

Dear Fellow Traveler,

Today, we stand on the shore of a vast ocean—this land behind us is our upbringing, the foundation where our roots took hold and our faith was nurtured. Ahead lies the wide, unpredictable sea of life, full of unknowns and challenges.

Some of us grew up side by side in classrooms, while others only crossed paths in moments of worship, but now we share this moment together. As we prepare to set sail into the unknown, surrounded by friends, family, and faces both familiar and new, we celebrate all that has shaped us—our successes, our failures, and the lessons they brought.

Life will toss storms our way—waves of challenge and change that threaten to pull us under. We will have to work hard to stay afloat and keep our course steady when the seas grow rough. Yet we do not face these storms alone. God is our steady lighthouse and guiding hand, leading us safely through every tempest. We didn't all grow up on the same soil or walk the same paths. Some of us faced quiet struggles beneath the surface; some of us flourished in plain sight. Many of us did both—often unnoticed. Yet each of us has stood firm on this land of preparation—and that is no small thing.

What we carry forward is more than the knowledge we've gathered—more than dates, formulas, and finished assignments. We've learned how to keep learning. How to ask better questions. How to sit with hard answers. How to walk forward even when the road isn't clear. That kind of learning cannot be tested or graded, but it will guide us far beyond the classroom. It is part of how we are being equipped for every good work.

This land behind us was given for our growth—steady ground to take root, to stretch upward, and to learn who we are. But we were never meant to stay there. Like Abraham, called out from the familiar into a place he had never seen: "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise" (Hebrews 11:8–9). Now, like him, we step into the unknown—trusting not in a map, but in the One who leads.

The ocean before us will be many things: beautiful, wild, uncertain, vast. There will be days of calm and days of chaos—days when the winds are at our back, and days when we're struggling just to stay above the waves. Yet through it all, we are not alone. "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you... when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you" (Isaiah 43:2).

These promises are not just for memory—they are meant to be lived. The same God who steadied our steps on solid ground will steady us on the sea. Christ does not promise ease, but He does promise presence. When the waves rise, He speaks peace. When our strength fails, His grace remains sufficient. And when trials come—as they surely will—remember that suffering is never wasted in God's hands. A philosopher once said, "The strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must." But in that, we glimpse a deeper truth: those who suffer often discover what the strong never have to learn. As Tolkien showed through hobbits and hardship, weakness does not disqualify us—it prepares us.

When the sea is rough, weakness can feel like a weight. But it becomes a training ground. In struggle, we learn not only how to endure—but how to rise, how to lift others, how to seek the shore again. It's in those moments we learn that salvation comes not from our strength, but from the One who walks on water to meet us.

Finally, if God is with us, no wave is too high, no storm too fierce. With Him, we can press on—whether limping or leaping—toward the work and calling He has prepared for us (Ephesians 2:10).

Rooted in truth, sailing by faith,

Anonymous,

*"The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight" (Proverbs 4:7).*