

Elder Russell C. Taylor

Joy and blessings follow service

On this momentous occasion, my first time at this pulpit, I stand humbly and prayerfully. May I share from the testimony of the heart and from the fire of application and experience the personal joy of service in God's kingdom.

I can say unashamedly, I rejoice in the service of God. My experience teaches that the highest goodness attainable is a life of unselfish service to mankind. The Master said, "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matthew 23:11).

It has been wisely said, "Service is the rent we pay for our own room on earth." We should know that the rent is due on a daily basis and know that the receipt is never stamped "paid in full," because the rent, service in God's kingdom, is again due today and due tomorrow.

Some mistakenly think that a commitment to service comes *after* a great spiritual experience. This is like the man who is cold, standing before the stove, and saying, "Give me heat, and *then* I will put in some wood." The joy and blessings of service *follow* the rendering of service. The missionary who renders eighteen months of faithful missionary service *then* has a lifetime to think about it, while perfecting a life of service to others. Some would want and expect the windows of heaven to open *before* they pay their tithing, even though the prophet Malachi so plainly teaches:

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse . . . and *prove* me *now* . . . saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open *you* the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10; italics added).

All must certify with actions

There comes a time in the life of all people when they must *certify* with their actions what they believe. Jesus said of his own life, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matthew 20:28).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie has so eloquently taught us that service is essential to salvation. I have been impressed with the *urgency* of doing. Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Being willing is not enough; we must do. Progress is not created by contented people. It is up to us, you and me, to be uncomfortable in complacency, to refrain from being spectators, and to be players in the game of life. The Lord has chosen His people to perform a mighty work. Our home teaching, our visiting teaching should be more than *going*; it should be *doing* with Christian love. It can be done; you can each do your portion of the work because you desire it.

"To serve one another"

Fathers and mothers, with your strength of example you will influence your sons and daughters for eternity with examples of loving, uncomplaining service far more convincingly by *doing* than only by saying. Show your children a life of love for them by a life of love and service to the Church and to our Father's children in spiritual need.

I recall King Benjamin's instruction to parents as they were counseled in teaching their children:

"But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another" (Mosiah 4:15).

Blessings of unselfish service

As wisely stated, "Until a man learns to think, he is not an educated

man, no matter how many degrees he has." I would also add that a thinking man will want to serve. The greater your service, the closer your access to God. One who serves and sacrifices goes to bed at night with peace of mind.

I think of a dear sister who has crippling arthritis in her hands but faithfully each week, upon entering the genealogical name extraction center in Denver, finds the joints of her fingers limber enough to type the names with efficiency and rapidity—the blessings of unselfish service.

Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, feet that were hot, sweaty, and soiled with dust and dirt. He washed not their hands or face; he washed their feet. He who is the greatest shall be the least—he it is who learns to serve. (See D&C 50:26.)

Well of spirituality has deepened

Within days of arriving in Europe, Sister Taylor and I, still living out of suitcases in a small hotel room in Germany, were scheduled to attend a mission presidents' seminar in Amsterdam, Holland. As we drove to and from the seminar, as arranged by the Regional Representative, we set out to meet our leaders in western Europe. We drove an hour each way into a small village to bless a leader and his family. We went to their homes. In each home we met a lovely wife and handsome children. We ate at their tables, slept as invited, and in each case knelt in prayer and blessed their homes, their families, their callings, and the area for success-

ful missionary service. I now know our leaders there. I felt a genuine love for them, and I felt the same response from them.

You have those feelings of approaching in some small degree the indescribable joy of the celestial glory. He that loses his life shall save it. (See Luke 17:33.) My well of spirituality has indeed been deepened.

I invite those yet to be members of the Church to come off the back rows as spectators and become participants in the Lord's restored Church through baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost, that they might also lose their lives in service and thereby save it.

Through the years my heart has been changed and softened through service. As the least of the Brethren, I invite all to lengthen and strengthen their service in God's kingdom. I bear witness to the divinity of this work. I also bear witness that this Church is led by inspired leaders, whom I sustain with all of my soul, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Russell C. Taylor, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

Elder Robert B. Harbertson, who was sustained at the April conference as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will be our next speaker. He will be followed by Elder Devere Harris, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Robert B. Harbertson

Brothers and sisters, I want you to know that I stand before you as a living example of Elder Ashton's definition of endurance. Waiting to stand before these microphones, I have endured pain, anguish, and all the other characteristics he spoke of.

Obedience and willingness to serve

Obedience to God's commands and a willingness to serve have always been requisites for a true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul teaches us that even the Savior, "though he were a