

ELDER ELRAY L. CHRISTIANSEN

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My beloved brethren and sisters, I have not forgotten the statement made in one of the recent general conferences by Elder Richard L. Evans, who reminded us that to know is not enough. As we draw near to the close of this great and uplifting conference, it seems to me that the thing that remains is for us to go to our homes and conform our lives to the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ as they have been expounded here, lacking not in determination and in moral courage to do it, for "to know is not enough."

One of the greatest demonstrations of moral courage ever shown in this day was when in the dead of winter, 1846, the first of the Saints, living in the city of Nauvoo, rolled their loaded wagons onto flatboats to be ferried across the broad, icy Mississippi River. That marked the beginning of the exodus of modern Israel. Later in the month, according to the historians, long caravans crossed the river on a solid floor of ice.

These people had been living in substantial and comfortable homes. They had farmed their fertile lands; they had completed the construction of the sacred Nauvoo Temple and had developed an attractive city, which they proudly referred to as "Nauvoo the Beautiful." All these they left behind to move their families, with what household goods and provisions that they could take with them, to make an almost superhuman trek thirteen hundred miles into an almost unknown western land.

With a background of culture and refinement, they were not accustomed to the hardships of improvised shelters erected against the wintry blasts of February winds; yet, because of their faith and their courage, they resolutely met the challenge, and turning their backs upon their beautiful homes and their faces toward the west, they met whatever was to come. These exiled people, with implicit trust in their leaders, chose to ". . . seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; . . ." (Matt. 6:33.) Their physical

courage was equaled only by their moral courage.

In our day there is a crying need for this same quality in each of us, especially the moral courage to resist the ever-increasing pressures and insidious influences that are constantly at work, distorting the truth, tearing down the good and the decent, and attempting to substitute therefor the vain and shallow philosophies and practices of a carnal world. There is need for the moral courage to uphold correct principles in our personal lives and to defend right and truth and decency and honor, and above all, to have faith in and honor God our Father.

It seems to me that moral courage is made of a firm desire, coupled with determination to accept and to do what is right and to shun the wrong. It is the outgrowth of moral conviction. Moral courage may not be dramatically displayed. Seldom does it receive public acclaim, nevertheless, it is an indispensable attribute of noble character. It must be exercised if worthwhile principles and institutions are to be preserved and perpetuated.

He who stands steadfastly for that which is right must take the risk of becoming at times disapproved and unpopular, or even shunned by others—sometimes by his closest friends. Indeed, some have become martyrs. Knowing what is right and true and honorable, they have had the courage to do, not what is *easy* but what is right; not what is *expedient* but what is best.

I think of a young boy with whom I am acquainted, who, rather than join his companions one night in an escape that was not in harmony with the training he had received in his home and in the Church, chose to walk more than six miles to his home while his companions in the car proceeded to carry out their plans. I imagine that boy, for more reasons than one, slept well when he finally arrived at home. And no doubt his parents were proud

of him. Truly, "A wise son maketh a glad father." (Prov. 10:1.)

It requires no moral courage to drift with the multitude or to run with the "pack," so to speak. The real test is in choosing and pursuing the right, even though it appears that in so doing, one is alone.

Jesus, the personification of this quality, disagreed with the powerful and influential Jewish governing body—the Sanhedrin. He referred to certain unrighteous Pharisees as "... hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, ..." (Matt. 23:27.)

And Matthew records him saying plainly, "... for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation." (*Ibid.*, 23:14.)

With righteous fervor he drove out the money changers, because he could not bear to see them desecrate the temple. He was fearless in defense of correct principles, and although he was falsely and maliciously accused—even though he was subjected to railings and mockery of the worst kind—he stood majestically and composed before Pilate and again before Herod, while the howling mob cried, "Crucify him, crucify him!" (Luke 23:21.)

He was not concerned with his own security nor with the indignities he suffered at the hands of foul men. His great desire was to do the will of the Father, even though it meant his crucifixion.

While we in our day may or may not be called upon to suffer unduly or to test our moral courage in the great issues of the world, there is, nevertheless, always need for each of us to exercise self-discipline and moral courage in our everyday living.

