

**President David O. McKay:**

To those who are listening in over the radio or television, we are pleased to announce that we are assembled in the great Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in the fourth session of the One Hundred Twenty-Fifth Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. To those who are unable to gain admittance or obtain seats here in the Tabernacle, and we note many who are standing in the doorways, we announce that overflow meetings are held this afternoon in the Assembly Hall and in the Barratt Hall, where the public address system and television are operating.

These services are also being televised over KSL-TV, Channel 5, in Salt Lake City and for those who were not here this morning or listening in, these services are broadcast over nine radio stations in Utah, California, Idaho, and Arizona. The names of these stations have already been announced.

We desire to express our appreciation always at each session to these radio stations who are thus favoring the public with these radio announcements.

We are pleased to note in the audience this afternoon prominent state officials, leaders in educational circles, our leading state institutions represented here, the University of Utah, the Brigham Young University, Utah State Agricultural College, Snow College, Dixie, and others of our educational institu-

tions. We extend a hearty welcome to all of you.

The singing this afternoon will be by the Combined Scandinavian Choirs, with Hulbert Keddington conducting and Alexander Schreiner at the organ. We shall begin these services by the Combined Choirs singing, "The King of Love My Shepherd Is." The opening prayer will be offered by Elder June W. Black, president of the Deseret Stake.

The Scandinavian choirs sang: "The King of Love My Shepherd Is."

President June W. Black of the Deseret Stake offered the opening prayer.

**President David O. McKay:**

Elder June W. Black, president of the Deseret Stake, just offered the invocation. The Combined Scandinavian Choirs will now favor us with "Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled," after which Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Council of the Twelve will address us.

Selection by the Combined Scandinavian Choirs, "Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled," in the Scandinavian language.

**President David O. McKay:**

Our first speaker this afternoon will be Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Council of the Twelve. He will be followed by Elder LeGrand Richards.

**ELDER SPENCER W. KIMBALL***Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

**M**Y BELOVED brothers and sisters and friends, I approach this opportunity with fear and trembling, humility, and fasting and prayer.

It was my privilege in the month of August to attend the great pageant at Palmyra, and I sat entranced with some forty thousand others at the Hill Cumorah, looking up at that dark hill as the night came on. I heard the voices of those who took the parts of many prophets, Nephi, Jacob, Alma, Amulek, Ammon, and finally the prophet, Samuel

the Lamanite, all prophesying as to the coming of the Savior of the world to them here on this continent.

It was inspirational as the program progressed to its conclusion, to see the beautiful picture as a Personage came above the hill. Because of the blackness under him, it appeared as though he stood in mid-air, with long white robes flowing in the breeze that blew from the top of the hill. I was inspired, and that inspiration has remained with me ever since. There was being portrayed

the story of the coming of the Savior to this land when these thousands of people gathered at the temple, and were looking intently up toward heaven. They heard the voice, neither loud nor harsh, but a penetrating one, and it pierced their very souls. The third time they could understand, and they heard the voice say:

Behold my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him. (3 Ne. 11:7.)

Then came the voice of him who had appeared to these Nephite people saying: “. . . I am Jesus Christ.” (*Ibid.*, 11:10.) His message then and before and since always to his people has been:

. . . to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. (1 Sam. 15:22.)

So said the Prophet Samuel to the disobedient King Saul who lost his kingdom because of rebellion. The prophet warned Saul that he should discomfit his enemies but that he should not retain the spoils of war. But the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen revealed that Saul and his people had disobeyed the simple command of the Lord. Samuel chastised:

Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?

. . . rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. (*Ibid.*, 15:22-23.)

Saul asked forgiveness, but the prophet replied:

. . . thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. (*Ibid.*, 15:26.)

In his arrogant and haughty state he took things in his own hands wholly disregarding the commandments of the Lord.

Samuel scolded:

. . . When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel?

Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord? (*Ibid.*, 15:17, 19.)

Saul rationalized. It was easy for him to obey as to the disposition of the kings, for what use were conquered kings? But why not keep the fat sheep and cattle? Was not his royal judgment superior to that of lowly Samuel? Who was Samuel that his words should be obeyed implicitly, and who would know anyway?

How like Saul are many in Israel today. One will live some of the Lord's revelation on health except that he must have his occasional cup of coffee; she will not use tobacco nor liquor for which she has no yearning anyway but must have the comforting cup of tea.

