

arch to select someone to lead us in kneeling prayer. He looked past the General Authority, past the stake president and the bishop, and with love in his eyes asked his wife to give the prayer. What a golden moment! What a tribute to her love and patience.

This same man was unable to sleep that night, and the following morning, in a meeting with recent converts and newly returned members, gave a loving, beautiful testimony of the gospel and pledged to be baptized in another eight days.

### **Blessings of searching out and helping less-active members**

It is exciting to see the servants of the Lord, the leaders and members, prepare as vessels of the Spirit of God to identify the families who have been distracted or have transgressed and are now less active and then to touch the hearts of these wonderful families. Yes, thousands of families are returning to the Lord. They have received in love the invitation to return, have understood the humble, loving plea, "Please come back!" They have been searched out by servants of the Lord, then have been sought out by the Spirit of the Lord and brought back as they have remembered once again the word spoken through the Lord's servants.

In these inspired visits, I do not know of a single instance where hearts of families have not been touched by the miracle of our Lord's unconditional love and his servants' caring and love.

May we assure our sometimes missing friends in the Church of our Lord's love for them and ask the Spirit of the Lord to testify through us to them of the Lord's love for them, and our love as well, and bring them back to the fold in joy.

I bear my humble witness that our leaders are inspired and receive revelation for us, that the Book of Mormon nurtures the true fountain of Christ's Spirit, and that this is the true, restored church of Jesus Christ on the earth. And I do this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Monson**

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Joseph Smith's First Prayer," following which Elder Ted E. Brewerton of the First Quorum of the Seventy will address us.

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The choir and congregation sang "Joseph Smith's First Prayer."

Elder Ted E. Brewerton spoke without further announcement.

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## **Elder Ted E. Brewerton**

My thoughts at this time will be in the form of a dialogue between me and my fourteen-year-old son, Michael, who resides with us in Argentina. I will talk about how important he is and how much the Lord and I love him. At the same time I address these critical thoughts to him, they would be the same as I would express to my son David, the eldest of my six children, or to their four beautiful sisters, my daughters, Michelle, Andrea, Leanne, and Lycia.

### **Importance of each person**

Fathers, would you like to join me and share the same thoughts as if directed to your sons and daughters, describing their singular importance in the eyes of our Heavenly Father?

Hi, Michael, you know how much I trust and love you, don't you? Let me try to show you who you are and how very important you are as a literal son of our Father in Heaven.

President Harold B. Lee said that this understanding of who we are is "of

first importance," and without it we lack "the basis of a solid foundation upon which to build [our] lives" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1973, p. 5; or *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, p. 4).

### Evidences of God

First, Mike, we know by reasoning, seeing, and the impressions of the Spirit that the Lord is a living perfect man. Many have seen him: for example, Adam, Enoch, the brother of Jared, Abraham, Moses, Joseph Smith, Isaac, Jacob, Seth, Nephi, Isaiah, Emer, Joshua, Manoh and his wife, Solomon, Sidney Rigdon, Alma, Moroni, Stephen, and John. Alma states, "Many, exceedingly great many" have seen him (Alma 13:12).

Now another evidence of God: speaking of the planets and orbs, the Lord says, "Any man who hath seen any or the least of these hath seen God moving in his majesty and power" (D&C 88:47). "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork" (Psalm 19:1).

### God's massive, orderly creation

Mike, let's visualize three scenes together.

*Scene 1.* First of all, we see before us, Michael, our solar system: our sun, together with the earth and the eight other heavenly bodies that revolve around it. We see law, beauty, order, and perfection.

*Scene 2.* Now, Michael, in this next scene, we see this same solar system in its place in our galaxy, the Milky Way. We marvel at the order and arrangement. Our planets are so small they can't be detected here, but our sun and its nine planets appear as one of these shining orbs and are situated about two-thirds of the way from the center, about thirty thousand light years from the middle of the Milky Way. Our planets move about the sun; the sun itself moves in a circular path at a speed of 130 miles per second, yet even at that speed, Mike, a complete turn around the Milky Way takes two hundred bil-

lion years. *This, our star system, has about two hundred billion blazing suns and is one hundred thousand light years wide.*

*Scene 3.* Now in this next scene, Michael, we see our galaxy, the Milky Way, in space along with other galaxies. You know, Mike, it is conservatively estimated that *there are ten billion star systems like these galaxies.* Incomprehensible? I should say! We have soared out far beyond our imagination.

What is a billion, Michael? One thousand million — that's right.

What's a definition of a million, Michael? That's good; you say a million is like your mother telling you to clean up your room 274 times every day for ten years.

How fast does light travel, Mike? That's right: 186,000 miles per second. Hold up your left fist as if it represented the earth. Now whirl your right index finger around it. If your index finger spun around it about seven times in one second, you have shown how fast light would travel around the earth.

It takes about eight minutes for light to reach the earth, and just over one second for light to reach the moon from the earth. Imagine how far light could travel in one day of 86,400 seconds. Wow! Then in one year . . . it is beyond our ability to understand.

The Lord said: "And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten. . . ."

"And the Lord God spake unto Moses, saying: The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man; but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine" (Moses 1:33, 37).

He further said:

"And were it possible that man could number the particles of the earth, yea, millions of earths like this, it would not be a beginning to the number of thy creations" (Moses 7:30).

Isn't that exciting, Mike?

From *The Amazing Universe* we read: "As the sum of knowledge grows,

the astronomer continues to seek answers to man's most profound questions: What is the grand design of the universe? How was it created? How did we get here? . . . Are we alone?" (Herbert Friedman, *The Amazing Universe* [Washington, D.C., National Geographic Society, 1975], p. 10).

We again read, "It is impossible to any sensitive person to look at a star-filled sky without being stirred by thoughts of creation and eternity" (Friedman, p. 166). "A super-giant elliptical [galaxy] may contain more than ten trillion stars, and measure 300,000 light-years across.

"*The sheer immensity of such systems suggests eternal qualities of stability and predictability*" (Friedman, p. 134; italics added). See, Mike, the scientific world sees the evidence of a supreme being.

### The heavens were created for man

With all this massive, orderly creation, are you, Michael, a single human being, important? The scriptures state:

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

"For thou has made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

"Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet" (Psalm 8:3-6).

Yes, you, Michael, are *everything*; you are *why* the heavens were created.

### Heirs to all that God has

Mike, you must realize a truth: that God knows who you are and what you may become. He knows where you are and what he expects of you.

You, Michael, are God's son, hence heir to all he has. His purpose and goal is to bring to pass *your* immortality and eternal life. You are the most

important thing that exists — his most important creation. So we must be master of our beings and control ourselves, and not be controlled by some habit or by someone else. We must be lifters and not leaners. Reach for the stars.

### "Be a remarkable one"

You, Mike, with the Lord's help, have an unlimited potential. Let's follow the perfect example of the Master, our Savior. How easy it is to have hope: "Hope is the strongest weapon in the spiritual arsenal of youth" (*Royal Bank Newsletter*, vol. 66, no. 6).

The sun is *our* star, the only source of all light and energy for us. It makes life possible.

One star — a remarkable one. There are about two hundred billion blazing *ones*, or suns, in our star system alone, and over ten billion star systems; yet one sun is a remarkable one. You, Michael, are like a sun — a remarkable *one*.

Jesus, the Redeemer, had no office or public function, yet he shaped the world's history. He wishes you to understand that you should be a remarkable *one*, for the power is in *you* to make things happen.

### Philemon Merrill — a remarkable one

Here is a true story that relates a simple experience of a nineteen-year-old who became a remarkable *one*. He was magnified and had great powers beyond his natural abilities as the Lord acted through him. There was a young nineteen-year-old admirer of Joseph Smith, Philemon Merrill, who had come with other loyal followers to rescue their prophet from the hands of sheriffs Reynolds and Wilson. While returning to Nauvoo, the company rested "in a little grove of timber." One of the lawyers for the sheriff and the kidnapers boasted of his wrestling powers. He offered a wager that he could throw any man in Illinois. Stephen Markham, a bodyguard of Joseph's and a huge man, also an

experienced wrestler, took up the challenge. The boaster threw Stephen, and a taunting shout went up from the Prophet's enemies.

As the taunts continued, Joseph Smith turned to young Philemon Merrill and said, "Get up and throw that man."

The boy was about to refuse, to excuse himself by saying he was not a wrestler, but the look in the Prophet's eye silenced his tongue. "He arose to his feet filled with the strength of a Samson." Philemon "lifted his arms" and told the lawyer to take his choice of sides.

