

Wednesday, April 6

Fourth Day

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

Christ, on the glorious reality and divine calling of Joseph the Prophet, of the reality of the appearance to him of the Father and the Son. Right down to the present, to the immediately previous talk, it has been a glorious, inspiring, and solid and satisfying general conference.

I think at this point we could well ask the question, or questions: What is the ultimate meaning and purpose of these conferences; what is the real meaning of this miscellany of messages (or seeming miscellany to those who are not quite aware of the wholeness of the gospel)? Why do all this? Why come together? Why so exert ourselves and so concern ourselves? Why not just relax and be comfortable and complacent? Why is it all important? I suppose we are busier, per capita, than any other people that I know of, and if there were not some great far-reaching, basic importance to all this effort we go to, and all this gathering we do, all this activity, and all this instructing and edifying of one another, it would save us a lot of time and trouble if we knew that it were not important.

These things would not be so important except for the reality of everlasting life, but the most meaningful things in life are everlasting, and what we do is important because we are everlasting—

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. (Matt. 16:25.)

Now Brother Bennion has already pursued a theme that I might have pursued; and some comments that I might have made on happiness he has transcended with his on joy. But the meaning of all this that we do, and the reason for all of it, is because men are immortal; because the object of life is happiness, peace, eternal life, and everlasting progress; and these are sufficient indeed to justify all we do, and much more.

I should like to read into the record, in witness of the truth of this statement, a sentence from Joseph Smith concerning the aim and object of life:

Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and

this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 255-256.)

Brother Bennion has ably brought before us some of the things that have in them the makings of joy and of happiness. There is a long list of other things. We could extend ourselves into the recital of them for a long time to come; among them: obedience; freedom, freedom to think, a kind of freedom in which we keep ourselves from the enslavement of habits that are detrimental to happiness; an open mind to truth; love; a sense of belonging; a conviction of purpose, purpose in time and in eternity; cleanliness; the peace that comes with a quiet conscience; patience; repentance—these are all indispensable elements of happiness.

Another I have not named is family unity. Not many days ago my lovely wife, the mother of our four sons, and I, with our sons, were all together—the six of us—in a car going to the same place with a common purpose and a common destination in mind; and sharply the thought came to me, how much less it would mean if we were not together, and if we were divided in our objectives; if their mother were trying to tell them to go one place or to believe one thing, and I were trying to tell them to go another place or to believe another thing; if she were setting before them a certain set of ideals or objectives, and I were setting before them a different set of ideals and objectives. This would not be fair to a home. It would not be fair to children. It would not be fair to the future.

One of the greatest elements of joy and peace and effectiveness in life is the unity of parents in a home; and with my young friends who are contemplating entering into this most important of all relationships, that of marriage, I would plead this day to think of this: No marriage has a right to be made, which, at its making, has less than the prospect of lasting everlastingly. No marriage at its making, has the right to impose the penalty upon a home of pulling children two ways at once. It is not fair to the children. It is not fair to the community. It is not fair to the future. It is difficult enough

to teach children when both parents are pulling in the same direction, but when the two people that children have the most right to look to for guidance are each telling them something basically different, and are each persuading them on a different course in a different way, it has in it the seeds of trouble and discontent and frustration and unhappiness and ineffectiveness in life.

I would leave this with you as one of the greatest elements, one of the indispensable elements of happiness: unity in the home.

We could mention many more. There is humility, always an indispensable. I like to recall a sentence from Owen Meredith which rings in my heart: "O be sure that no man learn anything at all unless he first learn humility."

Of course, there is faith, the first of the first principles of the gospel. What a glorious thing faith is! Faith! All of us would like to know a lot of answers we do not know. All of us shall some day. But it was meant that men should live in part by faith. It is a glorious thing to have it, to meet the unanswered questions, to meet the fears of life, to carry us over all difficulties—the glorious principle of faith, the first of the first principles of the gospel.

From the fourth section of the Doctrine and Covenants I would recall these elements of joy and happiness, of peace, and of purpose in life:

Remember faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence.

Ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. (D. & C. 4:6-7.)

I haven't the language to express to you the love I feel for these, my brethren, for their fatherly and brotherly affection, confidence, and encouragement. I haven't the words to express to you the gratitude I feel for my fellowship with you and my membership in this Church, in this choice and cherished fellowship; and I am grateful for the love and affection I feel in my heart for all men, all of my Father's children, and for the things we have in common.

I think I know something of the weight of responsibility that comes with influencing the lives of others. I believe I sense something of the respon-

bility of bearing witness; and yet to you who are here, and to all who may listen within and outside membership in this Church, I would leave with you the witness of my soul as to the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ; as to the Fatherhood of God, who made us in his image; as to the divine reality of the mission and message of Joseph Smith, and the appearance of the Father and the Son unto him, not just in a manner of speaking, but in very fact; as to the inspired and authorized leadership of this Church in this day; the prophetic calling of President McKay; as to the glorious destiny of all men, if they will follow the promises, the purposes, the commandments, and go all the way in keeping them—not just part way.

God lives. His purposes are eternal. Truth will triumph. Injustice will be righted. Men are immortal. There are happiness, peace, everlasting life, eternal progress for all of us on the terms on which our Father offers them to us.

To my beloved young friends of this glorious young generation that we have in the Church today: May I plead with you to be patient, to search the scriptures, to keep your lives balanced, and to reserve judgment, to keep faith, to keep clean, to go forth and rise to the high destiny that is yours, and to live your lives and make your homes with unity of purpose with your companions so that you may realize that joy and effectiveness and peace and undivided purpose in life which will lead to limitless possibilities here and hereafter.

God bless you and give you every needed thing in life, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He to whom you have just listened is Elder Richard L. Evans of the Council of the Twelve. The Congregation will now sing, "The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning," conducted by Elder J. Spencer Cornwall. After the singing, Elder Bruce R. McConkie will speak to us.

The congregation and the Singing Mothers joined in singing the hymn, "The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning."