities, but they developed them in us.

One of my favourite examples is our Homiletics class; most of us were so nervous giving that first presentation. But now I think of my classmates in our Expository Presentation class, and everyone gave brilliant sermons. I think of friends who not only grew in their preaching skills but found a passion for public speaking. It's amazing to think that this was all found in our unassuming Bible college.

As we go forward though, I want to encourage you. I know there are still so many unknowns and even after all we've found and experienced, we know that God has much more in store for us.

## Three Encouragements

I want to encourage you in three ways. My first encouragement is to remember and practice what you've learned at Vanguard.

Let's remember the spiritual foundation that's been laid for us. Hebrews 6:1 and 3 says,

So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely we don't need to start again with the fundamental importance of repenting from evil deeds and placing our faith in God. ... And so, God willing, we will move forward to further understanding.

As we go into the world and its culture, we'll be hit with all sorts of new trends on how to live and how to do ministry, and there will be temptation to put secondary issues in the place of God. But let's not forget the basics. Do you remember the disciplines from Spiritual Formation? I'll be honest, I forgot some of them too. Here's a brief reminder: The personal disciplines are prayer, fasting, meditation, studying Scripture, simplicity, solitude, submission, and service. These will build up our inner lives. And with corporate disciplines we'll remain connected to the body of believers. Through confession, worship, guidance, and what we're doing right now, celebration! Keeping these basic practices will help us remain steadfast in our faith.

This passage in Hebrews encourages us to press forward in our understanding, to keep learning from our great teacher, but let's not forget to practice what we have learned.

The second encouragement I want to give you is to continue your outreach, regardless of where you work or live.

Matthew 28:18-20 calls us to go to all nations and make disciples, baptizing them and teaching them the commands of God. We are empowered to fulfill this call, knowing that Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth, and that He is with us! Regardless of where we are and what we do, we are to carry out this mission.

All we have learned at Vanguard, academic and otherwise, has been for the sake of equipping us for this mission. We didn't learn to prepare Bible Studies, devotionals, sermons, presentations, and research papers just for ourselves. Our training, Christ's presence, and the power we receive through the Holy Spirit is for carrying out this mission!

While I know most of us are planning to enter ministry jobs, I know that some of us are called to other workplaces. You might not work full-time at a church, but you are the Church, and you bring Christ wherever you go.

Our faith is not only in what we do on Sundays, or how much time we spend at church, or how many years we spent at Vanguard. Our calling doesn't stop after we graduate.

Real calling is lived out daily.

Every day, we must let our lives testify of Christ so that even if people never come to a church service, or read the Bible, they will be able to see Christ in us.

The third encouragement I want to give you is to remember that you are loved! 1 Jn 4:16a says "We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love".

During Minister's gathering earlier this year, I felt God speaking His love to me. And I want to speak that love to you too. You are loved! In ministry we can easily focus on what we are expected to do next, letting our relationship with God become monotonous work. We complicate our relationship with Him, thinking His love is like ours, needing reason and keeping record of wrongs. In this striving we can lose sight of the one who loves us regardless of our successes and failures. Take time each day to reflect on God's love and let your actions flow out of His love for you.

### **Final Exhortation (Conclusion)**

Finally, I wanted to congratulate you all! You have decided that this is what your life is about! As the writer of Hebrews says, "Anyone who wants to come to God must believe that God exists and that He rewards those who sincerely seek Him". Committing thousands of hours, and tens of thousands of dollars, to achieve what you have today is admirable. You have not taken God's provision for granted.

In making Him the center of your lives, you are glorifying Him. And when God is glorified, we are glorified with Him too (Romans 8:17). Let us continue to glorify God by loving Him with our whole being: All our heart, all our soul, all our mind, and all our strength.

Thank you.