

Wednesday, April 6

Fourth Day

ing, "The Lord is My Shepherd." The opening prayer will be offered by Elder G. Eugene England, President of the North Central States Mission. "The Lord is My Shepherd."

Singing by the Relief Society Singing Mothers, "The Lord Is My Shepherd."

Elder G. Eugene England, President of the North Central States Mission, offered the invocation.

The Relief Society Singing Mothers sang a number, "Could Ye Not Watch?"

President David O. McKay:

That is glorious.

Our first speaker this afternoon will be Elder Adam S. Bennion of the Council of the Twelve. He will be followed by Elder Richard L. Evans.

ELDER ADAM S. BENNION

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

FOR MYSELF and for all of you, I express gratitude to these Singing Mothers. I am grateful that the loveliness of their lullabies has been sublimated into the holiness of their hymns under the inspirational leadership of Sister [Florence Jepperson] Madsen.

Those of us who sit here this afternoon, still subject to our turn, know that this is the hour. It reminds me of the time when we used to play musical chairs. You remember when we gathered in a circle around the chairs and the host took a chair out each time around, so that there was one chair fewer than people. We knew when we got down to the last three or four chairs that that was it. Well, the chairs have all been taken out but three!

Brother Richard Evans and I have been sitting here together for three days, observing to each other that there is strength in this audience—strong men and remarkable women.

It is intriguing to me to know that in a hundred and a quarter years six members have grown into a million and a quarter people. That is a wonderful achievement in the Lord's work.

I am doubly grateful to be here today because last October I missed this conference. Recently out of the hospital, I was convalescing at home. But that experience has brought me something that perhaps I could have had in no other way. I stand here today grateful for the blessings of our Father in heaven and his goodness. I bring you my witness to the power of the priesthood, because under the hands of these my good brethren, I have been blessed back to

health and strength. I know the power of healing is in this priesthood, and I give you my witness that it is.

This has been a wonderful conference. I have sat here much of the time with a lump in my throat. I am honored to be here. I rejoice in the power of the leadership of this First Presidency. They are among the strongest men ever to guide the destinies of this Church. I pay my tribute to my brethren. It is a sustaining force to have every one of them give us his blessing for this experience. These are strong men, as you know from the evidence of this conference. They are devoted men, and in their hands you can feel good about the future of this great Church.

I pray that the few minutes I occupy I may be in tune with the Spirit, the uplifting Spirit, that we have felt all the way through this conference.

I am always concerned about the carry-over effect of our teachings. The gospel, in the language of Paul, is the power of God unto salvation, and these conferences and all of our meetings and the very genius of the gospel itself are meant to help us the better to live.

Each week we go out to some stake or to some mission. Each Monday morning I come back lifted up and built up not only in my faith but also in the assurance of the goodness of the people among whom we labor. I bear you witness that the evidence we get week after week is that the gospel makes better men and women; it transforms their lives; and I want to hint from two of our conferences some of the things that shall never leave me the same again.

When I was introduced to the home at which I was to stay in Klamath [Oregon-California] Stake, I felt a little embarrassed because the hostess, the wife of a member of the stake presidency, was in a wheel chair, crippled from the effects of polio for twenty years. But the look in her face convinced me that I need have no misgivings. She wheels around in that wheel chair, thanks to the kindness of a good husband, as if the house had been built just for her. She wheels out into the kitchen between the range and serving table where she prepares the food, makes a turn, and has it ready for distribution. She teaches a Sunday School class, is a leader in Relief Society, and if you ever shook hands with that little woman and caught the look in her face, you would know that, while an affliction can cripple the body, it never can handicap such a spirit.

A few weeks later I went down to Zion Park [Utah] Stake. I shall be grateful all the rest of my days for the inspiration of that visit. In one family there I think I saw as much affliction as I have ever seen in any other one family. But those good people have risen above it so wonderfully. The president of the stake down there served in the war, and it is almost a miracle that he came back alive. He wears a steel plate now, a cranial plate, with the index across the forehead that it is there. His wife, stricken arthritically, with feet she could hardly walk upon until they were all broken anew and made over, and her hands so gnarled and twisted that as you reach to shake her hand, you wish you could give her a blessing. Two fine boys born into the family and then the third child, a little girl, under the complications of Rh-negative, invalidated through eight years. I want to tell you that when you walk into that home and catch the spirit of the father and the mother and you watch the boys rush over to help the little child who, when she falls, cannot get up, when you kneel in the home and you listen to the prayers of that family, with their gratitude to Almighty God for the kindness he has shown to them, you know that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

Well, in the light of those two experiences I should like to join with you

for just a little while this afternoon in consideration of one of the richest declarations ever made. I love the Book of Mormon and have done so ever since I was a youngster. For this afternoon I have chosen from the second book of Nephi the passage, that I want to develop just a little with you:

And now, behold, if Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen, but he would have remained in the garden of Eden. And all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end.

