

Friday, April 5

First Day

to it, brothers and sisters, that we be happy with each other, because our service is willing.

There are many of us, holders of the priesthood, many of us who are holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood, that somewhere or another after taking on the obligation and the implied covenants that are with it do very little in the way of service. We fail to serve our quorums; we fail to serve our wards; we fail to serve our stakes; we fail pretty much, if the reports coming to us are true, to serve our God. We ought not to assume those obligations, brethren, if we don't feel in a measure that we can fulfil or comply with the promises and covenants therein, and any man who has received that priesthood should, with a willing heart, attempt to measure up to his responsibilities and opportunities.

Now if I could leave with you just that one thought and then suggest that you go back into the scriptures and find the interesting stories connected with it, I would feel quite happy today. The time is so limited that I am not going to take more of it today, but I want you to understand that in the long service that I have rendered here I have tried to have a willing heart and serve you well. I have had no other major responsibility or interest since 1931 when I was appointed but to help this work

and especially to help the seventies of the Church. We are very proud of the seventies. We are very proud of the work that they accomplish, and we are interested in the purpose for which the seventies were organized. Let us all then, brothers and sisters, set to our problems with a willing heart, with faith, and sincere devotion to our God, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Antoine R. Ivins of the First Council of Seventy has just spoken to us.

The chorus and congregation will now join in singing "Praise To The Man Who Communed With Jehovah."

Elder Milton R. Hunter of the First Council of Seventy will be our next speaker.

The Congregation and the Logan Institute of Religion Choir joined in singing the hymn, "Praise To The Man Who Communed With Jehovah."

President David O. McKay:

Elder Milton R. Hunter of the First Council of Seventy will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Eldred G. Smith.

ELDER MILTON R. HUNTER

Of the First Council of the Seventy

My dear Son Michael:

With the hope that I might say something, my son, that will help you to live a more complete and joyful life and that someday you will receive a blessed exaltation in the presence of our Lord, I am writing you this letter.

Deep in the heart of every human being is a strong desire to experience joy day by day. In fact, Father Lehi claimed that the achievement of a life of joy was the principal purpose of our existence. He said: "Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy." (2 Nephi 2:25.)

In order that you might live a life

filled with joy, that you might be happy now, in the future, and forever, it is necessary that you understand who you are and the course that you must follow in order to attain a fulness of joy in this life and in the world to come.

You are a son of God, literally and actually a child of an Eternal Father in heaven. You are endowed with the spiritual attributes of godliness that if properly cultivated will result eventually in your returning to the presence of that Divine Being and receiving eternal life. Regarding this important truth, the First Presidency, President Joseph F. Smith and his Counselors,

Presidents John R. Winder and Anthon H. Lund, wrote:

"Man is a child of God, formed in the divine image and endowed with divine attributes, and even as the infant son of an earthly father and mother is capable in due time of becoming a man, so the undeveloped offspring of celestial parentage is capable, by experience through ages of aeons, of evolving into a God." (The Improvement Era 13:81.)

My son, in the spring of 1820, the greatest event that ever occurred in the United States took place in the Sacred Grove in New York. God our Eternal Father and his Only Begotten Son appeared to a boy just your age—the Prophet Joseph Smith—in response to his prayer regarding which church to join. This marvelous vision was the prelude to the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Soon thereafter, numerous heavenly beings appeared to the Prophet, revealing the gospel of Jesus Christ for the salvation of as many of the human family as will believe and obey. The true church was established; namely, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

In accordance with the predictions of the ancient prophets, this is the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times, "... the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:21.)

You have the tremendous blessing, my son, of being a member of the true Church of Jesus Christ. This is an inheritance more valuable than all of the wealth of the world.

Seek day by day throughout your life to have sufficient inspiration and wisdom to know what the Lord our Savior desires you to do; and then work under that divine inspiration to do it at all times to the best of your ability. Jesus put it this way: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6:33.)

Always select good company with whom to associate. Your companions greatly influence the life that you live. Stay away from places of temptation. If any young man frequents places of

evil, eventually he will be ensnared in sin.

In modern revelation, the Lord has commanded: "Wherefore, stand ye in holy places, . . ." (D&C 87:8.) Going to church and doing temple work places one in holy places. The Lord thy God commanded: "And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day." (*Ibid.*, 59:9.)

Keep your mind and heart clean and pure at all times. The scriptures truthfully declared: "For as . . . [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he." (Prov. 23:7.) Our thoughts are like seeds planted in a fertile garden. They take root, grow, and eventually mature in full bloom. Thus the very center of our character-growth is our inner thoughts. Our thoughts precede our actions. They are the underlying forces that shape our destiny. My son, if one could look into your heart when you have nothing in particular to do but to live with your thoughts, one could predict your future happiness and successes or your future heartaches and failures.

