

Saturday, April 6

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gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name's glory.

"For thus saith the Lord God: Him have I inspired to move the cause of Zion in mighty power for good. . . ." (D&C 21:5-7.)

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

I am happy to be with you here tonight in this priesthood meeting. It is a particular delight to us to see the fathers and their sons coming early to the Saturday night priesthood meeting—many of them an hour or two early to be sure of a good seat, and thousands of others, fathers and sons, hurrying to the Tabernacle and to the numerous stake and ward buildings all over the country. This is a delightful extension of our family life which we celebrate and love and which the world is beginning to recognize as a basic family pattern—to have fathers and sons together.

We are grateful to have you present, and our appreciation for you is great and our affection sincere.

First, may we commend you for your devotion and faithfulness. The temples are generally full. The chapels are filling, and there is an increase in attendance and devotion. The families holding home evening are increasing, and we are happy with the display of faith and love which is manifested throughout the Church. We are particularly happy with the growth in numbers and effective activity in the stakes and missions overseas. It is a world Church; we believe we are getting nearer and nearer the universal church standing.

Elders quorums

Now, brethren, may I announce to you some matters which I discussed with other leaders on Thursday. The First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve have approved the organization

of an elders quorum in every ward and independent branch. The elders, regardless of number, up to 96, residing in a particular ward or independent branch, may be constituted as an elders quorum, with a presidency. Where there are more than 96 elders, the quorum should be divided. It is felt by the Brethren that this great reservoir of power and strength can best be used to its greatest value to have strong, active quorums of elders in the more local jurisdictions.

Seventy ordinations

Another priesthood item: Effective immediately, stake presidents may ordain seventies and set apart presidents of seventy in their stakes when such men have been properly processed and approved by the First Council of the Seventy. This should eliminate many long delays and create a good working relationship between the stake leaders and their seventies, and we hope that new emphasis may come to missionary work.

Brethren in leadership, you could save many, many letters if you would read your handbook and bulletins. May we call your attention especially to the matter of temple interviews. And will you urge your people to take their problems to their bishops.

We commend you men for your steadfastness in training your sons. We love you all. We prize your faith; we glory in your growth and worthiness. Many of your older sons have filled your missions, but numerous of you

younger ones are still prospective missionaries.

Planning your life

To be sure your life will be full and abundant, you must plan your life. What you plan now when you are deacons can assure you an abundant life. Have you already been saving money dedicated to your missions?

You may not yet have chosen your business or profession or life's work, but there are many generalities which you can already set up in your lives, even though you may not yet know whether you will be a lawyer or a doctor or a teacher or an engineer. There are decisions you should already have made or now be making. What are you going to do in the years between now and your marriage? And what will you do about your marriage?

You can determine now that you will be the most faithful deacon and teacher and priest. You can decide that now with an irrevocable covenant. You can be a good student; you can use your time properly and efficiently. All the balance of your life you can be happy if you use your time well.

You can make up your mind this early that you will fill an honorable mission when you reach mission age, and to that end that you will now earn money and save it and invest it for your mission, that you will study and serve and use every opportunity to properly prepare your mind and heart and soul for that glorious period of your life.

Mission program

The question has been often asked, Is the mission program one of compulsion? And the answer, of course, is no. Everyone is given his free agency. The question is asked: Should every young man fill a mission? And the answer of the Church is yes, and the answer of the Lord is yes. Enlarging this

answer we say: Certainly every male member of the Church should fill a mission, like he should pay his tithing, like he should attend his meetings, like he should keep his life clean and free from the ugliness of the world and plan a celestial marriage in the temple of the Lord.

While there is no compulsion for him to do any of these things, he should do them for his own good. We have often sung:

"Know this, that every soul is free
To choose his life and what he'll be,
For this eternal truth is given
That God will force no man to heav'n.

"He'll call, persuade, direct aright,
And bless with wisdom, love, and light,
In nameless ways be good and kind,
But never force the human mind."