And they would have had no children; wherefore they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin.

But behold, all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things.

And now for my theme:

Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy. (2 Nephi 2: 22-25.)

That same sentiment is echoed in one of the greatest documents ever given to mankind, the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount. You remember that every paragraph in that great document begins with a blessing. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," and so on through all of them. In the concluding paragraph of that great document, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner . . ." —you remember it.

Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. (Matt. 5:11-12.)

I think sometimes we let the negative aspects, the disciplinary aspects, the prohibitive aspects crowd out the teaching of the joys of the gospel. I wish we might center our thinking a little while today in the joys of living the gospel, not as an obligation but as a privilege—one of the richest privileges in life.

Did we have time this afternoon I should like to expand on the meaning of joy. In ordinary language we talk as if joy, pleasure, gladness, and happiness were all synonymous. But in this

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passage from the Book of Mormon joy has a far richer meaning. Pleasure, in my mind, is essentially a gratification of one of the senses. Happiness seems to center in a kind of contentment born of good fortune or of some fortuitous circumstance. But joy reveals a certain spiritual exaltation.

As someone has said: "Joy is more intense than happiness, deeper than gladness, to which it is akin, nobler and more enduring than pleasure." As I have been thinking about it, joy seems to me to be essentially spiritual and has an abiding quality with a hint of eternal bliss.

How may we aspire to this thing called the joy of living? We cannot buy it; it is not for sale in the market place, nor can you go out to cultivate it directly. At best it seems to be a sort of by-product. It is an end result achieved from worthy performance.

I come to you today with three suggestions that I think make for joy:

1. In the first place, we can find it in the *work of the world*. There has been a tendency, perhaps all too strong, recently, to coddle the children we love. In our own state legislature in an attempt to protect children, we could easily do them a great disservice. I notice this morning that our governor indicates that he would be willing to call the legislature back into session to correct the mistake because there is no great wisdom in putting a premium upon idleness, either for children or for men.

You remember what the Lord has said: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." (Gen. 3:19.) And there is this wonderful passage in John. When the Savior was criticized for something he did on the Sabbath, he answered his accusers by saying, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." (John 5:17.)

And then that memorable passage from Ecclesiastes:

"The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: (I am glad I have not been rich—because this next line says) . . . but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep." (Ecclesiastes 5:12.)

All my life I have enjoyed the blessed privilege of living with people who love

to work. I rejoice in a helpmate who delights in keeping up our home. Born in a country town out in this valley, I still thrill as I think of the work of two men, Robert and Willard Pixton, who were pioneers in my town. They prided themselves that there was never a weed in the potato patch. They selected their grain, and when it rolled into the fall harvest, it was beautiful. Those men worked as if they loved to work, and when fall came, after they had plowed and planted and cultivated and irrigated and harvested—with the barns full of hay and the granaries rich in grain—and the cellars bulging with fruits and vegetables—I am just sure that Robert and Willard Pixton gathered the family together in a thanksgiving that was full of joy—joy for the blessings of heaven.

I have always been glad that I lived in a humble home—a home in which people loved to work. I can recall the thrill of the days when we brought in the new straw and put it under the rag carpet that had been woven from the rags which mother used to cut and wind into balls to be taken over to be made into a carpet. How we used to love to "tromp" the straw to get it down so that the carpet could be stretched over it; and then we would attach the stretcher and "stomp" some more and pull and push and then tack the carpet down. Those were great days. No man ever relaxed more luxuriously on a Persian rug.

I remember when the pig was killed in the fall, and the hams were put down in brine, and the sausage was made, not of the discarded parts but of the selected parts. I have always thought that eating was in the realm of pleasure—but I want to tell you that some meals get pretty close to joy.

For years I kept in touch with one of the finest writers in America, who wrote this little paragraph awhile back in a Chicago paper:

When a young man finds no joy in his daily work, goes to it in the morning with regret, has no feeling of thankfulness that he has work to do, and dislikes the hours in which he does it, there is something wrong. It is a cheering thing to have the habit of industry, the desire to do each day's work better than that of the day before, and to leave it conscious of having

done it well. There is a sad future for the young man who hates work, who dislikes his employer and gives as little of effort as he can get by with. He will suffer more from the shirking than his employer, because he is destroying his own chance for joy in his life.

Someone has said, "*Happy is the man who has work he loves to do,*" but somebody else has added the basic fundamental thought, "*Happy is the man who loves the work he has to do.*"

II. Well, we can find joy in a second place. It is in the *life of the home*, which has been spoken of here so beautifully throughout this conference, beginning with that inspirational message from our President.

