

Indeed, the parents could not enshroud in secrecy that which was already public knowledge; everyone in the whole area would soon know, because of the way Jesus himself had handled the successive events, that the little maid who once was dead now lived. Her death had been announced openly to the multitude. Jesus himself had replied before the multitude that, notwithstanding her death, she would "be made whole" (Luke 8:50). All the people would soon know that she now lived and could only be expected to wonder how and by what means life had come to her again.

The parents were charged to tell no man, but instead left the telling of this wondrous event to outsiders who were aware of the miracle. We as a matter of standard gospel counsel encourage that those who enjoy the gifts of the Spirit and who possess the signs which always follow those who believe are commanded not to boast of these spiritual blessings. In our day, after naming the miraculous signs that always attend those who have faith and those who believe the very truth taught by Jesus anciently, the Lord has said:

"But a commandment I give unto them, that they shall not boast themselves of these things, neither speak them before the world; for these things are given unto you for your profit and for salvation" (D&C 84:73).

Perhaps the charge to "tell no man" meant they were not to tell the account in a boastful way, lest a spirit of pride—a spirit of self-adopted superiority—should come into their souls. There were times when Jesus told the recipients of his healing power to go forth and testify of the goodness of God unto them, and other times when he limited the extent and detail of their witness.

## Everything comes from God

The many admonitions in the scriptures to avoid boasting send the message that we should realize the source of all our blessings.

Everything is given by God. All talent, creativity, ability, insight, and strength comes from him. In our own strength we can do nothing, as Ammon admitted to his brother (see Alma 26:10–12). When we seek the praise of man more than the praise of God, it will become easy to fall.

Boasting will be erased when we seek the Lord's help and thank him for all we have and are.

God help us to humbly accept his blessings of strength and guidance. The wise and committed will praise his name forever and will avoid the very appearance of any attitudes or situations that feature personal accomplishments or boastings.

I leave you my special witness of the truthfulness of this great work. All of us can more effectively share our knowledge and testimonies if we boast not. This I say in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## President Hinckley

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve has just addressed us.

Following my remarks the Tabernacle Choir will conclude this session by singing "God's Daily Care."

The benediction will then be offered by Elder Lloyd P. George of the Seventy, and this conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

## President Gordon B. Hinckley

My brethren and sisters, I sense the awesome burden of speaking to you in this great conference. Tens of thousands of you are listening with great expecta-

tion here in the Tabernacle, or in your homes, or in more than two thousand church buildings. May I say at the outset that I love you as my brethren and sisters

of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I love you for your faith and faithfulness. I love you for the integrity of your lives. I love you for your desire to live as the Lord would have you live and for the effort you are making to do so.

### We all need mercy

I know that many of you carry very heavy burdens. I know that many of you live under extreme stress. I know that you are anxious to do the right thing and that you are prayerfully trying to do so. I know also that none of us has reached that perfection we have been admonished to seek, and therefore, with only a desire to give encouragement, I take the liberty of using a text that I feel has application for each of us. It is from the sermon which Jesus gave to the multitude who gathered on the mount: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7).

We live in a world where there is so much of harshness. We live in a world filled with hostility and meanness. By reason of our human natures, so many seem prone to act with unmitigated selfishness regardless of injury to others.

I spoke one day with a young mother, a single parent who had been abandoned by her husband. With only meager skills, she was trying to make a living for her children. Broken and discouraged, she said, with tears in her eyes, "It's a rough world out there. It's a jungle without mercy."

How godlike a quality is mercy. It cannot be legislated. It must come from the heart. It must be stirred up from within. It is part of the endowment each of us receives as a son or daughter of God and partaker of a divine birthright. I plead for an effort among all of us to give greater expression and wider latitude to this instinct which lies within us. I am convinced that there comes a time, possibly many times, within our lives when we might cry out for mercy on the part of others. How can we expect it unless we have been merciful ourselves?

### Rich men and the oppressed

A parable of the Master comes to mind:

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

"And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

"And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: . . .

"And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

"And in hell he lift[ed] up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

"And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

"But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

"And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot" (Luke 16:19-26).

I plead for a stronger spirit of compassion in all of our relationships, a stronger element of mercy, for the promise is sure that if we are merciful we shall obtain mercy.

Along with you I have observed in recent months a wondrous, almost unbelievable, change in some of the nations of the earth. Dictators have fallen, and the voices of the people are heard again with a new song of freedom.

I watched on television the summary trial given one who had been a merciless despot. Now in the moment of his extremity he wished for mercy on the part of his accusers. I know nothing of the court system under which he and his wife were tried. I know only that the hearing

was short, the judgment death, and the execution quick and final. There had been no mercy shown through long years of oppression, harsh and unrelenting; and now in this hour of bitter culmination none was extended.

