

**President Monson**

We have just heard from Sister Barbara W. Winder and Sister Elaine Jack.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," following which we shall be pleased to hear from Elders

Horacio A. Tenorio and Merlin R. Lybbert of the Seventy.

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**Elder Horacio A. Tenorio****Heavenly Father's plan**

Our Heavenly Father loves us dearly and watches over us in all our needs and cares, following us through life step by step.

He established the plan for us as His children to come to earth and to continue our progress which we began at His side. When we were with him, we enjoyed his teachings, his counsel, and even his reprimands, like children whose parents watch over and guide them carefully.

As his children, we attained a degree of knowledge wherein our Father decided that we needed another sphere and another means to continue progressing, exercising our free agency and making our own decisions beyond His presence.

But not having Him with us does not mean that He has left us alone. He is concerned about each of us during this probationary period. He provided us a Savior, a Redeemer, a Shepherd. He has also given us the opportunity of having a constant companion, the Holy Ghost, and the scriptures and teachings of living prophets.

**Life's teachings and experiences**

We are not alone. He attempts to teach us in all things. Many, many such teachings come to us from each and every creature in creation. A tiny ant teaches us about industriousness and hard work. A bee teaches us about organization and foresight. We learn additional lessons from flowers, plants, and all of nature. We only need to open up an en-

cyclopedia or a textbook and we will discover wonderful things about the great works of our Heavenly Father. All of these things will help us in one way or another to direct our lives along the proper path.

But the most important teachings, aside from the scriptures, we receive through our own lives and experiences. These are the most important because they affect us directly and they touch us personally. In fact, those which teach us the most are those which are the most difficult challenges or trials for us as individuals. This is when, if we are susceptible to the Spirit and have faith, we can see the hand of God reaching out personally to each of his children.

**We learn from obstacles**

Problems form an important part of our lives. They are placed in our path for us to overcome them, not to be overcome by them. We must master them, not let them master us. Every time we overcome a challenge, we grow in experience, in self-assuredness, and in faith.

In the 100-meter hurdles race, runners must jump over hurdles placed in their path. The hurdles are not there so that a runner will come to them and stop and, discouraged, go back to the starting line. They are not there to make him crash. The beauty and excitement of this race is to jump over the hurdles, to overcome the obstacles.

If we understand the importance of the obstacles in our individual lives, we begin to see them in a positive light as true challenges to overcome.

Young people on a mission learn this. I have seen many of them bear their testimonies as they leave their missions, thankful for "wonderful problems."

### The purpose of challenges

Challenges are true opportunities to obtain blessings which are received by overcoming, through faith, and by discerning what the Spirit and the Savior want to teach us.

Many people complain or murmur when trials, illness, accidents, loss of employment, or death come. They say, "Why me? This isn't fair," or they become so depressed that they suffer breakdowns from which it is difficult to recover.

Another reason for our trials is taught in Doctrine and Covenants 29:39: "And it must needs be that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves; for if they never should have bitter they could not know the sweet."

### Learning from hard trials

A short time ago, our family had the opportunity to be taught. It was a painful trial, but it became a sweet experience. Last December my wife and I were together with our three daughters. The oldest is married and lives in the state of Delaware. She came to visit us with her husband and three little children. The youngest of her children is David, fifteen months old, who is also the youngest of our four grandchildren. The days of their visit were beautiful and unforgettable. We enjoyed ourselves immensely as a family, and it was an opportunity to get to know David, whom we had only seen at birth. David is an extremely sweet child, the best I have ever known. He never cries, even when sick or in pain. He is independent but very loving—a special spirit.

Those days together came to an end, and my daughter's family returned home. Two days after they arrived, tragically

David had to be taken to the hospital, and four hours later he died.

My wife and I immediately left to be with our children at this difficult time. We flew all night, and it was painful for us to talk about what had happened. We spent long waking hours in thought and prayer. I didn't know how I could comfort our children. What could I say when I, myself, felt such deep pain? So I prayed a great deal, and a loving Father came to my aid. The answers came one by one at the appropriate time, fulfilling the Lord's promise: "Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me" (D&C 19:23).

We met our children, who were in deep mourning. They were suffering so intensely that their pain did not allow them to see the purposes and teachings. They are faithful members of the Church, but as young people they never expected anything so devastating.

My wife and I shared the answers that we had, and they, upon understanding and accepting them, began to receive further answers, additional teachings which brought peace to their hearts.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, if you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things.

"Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?" (D&C 6:22–23).

The sense of pain and suffering diminished, leaving in its place sweet feelings from the Spirit.

I was amazed at the way our children went through the difficulty of the funeral with such calmness and sweetness. They showed great strength and even comforted other relatives and friends.

### We can always rely on God's love

How was this wonderful change made possible?

Because we realize that God lives and, as our Father, he loves us. He

doesn't want us to suffer any harm. If David went away, it was because as a special spirit he had no need to remain longer in this life. We realize that David is needed in another place. It was a blessing to know him and to have him in our family. We have not lost him; we will be able to see him again. We should remember fondly the time that we spent with David. He taught us what it means to be pure and clean before God, and he is an example for all of us. We need to place our lives in proper perspective in order to be worthy to see him again. Because of him, we think more about life beyond the veil and have been taught to recognize what is truly important in this life and the

life to come—keeping our families united eternally.

So many blessings, so many teachings! We changed and grew during that time. How grateful we are to our Father in Heaven for this experience.

A few days after David left us, my daughter learned that she was pregnant again. So much love from our Father! Additional teachings. I testify that our teacher, our Shepherd, is Christ, our best friend, who clears up all our doubts. He heals our wounds and turns our pain into sweet experiences. I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder Merlin R. Lybbert

My dear brothers and sisters, there is a feeling of deep appreciation in my soul this afternoon as we worship together. On behalf of the members of the Church in Asia, where we are now serving, I extend their love to President Benson, to the other leaders that they have come to know and love, and to all of the members of the Church everywhere. It is a joy to serve among them.

I also express my love and appreciation to my family and my aging parents for their unswerving support.

### How we gain eternal life

When I measure myself against the enormity of the work before us, an overwhelming sense of humility washes over me. I have come to know that the work of the salvation of mankind is beyond the capacity of any man. It is indeed the work of God.

One of the best-known parables of the Savior is the story we have come to know as the good Samaritan. As related by Luke, a certain lawyer tempted Jesus, saying, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25).

In New Testament times a lawyer was the "equivalent [of a] 'scribe,' . . .

who was by profession a student and teacher of the law, including the written law of the Pentateuch, and also 'the traditions of the elders'" (Bible Dictionary, s.v. *Lawyer*).

This learned man sought either to test the Lord concerning His knowledge of the law or to display his own. The Savior responded with a question: "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" (Luke 10:26).

The scholar responded, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (10:27).

Jesus said unto him, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live" (10:28).

The answer to the inquiry was solicited from his own mouth through the questioning of the Lord, who then directed him to live in accordance with what he knew. However, the scholar was not satisfied with so simple a response. Luke records that the learned man, "willing to justify himself," asked a further question of the Lord, "Who is my neighbour?" (10:29). And Jesus answered by telling a story:

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among