I am mindful of the struggle we have to go through to get a home, and then the pride we feel as we come into it, and then the joy of children as they come to bless it. I still think that the birth of a baby surpasses the greatest miracle ever wrought. The joy in the coming of the children, their development, their questions, their affection, their frank disclosures, the privilege we have of living life over again, and then when we get to the stage of grandchildren, where we have all the joys and not quite the full responsibilities, when, after they have worn us or our nerves a little threadbare, we can suggest, that for the children's sake, maybe they ought to be in bed. These are great blessings and great sources of joy.

Let me give you a homely illustration of the difference between a joyous family and an agitated one. Some people make their lives center in "don'ts" and "mustn'ts" and "can'ts." I often think of the mother who used to say, "Go and see what Billy is doing and tell him to quit." That kind of parent gets into the car and proceeds to tell her children what they cannot do and orders them to be quiet. The wise parent, who has found the joy in the association of the children, says, "Let's see how many white horses we can see in the next hundred miles." Perhaps we shall have to change the white horses to red tractors. It is an interesting game to trace the alphabet on the billboards along the way—good fun to try to work out a complete alphabet. It is fun to find the best signboard along the way

or, if you want to, and lean a little to the intellectual side, you can get one of the children's best current books—not the cheap ones that Brother Dilworth [Young] talked about this morning—but one of those beautifully illustrated books now available, and you can sit in the back seat (if you have the right kind of driver) and fill in the time that otherwise might drag. That is joy in the making.

In the home, too, there is the joy of a few good friends—not too many—because you cannot cultivate them—but a few of the friends who will stand by you in all that comes in life. We have such friends—God be praised for them.

In the language of Shakespeare, "Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried, grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel."

III. I hurry into the third suggestion that I want to give you. We find joy in the work we do. We find joy in the privileges of the home with its children and its friends, but in the third place, and finally, *we find joy in the service of the Lord.*

I read the other night again from Habakkuk, a book which we do not turn to often enough:

Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:

And then this ringing line:

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, *I will joy in the God of my salvation.* (Hab. 3:17-18. Italics added.)

Yesterday, all day long, we had the privilege of sitting in an inspirational meeting with these good mission presidents. I could wish in some magical way their messages might be brought to all of you because it was a day of dedication and consecration. I bless them for the work they are doing.

In the spirit of that wonderful meeting of yesterday, I bid you to find the joy of life in service of the Lord whether it is a call to be a ward teacher, a call to be a Sunday School teacher, an MIA leader, a quorum officer, or a call to visit those who are a little disinclined or indifferent or bound down

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by some unfortunate habit. The promise of the Lord is so rich in its blessing:

And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me. (D. & C. 18:15-16.)

Your joy is akin to the joy of heaven, for as the Master declared:

Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. (Luke 15:10.)

When you have felt the power of his Holy Spirit, when you have been inspired to meet your perplexing problems, when you have had the privilege of comforting the brokenhearted, when you have led an erring one into the sunlight of a new day, when you have achieved the goal of your dreams, when you have done these things, you enjoy this promise that was given to the laborers in the vineyard years ago:

And whoso receiveth you, there will I be also, for I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and

mine angels round about you, to bear you up. (D. & C. 84:88. Italics added.)

Add to that promise the glorious one already quoted in this conference by President Richards:

Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever. (*Ibid.*, 121:45-46.)

I give you my witness, my good brethren and sisters, that in the service of the Lord comes the supreme joy of life. And when you have coupled it with the nobility of work and the satisfaction of having friends and children about you, God can bless you, and he will. May he do so abundantly, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Adam S. Bennion of the Council of the Twelve has just concluded speaking. Elder Richard L. Evans of the Council of the Twelve will now speak to us.

ELDER RICHARD L. EVANS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I CHERISH the privilege of sitting by Brother Adam S. Bennion, but not that of following him as a speaker. He makes this task doubly difficult.

What I should least like to do today would be to detract in any way from the glorious quality and content and spirit of the messages which we have heard here these past four or five days—beginning with President McKay's message of Sunday morning on peace in the world and the influence of the home; going back before that to President Richards' remarks in the priesthood meeting on Saturday evening, as concerning the counsel that we should not overextend ourselves in debt (which re-

mind me of the counsel given to Joseph Smith not to run faster nor labor more than we have strength and means); then the glorious talks—two of them—by President J. Reuben Clark on fundamentals, including the counsel to keep *all* of the commandments; and President Smith's remarks at the missionary meeting, reminding us of our inescapable obligations to bear witness to the world.

And so we have been edified and encouraged and strengthened by the messages of all the brethren, on the home, on the teaching of children, on the example we must set before them, on the divinity of our Savior, Jesus the