

Jesus taught that men and women fail to live truly, unless they have spirituality. In the *Life and Teachings of Jesus*, we read that the spiritual force underlies everything, and without it nothing worth while can be accomplished. "Spiritual needs can be met only by spiritual means. All government, laws, methods, and organizations are of no value unless men and women are filled with truth, righteousness, and mercy. Material things have no power to raise the sunken spirit. Gravitation, electricity, and steam are great forces, but they are all powerless to change the motives of men and women." Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

### GOSPEL OFFERS SOLUTION

Men of the priesthood, we must continue to declare that the gospel, the Glad Tidings of Great Joy, is the true guide to mankind; and that men and women are happiest and most content who live nearest to its teachings.

The voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape; and there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated. . . .

And the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days. (D. & C. 1:2, 4.)

What the sun in the heavenly blue is to the earth struggling to get free from winter's grip, so the gospel is to sorrowing souls yearning for something higher and better than mankind has yet found.

If men and nations will hold their belief in God, and accept the teachings of Jesus Christ, pilotless planes and other argosies of the air encircling the globe in a nightless world will carry not bombs of merciless destruction, but gifts and blessings to what is now a groping, benighted world.

All the world is in the Valley of Decision  
And out of it there is but one sure road;  
Eyes unsealed can still foresee the mighty vision  
Of a world in travail turning unto God.

May heaven help all members of the Church of Christ to live and labor for the spreading throughout the world of the gospel of light and truth and peace, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ELDER JOSEPH L. WIRTHLIN

#### *First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric*

Facing this magnificent congregation of Latter-day Saints I deeply realize the great responsibility that rests upon me and hence I crave an interest in your faith and prayers.

The ancient writer of Proverbs declared:

Where no counsel is the people fall, but in the multitude of counselors there is safety. (Proverbs 11:14.)

He also declared:

Give instruction to a wise man and he will yet be wiser; teach a just man and he will increase in learning. (Proverbs 9:9.)

Centuries ago there lived upon this earth a generation of people so wicked and vile that the God of Israel turned his face away in shame and chagrin, but as a manifestation of his great love for these people, he sent them a great counselor and prophet. His name was Noah. Noah stood at the crossroads and admonished, pleaded with, and counseled the people to take the path of righteousness and virtue, but exercising their free agency, they chose the path of wickedness and debauchery. A great flood swept over the earth, and they were swept from the face of it, and the God of Israel looked down upon a cleansed earth.

#### A GUIDE AT THE CROSSROADS

Throughout all dispensations the God of Israel has placed at the crossroads a great counselor, a prophet, to teach the people the mind and the will of their Eternal Father, to the end that they might return to him and dwell with him throughout the eternities to come.

God so loved the world that he sent his Only Begotten Son, and he, too, stood at the crossroads. He admonished, he pleaded with the people, and endeavored to teach them the gospel of salvation, giving his life for the redemption of mankind. After his death and resurrection, the organization of the Church remained with apostles and prophets, counselors to the people, endeavoring to teach them the gospel of Jesus Christ. But again the people chose another path, and after a few centuries they chose to follow the doctrines and the teachings of men, and a great pall of apostasy was over the earth, and darkness remained upon the earth for many centuries.

#### A PROPHET RAISED UP

Once again, as the Lord had promised through his prophets, there would be a restitution of all things. A prophet was raised up, a young man who wished to know which of all the teachings of men might be the teachings of God. And in answer to that prayer the Father and the Son appeared to him. They told him that all of these doctrines were of men, that they drew nigh unto God with their lips but their hearts were far away from him.

So God gave another great counselor to the people, the Prophet Joseph Smith through whom the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ was restored in its fulness, in its simplicity, and in addition thereto the priesthood was restored to earth, that power given to men where they may act as God's agents. The Church was set upon the earth with prophets, apostles, and all of the officers that existed in former days.

## ACHIEVEMENTS FROM FOLLOWING COUNSEL

Evil men took the Latter-day prophet and murdered him in cold blood. Again the people who had accepted him as a prophet of God stood at the crossroads, but another great counselor was raised up—Brigham Young—upon whom rested the great responsibility of finding another home for the Latter-day Saints and also of finding a place where the roots of the kingdom should be sunk so deeply that they would never be torn up again. Following their divinely appointed leader, the people made the long trek over the plains and through the mighty defiles of these great mountains, and here in the valleys they built churches, homes, schools, buildings of various kinds, and a temple to their God.

I have wondered many times what it was that made them successful, that made it possible for them to achieve so highly. In contemplating some of the factors that contributed to their success and achievements, I have come to the conclusion that they were anxious and willing to follow counsel. They accepted Brigham Young without any reservations as the servant of God, God's mouthpiece through whom the Lord made his mind and will known to his children. And they followed that counsel so closely that they gave no consideration to themselves in a physical sense. All that mattered was whether or not the counsel of God as revealed to them through his chosen servant was being carried out fully.

Brigham Young made the following statement to them, and I am sure this statement came from God as did the statement made by the writer of Proverbs, which expresses the same thought:

The Latter-day Saints who hearken to the words of the Lord, given to them touching their political, social, and financial concerns, I say, and say it boldly, that they will have wisdom which is altogether superior to that of the wisdom of the children of darkness, or the children of the world. I know this by the revelations of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the results of my own actions. They who have hearkened to counsels given to them in temporal matters, have invariably bettered their conditions temporally and spiritually. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, 219, 220. 1943 edition.)

And so counsel, in one sense, divides itself into two categories: That which has to do with materialistic things and that which has to do with spiritual things. God's prophet was given revelation from on high to the extent that he was enabled to counsel his people in temporal as well as spiritual things, and that had to be because this people came here impoverished. They had no money. All that they had was faith in God and their hands and minds with which to work, but yet God revealed to them the counsel that was necessary for their temporal success. That success is now represented in farms, industries, and in various forms of business which exist today.

## FAITH OF A PIONEER

The pioneers did not think much of personal consequence, which is exemplified in a diary that I read some time ago of one of the Gardner brothers who accepted the gospel in Canada and after accepting it, he was most anxious to go to Nauvoo and shake the hand of the Prophet and visit with the Saints, but he arrived in Nauvoo too late. The Prophet had been murdered, but Brother Gardner visited with the General Authorities and with the Saints, and in his diary he wrote: "I know that these men are the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I know the people that are following them are indeed Saints."

Returning to Canada he sold his property and made the long trek back to Nauvoo with his family, just in time to be driven out in the middle of winter. He spent the winter on the plains of Iowa. He finally made his way into Salt Lake Valley, where after ten years of struggle and almost starvation he wrote in his diary: "How grateful I am to the Lord, for now my family are sheltered under one roof. We have clothing, and we have food."

In the midst of this prosperity a messenger sent by the President of the Church requested him to come to his office at once. As he entered the office of President Young, he met one of the President's counselors coming out, and the counselor said to him: "Now, brother, don't blame me for what's going to happen."

In a moment this good brother stood before President Young and the President said to him: "Brother Gardner, we are calling you on a mission to go and help settle Dixie."

This good man said: "I scratched my head. I spit upon the floor, and mentally I concluded I had had enough, but another thought flashed through my mind. The servant of God was calling me to perform a duty." And he answered the President: "I'll be glad to go."

He sold his mill; he sold his farm; he sold most of his livestock and taking a few belongings and his family in a wagon made the long trek in the middle of winter to what is now St. George. And from that time on, according to his diary, he did not know very much about prosperity. He was on a mission to help build up another part of the kingdom and an interesting comment is that some of the wood that rests in the great Tabernacle organ came from trees cut by this brother in Pine Valley.

He suffered privation and many physical hardships, yet in his diary I did not find one word of complaint, rather I found the spirit of gratitude and thankfulness to God because he had found the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. He had a testimony that the great counselor who stood at the head of this Church was a servant of Almighty God.

## WASTED FOOD NOW NEEDED

By following counsel closely the pioneers achieved, and I

wonder now as we leave this great conference whether or not you and I are going to follow the counsel of God's servants who have admonished us in the spirit of the Lord as to what we should do in both spiritual and temporal matters. I think of the days in 1932-3-4-5 and 6, when the philosophy was advocated that we should destroy food, that we should cut down on our crop production, and in the midst of such advice a prophet of God stood at the crossroads, and admonished the people to continue to produce more and more and to save every pound. Oh, how I wish that the modern Pharaohs of today had listened to a modern Joseph, for had this country gone forth with its great potential strength in productivity of food, there would be enough food on hand to feed a starving world. You might ask the question: How is it possible to conserve food over a period of ten or twelve years? Well, through modern means of refrigeration and canning, and other devices, it is possible to conserve food for years. Out of our own experience in storing the Relief Society wheat we know that wheat can be kept sound for many years, based upon certain principles.

And so, had the counsel of God's servants in these days been followed there would have been no difficulty in providing enough food and other necessities of life to help a starving Europe and a suffering China. Accepting and following the counsel of God's selected and anointed should be to us the word of God in this day just exactly as was the word of God in the days of the pioneers.

#### OBEDIENCE TO COUNSEL REWARDED

I had related to me a rather interesting story of a humble man who lives in the state of Arizona; it is as follows: Dr. John A. Widtsoe of the Council of the Twelve had been visiting in the Snowflake Stake and among other counsel he gave to the brethren was this: "Why don't you drill wells that you might bring more of this arid land under cultivation?"