"The man took the left side with his right hand under," which gave him a decided advantage. Philemon Merrill's friends protested, but young Philemon felt such confidence in the words of the Prophet that it made little difference to him what advantage his antagonist took. As they began to grapple, Joseph instructed him, "Philemon, when I count three, *throw him!*"

"On the instant after the word dropped from Joseph's lips," Philemon Merrill, "with the strength of a giant, threw the lawyer over his left shoulder, and he fell striking his head upon the earth."

Little wonder it is reported that "awe fell upon the opponents of the Prophet when they saw this, and there were no more challenges to wrestle during the journey" (George Q. Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1964], pp. 450-51).

### Joseph Smith — a remarkable one

Here's another example of a remarkable one, Michael.

John Taylor, in his book *The Gospel Kingdom*, relates how the one is magnified by the Spirit and makes extraordinary things happen:

"Some . . . years ago, in Far West, a mob — one of those semi-occasional occurrences — had come against us with evil intent, placing

themselves in position to give us battle. . . . We had one fellow who . . . ordered our people to retreat. As soon as Joseph heard this sound, he exclaimed, 'Retreat! where in the name of God shall we retreat to?' He then led us out to the prairie, facing the mob, and placed us in position. And the first thing we knew a flag of truce was seen coming towards us. . . .

" . . . Joseph Smith, our leader, then sent word back by this messenger. Said he, 'Tell your general to withdraw his troops or I will send them to hell.' *I thought that was a pretty bold stand to take, as we only numbered about two hundred to their thirty-five hundred.* But they thought we were more numerous than we really were. It may be that our numbers were magnified in their eyes. But they took the hint and left. . . . The Lord, through simple means, is able to take care of and deliver his people, but they must put implicit faith and confidence in him" (*The Gospel Kingdom*, sel. G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1964], pp. 354-55).

Another example of a remarkable one.

### Each person is grander than all the planets and suns

Let me quote Elder James E. Talmage, a former member of the Quorum of the Twelve: "What is man [or if I may add, what is Michael Brewerton] in this boundless setting of sublime splendor? I answer you: Potentially now, actually to be, he [or Michael] is greater and grander, more precious according to the arithmetic of God, than all the planets and suns of space. For him were they created; they are the handiwork of God; man is his son. In this world man is given dominion over a few things; it is his privilege to achieve supremacy over many things" (Aug. 9, 1931).

With the exception of the few years when the Savior graced the earth, this, Mike, is the most exciting time to live. We have the gospel in its fulness,

so many scriptures are being fulfilled, and so much history is being made. You are an important part of it.

Let me express my true feelings to you about the Church. I know, Michael, in a decisive, indelible manner — due to the Spirit — that Jesus is our Redeemer. He lives, as does his Father. He is the living Son of a living God. President Benson and the First Presidency are his living servants through whom His will is given to all the world. Watch them, Mike, listen to them, follow them. This is the only church of Jesus Christ on the earth, Michael, and you are just as important

as any human being in all history. You are of infinite worth. I love you, pal. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Monson

Elder Ted E. Brewerton of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, and he will be followed by President Howard W. Hunter, Acting President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

## Elder M. Russell Ballard

### Proclaim the gospel to all people

The Prophet Joseph Smith was often asked to inquire of the Lord to learn what people should do. In the case of John Whitmer, the Lord said, "And now, behold, I say unto you, that the thing which will be of the most worth unto you will be to declare repentance unto this people, that you may bring souls unto me, that you may rest with them in the kingdom of my Father" (D&C 15:6).

Jesus repeatedly called upon his disciples to preach the gospel to every living soul. Those who would believe were to be baptized in his name and enter into his church. After the Savior's forty-day fast and the temptation by Satan, "Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

"And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

"And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

"And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. . . .

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and

preaching the gospel of the kingdom" (Matthew 4:17-20, 23).

With loving patience, Jesus taught his disciples, and especially his twelve Apostles, to "preach the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:2). After the three years of his ministry, crowned by the Atonement, which included his glorious resurrection, Jesus gathered his eleven disciples in Galilee.

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:18-20).

These instructions were clear. When Peter, the chief Apostle, finally understood them, he became a powerful leader. For example, on the day of Pentecost, he stood "with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, . . .

"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. . . .

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath