

the lives of those who were caring for them unnecessarily, making life miserable for all. They thrive on sympathy, which is generally very low in nourishment. To know just how far to press the handicapped when physical and emotional pain are involved may be the most difficult part for those who serve them. Nevertheless, as the Prophet Joseph Smith said, "There must be decision of character, aside from sympathy" (*History of the Church*, 4:570).

Think of this: Unless we die prematurely, every one of us may end up both physically and mentally handicapped. We would do well to make advance payments of service and compassion on which we may draw when that time comes.

Why not help the parents who have extra things to do and extra expenses and are confined because of a handicapped family member. Encourage the teachers and social workers who show such devotion to them. And it wouldn't hurt you to donate a few dollars or a few hours to one of the many organizations which help the handicapped. If we do this, without the slightest idea of selfishness, it will remain in our account against that time when we may need help. And the works of God will be made manifest in our lives.

After tribulation come the blessings

"Ye cannot behold with your natural eyes, for the present time, the design of your God concerning those things which shall come hereafter, and

the glory which shall follow after much tribulation.

"For after much tribulation come the blessings. Wherefore the day cometh that ye shall be crowned with much glory; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand" (D&C 58:3-4).

I bear witness of the restoration which will come. Each body and mind will be restored in perfect frame. However long and unfair mortality may seem, however long the suffering and the waiting may be, he has said:

"After that cometh the day of my power; then shall the poor, the lame, and the blind, and the deaf, come in unto the marriage of the Lamb, and partake of the supper of the Lord, prepared for the great day to come.

"Behold, I, the Lord, have spoken it" (D&C 58:11-12).

I am a witness of the condition of those who have gone beyond the veil, and we all have reason to glorify him who is our Father and him who is our Redeemer, of whom I bear witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "Praise Ye the Lord" without announcement.

President Monson

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us, followed by the Mormon Youth Chorus singing "Praise Ye the Lord."

Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder Dean L. Larsen

We welcome the Brethren whom you have sustained this morning as new members of the Seventies Quorums. They are men of faith and devotion

with a broad background of experience in Church leadership. Their call is a reflection of the continuing growth of the Church worldwide.

Beware lest thou forget the Lord

As the tribes of ancient Israel prepared to cross over Jordan to enter the land of Canaan, Moses gave them his final counsel and instructions. They were about to enter a land that Joshua and Caleb had described as “a land which floweth with milk and honey” (Numbers 14:8). It would be a dramatic change in the circumstances of Israel. For a full generation they had known only the desolation of the desert places, depending upon the Lord for their daily subsistence.

Moses felt some concern for the capacity of his people to cope with the abrupt transition they were about to experience. “Hear, O Israel,” he said. “Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven” (Deuteronomy 9:1).

“And it shall be, when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not,

“And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full;

“Then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage” (Deuteronomy 6:10–12).

Abundance can be a great test

The concerns expressed by Moses for his people have been repeated by other prophet leaders through all of the gospel dispensations. It has seemed that one of the inevitable side effects that occurs as people apply gospel principles in their lives is that their material circumstances also improve. This

does not suggest that it should be the right nor the expectation of all who accept the gospel of Jesus Christ to become wealthy in the possession of the world's goods. The Lord has made it clear, however, that when his people are obedient, he desires to bless them with the necessities and the comforts of life so that none should live in want.

To the Prophet Joseph Smith the Lord said:

“I have made the earth rich, and behold it is my footstool, wherefore, again I will stand upon it.

“And I hold forth and deign to give unto you greater riches, even a land of promise, a land flowing with milk and honey, upon which there shall be no curse when the Lord cometh” (D&C 38:17–18).

Historically, the abundance with which the Lord has blessed his people has proved to be one of their greatest tests. The cycles of their acquiring worldly wealth and their subsequent spiritual decline are well documented in scriptural and historical records.

Moses' counsel about prosperity

Moses' concern for his people proved to be justified in the years following their entry into the land of Canaan. It was when they became settled in this goodly land that they began to take their abundance for granted and to forget the real source of these blessings. Moses had counseled them:

“For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills;

“A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey;

“A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.

“When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee.

“Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day:

“Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein;

“And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied;

“Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. . . .

“And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth” (Deuteronomy 8:7–14, 17).

Brigham Young’s concern about riches

Not long after the early Latter-day Saints had entered the Salt Lake Valley, and as they struggled in their poverty to establish homes and to survive in a land that had been a wilderness, reports came of the discovery of gold in northern California. The news spread to all parts of the country, and fortune hunters passing through the Salt Lake area en route to the gold fields spoke of their hopes for striking it rich in the newly discovered bonanza. It was a great temptation to some of the Saints who were so destitute in their own circumstances.

Brigham Young, sensing feelings that circulated among some of the people, said: “I hope that the gold mines will be no nearer than 800 miles. . . . Prosperity and riches blunt the feelings of man” (Journal History of the Church, 8 July 1849).

And then, in his customary candor, he added at a later time: “The worst fear I have about this people is that they will get rich in this country, forget God and His people, wax fat, and kick themselves out of the Church and go to hell. This people will stand mobbing, robbing, poverty, and all manner of persecution, and be true. But my greater fear . . . is that they cannot stand wealth” (in James S. Brown, *Life of a Pioneer* [Salt Lake City: Geo. Q. Cannon and Sons Co., 1900], pp. 122–23).

In his inspired wisdom, President Young felt some of the same apprehensions for his people that Moses had felt for the tribes of Israel.

Jacob’s counsel about riches

Brigham Young’s counsel to the early Saints reflects the sentiments expressed by Jacob in the Book of Mormon. These men felt there was nothing inherently wrong in acquiring wealth. The danger lay in its obscuring the need for acknowledging the Lord’s hand in these blessings, and in failing to use the abundance to bless others and to accomplish the Lord’s purposes. Jacob said:

“Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you.

“But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God.

“And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted” (Jacob 2:17–19).

The coveting of wealth so often has resulted in avarice, dishonesty, and greed. The acquisition of wealth has frequently produced pride, self-satisfaction, and arrogance.

The Nephite cycle of prosperity

An episode during the time of Alma in the Book of Mormon illustrates the cycle that has so often occurred when people are blessed materially by the Lord and then turn away from him. In the instance referred to, the Nephite people were struggling to overcome the effects of a devastating civil strife and a Lamanite invasion.

Not only had there been great loss of life; the destruction to lands and to property had been sufficient to seriously jeopardize the prospects of recovery. Alma describes conditions in these words:

“But the people were afflicted, yea, greatly afflicted for the loss of their brethren, and also for the loss of their flocks and herds, and also for the loss of their fields of grain, which were trodden under foot and destroyed. . . .

“And so great were their afflictions that every soul had cause to mourn; and they believed that it was the judgments of God sent upon them because of their wickedness and their abominations; therefore they were awakened to a remembrance of their duty.

“And they began to establish the church more fully; yea, and many were baptized in the waters of Sidon and were joined to the church of God” (Alma 4:2-4).

This spiritual reawakening among the people had a dramatic effect. Peace returned to the land. The Church prospered in its rapid growth. Not surprisingly, the people soon began again to enjoy an abundant life.

The spiritual blessings granted by the Lord were accompanied by the acquisition of material wealth. Unfortunately, the Nephites failed to meet this test. Within three years from the time of their earlier tragedy, Alma describes his people in this way: “The people of the church began to wax proud, be-

cause of their exceeding riches, and their fine silks, and their fine-twined linen, and because of their many flocks and herds, and their gold and their silver, and all manner of precious things, which they had obtained by their industry; and in all these things were they lifted up in the pride of their eyes” (Alma 4:6).

Counsel about material prosperity

History repeatedly confirms that the abundance of earthly possessions can be both a blessing and a curse, depending upon the way these things are viewed and used. When we consume them on our own lust, we invoke tragedy.

Wealth is a relative thing. Conditions vary dramatically from place to place in the world today. That which some consider to be the necessities of life, to others would be abundance, and even extravagance. In any set of circumstances, the challenges related to an improvement in material prosperity remain the same. The message that echoes to us from the pages of history and from the counsels of the Lord and his prophets is clear:

- Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven.
- Seek not for riches to consume them on your own lusts.
- Thou shalt not covet.
- Clothe the naked.
- Feed the hungry.
- Relieve the sick and the afflicted.
- Pay tithes and offerings.
- In all things acknowledge the Lord.
- Be grateful.
- Be humble.

The words of Moses to the tribes of Israel have appropriate application for us:

“Fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, . . . thou, and thy son, and thy

son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged.

"Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey" (Deuteronomy 6:2-3).

And "when thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good . . . which he hath given thee" (Deuteronomy 8:10). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the Quorums of the Seventy, has spoken to us.

The chorus and congregation will now join in singing "Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel," following which we shall hear from Elder F. Burton Howard of the Seventy.

The chorus and congregation sang "Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel."

Elder F. Burton Howard

"Pass it on"

While you will not remember, the last time I stood at this pulpit I spoke about repentance. I have elected to do so again.

In a school yard game, young boys sometimes form a circle, and one hits another on the shoulder and says, "Pass it on." The one who receives the blow obediently transmits it to the next in line and says, "Pass it on." The third recipient promptly punches a fourth, and each in succession thereafter, by "passing it on," tries to rid himself of his pain, and the responsibility for it, by inflicting it on another.

Many of us are like these school-boys. Perhaps without realizing it, as adults we continue to play the same childish game and risk far more than a bruised shoulder in the process. Let me explain what I mean.

Don't blame others for disobedience

Unwillingness to accept the responsibility for and consequences of one's actions is an all too common condition in today's world. Who has not heard of the drunken driver who sues

his host for allowing him to get drunk, or of the accident victim who claims damages from the physician who tries to help him? Perpetrators of the most heinous crimes often plead guilty by reason of insanity or claim that they are victims of society's ills. The homeless blame alcohol. Alcoholics blame genetic deficiencies. Abusers and adulterers blame the broken homes of their childhood. And there are enough who agree with them to ensure that no one need feel terribly guilty for long if they don't want to.

The habit of shifting the burden of guilt onto someone else, while perhaps understandable in a secular setting, has more serious consequences in a spiritual one. There too it has an ancient but not honorable tradition.

Cain blamed God when his sacrifice was not accepted. "I was wroth," he said, "for his offering thou didst accept and not mine" (Moses 5:38).

Laman and Lemuel blamed Nephi for nearly all their troubles (see 1 Nephi 16:35-38). Pilate blamed the Jews when he condoned the crucifixion of the Savior, in whom he found "no fault" (Luke 23:4; see also Matthew 27:24).