He will serve in a Church position, for here is activity which he likes and honor which he craves, or contribute to a chapel where his donation will be known, but rationalization is easy as to tithing which he finds so difficult. He cannot afford it—sickness or death has laid a heavy hand—he is not sure it is always distributed as he would have it done, and who knows anyway of his failure?

Another will attend some meetings but Saul-like rationalize as to the rest of the day. Why should he not see a ball game, a show, do his necessary yard work, or carry on business as usual?

Another would religiously attend his outward Church duties but resist any suggestions as to family frictions in his home life or family prayers when the family is so hard to assemble?

Saul was like that. He could do the expedient things but could find alibis as to the things which countered his own desires.

To obey! To hearken! What a difficult requirement! Often we hear: “Nobody can tell me what clothes to wear, what I shall eat or drink. No one can outline my Sabbaths, appropriate my earnings, nor in any way limit my personal freedoms! I do as I please! I give no blind obedience!”

Blind obedience! How little they understand! The Lord said through Joseph Smith:

Whatever God requires is right, no matter what it is, although we may not see the reason thereof until long after the

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events transpire. (*Scrapbook of Mormon Literature*, vol. 2, p. 173.)

When men obey commands of a creator, it is not blind obedience. How different is the cowering of a subject to his totalitarian monarch and the dignified, willing obedience one gives to his God. The dictator is ambitious, selfish, and has ulterior motives. God's every command is righteous, every directive purposeful, and all for the good of the governed. The first may be blind obedience, but the latter is certainly faith obedience.

The Patriarch Abraham, sorely tried, obeyed faithfully when commanded by the Lord to offer his son Isaac upon the altar. Blind obedience? No. He knew that God would require nothing of him which was not for his ultimate good. How that good could be accomplished he did not understand. He knew that he had been promised that through the seed of the miracle son Isaac should all the multitude of nations be blessed, and God having promised, it would be fulfilled. Undoubtedly questions arose in his mind as to how these things could be if Isaac were liquidated, but he knew that the Lord was just and would provide a way. Had not the Lord fulfilled the promise made wherein this very son was to be conceived when Abraham was old and Sarah far past the normal bearing period? In Hebrews, we read:

Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. (Heb. 11:12.)

Abraham was now called upon to sacrifice this beloved son who as yet had no posterity. But with faith supreme, Abraham:

... offered up Isaac ... accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead. (*Ibid.*, 11:17, 19.)

Knowing that God would make no capricious nor unnecessary demands, that the lad could be raised even from death if necessary, Abraham obeyed. A ram was provided.

Perhaps the criminal in the penitentiary obeys blindly, for here is com-

pulsion. Most of his decisions are made for him. Somewhat comparable are dictator's subjects whose work, recreation, religion, and other activity are controlled and regimented. Here is *blind* obedience.

It was not blind faith when the patriarch Noah built an ark some forty-two centuries ago or when the prophet Nephi built a boat about twenty-five centuries ago. Each was commanded by the Lord to construct a seaworthy vessel. An unprecedented total flood was to envelop the earth in the one case and the greatest ocean to be crossed by the other. No experience of either builder could give guidance in these new adventures—no previous flood or ocean crossing had ever come in the life of either—there was nothing on which to base construction except directions from the Lord. Here was no blind obedience. Each knew the goodness of God and that he had purpose in his strange commands. And so each with eyes wide open, with absolute freedom of choice, built by faith. Noah's family was saved from physical drowning and spiritual decadence, and Nephi's people were saved likewise.

No swords nor bayonets, no famine nor pestilence drove the Lehiters from the lush shores of Bountiful, but seeing obedience led them across uncharted oceans. The Lord had promised:

... inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper, and shall be led to ... a land which is choice above all other lands. (1 Nephi 2:20.)

And with compliance born of faith and confidence, the vessel was finished, loaded, and launched.

There was no compulsion in Noah's movements—no blind obedience. It was not raining when this man of God made the craft which was to save his family. After its completion, a full week of dry weather preceded the storm. Here was obedience born in testimony of the power, sureness, justice of God. And Noah's trust was justified, and a race was perpetuated.

When men speak of *all faith* and *all obedience* as blind, are they not covering their own weaknesses? Are they

not seeking an alibi to justify their own failure to hearken?