—LDS Hymns, no. 90

No compulsion in gospel

There is no compulsion in any part of the gospel. The Lord said in 1833, "Behold, here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man; because that which was from the beginning is plainly manifest unto them, and they receive not the light." (D&C 93:31.)

This means that since Adam the Lord has taught us correct doctrines and we may accept or reject them, but the responsibility is ours. It means that, having the Holy Ghost which we received at baptism time, we all know good from evil. The conscience whispers to us what is right and what is wrong. We cannot blame others or circumstances. We know what is right.

Every person has his free agency. He may steal or curse or drink; he may defile himself with pornographic material; he may lazy away his life, fail to do his duty, commit sexual sins, or even take life. There is no force, but

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he must know that sin brings its proper punishment, sooner or later and in total, so that one is stupid indeed to choose to do the wrong things.

Every person can fail to attend his meetings, fail to pay his tithing, fail to fill a mission, ignore his temple obligations and privileges, but if he is smart, he must know that he is the deprived one.

"Every man . . ."

Again the Lord answers the question: "And that every man should take righteousness in his hands and faithfulness upon his loins, and lift a warning voice unto the inhabitants of the earth; and declare both by word and by flight that desolation shall come upon the wicked." (D&C 63:37.) Did you note that he said "every man,"—and every boy that is becoming a man? Of course, we do not send young men steeped in uncleanness and sexual or other sins. Certainly such an one would need to be cleansed by deep repentance before he could be considered. And so we repeat it: Every LDS male who is worthy and able should fill a mission.

Then in order to have a full and abundant life that is clean and open, every lad needs to plan his course, and covenant with himself and his Heavenly Father what his life will be and what he will do to glorify it.

Value of time

Someone has given us this thought on time (I shall read it):

"And in my dreams I came to a beautiful building, somehow like a bank, and yet not a bank because the brass marker said, 'Time for Sale.'

"I saw a man, breathless and pale, painfully pull himself up the stairs like a sick man. I heard him say: 'The doctor told me I was five years too late in going to see him. I will buy those five

years now—and then he can save my life.'

"Then came another man; also who said to the clerk: 'When it was too late, I discovered that God had given me great capacities and endowments, and I failed to develop them. Sell me ten years so that I can be the man I would have been.'

"Then came a younger man to say: 'The company has told me that starting next month I can have a big job if I am prepared to take it. But I am not prepared. Give me two years of time so that I will be prepared to take the job next month.'

"So they came, ill, hopeless, despondent, worried, unhappy—and they left smiling, each man with a look of unutterable pleasure on his face, for he had what he so desperately needed and wanted—time.

"Then I awakened, glad that I had what these men had not, and what they could never buy—time. Time to do so many things I wanted to do, that I must do. If that morning I whistled at my work, it was because a great happiness filled my heart. For I still had time, *if I used it well.*" (Author unknown.)

Goal of reading the Bible

Let me tell you of one of the goals that I made when I was still but a lad. When I heard a Church leader from Salt Lake City tell us at conference that we should read the scriptures, and I recognized that I had never read the Bible, that very night at the conclusion of that very sermon I walked to my home a block away and climbed up in my little attic room in the top of the house and lighted a little coal-oil lamp that was on the little table, and I read the first chapters of Genesis. A year later I closed the Bible, having read every chapter in that big and glorious book.

I found that this Bible that I was reading had in it 66 books, and then I was nearly dissuaded when I found

that it had in it 1,189 chapters, and then I also found that it had 1,519 pages. It was formidable, but I knew if others did it that I could do it.

I found that there were certain parts that were hard for a 14-year-old boy to understand. There were some pages that were not especially interesting to me, but when I had read the 66 books and 1,189 chapters and 1,519 pages, I had a glowing satisfaction that I had made a goal and that I had achieved it.

