

Friday, October 4

First Day

And I said, "Have you ever met a Mormon missionary?"

And then he stopped and turned to the whole group and said that he had lived out in Idaho, and his nearest neighbor was a Mormon. He said, "He was the most wonderful neighbor I have ever had."

Now I could tell you many stories like that, because I like to know what people think of us when they know us.

So I come back to the words of Jesus: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." May God help each one of us individually to do that, I humbly pray, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

The Singing Mothers and the congregation will now join in singing, "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

The congregation and the chorus sang the hymn, "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., of the First Council of Seventy, will now speak to us.

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr.

Of the First Council of the Seventy

My dear brethren and sisters:

This is a traumatic experience for a convert, and I ask for an interest in your faith and prayers in my behalf this morning.

Strong reasons required

The Lord through the prophet Isaiah required strong reasons of his people for their acts.

"Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob.

"Let them bring them forth, and shew us what will happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come.

"Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together." (Isa. 41:21-23.)

Motive makes the difference

Surely reason or motive is all important in determining guilt or innocence for our acts.

Nephi went to Jerusalem determined

to obtain the records of his people. The Lord commanded it. As he proceeded on the errand he recognized the risk. Laban had threatened his life and the lives of his brothers. He found Laban drunk and received the clear command from the Lord to slay Laban, and he obeyed.

Consider now Cain. He was jealous of Abel, a righteous man, whose offering was acceptable to the Lord God. Cain in his jealousy and in his greed listened to Satan; and urged by him, he slew Abel in order to obtain his brother's flocks.

In the one case, one was entirely righteous in his motive. In the other, the motive was entirely evil. Motive is the main difference in these two acts in which men were slain.

The Lord through Peter says that every man should "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you. . . ." (1 Pet. 3:15.)

If reason or motive is so important and the Lord requires it of all of us, then every man should examine his motives lest they be found wanting at the last day.

Erosion in nation

I have spent a good bit of my life in the navy. I have loved it. The navy has been very good to me and good for me, some have said. There is a satisfaction that comes to man no other way when he serves his country honorably in the armed forces. This is particularly true when it is the good ol' United States of America that he is serving. It is a privilege to represent this nation, the last great bastion of liberty and freedom before the nations of the world. That is one reason for the concern I feel this day for the erosion I see taking place at the foundation of this noble republic.

In the active duty I have been privileged to render, I have spent some time aboard ships of the aircraft carrier class. On these ships about 3,500 men live together for extended periods of time in a confined space about 1,000 feet long, 150 feet wide, and 200 feet high. Under these conditions you get to know people well in a short period of time.

Absence of home influences

I have seen instances where young men came aboard ship who were away from home and home influences for the first time in their lives. They had been taught the Word of Wisdom and laws of chastity, and they lived them. They didn't smoke or drink or gamble. They didn't smoke because their father didn't want them to, or they didn't drink because their sweetheart didn't want them to, or they didn't gamble because their mother didn't want them to. Now these are good reasons for not doing these things. They had been good enough to serve these young men adequately for 18 to 20 years.

Since these young men had never been away from home, they had never seen much of what really goes on in the world. And the ways of the world came as a rude shock to them. For instance, they found themselves living with young men their own age who lived none of their standards. Still, their newfound companions could run as fast and jump as high as they, and sometimes exceed them in feats of strength or mental ability. This had a very interesting effect on these young

men. They began a serious reevaluation of their standards. The fact that they were encouraged by their new friends to join in their immoral acts didn't help the situation either.

But the most crucial fact was that they were now thousands of miles away from their reasons for living the commandments. All too often influence varies inversely in proportion to the distance from it. I saw some of these young men slip down into doing the things they were sure they would never do because they loved their parents or sweetheart too much.

Strength in loving God

Now I wouldn't want you to think this was the fate of a great number of my young friends. It wasn't. Many came aboard ship with the same high standards. They lived the same laws, but they did it for a different reason—their motives were different. Instead of keeping the commandments because they loved their mother or father or sweetheart, although it was quite obvious they did love them, they did it because they loved the Lord. They knew him and loved him, and this made a major difference in their conduct. It doesn't make any difference where you are or how many miles from home you happen to be; the Lord is still there. The Psalmist said:

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?"

"If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

"If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

"Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

"If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

"Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." (Ps. 139:7-12.)

The Lord is as close and real in the Far East in Vietnam or the middle of the earth as he is in Salt Lake City. He is *always* there. So my young friends who were true to their covenants be-

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cause they loved the Lord couldn't get too far away for his influence to reach them. He is always there.

The wrong moorings

One of the philosophers has said: "The greatest treason is to do the right thing for the wrong reason." Of course, this isn't strictly true. Obviously it is greater treason to do the wrong thing for any reason. But the philosopher, is correct in assessing it treason to do the right thing for the wrong reason because it is an essential betrayal to the security of the soul. The man who performs righteous acts for an erroneous reason lulls himself into a false sense of security. He feels that the acts themselves will save him. But when the rain descends and the flood comes and the wind blows and beats on the house, it falls because it does not have the correct foundation.

The danger in this approach comes from the fact that all too often man ties himself to the wrong moorings. Wonderful as a mother's love is, it is not strong enough to hold her son. Even heaven is not a sufficiently strong anchor to hold against the flood tide of temptation. In the words of the Master: "What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled. . . ." (D&C 1:38.)

The strongest reason

From this and other scripture it is obvious that everything—the heavens, the earth, and everything that in them is—is going to pass away, and if you have tied your faith to any part of this frail existence—the earth, the heavens,

or people on the earth—it is not going to stand. Everything else will go except the word of the Lord, but "my word shall not pass away," saith the Lord.

Then love of the Lord becomes absolutely vital to salvation, because it forms the foundation of our motives for righteousness. No other reason is strong enough to hold us, and therefore is wrong.

It is manifestly impossible to love him whom we do not know. Then to know the Lord becomes the first step to correct action through correct motives. We declare with boldness and yet with humility that the God of this earth, who is Jesus Christ, does live. He has been seen in modern time and has given instruction and authority to establish his Church again upon the earth in all its fullness. I declare to you with soberness that this has been done through the Prophet Joseph Smith and all those who have succeeded him unto this day. I bear to you my witness that David O. McKay is a prophet of the living God—I know it as I know I am alive—and that he presides over this Church under the direction of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, whose Church it is; and we invite all men of goodwill who are honest in heart to partake of this truth and blessing with us. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr. has just addressed us.

Elder John Longden, Assistant to the Twelve, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve, who will be our concluding speaker.

Elder John Longden

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

One of the privileges of being an elder citizen is to reminisce. He who has good memories is richly blessed. As I have contemplated my message today, there is one phrase that keeps returning: "The tie that binds." Many

poems and articles have been written about the tie that binds. I should like to suggest that the tie that really binds is the gospel of Jesus Christ; the way of life it offers mankind; the peace it assures to all who will