A man obeys strictly the income tax law and pays fully and before due date his property taxes but justifies himself in disregarding the law of the Sabbath or the payment of tithes on time, if at all. In the one case he may suffer only deprivation of freedom or resources or lose his home or personal property, but in the other he opens doors to the loss of a soul. The spiritual as truly brings penalties as the temporal, the principal difference is the swiftness of punishment, the Lord being so long-suffering.

One would hardly call the first blind obedience, yet he sometimes regards the spiritual commands as such.

Is it blind obedience when the student pays his tuition, reads his text assignments, attends classes, and thus qualifies for his eventual degrees? Perhaps he himself might set different and easier standards for graduation, but he obeys every requirement of the catalog whether or not he undersets its total implication.

Is it blind obedience when one regards the sign "High Voltage—Keep Away" or is it the obedience of faith in the judgment of experts who know the hazard?

Is it blind obedience when the air traveler fastens his seat belt as that sign flashes or is it confidence in the experience and wisdom of those who know more of hazards and dangers?

Is it blind obedience when the little child gleefully jumps from the table into the strong arms of its smiling father, or is this implicit trust in a loving parent who feels sure of his catch and who loves the child better than life itself?

Is it blind obedience when an afflicted one takes vile-tasting medicine prescribed by his physician or yields his own precious body to the scapel of the surgeon or is this the obedience of faith in one in whom confidence may safely be imposed?

Is it blind obedience when the pilot guides his ship between the buoys which mark the reefs and thus keeps his vessel in deep water or is it confidence in the

integrity of those who have set up protective devices?

Is it then blind obedience when we, with our limited vision, elementary knowledge, selfish desires, ulterior motives, and carnal urges, accept and follow the guidance and obey the commands of our loving Father who begot us, created a world for us, loves us, and has planned a constructive program for us, wholly without ulterior motive, whose greatest joy and glory is to "bring to pass the immortality and eternal life" of all his children?

Blind obedience it might be when no agency exists, when there is regimentation, but in all of the commands of the Lord given through his servants, there is total agency free of compulsion. Some remonstrate that agency is lacking where penalties are imposed and condemnations threatened—to be damned for rejecting the gospel seems harsh to some and to take away free agency. This is not true, for the decision is ours—we may accept or reject, comply or ignore.

In all of our life activities it is the same—we may attend college or stay away from the campus; we may apply ourselves to our studies or waste our time; we may fulfil all requirements or ignore them. The decision is ours; the agency is free.

We may take the medicine or secretly pour it down the drain; we may yield our bodies to the surgeon's knife or refuse his service; we may follow paths or get lost in the jungle; but we cannot avoid the penalties of disobedience to law.

We may speed one hundred miles an hour, park our car against fireplugs, drive on the wrong side of the road, resist arrest, rob a bank, but we will pay penalties sooner or later, even the utmost farthing. No soul is clever enough to evade penalties indefinitely or to counter this extensive and basic law of retribution. Without free agency men would be lifeless, limp weaklings, and worthless to themselves and to the world.

Our heavenly Father, knowing all things, gave us this fundamental law of free agency. He could force our obedience, compel our goodness, regiment our acts, but that would make of us spine-

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less creatures without will or purpose, or destiny.

Our Lord wept bitterly when he saw his creatures breaking his commandments in the pre-deluge days, but he refrained from force. They must have their agency:

The Lord said unto Enoch: Behold these thy brethren; they are the workmanship of mine own hands, and I gave unto them their knowledge, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency. (Moses 7:32.)

They were permitted to ignore the warnings of the prophets till their cup of iniquity was full, ran over, and flooded the world and drowned its inhabitants.

Rewards for faithfulness and penalties for disobedience are certain. God is longsuffering, patient, and kind, whereas men and natural laws are often swift and cruel.

Our righteous and wise parents, Adam and Eve, were exemplary in the matter of obedience born of childlike faith:

. . . And Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord.

And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying: Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me.

And then the angel spake, saying: This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth. (*Ibid.*, 5:5-7.)

Blind obedience? Assuredly not. They had known Jehovah, heard his voice, walked with him in the Garden of Eden, and knew of his goodness, justice, and understanding. And so for "many days" they killed the blemishless lambs and offered them without knowing why, but in total confidence that there was righteous purpose in the law and that the reason would unfold later after compliance.

