

I remember on one occasion going by train to Alberta, Canada. As we approached Raymond, the wind was blowing, and there had been a light snowfall which was drifting, and I saw a woman and two or three children out in the beet fields working among the beets, and I have never forgotten the feeling I had. Those people working, almost their finger ends off, to make a living, and because God has said that one tenth of their interest should be given annually to him for the building up his kingdom when they get their meager returns, as faithful Saints, they will give to the Lord one tenth. And that is going on all through this Church.

As we visit the stakes and learn that these stake officers and ward officers, almost universally, are full tithesayers and keep the Word of Wisdom, hundreds of thousands of them, manifesting their love for God, their faithfulness in keeping his commandments, their willingness to help carry on this great latter-day work, how can we do otherwise than love them?

God bless you, brethren and sisters, for your faithfulness, and reward you abundantly therefor in time and throughout eternity, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER HAROLD B. LEE

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I sincerely pray that the Spirit of the Lord might guide my few remarks and that they might be in full harmony with all that has been said on this occasion.

We have a scripture recording the words of the Master:

... I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10.)

MODERN CONCEPTS OF ABUNDANT LIVING

That scripture has been the text for certain economic philosophies that are with us today, and from that text has been coined a term, "The abundant life," which has been used frequently to refer to a condition of plenty or sufficiency or a profuseness of the material things of life. But if we are to strip those philosophies of all their high-sounding phrases and explanations, we might describe them in this language: "Giving more and more to an individual in return for less and less from him."

As I think back over my life, I remember that these philosophies did not begin with the last few years. When I think of the first political campaigns that I, as a young boy, heard about, and fortunately we did not hear as much about them in those days as we hear about them today, I remember that some of the slogans of those days sounded very much like the kinds of philosophy we have today. I remember in one campaign there was one something like this: "We

stand for a full dinner pail," and on another occasion: "We stand for a chicken in every pot," and still later, "Two cars in every garage." I remember picking up a magazine and seeing a picture of a family in a beautiful convertible, off to the movies, and underneath it said: "This is the American way of life." And more recently, we have a philosophy, or slogan: "Full employment for everybody in America and a pint of milk for everybody in the world."

Now, I call these sayings to your attention, and you, who are older than I, can add other slogans along the same line, not to ridicule, but to call your attention to the fact that in this land, and perhaps other lands, we have been choosing as ideals these material benefits, and we have called them the way to an abundant life.

In commenting about these things that seemingly have existed here in America, the president of one of our great American universities said this:

But the ideal of comfort which is the best we have been able to think of for ourselves will never do as an aim for a world order. Men can never be comfortable enough; we can never have enough material goods, if material goods are what we want. Any world order with this ideal will be torn to pieces by the divisions to which it leads.

As long as it is assumed, then, that it is the duty of all of us to get all we can and make the ideal of comfort our goal in life, then we may expect a similar fate to that nation, or community, or that family which builds on such an ideal. They will certainly be torn to pieces by the divisions to which such an ideal will lead.

I think I would be safe in saying, and I believe you would agree with me, that perhaps never before in the history of the world has so much been said about the abundant life and so little effort expended in obtaining the essentials that make for an abundant life.

THE MASTER'S STATEMENT

I should like to read you the parable that preceded the Master's statement of that text to which I referred. These were his words:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. . . . Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. . . . I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. (John 10:1, 7, 9.)

And then he closed his lesson with this statement:

. . . I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10.)

To his disciples on another occasion he said:

. . . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6.)

It was the same message that he gave to Nicodemus who asked what he must do to be saved and in reply the Master answered:

... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:5.)

Those who seek for the abundant life in any other way, then, but by the way the Master has laid out in the gospel plan, or, "as a thief and a robber," to use the Master's words. But the tragedy is that he who does so rob, is also the victim of his own robbery, and his own house is left to him desolate in the day of his great spiritual need. Then, certainly, such a one is poor indeed, and he is as the man to whom the Master referred in his Sermon on the Mount as, one who builds his house upon the sand and when the storms come, the winds blow and the rains descend, his house will fall, because it is founded upon the sand. (See Matt. 7:26-27.)

SCRIPTURES CHART WAY TO ABUNDANT LIFE

But the scriptures have given us unmistakably a charted way for the living of the abundant life and the preparation therefor. It was the Apostle Paul who said to the Hebrews:

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection. (Hebrews 6:1.)

In explaining what salvation means, the Prophet Joseph declared that:

Salvation is nothing more nor less than to triumph over all our enemies and put them under our feet. And when we have power to put all enemies under our feet in this world, and a knowledge to triumph over all evil spirits in the world to come, then we are saved. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 297.)

But apparently, as I read the scriptures, the Lord did not intend to convey that a fulness of the abundant life was attainable even in this life, for we find him saying in a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith:

Wherefore, fear not even unto death; for in this world your joy is not full, but in me your joy is full. (D. & C. 101:36.)

The Apostle Peter has reduced that teaching to a formula, a pattern, or a way of life. These were his words:

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: *For so an entrance shall be ministered unto*

you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (II Peter 1:5-11.)