It is definitely true that each person is the product of his own individual thinking. Mr. James Allen aptly declared: "Whatever your present environment may be, you will fall, remain, or rise with your thoughts, your Vision, or your Ideals. You will become as small as your controlling desire, as great as your dominating aspiration." (*As A Man Thinketh*, p. 42.)

Thus let me advise: my son, guard your mind and your thinking continuously. Do not listen to impure or indecent stories. Never repeat a thought or a story that you would not be proud to tell your mother. Immoral stories are insidious and degrading to one's spiritual growth and sweetness of personality; therefore, remember never to let anything come from your lips that is indecent, suggestive, degrading, or of an immoral nature in any respect. The Savior declared: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8.)

Knowing that we are children of God,

Friday, April 5

First Day

the Apostle Paul pointed out that our bodies are very sacred. He said:

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (1 Cor. 3:16-17.)

On another occasion, the Apostle Paul made it very clear that each of us will have to answer for his own mistakes, and, on the other hand, each of us will be rewarded for his own good actions. To quote:

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

"For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. 6:7-8.)

Remember this, my son, God is no respecter of persons. He will hold you accountable for your sins and reward you for your righteous acts. The writer of Ecclesiastes truthfully declared:

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Ecc. 12:13-14.)

The justice and mercy of God in blessing his children is given plainly in the Doctrine and Covenants as follows:

"There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—

"And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to the law upon which it is predicated." (D&C 130:20-21.)

My son, there was a divine and eternal truth declared by Alma, that great Nephite prophet and teacher, which I wish would rise in front of your eyes in your mind as a great placard in glowing letters every time temptation comes your way throughout life. I would that every Latter-day Saint boy, girl, man, and woman would memorize

Alma's divine declaration and that it would flash strongly in their minds on each and every occasion that they are tempted to do wrong. Alma declared: "Behold I say unto you, *wickedness never was happiness.*" (Alma 41:10.)

Perhaps a scripture of equal vital importance to have ringing in your ears is Paul's firm declaration that ". . . the wages of sin is death." (Rom. 6:23.)

Your Heavenly Father has blessed you, my son, with a healthy body and a keen mind. Certainly he expects you to keep them that way. To help accomplish this, he revealed the Word of Wisdom. It stands to reason that wise boys and wise men will at no time take substances into their bodies which are not good for them. I plead with you to refrain from taking the first smoke, and then tobacco will never be a severe temptation to you. The same truth holds for any other harmful substance that you might be tempted to take into your body. Set your standards high. Be determined that you will never break God's law of health. The achievement of this resolution will bring you joy, peace, and comfort. It will result in your maintaining health in your body and mind; and you will receive ". . . wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures" (D&C 89:19) one of which treasures is a firm conviction that Jesus is the Christ and the Savior of the world. Also, obedience to the Word of Wisdom will help you to maintain your body as a pure temple in which the Spirit of God can dwell.

My son, be prayerful. Pray to your Heavenly Father every night before you retire to bed. Pray to him every morning before you leave your bedroom. Pray for the sick and afflicted, the poor and needy, the widows and orphans, and all workers of righteousness throughout the world. Pour out your heart in thanksgiving to him for the numerous blessings that he gives you. Pray to him for his divine guidance in your schoolwork. He will answer your prayers by enhancing your memory and by giving you strength and wisdom to complete your assignments. He will help you to succeed in your numerous undertakings.

Throughout life continue to call upon

your Heavenly Father for divine guidance in all things that you do. Great men such as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln found their supreme strength in times of distress in humble prayer to their Divine Creator. So will your burdens, my son, be made lighter and your heart be filled with serenity and peace as you travel the highway of life if you continue to keep your Eternal Father as your companion, your friend, and your guide. Surely he will take you by the hand and will give you answers to your prayers.

One of the most vital things in your life, if you are to have joy, is for you to learn to work and to love to work. My son, work and work and work, for herein lies perhaps your greatest joy. I know of nothing that gives more satisfaction to one's hearts than to have a job he likes, and to do that job efficiently to the best of his ability. An indescribable peace and satisfaction come into one's heart through work well done. When you stand before the judgment seat of the Lord after leaving this mortal life, be able to report honestly that you always did a full day's work. As you know, one of the two first laws given to Adam and Eve was the commandment to earn their bread by the sweat of their faces. This law we must all obey if our lives are pleasing to our Heavenly Father. The following important advice appeared in the Salt Lake *Tribune*:

"A police chief's advice to teen-agers—Always we hear the plaintive cry of the teen-agers—

"What can we do? Where can we go?"