Obedience was paramount in the healing of the lepers. They cried:

Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

And when he saw them, he said unto them,

Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. (Luke 17:13-14.)

It is certain that the priests made no contribution to the healing. The ten had probably lived all their lives in the jurisdiction of the priests who are not known ever to have healed lepers. The miracle happened when, but not until, they obeyed in every detail. No blind obedience here. These lepers knew Christ would not fail them. They had faith not only in his power but also in his goodness and integrity.

So also did the man born blind move toward wholeness of sight, yet he obeyed the voice of authority. Questioned by the skeptical Pharisees as to his unparalleled sight recovery, he stoutly maintained,

He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

. . . He is a prophet.

. . . one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. (John 9:15, 17, 25.)

A simple little formula it was. A little spittle, a little clay, a simple anointing, a simple command, and an act of faith obedience; and darkness was replaced with light. "Lord, I believe," he said as he worshiped in gratitude. Blind obedience, would you say? It was a blind man, but a seeing obedience. The Savior had:

. . . spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.

And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam. . . He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing. (*Ibid.*, 9:6-7.)

How simple the process! How gentle the command! How faithful the obedience! How glorious the reward!

Strange—we provide pure, sterile tissue for spittle and forbid expectorating even on sidewalks.

We bathe with soap, scrub with disinfectants, and scald dishes, pots, and pans with boiling water to kill the germs from the filth of clay.

We use for culinary purposes and especially in hospitals and sickrooms only water purified by chemical processes.

But here the Master disregarded all our rules of sanitation and prescribed spittle, germ-ridden clay, and impure water from the contaminated pool of Siloam which bathed the sweaty bodies of laborers and the sore bodies of the sick and diseased.

Is there healing in mere clay to make eyes see? Is there medicinal value in the spittle to cure infirmities? Are there curative properties in the waters of Siloam to open eyes of congenital blind? The answer is obvious. The miracle was conceived in the womb of faith and born and matured in the act of obedience.

Had the command involved oil instead of spittle, herbs instead of clay, and waters of a pure bubbling spring instead of filthy Siloam, the result would have been the same. But some would have said that oil and herbs and pure water had healed the eyes, but even the untrained must know that these could not cure one. Consequently, only one conclusion could be drawn: The unparalleled miracle was positively the result of faith obedience. But had the sightless one disobeyed any of the phases of the command, he would indubitably have suffered till death with continued blindness.

Though there is no compulsion, the spiritual laws of today must also be obeyed if blessings are to be realized, for as the Lord has said:

I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise. (D. & C. 82:10.)

And:

Mine arm is kindled against the rebellious. (See *ibid.*, 56:1.)

And:

And the rebellious shall be pierced with much sorrow; for their iniquities shall be spoken upon the housetops, and their secret acts shall be revealed. (*Ibid.*, 1:3.)

And:

Behold, I, the Lord, utter my voice, and it shall be obeyed.

Wherefore, verily I say, let the wicked take heed, and let the rebellious fear and tremble; and let the unbelieving hold their lips, for the day of wrath shall come upon them as a whirlwind, and all flesh shall know that I am God. (*Ibid.*, 63:5-6.)

And my people must needs be chastened until they learn obedience, if it must needs be, by the things which they suffer. (*Ibid.*, 105:6.)

And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated. (*Ibid.*, 130:21.)

And so we render intelligent, constructive obedience when we voluntarily, humbly, and happily obey the commands of our Lord:

1. Be ye clean who bear the vessels of the Lord.
2. Thou shalt go to the house of prayer upon my holy day.
3. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse.
4. Honor the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.
5. Ye are the temple of God—defile it not with liquor, tobacco, tea, and coffee.
6. Repent or suffer.
7. Bow down upon thy knees before the Lord.
8. Judge not that ye be not judged.
9. Except a man be born of the water and of the spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
10. A man must enter into the new and everlasting covenant to be exalted.
11. Woe unto those who come not unto this priesthood.

May God bless all of us, members of his Church, and all others, in the great world which he has created and peopled to live and obey his commandments, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President David O. McKay:

He who has just addressed us is Elder Spencer W. Kimball, a member of the Council of the Twelve. Elder LeGrand Richards, a member of the same Council, will now address us. He will be followed by President Levi Edgar Young.