

of the Lord there are no problems, only challenges." Laurie Polk is now a high priest group leader in the Charleston South Carolina Stake.

From my own experience with life's hardships I have learned that faith in God develops a personal love for Him which is reciprocated through his blessings to us in times of need. To my daughter and to all others who are meeting new or challenging times, I say: Do not fear the challenges of life, but approach them patiently, with faith in God. He will reward your faith with power not only to endure, but also to overcome hardships, disappointments, trials, and struggles of daily living. Through diligently striving to live the law of God and with faith in Him, we will not be diverted from our eternal course either by the ways or the praise of the world.

May each of us develop faith in God sufficient to fight the battles of life victoriously "with the strength of God; yea, . . . with [His] miraculous strength; and . . . mighty power" (Alma 56:56). We will then find the

## Elder Rex C. Reeve, Sr.

### Turn hearts and lives to God

As fearful as the daily news headlines are and even though there are violence and ominous uncertainty continually on almost every hand, there is no problem, national or personal, which could not be solved, and solved easily, if men and nations would turn their hearts and lives to God. It would be so simple.

He is our father, the actual father of our spirits. He is the father of all men. We are His children. He knows us; He loves us. He may not like all we do, but of one thing we can be sure—He loves His children. Yes, He is a loving Heavenly Father. And He *is* there.

happiness we so much desire in our lives. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother Pinegar. Elder Rex D. Pinegar, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

The chorus and congregation will now join in singing "I Know That My Redeemer Lives," following which we shall hear from Elder Rex C. Reeve, Sr.

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The chorus and congregation sang "I Know That My Redeemer Lives."

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### President Hinckley

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Rex C. Reeve, Sr., of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

How comforting and reassuring it is each day as we behold the wonders of the universe and this beautiful world on which we live. We can see His hand in the matchless order with which the heavenly bodies move and the delicate beauty of the flowers and trees and other growing things, all of them bearing silent witness of His existence.

How stimulating and edifying to approach Him in prayer each morning and evening and feel His nearness and His love as we acknowledge His hand, and in our need, seek His help. What a blessing to be able to approach the source of life and light and be strengthened and renewed by just humbly seeking and asking.

Even in tragedy He is there. When traumatic challenges come and a life hangs in the balance or is hopelessly marred and the future is dark and hope grows dim and time seems long—He is there. His reassuring feeling comes through, seemingly saying, “I am here, do not worry; this will be for your good if you endure it well. Trust in me.”

### Life—time of testing

As He communed with our father Abraham He told him of the purpose of sending us to earth. He said:

“We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

“And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them” (Abraham 3:24–25).

Yes, this life is a time of testing. It is not the reward time. That will come later. We are here being tested. The test is going on now!

He wants us to know how we feel in our heart. He has said, “For as [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7).

“They draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me” (Joseph Smith—History 1:19).

When our hearts are not right, the Lord withholds His spirit. “They sought evil in their hearts, and I, the Lord, withheld my Spirit” (D&C 64:16).

He “granteth unto men” according to the desire of their heart. (See Alma 29:4.)

“O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart . . . that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day” (D&C 4:2).

Of offerings, the Lord has said, “Speak unto the children of Israel,

that they may bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering” (Exodus 25:2).

There was no concern as to the gift itself, but only that he give “it willingly with his heart.”

### Worship of the heart

I suppose in the day of judgment the question won't be so much what did you do or where did you serve, but rather, did you serve me with all your heart? Did you put me first in your life?

Yes, real worship is of the heart.

If men and nations did reach up to God with all their hearts, war would cease. If love of God were in the heart, a man would have no desire to destroy his brother.

There would be no dishonesty if the love of God were in the heart. If God came first in his life, a man would love his neighbor as himself, and instead of taking from him, he would feel to give to him.

In the home, if the love of God were in the heart of the father and the mother, the husband and the wife, and God came first in their lives, there would be an end to selfishness; there would be no discord. Instead, there would be a feeling of how can I help you or what can I do for you instead of demanding my rights and my desires, which often destroys homes.

Home is really only the feeling between husband and wife—how they feel about one another and God. Home isn't the house, for the house can still be there when home is gone.

If men and nations did reach up to God with all their hearts, the Sabbath day would be a holy day. The desires of men's hearts would be to love and serve God and honor and worship Him.

Yes, worship is really of the heart.