### Examples and teachings about mercy

Mercy is of the very essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The degree to which each of us is able to extend it becomes an expression of the reality of our discipleship under Him who is our Lord and Master.

I remind you that it was He who said, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 5:39).

It was He who said, "And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also" (5:40).

It was He who said, "And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain" (5:41).

It was He who said, "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away" (5:42).

It was He who said to the woman taken in sin:

"Where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? . . .

"Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:10-11).

It was He who, while hanging on the cross in dreadful agony, cried out, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

He, the Son of the everlasting Father, was the epitome of mercy. His ministry was one of compassion toward the poor, the sick, the oppressed, the victims of injustice and man's inhumanity to man. His sacrifice on the cross was an unparalleled act of mercy in behalf of all humanity.

How great a thing is mercy. Most often it is quiet and unassuming. It receives few headlines. It is the antithesis of vengeance and hatred, of greed and

offensive egotism. As Portia says in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*:

The quality of mercy is not  
strain'd,—

It droppeth as the gentle rain from  
heaven

Upon the place beneath: it is twice  
blest,—

It blesseth him that gives, and him  
that takes:

. . . it becomes

The throned monarch better than his  
crown;

His sceptre shows the force of  
temporal power, . . .

But mercy is above the sceptred  
sway,—

It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,  
It is an attribute to God himself.

[Act 4, scene 1, lines 184-95]

### Ending wars with mercy

If cultivated among all men, it would put an end to the atrocities of war. For all too many years now we have watched the conflict that has gone on in Northern Ireland. Surely those who have been closest to it and most affected by it must be weary of it. An outpouring of mercy on both sides would overcome the corrosive hatred that has existed and festered for so long. It is time for each side to act with greater compassion toward the other. I am confident that as surely as this happens, those who are merciful will find the mercy for which they hunger.

Of all the wars that have afflicted the United States, none was so costly in suffering and death, none so filled with venom and hatred as was the American Civil War. There are few more touching scenes in history than that of April 9, 1865, at Appomattox, Virginia, when General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant. General Grant wrote a brief statement of terms under which the soldiers of the South were free to return to their homes with their personal side arms, their private horses, and baggage.

There was no recrimination, no demand for reparations, no apologies re-

quired or punishment given. This has gone down in the chronicles of war as a great and magnificent act of mercy.

### **Society benefits from mercy**

In the story of our own people there stands out the example of Brigham Young's attitude toward the Indians. His declaration that it was "better to feed them than to fight them" evidenced not only the innate mercy of his nature, but the greater wisdom inherent in a compassionate attitude toward the less fortunate.

If I may be pardoned a personal indulgence, I find expression of this attitude in the chronicles of my own family. My grandfather, Ira Nathaniel Hinckley, was called in 1867 by Brigham Young to build a fort at Cove Creek on the road to southern Utah so that travelers might be afforded protection from the Indians. But there was never Indian trouble of any consequence because of the policy of merciful treatment toward them which was followed during the years by my grandfather when he operated that lonely outpost.

There is so much of civil strife and conflict in our society that could be ameliorated by a small touch of mercy. Much of it has reached a point where the Mosaic law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth has been enlarged to require three eyes for one eye and three teeth for one tooth. Many victims, badgered and broken, cry in vain for a touch of kindness.

We see labor strife fraught with violence and untamed accusations. Were there a greater willingness on the part of each side to look with some element of mercy on the problems of the other, most of this could be avoided.

We have recently been reminded that in this land there still persists, notwithstanding the protection of the law, a merciless exploitation of children in certain industries.

And there are still those, not a few, who without compassion "grind the faces of the poor" (Isaiah 3:15).

### **Show more kindness to others**

Our generation is afflicted with critics in the media who think they do a great and clever thing in mercilessly attacking men and women in public office and in other positions of leadership. They are prone to take a line or a paragraph out of context and pursue their prey like a swarm of killer bees. They lash out with invective and snide innuendo against those who have no effective way of fighting back or who, in the spirit of the teachings of the Master, prefer to turn the other cheek and go forward with their lives.

In many areas of the world, governments are waging a battle against illegal drugs. I do not speak negatively of the efforts of enforcement officers to curb the pernicious drug traffic. But along with this there is need for compassion toward many of the victims of drugs. Whenever we help one to find a better way, our effort becomes an act of mercy with a grateful response rather than an act of punishment followed by resentment.

The plight of the homeless is a repudiation of the greatness of our nation. I commend most warmly those who with a compelling spirit of kindness reach out to those in distress, regardless of whom they might be, to help and assist, to feed and provide for, to nurture and to bless. As these extend mercy, I am confident that the God of heaven will bless them, and their posterity after them, with His own mercy. I am satisfied that these who impart so generously will not lack in their own store, but that there will be food on their tables and a roof over their heads. One cannot be merciful to others without receiving a harvest of mercy in return.