When I understand the full import of the Apostle Peter's words, describing that way of life by which we might obtain that abundance, or in other words that "abundant entrance" into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, I am made aware that we cannot obtain it by spiritual gratuities any more than we can obtain a temporal abundant life by receiving temporal gratuities, for the Lord declared:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. (Matt. 7:21.)

Only can an individual receive that joy and that abundant life whose life is patterned to the standards as laid down in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have a splendid illustration that I should like to call your attention as to how this might be obtained.

LIFE OF SAUL OF TARSUS

Saul of Tarsus was one who had been valiant and conscientiously engaged in trying to stamp out Christianity which he believed to be a sect defiling the word of God. He even held the coats of the men who stoned Stephen, and having obtained letters of authority was on his way to Damascus there to prosecute his work, and it was about noonday:

And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. (Acts 9:3-6.)

He went and found Ananias, a humble man of God. Ananias taught him the way to an abundant life. He baptized Paul and then sent him to the apostles where he received his commission that sent him out to be one of the greatest missionaries among the Gentiles, and we know him from that time forth as the Apostle Paul.

The rewards that come from a life of sacrifice and service are also illustrated in an incident in his life. You recall, he was now a prisoner on his way to Rome. As they put out from an island in the Mediterranean Sea, he had the impression that all would not be well, and they were hardly out of sight of land until a furious storm broke, and for fourteen days that frail ship was tossed about, and when, as the scriptures say,

... neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away. (Acts 27:20.)

Then it was that the Apostle Paul went down into a place by himself and prayed, and here are the words that are recorded in the scriptures which describe his experience:

... after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, . . . And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. (Acts 27:21-24.)

Then the Apostle Paul quieted his shipmates with this testimony:

Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. (Acts 27:25.)

There we might find illustrated the essential steps toward the abundant life, of which the Master spoke. The first step is to live the kind of life that permits up to receive the light of heaven, and a testimony that Jesus is a living reality, and that he can speak to us. One possessed of such testimony, then, from the depths of his heart, will say, as did the Apostle Paul: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

DOING THE WILL OF GOD

I wonder if you will think about that, you who preside in the missions and the stakes of the Church, in the various organizations, and priesthood quorums, those of us who sit in places in the presiding councils of the Church, whenever we come to the selecting of an officer or the determining of policy for the welfare of Zion, how well it would be if always we would say, we who have that testimony of Jesus, "Heavenly Father, what wilt thou have me do?" And if we will remember that, as fathers and mothers in dealing with a wayward child, if we will remember that when we sit in judgment upon the sinner, in all our business affairs, and the youth in his love affairs! May we who have the testimony remember that lesson of the Apostle Paul and from our hearts cry out to our Father: "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?"

And if we pray in real sincerity and faith, there will come back to us from out of the scriptures the answer to that prayerful inquiry. The answer has come oft repeated, time and time again, that all that we do should be done "with an eye single to the glory of God." What is the glory of God? The Lord told Moses that:

... this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. (Pearl of Great Price, Moses 1:39.)

With that goal always before us, seeing every act of our lives, every decision we make as patterned toward the development of a life that shall permit us to enter into the presence of the Lord our Heavenly Father, to gain which is to obtain eternal life, how much more wisdom there would be in the many things of life. Cannot you

see, mothers, if yours is the responsibility and you sense it, as the Lord has placed it upon you, to teach your little children that there is a Heavenly Father and that life has a purpose, and that purpose is to prepare to go back to his presence in a day not far distant, then when that child, thus possessed of faith from such motherly teachings, comes to a decision in the choice of educational subjects in school, shall it be a course in home economics, or a career in theatrical fields, I am wondering if this child may not well choose rightly in such a question?

If there should come a problem as to what kind of business a man should be engaged in, whether he should invest in this matter or that, whether he should marry this girl or marry that girl, where he should marry, and how he should marry, when it comes to the prosecuting of the work to which we are assigned, how much more certainly would those decisions be made, if always we recalled that all we do, and the decisions we make, should be made with that eternal goal in mind, with an eye single to the ultimate glory of man in the celestial world.

DIVINE GUIDANCE AVAILABLE

If all our selfish motives, then and all our personal desires, and expediency, would be subordinated to a desire to know the will of the Lord, one could have the companionship of heavenly vision. If your problems be too great for human intelligence or too much for human strength, you too, if you are faithful and appeal rightly unto the source of divine power, might have standing by you in your hour of peril or great need an angel of God, whose you are and whom you serve. One who lives thus worthy of a testimony that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ, and who is willing to reach out to him in constant inquiry to know if his course is approved is the one who is living life to its full abundance here, and is preparing for the celestial world, which is to live eternally with his Heavenly Father.

I bear you my humble testimony, as one of the humblest among you: I know there are powers that can draw close to one who fills his heart with the kind of love of which President Richards has spoken so beautifully this afternoon. I came to a night, some years ago, when on my bed, I realized that before I could be worthy of the high place to which I had been called, I must love and forgive every soul that walked the earth, and in that time I came to know and I received a peace and a direction, and a comfort, and an inspiration, that told me things to come and gave me impressions that I knew were from a divine source. I know that these things are true and that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that each of us might live the abundant life by drawing thus close to him, and I bear you that testimony, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.