

## Elder Hugh W. Pinnock

### Those aching with grief, anger, and guilt

Lately, I have watched with deep concern a number of instances that have unfolded into frustration, heartache, and seeming hopelessness. I speak today to those who suffer with pain and who are aching with grief, anger, and guilt. What I say applies also to those who will yet pass through periods of anguish and difficulty.

When we were little, many of us repeated a verse that began:

*I wish that there were some wonderful place*

*Called the Land of Beginning Again,  
Where all our mistakes, and all our heartaches*

*And all of our poor selfish grief  
Could be dropped like a shabby old coat at the door,*

*And never be put on again.*

(Louise Fletcher, "The Land of Beginning Again," in *The Best Loved Poems of the American People*, sel. Hazel Felleman, Garden City, New York: Garden City Publishing Co., 1936, p. 101.)

The "Land of Beginning Again" does not exist in a geographical location, but there is a specific spiritual position from which we can all start anew, shedding our pains, guilt, and sorrows. Let us travel there this morning.

The ancient prophet Jeremiah was in his house one day and heard the word of the Lord saying:

"Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.

"Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.

"And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.

"Then the word of the Lord came again to me, saying,

"O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? . . . Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel." (Jer. 18:2-6.)

### Begin again

The Lord explained to Jeremiah that when we make mistakes, as ancient Israel was making, we can take what we have marred and begin again. The potter did not give up and throw the clay away, just because he had made a mistake. And we are not to feel hopeless and reject ourselves. Yes, our task is to overcome our problems, take what we have and are, and start again.

Some of you who are listening have sinned in ways that are significant, embarrassing, and destructive. Yet, by following the simple instruction given by the Master, you can talk with your bishop, when necessary, and begin again as a renewed person.

Recently, some of you have placed your money in an investment that has proven to be unwise or unprofitable. Now is an opportunity for you to begin again. Don't let a mistake injure you twice as it does if you harbor a past wrong or injustice and let your anger destroy you.

Some of you have hurt others, bringing pain, fear, and heartache to them. Now is the time to go and express sorrow for what you have done, beg their forgiveness, and whenever possible, restore that which has been taken. When? Now! It is God's design that we pay our obligations. In the Doctrine and Covenants he said, "Behold it is my will that you *shall* pay all your debts." (D&C 104:78; italics added.)

At the peak of its power, the Greek Empire sprawled from the Mediterranean Basin on the west to what is present-day India on the east.

Through military strength, the Greeks had conquered countless city-states and nations.

They honored their bravest men, but also hallowed the site at which the tide of each battle turned. They marked that single spot on the plain of conflict where a small victory had made the ultimate triumph inevitable. At that place, they pushed a piece of stone or a pile of captured weapons into an upright position. They called the marker a trophy. In the language of the ancient Greeks, the word *trophy* meant "a turning."

Is now a time for a trophy in your life? In the battles you are fighting, should you erect a monument to show that you have turned, that your life will be different now?

Remember, all problems do not keel over as Goliath did before David. All battles do not end as dramatically as the one fought at Cumorah. All miracles are not as immediate as when Joseph Smith blessed the sick on the banks of the Missouri River. But problems do go away, battles are won, and miracles do occur in the lives of us all. In Deuteronomy 7:22 the Lord described his battle plan for purifying Israel in this way: "And the Lord thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little." Victory often does come little by little.

### Eliminate if only

Let me suggest the steps necessary to turn our lives in a new direction. The business of life is to climb higher. The divine step is to repent. Repentance means to find a better way and to follow it.

*First*, eliminate from our thinking and our vocabulary the phrase "if only I had done something differently."

*If only* Samson had known the results of his association with Delilah, he never would have made the first visit. (See Judg. 16.)

*If only* Sidney Rigdon had been able to foresee his pathetic end, he

might have humbled himself and stayed with the Church.

*If only* the rich man could have seen beyond the grave, he might have started praying sooner; but only in hell did he become a praying man. (See Luke 16:19-25.)

*If only* you had not gone on that date, or taken that trip, or made that investment, or met that person, your life might have been different.

All of us can waste precious time by saying, "What if I had not done something or other?" Brothers and sisters, "What if" is not an appropriate question if we really want to start again. Let us face head-on where we are and where we want to be, and not dwell on the "what ifs" of yesterday.

### Today is the day

*Second*, do not wait for tomorrow to begin again. "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." (Prov. 27:1.) *Today* is the day for each of us to erect those monuments on our own battlefields and mark the place where we began again. One of the reasons we have conferences is to learn how to be better.