### **Let mercy be taught in our homes**

And this brings me to another area where there is so great a need for that mercy which speaks of forbearance, kindness, clemency, compassion. I speak of the homes of the people.

Every child, with few possible exceptions, is the product of a home, be it good, bad, or indifferent. As children grow through the years, their lives, in large measure, become an extension and a reflection of family teaching. If there is harshness, abuse, uncontrolled anger, disloyalty, the fruits will be certain and discernible, and in all likelihood they will be repeated in the generation that follows. If, on the other hand, there is forbearance, forgiveness, respect, consideration, kindness, mercy, and compassion, the fruits again will be discernible, and they will be eternally rewarding. They will be positive and sweet and wonderful. And as mercy is given and taught by parents, it will be repeated in the lives and actions of the next generation.

I speak to fathers and mothers everywhere with a plea to put harshness behind us, to bridle our anger, to lower our voices, and to deal with mercy and love and respect one toward another in our homes.

### **Our responsibility is to others**

As Elder James E. Talmage once wrote: "Religion without morality, professions of godliness without charity, church-membership without adequate responsibility as to individual conduct in daily life, are but as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. . . . 'Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.' Honesty of purpose, integrity of soul, individual purity, [absolute] freedom of conscience, willingness to do good to all men even enemies, pure benevolence—these are some of the fruits by which the religion of Christ may be known, far exceeding in importance and value the promulgation of dogmas and the enunciation of theories" (*Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1924], p. 429).

In that same vein the Lord in modern revelation has enjoined us, "Succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang

down, and strengthen the feeble knees" (D&C 81:5).

And again, "Therefore, strengthen your brethren in all your conversation, in all your prayers, in all your exhortations, and in all your doings" (D&C 108:7).

We in the United States have heard much in recent months about a "kinder, gentler nation."

If there is to be such it must come of the spontaneous expression of millions of kinder, gentler human hearts.

Let us be more merciful. Let us get the arrogance out of our lives, the conceit, the egotism. Let us be more compassionate, gentler, filled with forbearance and patience and a greater measure of respect one for another. In so doing, our very example will cause others to be more merciful, and we shall have greater claim upon the mercy of God who in His love will be generous toward us.

"For behold, are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend upon the same Being, even God, for all the substance which we have, for both food and raiment, and for gold, and for silver, and for all the riches which we have of every kind? . . .

"And now, if God, who has created you, on whom you are dependent for your lives and for all that ye have and are, doth grant unto you whatsoever ye ask that is right, . . . O then, how ye ought to impart of the substance that ye have one to another" (Mosiah 4:19, 21).

### **Those who show mercy obtain mercy**

So spoke King Benjamin. To which I add that the power of the Master is certain and His word is sure. He will keep His promise toward those who are compassionate. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7).

I am confident that a time will come for each of us when, whether because of sickness or infirmity, of poverty or distress, of oppressive measures against us by man or nature, we shall wish for mercy. And if, through our lives, we have granted mercy to others, we shall obtain it for ourselves.

"For thus saith the Lord—I, the Lord, am *merciful* and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.

"Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory" (D&C 76:5-6; italics added).

Of these things I bear witness as I testify that God our Eternal Father lives, that He is a God of mercy, that His Son

gave His life in a great merciful atonement for each of us, and that we shall be the beneficiaries of that mercy as we extend it to others, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The choir sang "God's Daily Care."  
Elder Lloyd P. George offered the benediction.

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## SECOND DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The fifth session of the 160th Annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, April 1, 1990. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Jerold Ottley conducting and Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Monson made the following remarks as the meeting began:

### President Thomas S. Monson

President Ezra Taft Benson, who has presided at all sessions of this conference, has asked that I conduct this fifth and concluding session of the 160th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled in the Tabernacle and to those seated in the Assembly Hall, where Elders Russell M. Nelson and Vaughn J. Featherstone and Bishop Glenn L. Pace are seated on the stand.

We send also our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and

many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, cable, or by satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, directed by Jerold Ottley and accompanied by Robert Cundick, will begin this service by singing "Great Is the Lord."

The invocation will be offered by Elder Glen L. Rudd of the Seventy.

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The choir sang "Great Is the Lord."  
Elder Glen L. Rudd offered the invocation.

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### President Monson

The choir will now sing "Of the Father's Love Begotten."

Following the singing, Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our first speaker.

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The choir sang "Of the Father's Love Begotten."

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## Elder Dallin H. Oaks

Some years ago, an acquaintance of mine who was moving to Washington, D.C., went to the district offices to take

the driver's license examination. He had to fill out a form that asked for his business address and his occupation. He had