

King Benjamin's message

King Benjamin, a beloved Book of Mormon prophet, exhorted his people to "open your ears that ye may hear, and your hearts that ye may understand, and your minds that the mysteries of God may be unfolded to your view."

And then he reminded them of his teachings, saying: "Neither have I suffered . . . that ye should murder, or plunder, or steal, or commit adultery; nor even have I suffered that ye should commit any manner of wickedness, and have taught you that ye should keep the commandments of the Lord, in all things which he hath commanded you." (Mosiah 2:9, 13.)

King Benjamin's message to his people was given from a tower in contrast with today's worldwide communication system, where many listening ears are tuned in to hear the sermons of this conference.

Easier to walk in the light

The purpose of these messages is the same now as it was then: to encourage people to accept and live the gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed by God for the benefit and blessing of his children. The sufferings and sorrows resulting from disobedience are extremely difficult to bear. It is far easier to walk in the paths of righteousness and the

light of gospel truths than to fall into the sorrow of disobedience and evil doing. If we walk in the light as Christ is in the light, peace of mind, happiness, and joy will be our lot forever.

I close with another statement of the Nephite prophet, King Benjamin:

"And moreover, I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness. . . ." (Mosiah 2:41.)

My brothers and sisters, I bear humble witness to the truth of these teachings. That we will all so live that we may enjoy eternal happiness and peace in our personal lives, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Delbert L. Stapley of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

Elder Henry D. Taylor, Assistant to the Twelve, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Boyd K. Packer, Assistant to the Twelve.

Elder Henry D. Taylor

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

As the psalmist contemplated with awe the beauties of the Lord's creation, with man as the crowning achievement, he exclaimed in wonderment: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

"For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

"Thou madest him to have dominion

over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet. . . .

"O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" (Ps. 8:3-6, 9.)

Many have described man in glowing terms. This is Shakespeare's analysis: "What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! . . ." (*Hamlet*, Act 2.)

What is man

Well might we ask the same question, "What is man?" and well might the answer be: Man is the spiritual offspring of heavenly parents, privileged through righteous living to come to this world, to be born of earthly parents, and to be blessed with a mortal body.

The possession of this wonderful body is a sacred trust. President Joseph Fielding Smith has declared: "The importance of these mortal tabernacles is apparent from the knowledge we have of eternal life. Spirits cannot be made perfect without the body of flesh and bones. This body and its spirit are brought to immortality and blessings of salvation through the resurrection. After the resurrection there can be no separation again, body and spirit become inseparably connected that man may receive a fullness of joy. In no other way, other than birth into this life and the resurrection, can spirits become like our eternal Father." (*Era*, Vol. 34 [September 1931], p. 643.)

Mission of Adam and Eve

When Adam was placed here upon the earth, our Heavenly Father indicated that by himself, Adam never could people the earth or subdue it. "It is not good," the Lord said, "that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." (Gen. 2:18.) So Eve was created and given to Adam in the bonds of eternal marriage, to continue with him, and to be his loving wife and companion.

This noble couple were given the commandment to perpetuate themselves: "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." (Gen. 1:28.) These objectives could not be achieved without effort, and so the Father further admonished Adam: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread. . . ." (Gen. 3:19.) He was to labor and struggle for a living. Then,

so that the man and wife would be united in their journey through life, the Lord added: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." (Gen. 2:24.) That is, one in unity, purpose, and harmony, to bring to life in mortality the spiritual offspring of Deity, to furnish mortal bodies for others, and to "replenish" or "fill" the earth. No life's purpose such as this could ever be devised by finite mind. It is truly divine.

Ideal home environment

What a glorious thing it would be if each child born into this world could have the assurance of these things:

1. To be born into a home where parents enjoy a respected and honorable name. In other words, "to be born of goodly parents."

2. To be born into homes where they are wanted: a place in which they are loved; a place where proper examples are manifest. One father said: "I am not trying to be a model father. All I am trying to do is to live so that when someone says to my son, 'You remind me of your father,' he can stick out his chest and not his tongue."

3. A place where the children are encouraged to prepare themselves for life, both here and hereafter, to live up to their full potential; a home where they are instructed to stand on their own feet, to be independent and self-supporting; a home where they are taught to prepare to establish homes of their own through proper training and securing an adequate education.

Security never granted

To "subdue the earth," a person must look mainly to himself and not to others, except as others might offer good counsel or set a good example. Most persons are striving to find what they consider security. It has been pointed out:

"People who look to government for 'security' are seeking that which has never been granted to human kind. Man was promised his living by the

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sweat of his brow, and where he wastes his substance he will want in spite of all human devices to render it otherwise. Nowhere in her system does nature offer security to anyone or anything. Nature's way is the law of change and succession, or replacement and fulfillment; but never the unalterable, the fixed or the guaranteed. It is defeatism in the individuals to seek security in living, a misunderstanding of the function of life itself. It was not so that the pioneers of this land lived, when there were few governments to do things for them. They met the wilderness on its own terms, and pushed it back. Men and women worked together to found their homes, raise their children, and wrest a competence from what the land had to offer them. They helped one another. They had time for worship, and they knew that over man there was God. Our age is a pioneering one, and to each are offered widening chances of development. It is a neglect of self-improvement to seek security without having earned it, to attempt to reap without having sown. No government can produce what people don't in themselves create." ("Security—A Mirage!" *Life Line*, October 31, 1964.)