### Put the Lord first

“But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and all thy soul” (Deuteronomy 4:29).

This question was asked of Jesus: “Master, which is the great commandment in the law?”

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” (Matthew 22:36-37.)

We need to grow in respect and reverence and love of God, the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ. This can come as we desire and seek. It will not come automatically, but we as individuals, free to choose, must desire and seek and pray and ask. It must grow from the deep feelings in our hearts.

The Lord has said, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:21).

To you wonderful young men of the Church, turn your hearts to the Lord, put Him first in your lives. The finest thing each of you can do for the Lord and for yourself and your family is to prepare yourself to serve as a missionary, to carry His gospel to the people who haven't yet heard it.

Not only would your service as a missionary bless many other lives, but it would bless your life. You would grow in love for the Lord and His children, your self-image would be enhanced, you would grow in confidence and understanding. You would grow closer to the Lord and know better how to use His holy power in your life.

When you returned from your mission you would be better prepared to serve as a priesthood leader and as a righteous father. It is the finest thing you can do to bless the lives of others as well as your own. Turn your heart to Him, put Him first in

your life, prepare to serve Him as a missionary.

You lovely young women of the Church, put the Lord first in your lives, turn your hearts to Him. He has placed such trust and confidence in you as His daughters. Prepare to marry in the temple. Work and plan to this end. It will not only bless your own lives, but the lives of many others will be blessed by your desire and example. Put the Lord first in your lives and hearts.

You fathers and mothers, put Him first in your lives and in your hearts. Teach your children of the Lord; let them feel that He comes first in your hearts. Teach them of His love and the great blessings He has for each of them as they desire and live worthy and go to His house. Help them feel how wonderful a family is, so they will desire to belong to a family forever.

Children come to know God and feel love for Him and His word and His prophets before they can read words if these sacred feelings exist in the hearts of the father and mother and they find expression in look and word and deed.

The finest thing you parents can do for your children is to love one another and put God first in your hearts and lives. It will strengthen your home and safeguard your family.

You who are single and who face many challenges, put Him first in your lives. He loves you. As you reach up and pour out your hearts to Him, you will receive strength and faith to meet the tests you struggle to face. He will not remove the challenges, but He will strengthen you so you can carry the burdens and meet the tests. He is there. He loves you.

### Look to God

And you, our fine friends who do not yet enjoy the blessings of His

restored gospel, turn your hearts to Him and listen to His voice; He will whisper to you in the quiet of your hearts, as you seek Him.

God has spoken to man again in our day. The heavens are open. He does commune with man again, as in times of old, through His prophet. He has restored His priesthood authority, authorizing man to act for Him. He has restored His church which makes the saving ordinances available again to man.

You need not take our word alone for it, but He has prepared a way that you can know for yourselves.

His timeless message will bring real purpose and new meaning to your lives and a richness and peace you can enjoy in no other way. Thousands are seeking and finding each month. We invite you to seek and find too. We will be pleased to assist you, if you wish.

Yes, the answer and solution to all the challenges and needs we have, national or personal, is to turn our hearts to God, put Him first in our

lives, keep His commandments—and all things will work for our good, even those tests which seem so big and require so much. They, too, will bless our lives.

We should look to God; put Him first in our lives and especially in our hearts.

I testify that He does live! He is our Father! He loves His children! I also testify that Jesus is the Christ, and that He will be as close to us as we will let Him be by how we live and feel in our hearts.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Hinckley**

We have heard from Elder Rex C. Reeve, Sr., of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our next speaker. He will be followed by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, also of the Council of the Twelve.

## **Elder L. Tom Perry**

### **A new era**

This conference marks the beginning of a new era for the Church in communications. The advent of the satellite affords us the opportunity of reaching more of the membership of the Church with general conference than we have ever had the privilege of doing before.

### **The office of bishop**

There is a subject I have wanted to address at general conference for some time. It seems appropriate to speak on this topic at this conference because of our larger membership audience. Some years ago I was assigned to a committee responsible for

reviewing all changes in bishops. We would bring forward our recommendations for consideration at a meeting in the temple attended by the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve. I became alarmed at the number of bishops recommended for release because of health reasons, family difficulties, or employment problems. Even though the number was not large as a percentage of the total, I felt any number was too high because these great men were not having the privilege of fulfilling their assignment with the joy and satisfaction that should accompany this sacred calling.

I have always had the highest admiration for the office of a bishop. I have been associated with bishops