

also that KSUB at Cedar City is broadcasting all the sessions of the conference.

Elder J. Spencer Cornwall will direct the music, and Elder Alexander Schreiner is at the organ.

The congregation will now join in singing, "Did You Think to Pray?" Song Folder number 40.

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The congregation sang the hymn, "Did You Think to Pray?"

Elder Edwin Q. Cannon, President of the Ensign Stake, offered the opening prayer.

Singing by the congregation, "Sweet Hour of Prayer" (Song Folder No. 28, L.D.S. Hymn Book No. 354).

### ELDER MARION G. ROMNEY

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

I don't know just why it is that I always feel like this when I stand before you brethren in this great building. The other day I was in Nampa, Idaho, attending a stake conference, and I said to one of the brethren up there:

"My name is Marion G. Romney."

This man said: "Oh yes, I know you. I heard your heart beat, and I heard you breathe the first time you spoke in the tabernacle."

I still feel that way. I know you are my brethren. I know you know my limitations. I know you want me to succeed, but when I am ministering in this work of God I am always very humble.

I am very much in harmony with the spirit of those two lovely hymns we have sung this morning. If I had known that I was to be the first speaker, and could have chosen the hymns, I could not have chosen better.

### PRAYER THE PRESENT DAY NEED

I have been thinking of that marvelous appeal for prayer made by President Grant yesterday in his message, I have been thinking of it in connection with a passage of scripture, a commandment which the Lord gave to the Prophet Joseph Smith. Perhaps I was so impressed because I had been thinking, as I am sure you have been, of the great hold which Satan has upon the inhabitants of the earth today. The commandment was:

Pray always, that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may conquer Satan, and that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work. (Doc. and Cov. 10:5.)

The subject of prayer deserves the consideration not only of Latter-day Saints but also of the whole nation, for a belief in God

and prayer has been almost universally professed in the United States.

One of our greatest needs today is to turn to God in true prayer, that we may conquer Satan and escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work. I should like to call your attention to some of the prerequisites to the realization of this need. The first is belief in God the Eternal Father, as taught by Joseph Smith.

#### BELIEF IN A LIVING GOD ESSENTIAL TO FAITH

There is a world of difference between a prayer understandingly addressed to "Our Father which art in heaven," and a prayer addressed to some unknown god defined in some such language as "cosmic energy," "universal consciousness," or as "the first great cause." No man prays to a theoretical god with any faith or expectation that his petition will receive a sympathetic consideration. But one can pray to the true and living God with the knowledge that he actually deals with men. When God is believed in as our Eternal Father, we can to a degree understand our relationship to him, that he is the father of our spirits, a loving parent who is interested in his children individually, and whom they can love with all their hearts, might, mind, and strength.

Such a belief is essential to true prayer because intelligent beings will not pray fervently to a God they do not know. Such praying will be done only by people who believe that their prayers can be heard and answered by an understanding, sympathetic parent.

Associated with belief in God the Eternal Father is belief in his Son Jesus Christ and an acceptance of his divine mission as the Redeemer of the world. This belief is as basic to true prayer as is belief in God, the Eternal Father. It is because Jesus is our Redeemer and therefore our advocate with the Father that we must always pray unto the Father *in his name*. While yet in mortality he said to his disciples, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." (John 14:6.) He promised them that if they prayed *in his name*, they should receive whatsoever they should ask. (John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-24, 26.) To the Nephite multitude, whom he taught after his resurrection, he said, ". . . Ye must always pray unto the Father *in my name*" (III Nephi 18:19), and to this generation, ". . . Thou shalt continue in calling upon God *in my name*." (D. & C. 24:5.)

I call these well-known teachings to your attention because on a number of occasions recently I have heard prayers in religious services which were not offered *in his name*. Latter-day Saints ought not to be ignorant of these commandments nor hesitant about obeying them. Our hearts are filled with gratitude beyond expression for what the Savior has done for us. We sing

with feeling, "Oh, it is wonderful that he should care for me enough to die for me!" Every time we partake of the sacrament, we witness unto the Father that we are willing to take upon us the name of his Son. A prayer not offered in his name suggests insincerity or lack of understanding.

When we pray unto the Father in the name of Jesus for specific personal things, we should feel in the very depths of our souls that we are willing to subject our petitions to the will of our Father in heaven. "Thy will, O God, thy will be done" should never be lip service only. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (III Nephi 13:10), is the pattern given by Jesus in the Lord's prayer, and emphasized in Gethsemane when in blood-sweat and agony he prayed, ". . . Not my will, but thine, be done." (Luke 22:42.)

#### A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

This principle we learned in our home through a rather impressive experience. During the early years of our married life, my wife and I intensely desired what we considered to be a particular blessing. We set about through fasting and prayer to obtain it. We considered many of the scriptures which seemed to make a blanket promise that ". . . Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (Matt. 21:22.) We asked, we believed, we thought we had faith, but though we fasted often and prayed fervently, the years rolled by without bringing us the desired answer to our prayers. Finally we concluded that we had not fully understood; that we were not giving proper consideration to the will of the Lord. Rather were we concentrating our faith and prayers upon receiving the particular thing which by predetermination we had set our hearts upon. We had to reconsider the conditions of the promise. We found that Jesus had stated them in full to the Nephites as follows: ". . . Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, *which is right*, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you" (III Nephi 18:20), and to this generation thus, "Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name it shall be given unto you, *that is expedient for you*." (D. & C. 88:64.) We had to learn to be as earnest in praying, "If it be thy will" as we were when presenting our personal appeals.

We need have no fear that our well-being will not be served by such an approach. It is God's work and glory ". . . to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. (Moses 1:39.) I think I am within the mark when I say that the obtaining of eternal life by each individual person, including specifically you and me, is part of the work of God and adds to his glory. His will concerning us and our affairs cannot be other than for our advancement toward immortality and eternal life. Submitting to his will in every instance will be for our own good. And this we must do in faith if we

would have peace and happiness in our present state of imperfect living.

#### RIGHTEOUSNESS STRENGTHENS FAITH

The time will come when we shall know the will of God before we ask. Then everything for which we pray will be "expedient." Everything for which we ask will be "right." That will be when as a result of righteous living, we shall so enjoy the companionship of the spirit that he will dictate what we ask. On this point the Lord has said, "He that asketh in the Spirit asketh according to the will of God; wherefore it is done even as he asketh" (D. & C. 46:30), and again, "And if ye are purified and cleansed from all sin, ye shall ask whatsoever you will in the name of Jesus and it shall be done. But know this, it shall be given you what you shall ask." (D. & C. 50:29-30.) Nephi, the son of Helaman, so lived. He with unwearyingness declared the word of God. He sought not his own life but the will of God, and to keep his commandments continually, and to him the Lord said, . . . all things shall be done unto thee according to thy word, for thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will." (Helaman 10:5.)

Now, in submitting our requests to the will of our Eternal Father and asking in the name of Jesus, when, where, and for what shall we pray?

The psalmist sang, "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray." (Psalms 55:17.) During his earthly mission, the Savior taught by parable that ". . . men ought always to pray, and not to faint." (Luke 18:1.) In this dispensation, he has said in many revelations, "Pray always." He said this to the Prophet Joseph Smith (D. & C. 10:5), to Martin Harris (D. & C. 19:38), to Thomas B. Marsh (D. & C. 31:12), and to many other individuals; he said it to the Church (D. & C. 20:33), and finally he said, "What I say unto one I say unto all; pray always lest that wicked one have power in you, and remove you out of your place." (D. & C. 93:49.)

#### THE SCRIPTURES TEACH PRAYER

As there is no limitation as to when we should pray, so there seems to be no limitation as to where we should pray or what we should pray about.

. . . In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. (Ph. 4:6.)

. . . Cry unto him for mercy; for he is mighty to save. . . Cry unto him when ye are in your fields, yea, over all your flocks. Cry unto him in your houses, yea, over all your household, both morning, mid-day, and evening. Yea, cry unto him against the power of your enemies. Yea, cry unto him against the devil, who is an enemy to all righteousness. Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them. . . But this is not all; ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret

places, and in your wilderness. Yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare and also for the welfare of those who are around you. (Alma 34:18-27.)

Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name [said the Savior], that your wives and your children may be blessed. (III Nephi 18:21.)

. . . Pray vocally as well as in thy heart; yea, before the world as well as in secret, in public as well as in private. (Doc. and Cov. 19:28.)