Now I am not telling you this story to boast; I am merely using this as an example to say that if I could do it by coal-oil light, you can do it by electric light. I have always been glad I read the Bible from cover to cover.

Obedience to Word of Wisdom

May I tell you another goal that I set when I was still a youngster.

I had heard all of my life about the Word of Wisdom and the blessings that could come into my life through living it. I had seen people chewing tobacco, and it was repulsive to me. I had seen men waste much time in "rolling their own" cigarettes. They would buy a sack of "Bull Durham" tobacco or some other brand and then some papers, and then they would stop numerous times in a day to fill the paper with tobacco and then roll it and then bend over the little end of it and then smoke it. It seemed foolish to me and seemed such a waste of time and energy. Later when the practice became more sophisticated, they bought their cigarettes readymade. I remember how repulsive it was to me when women began to smoke.

I remember as a boy going to the Fourth of July celebration on the streets of my little town and seeing some of the men as they took part in the horse racing as participator or as gambler, betting on the horses, and I noted that many of them had cigarettes in their lips and bottles in their pockets and some were ugly drunk and with

their bleary eyes and coarse talk and cursing.

It took a little time to match the ponies and arrange the races, and almost invariably during this time there would be someone call out, "Fight! Fight!" and all the men and boys would gravitate to the fight area which was attended with blows and blood and curses and hatreds.

Again I was nauseated to think that men would so disgrace themselves, and again I made up my mind that while I would drink the pink lemonade on the Fourth of July and watch the horses run, that I never would drink liquor or swear or curse as did many of these fellows of this little town.

And I remember that without being pressured by anyone, I made up my mind while still a little boy that I would never break the Word of Wisdom. I knew where it was written and I knew in a general way what the Lord had said, and I knew that when the Lord said it, it was pleasing unto him for men to abstain from all these destructive elements and that the thing I wanted to do was to please my Heavenly Father. And so I made up my mind firmly and solidly that I would never touch those harmful things. Having made up my mind fully and unequivocally, I found it not too difficult to keep the promise to myself and to my Heavenly Father.

Rotary banquet

I remember once in later years when I was district governor of the Rotary Clubs of Arizona that I went to Nice, France, to the international convention. As a part of that celebration there was a sumptuous banquet for the district governors, and the large building was set for an elegant meal. When we came to our places, I noted that at every place there were seven goblets, along with numerous items of silverware and dishes; and everything was the best that Europe could furnish.

As the meal got underway, an

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army of waiters came to wait on us, seven waiters at each place, and they poured wine and liquor. Seven glass goblets were filled at every plate. The drinks were colorful. I was a long way from home; I knew many of the district governors; they knew me. But they probably did not know my religion nor of my stand on the Word of Wisdom. At any rate, the evil one seemed to whisper to me, "This is your chance. You are thousands of miles from home. There is no one here to watch you. No one will ever know if you drink the contents of those goblets. This is your chance!" And then a sweeter spirit seemed to whisper, "You have a covenant with yourself; you promised yourself you would never do it; and with your Heavenly Father you made a covenant, and you have gone these years without breaking it, and you would be stupid to break this covenant after all these years." Suffice it to say that when I got up from the table an hour later, the seven goblets were still full of colorful material that had been poured into them but never touched an hour earlier.

Reaping as we sow

Again, my young brethren, in my boyhood I remember one time when the sheriff startled us when he came and announced that under the floorboards of the porch of the home just up the street from where we lived they had found a considerable cache of stolen articles. The young man who lived in that home was termed a kleptomaniac. He seemed to have a mania for stealing things, even items he had no use for himself. Numerous people in the town had been reporting that their buggy whips and their buggy robes were taken. Here they were under the porch, and this boy finally admitted to having stolen them. I remember how shocked we fellows were—how we pitied him because he had developed this terrible weakness!

