

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.)

Then you may also know of the true concept of Deity. God is truly an Exalted Being. Jesus Christ is literally his Begotten Son.

We testify that the Book of Mormon came forth by divine guidance; also the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price.

We know and accept the restoration of the gospel with the priesthood of God to act in his name and perform the ordinances of the gospel needed for salvation and exaltation.

President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., has said, "What today's world must have if humanity is to go on climbing upward, is men, those wearing the cloth as well as the laity, who know that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ; men, that having this knowledge have also the intellectual honesty not only to admit but to proclaim it; who have further the moral courage and sterling character to live the righteous lives this knowledge demands. This knowledge must be a living, burning knowledge of God and Christ."

We testify of the divine purpose of temple work, the vicarious work necessary for the salvation of all, the living and the dead. Yes, we declare the principle of continued revelation through his prophet, and his prophet today is President David O. McKay.

We testify of the surety that the resurrection is real and will be universal, that each shall inherit a degree of glory in accordance with his faithfulness—the celestial, terrestrial, or teletial—the righteous to receive eternal life and exaltation in the celestial kingdom. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "If the resurrection from the dead be not an important point or item in our faith, we must confess we know nothing about it; for if there be no resurrection from the dead then Christ is not risen; and if Christ is not risen he was not the Son of God; and if he was not the Son of God there is not nor cannot be a Son of God, if the present book called the scriptures is true; because the time has gone by when, according to that book, he was to make his appearance." (DHC. 2, 18.)

There is great strength in a testimony, strength to resist evil, strength to do.

What is it that causes a bishop or a stake president or others to spend so much time in church work without monetary remuneration? Is it not his testimony? Was it not their faith and testimony that brought the pioneers across the plains? Is it not testimony that keeps the great missionary system going? President Henry D. Moyle has said, "It is our purpose as members of the Church to consider constantly the place of testimony in our lives. We dare not become complacent or unaware of this priceless gift which is ours." When we bear our testimonies, we are teaching others the truths that have enriched our lives and made us happy. Our testimonies are born to give thanks to God for the knowledge and assurance he has given us, to assist our brethren and sisters in strengthening their testimonies, and to carry the conviction which is ours into the hearts of all other people upon the face of the earth.

I invite all to follow the formula given and obtain a testimony with us of the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I testify to you in the name of Jesus Christ that these things are true and that God lives, that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God, that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God through whom the gospel has been restored. I testify that President David O. McKay is a true prophet of God today, and I do this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

We have just heard from Elder Eldred G. Smith, Presiding Patriarch to the Church. You will hear later from Brother Evans.

The following telegram has been received from the Northeast British Mission, President Grant S. Thorn: "Our missionaries and members send their love and best wishes for a glorious conference and sustain you in this marvelous work."

And one from President Tuttle of the South American Mission: "Over 1,000 missionaries, 30,000 members, nearly one-third of whom joined the Church last year, and seven mission presidents