Call upon the Lord, that his kingdom may go forth upon the earth, that the inhabitants thereof may receive it, and be prepared for the days to come, in the which the Son of Man shall come down in heaven, clothed in the brightness of his glory, to meet the kingdom of God which is set up on the earth.

Wherefore, may the kingdom of God go forth, that the kingdom of heaven may come, that thou, O God, mayest be glorified in heaven so on earth that thine enemies may be subdued; for thine is the honor, power and glory, forever and ever. Amen. (Doc. and Cov. 65:5-6.)

#### AN INCIDENT FROM LINCOLN'S LIFE

Most all of you who are within the sound of my voice are witnesses that no person in true prayer ever called upon God in vain. There is hardly one of you who cannot personally testify, out of your own experience, of the power of prayer. Here is an example from the life of President Lincoln:

General Sickles had noticed that before the portentous battle of Gettysburg, upon the result of which, perhaps, the fate of the nation hung, President Lincoln was apparently free from the oppressive care which frequently weighed him down. After it was all past the general asked Lincoln how that was. He said:

"Well, I will tell you how it was. In the pinch of your campaign up there, when everybody seemed panic-stricken and nobody could tell what was going to happen, oppressed by the gravity of affairs, I went to my room one day and locked the door and got down on my knees before Almighty God and prayed to him mightily for victory at Gettysburg. I told him that this war was his, and our cause his cause, but we could not stand another Fredericksburg or Chancellorsville. Then and there I made a solemn vow to Almighty God that if he would stand by our boys at Gettysburg, I would stand by him, and he did stand by our boys, and I will stand by him. And after that, I don't know how it was, and I cannot explain it, soon a sweet comfort crept into my soul. The feeling came that God had taken the whole business into his own hands, and that things would go right at Gettysburg, and that is why I had no fears about you."

Lincoln believed in God. He prayed mightily in the strength of great humility. He did not alone ask God to stand by him, but he promised to stand by the Lord. He received his answer in the way which you, my brethren, are so well acquainted with,—the sweet comfort which crept into his soul.

#### JOSEPH SMITH'S PRAYER AND ITS RESULTS

In the spring of 1820, Joseph Smith, Jr.—one of God's mightiest spirit sons—but then a little known fourteen-year-old boy in the backwoods of New York state, while reading the Bible in

search of light on a vital problem, was moved upon by the Spirit to ask God in faith for the wisdom he lacked. Retiring to a secluded spot in a wooded grove, he "kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of" his "heart to God" in vocal prayer. It was while this boy was so engaged in humble prayer, and in answer to that prayer, that the great vision of the Father and the Son which opened this last dispensation of the gospel was given.

A great deal more could be said upon this vital subject of prayer, but this is not the time nor place for me to say it. In conclusion, I plead with all men everywhere to turn to God in true prayer. This is the number one requisite for peace in the world. It is the only way that we can conquer Satan and escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work. We Latter-day Saints know that God is our Eternal Father, that Jesus Christ is his Son and our Redeemer, and that we must bring our desires and our lives in harmony with his divine will, praying to him always about all things in the name of Jesus. Let us see to it that from henceforth no day shall pass in which we do not fervently, in family and in private prayers, express our gratitude to our Heavenly Father and seek his guiding and protecting care, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ELDER ANTOINE R. IVINS

*Of the First Council of the Seventy*

I crave an interest in your faith and prayers, my brethren, that what I may say may be directed by the Spirit of God, through your prayerful help.

#### CULTIVATION OF THE SOULS OF MEN

As I travel over this vast country of ours, I, like you perhaps, have been impressed by the vast amount of unproductive and untilled land that we have. Only a small portion of this state and the other states around us is well cultivated and really productive. There is a writer whom I read frequently who has made the statement that there are more uncultivated souls than lands. I wonder if that is true.

Certain it is that there are many souls in the world today who have been improperly cultivated, else we would not have the conditions prevalent that we are struggling with now.

I like to look upon this body of men as the tillers of the soul of the Church, and it is our problem to see that the soul of the Church is well cultivated, so that it can yield itself to the purposes of God. The soul of the Church is a composite of the souls of its members, and so we become the tillers of the souls of the members of the Church, and it becomes our duty as we face this problem, each and every one of us, to till our own garden spots first, and if they turn out to be productive, then there is no question that the greater fields will, likewise, be productive.