### Adhere to pure teachings of Jesus Christ

*Third*, resolve to live the gospel of Jesus Christ in its entirety. "For you shall live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God." (D&C 84:44.) Many people live the gospel according to themselves. That is self-deception.

There is only one true gospel. We may alter it or tint it with our own notions. But if we will adhere to the pure teachings of Jesus Christ, we will eliminate many of the rationalizations that lead to problems. The menu has only one entree. To pick and choose which of God's precepts to live is satanic self-centeredness. Integrity is the foundation of our life-style.

### Face personal responsibility

*Fourth*, face reality. Sometimes we wish we could fly from our troubles. King David did. He had been a good man, but he engulfed himself in great difficulties. It seemed to be more than he could bear. One day he cried, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest." (Ps. 55:6.) His guilt-fired emotions had gained the upper hand. He wanted to get away from everything. Some try to fly away physically, and others try to do so emotionally. That does not solve problems. The only true escape route is marked with the sign "personal responsibility."

Remember, the Savior said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28.) He invited us to learn of him and to take his yoke upon us. (See Matt. 11:29.)

*Fifth*, approach our challenges positively! Take over! Lead out! A poet wrote:

### Never give up!

*Never give up! If adversity presses,  
Providence wisely has mingled the  
cup,  
And the best counsel, in all your  
distresses,  
Is the stout watchword of "Never give  
up!"*

(Martin F. Tupper, "Never Give Up," in *Poems of Inspiration*, sel. Joseph Morris and St. Clair Adams, New York: Halcyon House, p. 11-77.)

We recall with clarity these words of the Master: "Seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (JST, Matt. 6:38.) Just a few verses later, the Savior tells us, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Matt. 7:7.)

### Begin a whole new life

*Sixth*, don't begin again partially. Be complete! Otherwise, you may be patching up an old article of clothing with a little piece of new material. The old fabric will not hold. As Jesus said, "No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for . . . the rent is made worse." (Matt. 9:16.) Don't patch. Begin a whole new life. The wealthy young man was unwilling to give all, to follow the Master totally, and so "he went away sorrowful" (Matt. 19:22), and was never heard from again.

### Don't be double-minded

*Seventh*, be open and candid in your relationships with others. So many of life's difficulties are brought about by being double-minded. Let us learn to say it as it is. Think of Peter's extreme discomfort when the Master addressed him after Peter had been teaching a false concept: "Thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of man." (Matt. 16:23.) From that moment, Peter was a greater disciple. The person who is open and honest will be vindicated. Time is his friend. Trust is his reward.

### Forgive

*Last*, and perhaps the hardest of all, forgive. Paul said, "To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also." (2 Cor. 2:10.) Certainly part of beginning again is to "love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you." (Luke 6:27-28.) Paul reinforced this admonition when he said, "See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men." (1 Thess. 5:15.) Revenge has no place in the life of a person who has found the "Land of Beginning Again."

Think how young Joseph had been wronged by jealous brothers anciently. They sold him into slavery. He had every reason to seek revenge. But when circumstances joined them together again in Egypt, Joseph said, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, . . . to save much people. (Gen. 50:20.)

Yes, so much of heartache and grief eventually become blessings, our earthly instructions, and condition us spiritually. Even if we cannot understand the "whys" of our tribulations, we can still turn to God and rededicate our lives to his safekeeping. Yes, "he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come." (D&C 59:23.)

May each of us, where necessary, Begin Again. I testify that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored and that we are to live its principles and precepts, and by so doing will be exalted. And this I say humbly in the worthy name of Jesus Christ, our Master, amen.

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The Choir sang "Eternal Life" without announcement.

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## Elder Mark E. Petersen

Basic to our religion are the Articles of Faith given us by the Prophet Joseph Smith.

### First article of faith

The first one is the foundation of all for which we stand. It reads, "We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost."

We Latter-day Saints believe in God with all our hearts and all our souls. We know that he lives. Our prophets have seen him. We know that

### President Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "Eternal Life."

We welcome those who have just joined us on television or radio for this, the first session of the 152nd Annual General Conference of the Church.

We are grateful to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker, following which the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Benediction."

The closing prayer will then be offered by Elder William R. Bradford, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, after which this conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

we are his children, his literal spirit offspring. We have no other source of life. We are his children.

Without God there would be no gospel, no salvation, no resurrection, no light or intelligence, not even life itself. Without God there would be no galaxies in the heavens, no sun, no moon, no stars, no earth, and none of the things this earth can produce. In other words, if there were no God there would not be anything else either.

It is equally so with respect to the Lord Jesus Christ. In this church we