

with all of us, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

President Kimball

President Marion G. Romney of

the First Presidency of the Church has just addressed us.

We shall now hear from Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

Of the Council of the Twelve

One warm evening during the past summer months Sister Ashton and I enjoyed a professional baseball game. During the early part of the competition our attention was diverted from the action by a late arriver. As he walked by, he spotted me and asked, "Who's losing?" I responded with, "Neither one." Following my answer, I noticed that he glanced at the right-field scoreboard, saw the game wasn't tied, and walked on, undoubtedly wondering about me.

Seconds after he made his way to a distant seat, Sister Ashton said, "He doesn't know you very well, does he?" "What makes you say that?" I replied. She responded with, "If he did, he would know you don't believe anyone is losing. Some are ahead and some are behind, but no one is losing. Isn't that right?" I smiled in approval with a warm feeling inside.

The importance of attitude

All of us, young and old, will do well to realize that attitude is more important than the score. Desire is more important than the score. Momentum is more important than the score. The direction in which we are moving is more important than position or place.

The truth "For as [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7) is as applicable today as any time in history. I remember years ago meeting a young man who had tattooed on his body the words "A BORN LOSER." I don't think you will be surprised to learn that I met him in a state prison.

I also remember once asking two young boys if they could swim. One said, "No." The other, "I don't know. I've never tried." Unknowingly, perhaps, their attitudes were showing.

Proper attitude in this crisis-dominated world is a priceless possession. Never before is it more important for all of us to move forward with conviction. We may be behind, but we are not losing if we are moving in the right direction. God will not score our performances until the end of the journey. He who made us expects us to be victorious. He stands by anxious to answer our call for help. Sad but true, many today are behind in their contacts with God and encouraging destructive attitudes toward self and fellowmen. We need to lead with good cheer, optimism, and courage if we are to move onward and upward.

Be grateful

The truths "And in everything give thanks" (D&C 98:1) and "Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things" (D&C 59:7) and "He who receiveth all things with thankfulness shall be made glorious" (D&C 78:19) are not only recommended tools of appreciation, but are powerful attitude guidelines prescribing rewarding patterns. Think of the personal challenge to thank God in all things. If we thank God in all things, we will not permit ourselves to get behind. We must work each day to beat yesterday's record, not someone else's. With His help we can

accomplish all things and be winners indeed in the processes of eternity.

We must strive for an ingrained attitude of self-confidence that will make us believers in self. How important it is in all our lives to develop an appropriate balance of confidence and humility. Proper self-confidence lets every man know there is a spark of divinity within waiting to be nurtured in meaningful growth. Proper attitude enables us to live in harmony with our potentials.

Beware of pride

We must beware of pride. An egotist will never get anywhere in this world because he thinks he's already there. Someone has said egotism is the anesthetic that dulls the pain of stupidity. Egotism can be cancerous to the soul.

The attitude with which we approach each day controls the outcome. We must be more concerned with what we do with what happens to us than what happens to us. Proper attitude toward self is an eternal pursuit. Positive personal attitude will insist that we deliver our best, even though less might seem adequate for the moment. Proper attitude demands we be realistic—even tough with ourselves and self-disciplining.

Let me share with you a verse from a 19th-century writer, Josiah Gilbert Holland. The bust of Dr. Holland is in the Hall of Fame and beneath is this powerful verse which he wrote entitled "Wanted:"

God give us men. A time like this
demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith
and ready hands.

Men whom the lust of office does not
kill,
Men whom the spoils of office cannot
buy,
Men who possess opinions and a will,
Men who love honor, men who will not
lie.

Patience and endurance

Proper attitude is a prerequisite to quality performance. We need men with the courage to put proper attitudes into action. We need more men today with patience and purposeful endurance. We need more men with the fearless conviction of a Joseph Smith, a Harold B. Lee, a Spencer W. Kimball, as he so courageously and fearlessly declared and exhibited in his keynote address. Joseph Smith—we may thrill in his attitude as I share these lines with you. His majesty and his attitude ring through.

"So it was with me. I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision; and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation." (Joseph Smith 2:25.)

Resilience

Another important ingredient of proper attitude is resilience, the ability to cope with change. Adaptability cushions the impact of change or disappointment. Love can be a great shock absorber as we adjust in trials and tragedy.

We constantly need to build hope in ourselves and those about us. We need to personally make dark days bright ones. Isn't it a joy, a lift, a light to see someone with heavy challenges and burdens moving forward to victory in the only contest that really matters.

Hope makes it possible for us to know that even in temporary failure or setback there is always a next time, even a tomorrow.