A prominent American, in contemplating the subject, gave this advice to young people: "Don't dream about security; make it for yourself, out of yourself." He then concluded his thoughts on self-reliance with these words: "Dare to believe in yourself . . . and act accordingly. If you do, both your present and your future are secure."

"Men are that they might have joy"

While man is struggling to achieve security and independence, he should also realize that happiness and joy can be his. The Prophet Lehi, speaking under the inspiration of the Lord, taught his sons that "men are, that they might have joy." (2 Ne. 2:25.) This joy could come from performing unselfish acts for others, a life filled with love for fellowmen, the rewards that come from honest toil, from a

home where love and kindness abide, the peace and tranquility that come from observing the commandments of the Lord.

There are many today who are seeking for thrills and so-called pleasure. These things are but momentary and fleeting. Happiness and joy come from more enduring and lasting acts. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that "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." (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 255-56.)

Rewards of life

Even though this life is real and earnest, it is possible to receive many rewards and satisfactions. I have noted serene joy in the face of a mother as she gazed with tenderness at her newly born child. I have viewed the pride, happiness, and joy in the expressions of parents as they watched and listened to the report of their son or daughter who had just returned from completing an honorable and successful mission, or other righteous achievements.

It is a humbling and warming experience to be present in the temple with the parents, friends, and families as a young couple is married and sealed for time and for all eternity. Certainly there is joy and happiness there.

I am confident that each of us has personally experienced the warm glow of happiness that comes from performing an unselfish act or rendering a service for someone else.

The Prophet Joseph Smith has said: "If a man gets a fullness of the Priesthood of God he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the House of the Lord. . . ." (*Ibid.*, page 308.)

Greater blessings promised

While joy and happiness are pos-

sible in life here upon the earth, greater rewards and blessings have been promised and will come following the time of the resurrection, after we have left this frail existence. At that time those who have been faithful will not only be reunited with their families and loved ones of mortality, but they will also be privileged to dwell in the glorious celestial world where God the Father and Jesus Christ, the Son, dwell.

Surely, this will be joy supreme. And

it is possible to every one of us if we keep the faith and endure in righteousness to the end.

For this I humbly pray, in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Henry D. Taylor, Assistant to the Twelve, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Boyd K. Packer, Assistant to the Twelve, and president of the New England Mission.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

I feel subdued in spirit this afternoon, my brethren and sisters, in coming from the mission field again to general conference, to hear the testimonies of our beloved Prophet and of the brethren. Particularly was my heart touched by the message of Elder Gordon B. Hinckley as he spoke to our servicemen, for in my life that silver thread of testimony, drawn from the dark tapestry of armed conflict, has been a guiding beacon.

Call to military service

Many young men listening to the conference are serving in the armed forces, or they face a call to military service. To answer the call, one must suspend many things dear and sacred. Military service requires a severance—hopefully a temporary one—from intimate and sacred ties that bind a young man to his family and from those relationships to which young manhood is so very responsive. Interruption comes likewise to schooling, and life's work is delayed. And, as always, it carries with it the threat of jeopardy to life and limb.

It is to you, our brethren in the armed forces, that I speak. Nor is the man who serves the only one concerned. There are wives and there are parents who never, never cease to love their children or fear for them.

Repudiation of responsibilities

A man answering the call now is

not left in total comfort that all will sustain him. There have emerged in our society groups composed mostly of restless, unchallenged young people. In the name of peace and love and brotherhood, they criticize those who, obedient to the laws of the land, have answered the call to military duty. It is puzzling to see them renouncing their obligation, repudiating their citizenship responsibilities. They declare on moral grounds, as an act of virtue, that they will not serve. One can be sensitive, even sympathetic, to their feelings, for war is an ugly thing—a heinous, hideous, ugly thing! Strangely, it is a pursuit to which mankind has turned again and again and again. The wicked have generated it, and the innocent have ultimately been provoked by it.

The Lord said: "Therefore, renounce war and proclaim peace. . . ." (D&C 98:16.) I would that all men would remain at peace.

"We love peace," said President David O. McKay, "but not peace at any price. There is a peace more destructive of the manhood of living man than war is destructive of the body. 'Chains are worse than bayonets.'" (*The Improvement Era*, June 1955, p. 395.)

Recently a college student about to graduate, and under notice from the selective service, came to my office. Confused and worried, he told me of the pressure from fellow students and