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Every man takes care that his neighbor shall not cheat him. But a day comes when

he begins to care that he [does] not cheat his neighbor. Then all goes well. He has changed his market-cart into a chariot of the sun." (*The Complete Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, New York: Wm. H. Wise and Co., 1929, p. 585.)

This boy did not know how our acts follow us and how that which we sow we are sure to reap. And every experience we have adds to or draws from our lives. We cannot think ugly thoughts or do ugly things without retribution.

"We believe in being honest. . ."

Recently in a paper was an account of a girl who found a very large check in excess of two million dollars. She immediately began spending it in her own mind, she said. But finally she returned the check to its owner, and the newspaper account revealed the reward was very much smaller than her dreams. Why should she want a reward for doing right? Why should she be disappointed in the amount offered? Must people be rewarded for doing right? Would you expect a reward if you returned a lost article? All of you boys are learning or have learned the Thirteenth Article of Faith: "We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men. . . ."

I wish to say a few words about shoplifting, but time will not permit. It is a terrible disgrace that in our communities firms must set aside a rather distressing percentage of their profits to take care of the shoplifting. It is a horrible thing that in a Latter-day Saint community, where part of us at least are Latter-day Saints, this should be the case.

Fathers blessing sons

Now I would like to conclude with one other little experience. I was down in Toquepala, Peru. We were dedicating a chapel. Many of the men who were employed in that mining town were Americans. After the dedication they had a dinner at one of the homes. As we

moved around in the home, a young boy came to me and said, "Brother Kimball, I'm thinking about a mission. Would you give me a blessing?"

I said, "Why, of course. I'd be very happy to give you a blessing, but isn't that your father I met in the other room?"

He said, "Yes, that's Dad."

I said, "Well, why don't you ask him to give you your blessing?"

"Oh," he said, "Dad wouldn't want to give a blessing to me."

So I excused myself. In time I ran into the father, and I said, "You have a wonderful boy there. I think he would like to have a blessing from his father. Wouldn't you like to give him a blessing?"

He said, "Oh, I don't think my boy would want me to give him a blessing."

But as I mingled among these people and saw the father and the son a little later, close together, I could understand that they had come together in their thoughts and that the boy was proud to have his father bless him, and the father was delighted to be asked.

I hope you boys in this audience will keep that in mind. You have the best dad in the world, you know. He holds the priesthood; he would be delighted to give you a blessing. He would like you to indicate it, and we would like you fathers to remember that your boys are a little timid maybe. They know you are the best men in the world, but probably if you just made the advance, there would be some glorious moments for you.

Testimony

Brethren, it is wonderful to be with you here tonight. And may peace be with you, and as has been said so many times in these days, only righteousness pays dividends. God bless you, and I bear my testimony to you boys, to you men, that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ. It is a great program of salvation and exaltation, and it is the only way, and there never

was found happiness in unrighteousness. I bear my testimony to you in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

The sessions of this General Conference will be received by millions in the United States and Canada over many television and radio stations co-operating to provide the extensive coverage of this conference.

Over 80 radio stations will broadcast conference Sunday morning in major cities of Mexico and Central America, and by satellite in countries of South America, to a potential Latin American audience of 60 million people.

The Nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir Broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 tomorrow, Sunday morning. Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 a.m.

In leaving this great Priesthood meeting tonight, we remind you, as we always do, to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and always to be courteous in driving.

The music for this priesthood session has been furnished by the Mormon Youth Men's Choir with Roy M. Darley at the organ. We deeply appreciate the inspiring music and the service you young men have rendered here tonight.

The choir, with Had Gundersen conducting, will now close this meeting with "Come Unto Me," following which Elder O. Leslie Stone, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will offer the benediction.

The conference will then be adjourned until ten o'clock tomorrow morning.

The Mormon Youth Men's Choir rendered the song, "Come Unto Me."

The closing prayer was offered by Elder O. Leslie Stone, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve.

The conference was adjourned until Sunday morning at 10 o'clock.