

release. Nevertheless, it is a sacred occasion and should be characterized by solemnity and reverence.

Death is necessary for happiness

Alma's son thought that death was unfair. In his remarkable sermon on repentance, Alma taught his son about death, saying, "Now behold, it was not expedient that man should be reclaimed from this temporal death, for that would destroy the great plan of happiness" (Alma 42:8).

Alma did not say that setting mortal death aside would merely delay or disturb the plan of happiness; he said it would *destroy* it.

The words *death* and *happiness* are not close companions in mortality, but in the eternal sense they are essential to one another. Death is a mechanism of rescue. Our first parents left Eden lest they partake of the tree of life and live forever in their sins. The mortal death they brought upon themselves, and upon us, is our journey home.

Elder Robert E. Sackley

"A more excellent way"

My beloved brethren and sisters, I want to speak to you today about what I consider to be one of the greatest challenges of our times—the need to pursue "a more excellent way." It was the Apostle Paul who said, "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way" (1 Corinthians 12:31).

Why should we all seek to pursue "a more excellent way," and what does it mean? Finding "a more excellent way" means being totally converted to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and doing all that we can to fulfill those covenants we make in becoming His disciples.

Reintroduce reverence

Three elements combine in a funeral as in no other meeting: the doctrines of the gospel, the spirit of inspiration, and families gathered in tender regard for one another.

May we reintroduce the attitude of reverence each time we gather to memorialize one who has moved through the veil to that place where one day each of us will go.

No consolation in parting compares with that "peace . . . which passeth all understanding." That is fostered by reverence. Reverence, please, brothers and sisters, reverence, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us and given us wonderful instructions.

Elders Robert E. Sackley and L. Lionel Kendrick, sustained at April conference as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

The great prophet Alma, speaking of his own life and his conversion, said:

"I have repented of my sins, and have been redeemed of the Lord; behold I am born of the Spirit.

"And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters;

"And thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God" (Mosiah 27:24–26).

What it means to be converted

Being converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ means to walk in a newness of life. It means learning to yield to the Spirit and responding to the things that the Lord expects us to respond to. It means caring for and serving others with deep, considerate feelings rather than pursuing the natural desires of our own lives. In our day and time there has been a great tendency to shrug off the things of the Spirit as we become more and more involved in worldly things. We seem to be living in a world where people give little thought to others, as they are busily caring for their own needs. As followers of Christ, we must live outside ourselves and lose ourselves in service to others.

I believe we ought to remember what King Benjamin said so long ago. He said: "For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father" (Mosiah 3:19).

"Walk in newness of life"

It was the great Apostle Paul who said, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

To find that "more excellent way," brothers and sisters, we must cast aside our old selves and our old habits and ways of thinking. We must first recognize how we should change, and then we must make those changes, thus putting on the new and beginning to live as we have never lived before—walking in a newness of life.

The Apostle Paul also said, speaking of our relationship to the Lord, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised

up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

Throughout the world I personally have witnessed man's great tendency to think of himself without consideration of others. I believe with all my heart that we cannot come unto Christ unless we put on a "newness of life" in caring for those we love, in sharing the gospel, in keeping the commandments, and in honoring the covenants we have made. These are the things we must do now and better than we have ever done them before.

Study the Book of Mormon

Our great prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, has called upon each of us to read the Book of Mormon. He has not invited us to read this sacred record just to read the words. Through prayerful study of the Book of Mormon we can pursue that "more excellent way." Our prophet's motive in asking us to read the holy scripture is conveyed in the beautiful words of one of our hymns:

Abide with me; 'tis eventide.
Thy walk today with me
Has made my heart within me burn,
As I communed with thee.
Thy earnest words have filled my
soul
And kept me near thy side.
O Savior, stay this night with me;
Behold, 'tis eventide.
(*Hymns* [1985], no. 165)

Testimony and commitment

Now, to each of you, I bear my witness that you who are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are involved in a true work. This is the Lord's work. I want each of you to know that I sustain it with all my heart. I sustain those who preside over me—our great and living prophet, who is guided by our Father in Heaven, and his associates, who are indeed messengers of the Lord Jesus Christ. This work is true, and this is the way to come unto Christ and walk in newness of life!

My brothers and sisters, it has been a humbling experience for me to speak to you in this great conference. I want you to know that you have my love, my faith, and my prayers. I know that no people on earth have more capacity to be what the Lord wants them to be than those of you who are members of this great church.

I also want you to know that my life was changed more than forty years ago as I read the Book of Mormon. There is nothing on earth that has influenced me more profoundly than my testimony of

this sacred record and the work to which it belongs. It has burned within my soul over the years with ever-increasing brightness, and I find great joy and satisfaction in walking in "newness of life" in my search for the "more excellent way."

And I find great joy and satisfaction in walking that journey with a beloved companion, and now with a posterity who seem to have caught the same vision.

May you have this experience, I pray humbly, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder L. Lionel Kendrick

Communications affect the soul

Heavenly Father has given us a priceless gift in our capacity to communicate with each other. Our communications are at the core of our relationships with others. If we are to return home safely to Heavenly Father, we must develop righteous relationships with His children here in mortality.

Our communications reflect in our countenance. Therefore, we must be careful not only *what* we communicate, but also *how* we do so. Souls can be strengthened or shattered by the message and the manner in which we communicate.

Accountable for all communication

We will be held accountable for all that we say. The Savior has warned "that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36). This means that no communication shall be without consequence. This includes the slight slips of the tongue, the caustic communications that canker the soul, and the vain, vulgar, and profane words which desecrate the name of Deity.

Un-Christlike communications

There are certain kinds of un-Christlike communications which destroy relationships and are not for our development

but are for our destruction. They result in a diminished opportunity of returning home safely to Heavenly Father. One of the major ways that Satan uses to retard the development of righteous relationships is in the use of gossip, rumor, and slander on his communication network. Perhaps the more common un-Christlike communications are those of lying, blaming, criticizing, and anger.

1. Lying. The first of these communications is that of lying. To lie is to be untruthful, deceptive, deceitful, and dishonest. This is a basic communications problem which is not new; it goes back to the Garden of Eden.

Satan introduced the first recorded communications problem in the form of lying in his conversation with Eve. He asked recorded history's first question: "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Genesis 3:1).

Eve responded, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

"But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, . . . lest ye die" (vs. 2-3).

Satan, in a spirit of deception and defiance, responded, "Ye shall not surely die" (v. 4). He distorted the truth, denied the word of God, and planted the seeds of doubt about the word of Deity. Thus, Satan became the father of lies, deception, and doubt.