One of the greatest tragedies of our time is children of God—you and I—living and performing below our capabilities. Strength and courage come when we realize “come and follow me” (Matt. 19:21) was given by a loving Savior of hope and trust who extended the invitation to us without regard as to where we are or have been. His was the perfect example. His was the perfect attitude. His was the perfect life. He would be true to his calling at whatever the cost. His labors, his life, and his teachings are cherished possessions. Our pathways are clearly marked, thanks to his steps. His experiences are our strengths. I have said many times to our missionaries, “It is not so important whether a young man has been through the experience of a mission as it is whether the mission experience has been through him.”

Christ's example

Though he, Jesus, were a Son busily engaged in his Father's business, he was never too busy to assist a troubled mother, a sick man, a friend, a little child. These attitudes, these services were but outward evidence of inward greatness. As we too learn to serve as did he, we learn to live abundantly. A proper attitude helps us find God through service to his children.

Nazareth was little and looked down upon. It bore the brunt of ridicule. It had not been the scene of historic achievement. It had produced no winners: “Can any good come out of Nazareth?” (See John 1:46.) His attitude, his works, his life had lifted the little village out of obscurity. “Jesus of Nazareth” the world later called him, bringing honor to a once-despised town.

Once rejected by his own, the will, the way, and the work would yet identify him as King of kings and Lord of lords. He experienced scorn, ridicule,

and abuse, but victory and triumph were his because he was busily engaged in good works. To those who would destroy, defeat, discourage, he taught truth shall triumph. To those who would desecrate his temples, he fearlessly declared, “It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.” (Matt. 21:13.) His words and actions in this circumstance were yet but another evidence of character, conviction, courage, and proper attitude.

Every person in the world who loves courageous performance and appreciates proper attitude should read and reread the final chapters of his life. He lived, this Prince of Peace, in true majesty. His home town scorned his achievements. Some of his disciples had turned away. His enemies were about to triumph (so they supposed). What was his attitude? Was it complaint, faultfinding, retaliation, defeat? Never! His majestic words were, “Let not your heart be troubled” (John 14:1); “I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33.)

Final triumph

In the final week of his life cries turned from “Hosanna” to “Crucify.” Unwavering courage carried him onward and upward triumphantly. The honest in heart would yet know what he stood for and why he must die. Final scenes from the last week of his earthly life unfold before us lessons in attitude greatness. Learn with me more of his courage and divinity as we see him continue faithfully to the end in those trying days. Recall with me the Last Supper with his disciples, a visit to the Garden for high communion with his Father (“Let this cup pass, nevertheless thy will be done” [see Matt. 26:39]), a victory signal following the battle, and the crucifixion site with soldiers appearing on the scene. When the boldly confronted him, prepared for resistance and rebellion, they were greeted with, “Whom seek ye? . . . I am he” (John 18:4, 5), he answered proudly. On a bar-

ren hill not far beyond the city wall he was nailed to a cross. As he suffered his cruel crucifixion, no doubt there were witnesses and spectators who observed with their limited perspective, "He is losing. He is confined. He is defeated." How wrong they were and how wrong they are. Jesus of Nazareth a loser? Never! He is our Savior, our Redeemer, a winner, a Son of God.

Adopt convictions

He this day would have us permanently adopt the attitude of conviction and commitment so movingly expressed in verse seven of our hymn, "How Firm a Foundation":

The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose

I will not, I cannot, desert to his foes;

That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,

I'll never, no never, no never forsake!

Hymns, no. 66

What a pleasure it is for me, brothers and sisters, to bear special witness to his reality, his strength, his divinity, and his earthly purposes. This is his church. This is his gospel. This is his plan for those who would conquer self, continue faithfully, and be victo-

rious. I bear testimony to these truths in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Kimball

We have just heard from Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve.

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing: "Come, O Thou King of Kings," following which we shall hear from Elder Rex D. Pinegar of the First Council of Seventy.

The Tabernacle Choir and the congregation sang the number, "Come, O Thou King of Kings."

President Kimball

To those of the television and radio audience who have just joined us in this third session of the 144th Semi-Annual Conference of the Church, we are convened in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square and other buildings in Salt Lake City, Utah.

We shall now hear from Elder Rex D. Pinegar of the First Council of Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Robert L. Simpson, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve.

Elder Rex D. Pinegar

of the First Council of the Seventy

My beloved brothers and sisters, I'm sure we all echoed with the choir "Thanks Be to God" for the opportunity we have to be gathered today under the direction of a prophet, Spencer W. Kimball.

Missionary experiences

My family and I have recently returned from Virginia, where it has been my great privilege to preside over a mission of the Church for the past three years. Observing the diligence and

faith of the missionaries has brought to me a greater realization of the blessings that accompany those who continue to serve the Lord in righteousness. I'm grateful to the Lord for the calling I now have which permits me to continue to serve in missionary service.

This privilege was even more keenly felt when one of my recently returned missionaries confided in me a dilemma at returning home. This fine young man had served well his entire mission. He had demonstrated faith and courage under difficult circumstances.