"The answer is . . . go home! Hang the storm windows, paint the wood-work, rake the leaves, mow the lawn, shovel the walk, wash the car; learn to cook, scrub the floors, repair the sink, build a boat, get a job, help the minister, priest, or rabbi, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army; visit the sick, assist the poor, study your lessons, and then when you are through and not tired . . . read a good book."

My son, if you are to live a life filled with joy and happiness, learn now while in your youth that such

results come about only to the proportion that you render service to your fellow men. We serve our God by serving his children. There is nothing sweeter in all the world than the spiritual blessings which come to us as a result of service—with the result of losing our lives for the Master's sake, with the assurance that someday we shall receive eternal life.

With these thoughts and purpose in mind, live in such a way that you are preparing to go on a mission when the call comes from the Lord. Save your money now in your own private missionary fund. Study the scriptures. Learn the gospel doctrines and then you will be prepared to serve your fellow men—God's children—when the call comes.

My son, be honest in all of your dealings. Never tell a lie. Build a character of high integrity. Be just and righteous in all of your actions as you go through life. Joy and success will be your reward.

In due time you will desire to obey the greatest law that God has given to man—the law of celestial marriage. My son, while in your youth you are preparing by clean living for this great event. During your courtship days, court on a spiritual plane; and then when you establish a home it will be built upon a rock foundation which will weather all storms.

To live and achieve in this world of complex problems, my son, you must have courage. Do away with any fear that may enter your heart. Fear is a destroyer of success and happiness. It confuses the mind. It undermines one's abilities. Peace of mind comes from a clear conscience and the conquest of fear. Therefore, remember and do at all times as the Lord commanded Joshua: ". . . Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." (Joshua 1:9.)

And now, my son, I shall close this letter by making only one more important suggestion. As you travel through life, have faith in yourself. Have faith that you can accomplish

Friday, April 5

First Day

the things which you righteously take into your heart to accomplish. Disappointments do come in life; but also great shall be your joy with the numerous accomplishments you will make through tenaciously retaining faith in your ability to achieve.

Affectionately,
Your Father

President David O. McKay:

Elder Milton R. Hunter of the First Council of Seventy has just spoken to us. Elder Eldred G. Smith, Presiding Patriarch to the Church, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Richard L. Evans of the Council of the Twelve.

ELDER ELDRED G. SMITH

Patriarch to the Church

A favorite song of mine, one that is familiar to us all goes to this effect:

"I have a testimony, sacred and dear
to me
Something that lies within my soul. . . ."

Just what is a testimony? Webster says: "A solemn declaration or affirmation made to establish or prove a fact," or "attestation of a fact or an event." Could we say then that a testimony is knowledge of a fact? We say we have a testimony as if it were a possession. Of course it is. It is a possession of knowledge. How does one obtain knowledge, either secular or religious? A student must go through the usual process of study, research, etc. To obtain religious knowledge requires additional effort. The Lord said, ". . . Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Luke 11:9.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith has given us a formula: "If we are to gain a testimony of anything, we must first desire a testimony, then learn to understand the truth in question, then practise that which has been learned, and before and during the study and practice we must be in close communication with our Heavenly Father and pray to him for help."

Moroni also gives us a formula: "And when ye shall receive these things," that is after you have done the study and received instruction and prepared yourself, "I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having

faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

"And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things." (Moroni 10:4-5.)

The power and function of the Holy Ghost is to testify of the truth, and especially to testify of the Father and of the Son. The Holy Ghost, being a personage of Spirit, speaks through our spirits. Each of us has a spirit body and a physical body. Before coming to this earth we were personages of spirit, yet we were individuals. We could walk, run, speak, see, think. Our spirit body was made of elements not found in mortality. That spirit body, combined with our mortal body, makes a living soul. When we receive promptings from the Holy Ghost, it is like opening an imaginary door between the spirit mind and the mortal mind. When this happens, we receive knowledge which we cannot deny. We have to put ourselves in tune with the Spirit of the Lord or the Spirit of the Holy Ghost, as has been mentioned here today. We will be held accountable for that knowledge in the day of judgment. By the Holy Ghost you may know the truths of the gospel. I'd like to mention just a few of these, and we will have heard some, and we will hear more as we go through this conference.

You may know of a surety of the visitation of God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Sacred Grove. The Father, calling him by name, said, ". . . This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" (Joseph Smith 2:17.)