It was Lincoln that reminded us that, and I quote: "We must return to idealism—the idealism of character and truth; of integrity in private and public (affairs) . . . no people can ever become greater by lowering their standards, no society was ever improved by adopting a looser morality."

Someone has said our physical fitness program is wonderful and is needed, but

we have also a need in our lives for a moral fitness program. It takes moral courage, for instance, to apologize, to put aside pride and say, "I was wrong," or to explain a misunderstanding which, if ignored, would hurt another person; or to defend a person when slighting remarks are made against his character. It takes courage to stand up and be counted when you may not agree with the crowd; for example, to plan, and to live, and to qualify to go to the house of the Lord when the time comes to be married even though some of our associates may do otherwise.

It requires moral courage to tell the truth regardless of the situation or the consequences, but it pays great dividends in peace of mind.

It takes courage to resist envy and hate and anger, the destroyers of happiness. The Bible says: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." (Prov. 16:32.)

Have we the moral courage to forgive or to ask forgiveness? Never is the human soul more noble and so courageous than when it forgives and then forgets. Jesus said in a revelation to Joseph Smith: "Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.

"I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men." (D&C 64:9-10.)

And Matthew records: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." (Matt. 6:14.)

The religious life of a Latter-day Saint should be based not upon obligation and duty alone, but upon a genuine desire to be honorable, to do good, to do what is right, to love God, and to love one another.

We ought to think right and do right simply because it is right. If there is to be any moral perfection for us in this life, it will come because we consistently and automatically do what is right.

I bear solemn testimony to the fact that Jesus is the Christ, that God our

Father lives, that Joseph Smith was indeed the Prophet of this dispensation through whom the gospel, the divine pattern for living, was restored, and that President David O. McKay is presently the prophet, seer, and revelator of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us go from here with the determination and the moral courage to say as Job said, ". . . while my breath is in me, . . .

"My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.

ELDER ANTOINE R. IVINS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

Brethren and sisters:

As I stand before you today, I seek an interest in your faith and prayers that, perhaps, I may say something that may be of help to some of us.

My life span covers nearly sixty-two percent of the lapsed time since the Church was re-established on the earth through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jun. For nearly forty percent of my life I have had opportunity to observe the forward movement of the Church as a member of the First Council of the Seventy. Quite naturally, I have been able to check, in a way, the responses of the priesthood members of the Church to the programs instituted, from time to time, for their encouragement and aid. In this I have reached a conclusion that what we, the bearers of the priesthood, most need is faith.

We declare in the Articles of Faith, "We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost." Also, "We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are; first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Articles 1 and 4.)

To me this means that we believe that God exists; that he is our Eternal Father and the Father of Jesus Christ; and we believe in the Holy Ghost. We believe also that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, took upon himself mortal life,

". . . till I die I will not remove . . . integrity from me." (Job 27:3-5.)

I pray for this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He to whom we have just listened is Elder ElRay L. Christiansen, Assistant to the Twelve. Elder Antoine R. Ivins of the First Council of Seventy will be our next speaker.

accepted death, and rose from death to be the first evidence to man of the resurrection—"the first fruits of the resurrection." In so doing he overcame the effects of Adam's act which introduced mortality into the world. It was then possible, through death and the resurrection, for man to re-enter the presence of God in an exalted estate.

That man might be exalted, a plan of life was given him, and this we call the gospel.

Recurring to the fourth Article of Faith we learn that the first principle of this plan is that man should have faith in God and in our Redeemer Jesus Christ.

Faith is defined in one biblical passage as follows: ". . . faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. 11:2.) Faith gives our yearnings substance and evidences to us the possibility of actual accomplishment. With this possibility before us, we undertake things new to us, gaining strength and courage, both physical and spiritual. In other words, faith in its broadest sense prompts every act of our lives. We increase faith in ourselves by the exercise of our faculties; we gain faith in our neighbors when our mutual interchanges accord with the gospel plan. We gain faith in the gospel plan—which means faith in God—by doing the various things required by it, and this means service. The only way I have discovered to serve God is to help his work along among his children. As we serve, we gain