

Good Morning young men of Bishops,

My name is Ismail Rawoot, I am an OD from the class of 2013. In many ways, it feels like only recently that I walked these grounds, despite the fact that I know that I started my university career before the matrics sitting in this chapel were even in grade 8, so neither my face nor my voice would be familiar to you.

Today, I am addressing you on behalf of the Holland-Stellenbosch Medical Foundation. A charity set up by Dutch benefactors who support students in medicine and its allied fields (like physiotherapy, occupational therapy etc.) in completing their studies. As 'repayment' for each year funded, the student undertakes to spend a year after completing their studies in a rural, or underserved community. This means serving in communities that are often marginalised, forgotten, and with specific challenges.

This cause is something that is close to my heart, and so, today, I just want to leave you with one message, and that is the importance of being socially responsive.

Now those are two big words, and they could easily be seen as some kind of catch-phrase that sounds great, but means little in practice. So let me try to explain it in reference to something quite topical: Tomorrow, the 27th of April, is Freedom Day.

It is on this day that we celebrate our country's first free-and-fair elections, and a milestone in our country's troubled history towards equality, and the enjoyment of basic human rights by everyone. However, I think it is an understood reality that we, as a country, are not there yet. We are not all equal yet, we are not all as free. And in trying to achieve that ideal of freedom, I think it is most useful to look at the corollary to each right – the responsibility that it entails.

The freedoms that are laid down in our constitution come with implicit responsibilities. The foremost among those responsibilities is making sure that we don't impinge on another person's rights, and that is important. However, a deeper responsibility is to create an environment where other people can enjoy that right as well.

I would like to make us all aware that each one of us present in this room is incredibly privileged – we have been blessed to enjoy a standard of living and opportunities that are not available to the vast majority of South Africans. However, the way I understand it, the blessing of wealth, or status, or opportunity, is a test at the same time: What are you going to do with that privilege?

Are you going to use it just to serve your own needs, or can you leverage it to lift others, so that they can also enjoy an equal access to housing, or a secure food supply, or dignified sanitation.

And that is a goal that you can have in *whatever* direction your life might go. Whether you want to be an entrepreneur, or a lawyer, a doctor or an accountant, or whatever in between, we can all strive to make sure that we are utilising our knowledge, our skills, our privilege, to uplift others – whether that is in our free time, our work, or our money.

The contribution that you make might look different for every person and your situation, and change over time. But I would urge that in uplifting others, that you become involved with communities, that you make an effort to understand them, and then that you work in tandem with them. Relationships are truly powerful things, and it is very different to know a community and to be with them, and to help them, as opposed to helping from afar. That is true servant leadership!

South Africa is a big place, and no one person's effort is going to shift the course of it, but each of us doing our part is a pre-requisite for our country doing better. And when we each put our efforts together, we can make South Africa safer, happier and more prosperous. So that we all might enjoy freedom.

Thank you all for your time.