President Flake of the presidency pondered over the counsel given, and he came to the conclusion that a servant of God had spoken and that it would be wise to follow such counsel. Going to a neighboring town he endeavored to secure the services of a well driller. And the driller said, "Yes, I will drill you a well. I assume you want the usual size pipe, six or eight inches."

President Flake said: "No, I want a twelve-inch pipe."

The well driller replied: "Man, you are foolish. There isn't enough water in this country to fill a twelve-inch pipe, and furthermore, I wouldn't take your money to drill a well of that size because it would be a waste of money." And so he refused to drill the well.

But, undaunted, President Flake went to another well driller in a neighboring community. He told the man what he wanted. The man said: "Well, it seems foolish, but nevertheless if you

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want to spend the money, I will drill the hole and put a twelve-inch pipe in it."

A site was selected for the well on a piece of arid land adjacent to Snowflake, Arizona, and drilling operations were commenced. After the men had drilled for a few days, a government man came along, and he said: "Mr. Flake, I think you are foolish in drilling for water here. I am quite sure that you won't find any. It is my judgment had you gone over here a short distance the possibilities are that you might have found a little water."

But again, undaunted and believing implicitly in the counsel of one of God's servants, the drilling continued and after reaching a depth of two hundred feet, a flow of water was struck in sufficient amount to fill the twelve-inch pipe up within sixty feet of the surface. The ground was broken, cultivated, and crops were planted. A pump was placed on the well, and it delivered nine hundred gallons a minute. This year the crops grown on what was arid land two years ago will pay for the drilling of the well and the pumping equipment installed.

President Flake further indicated that the volume of water has been sufficient, not only to take care of this year's crop, but also will be sufficient to irrigate a total of 175 acres.

President Flake followed the counsel of one of Christ's apostles and received the blessing for obedience rendered, which brings us to the conclusion that we should hearken always to the voices of the prophets to the end that the windows of heaven will be open to us—spiritually and temporally.

### OBLIGATION OF PRIESTHOOD

So much for temporal counsel, but what about spiritual counsel? We have had an abundance of it during this great conference. Think if you will of the admonitions that have come to us with reference to the home, the matter of family prayers, the matter of attending that most important meeting of the whole week, namely, the sacrament meeting. Will you think of your priesthood responsibilities as servants of God? I say that every man who holds the priesthood has a responsibility that is very great, and priesthood is of no value to an individual unless he uses it in the service of God. It does not come to you as an honorary office. It comes to you that you might serve God and assist him to consummate his plans. And, furthermore, the priesthood of God, that mantle of authority which rests upon your shoulders and mine, is not one which can be taken off on Sunday evening and left off during the week and then put on again the following Sunday morning. Your priesthood is with you wherever you may go, in the office or the field, and remember that priesthood demands of you lives that are wholly compatible with it in purity, in service, in hearkening to counsel and in keeping God's commandments.

## A LIGHT TO THE WORLD

We have received admonitions with reference to virtue, the Word of Wisdom, temple work, and missionary work. I want to say if we will hearken unto all of this counsel we will become a blessed people, for Brigham Young declared again:

If we hearken to counsel, we shall be the best people in the world; we shall be as a bright light set upon a hill, that cannot be hid, or like a candle upon a candlestick. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 219.)

Brethren and sisters, never let us forget the admonition that:

. . . to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. (I Sam. 15:22.)

Yes,

Give instructions to a wise man, and he will yet be wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. (Proverbs 9:9.)

I humbly pray that we can take the counsels of this great conference to heart and exemplify them in our lives, to the end that we will be a light to the world, for the Lord said to the Prophet Joseph:

. . . shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations. (D. & C. 115:5.)

That is our destiny, and we can achieve it if we will follow the admonitions and the counsels of these servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. I bear testimony to you that they have all of the same rights and authority to lead the people of the world in righteousness as did Noah, Isaiah, or any of the apostles of old. I bear testimony to you that the same God who dealt with the people in the days of Noah is your God and my God, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Redeemer of the world, and the humble man who was murdered in cold blood for his testimony in Carthage Jail, Joseph Smith, was God's servant, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## ELDER THOMAS E. MCKAY

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

The inspiring music of our great choir and organ, both in the broadcast this morning and in this service, and also the timely, masterful address of President McKay, and the interesting talk of Bishop Wirthlin, have all tended, I am sure, to uplift us, to bring us nearer our Father in heaven, and others on the other side.

It is my earnest desire and prayer, my brethren and sisters, to say something useful, something that will be helpful to us, that will bring more happiness and joy into our daily lives. One of my favorite themes, already mentioned by one or two of the speakers, is,