

BYU graduate Matt Easton came out as gay in his convocation speech on April 20, saying he was “proud to be a gay son of God.”

Easton, the April 2019 political science valedictorian, focused his speech on celebrating what he called his “own small victories” during his college career — including overcoming [getting hit by a deer](#) on campus, coping with his mother’s terminal cancer diagnosis and coming to terms with his sexuality.

“As I’m sure many of you have felt, I recall countless times here at the Y where I have battled and fought in prayer with my Maker,” Easton said in the speech. “It was in these quiet moments of pain and confusion that I have felt another triumph: that of coming to terms not with who I thought I should be, but who the Lord has made me to be.”

Easton compared his experience to that of Enos in the Book of Mormon, who cried to the Lord in [‘mighty prayer and supplication.’](#) The audience cheered after Easton said he stood before his family, friends and graduating class “proud to be a gay son of God.”

“I am not broken,” Easton said. “I am loved and important in the plan of our great Creator. Each of us are.”

The speech marked another victory for Easton, he said, as he could not have imagined coming out to his entire college four years ago. He addressed those in the audience who may have felt uncertain about how to tackle their unique challenges.

“I hope that my stories can serve as a reminder that BYU has given us the foundation to face difficult problems, both secular and spiritual, and that with the Lord, all things are possible,” Easton said.

The day of his speech, Easton tweeted that it was the first time he had publicly declared he is gay, though he had been slowly coming out to close friends and family members.

“I felt it was important to share both for myself and for the LGBTQ+ community at BYU,” he wrote.

[https://twitter.com/easton\\_matty/status/1121987140760379392](https://twitter.com/easton_matty/status/1121987140760379392)

Easton’s speech has received widespread online attention. The speech has more than 64,800 YouTube views as of April 29, and has been covered by national news outlets such as [the Washington Post](#), [CNN](#), [the New York Post](#), [Fox News](#) and [HuffPost](#). On Twitter, Broadway star and LGBTQ activist Kristin Chenoweth expressed her support for Easton.

<https://twitter.com/KChenoweth/status/1122468246685270017>

Easton wrote on Twitter that he was overwhelmed “in the best way possible” by the reaction to his speech. He also thanked the College of Family, Home and Social Sciences for “allowing me to share my authentic and vulnerable self to so many in our college.”

[https://twitter.com/easton\\_matty/status/1121987137761501184](https://twitter.com/easton_matty/status/1121987137761501184)

The speech comes on the heels of a recent [controversy surrounding the BYU Honor Code](#), including the Honor Code Office’s treatment of LGBTQ students.

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