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Liberty University

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Liberty University graduates charged to follow their faith

May 10, 2008 | Ron Brown

View the commencement ceremony [here](#).

Liberty University graduates, on Saturday, were urged to remain true to their Christian roots.

“Remember you are our ambassadors wherever you go,” LU Provost Boyd Rist told the graduates. “Your associates will judge Christian higher education by how you conduct yourselves.”

Rist continued with a charge for LU graduates to set an example for others.

“As you graduate, you should not find satisfaction with the commonplace in character, attitude and values,” he said. “By your example, you should raise the intellectual and the moral tone of society.”

Chancellor Jerry Falwell Jr. offered some parting words to graduates, parents and grandparents.

“I want to thank parents for trusting us with your most precious possessions,” Falwell Jr. said. “Because your children were at LU, it is our prayer that they’ll never be the same again.”

He told graduates to expect the unexpected in life.

“There will be many times in your life that you see no connection between your life’s goal and what you’re experiencing,” Falwell Jr. said. “But if you are like me, you’ll look back in hindsight and understand why God put you through everything you experienced. In all likelihood, you’ll see purpose in every experience of your life – because God had a plan for you the whole time, even when you couldn’t see it. In the end, you will see that many of the trials and tribulations were intended by God to toughen you up to endure more trying times ahead.”

Falwell Jr. drew on the lessons he learned as a young lawyer and general counsel for LU in the late 1980s, when the university was experiencing financial troubles.

“I spent the last 20 years helping to establish a firm financial foundation for this university,” he said. “I saw incredible miracles over and over. God stepped in time and time again to provide the exact amount needed to keep the lights on and payroll paid just in the nick of time. It was God’s way of letting us know that LU is His school.”

Falwell Jr. said LU’s 2008 class is the first class to graduate from a debt-free institution.

The Class of 2008 is also the largest graduating class in the history of Liberty University with 4,805 members, compared with 3,598 graduates in the class of 2007.

After showers blanketed much of Central Virginia overnight, the graduation ceremonies went off without a hitch under blue, sunny skies.

About 20,000 people attended the ceremony held in LU's Williams Football Stadium.

Just after sunrise, graduates and their family members streamed toward the facility.

Proud graduates stopped occasionally to have photographs taken with loved ones.

In the stadium seats, parents, grandparents and friends of graduates sat patiently for a couple of hours waiting for commencement to begin.

Shortly after 8:30 a.m., the procession of graduates began to file into their seats.

The ceremony was set to patriotic and Christian music provided by soloist Charles Billingsley, Sounds of Liberty, the LU Chamber singers and wind ensemble.