

And if we should have occasion to say: "Lord, when saw we thee an hungry, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?"—then I am certain we will hear this reply: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:37-40).

### Love others to secure peace

We need a more peaceful world, growing out of more peaceful families and neighborhoods and communities. To secure and cultivate such peace, "we must love others, even our enemies as well as our friends." The world needs the gospel of Jesus Christ. Those who are filled with the love of Christ do not seek to force others to do better; they inspire others to do better, indeed inspire them to the pursuit of God. We need to extend the hand of friendship. We need to be kinder, more gentle,

more forgiving, and slower to anger. We need to love one another with the pure love of Christ. May this be our course and our desire.

I add my witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world, and that this is his Church, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The choir sang "The Earth Is the Lord's" without announcement.

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### President Hinckley

Thank you, President Hunter, for your moving remarks. The choir has sung "The Earth Is the Lord's."

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Let Us All Press On," following which we shall hear from Bishop Robert D. Hales, the Presiding Bishop of the Church.

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The choir and congregation sang "Let Us All Press On."

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## Bishop Robert D. Hales

### Gratitude for the goodness of God

A few months ago I had an experience that took me to the very edge of this mortal existence. As many of you know, I suffered a heart attack last August. I had the opportunity of knowing firsthand of the healing strength that comes through united prayer. For that I will always be grateful. Thank you for your prayers and for your concern. Your kindness to me lifted my spirits and aided in the healing process. I have been greatly blessed with improving health and strength.

Throughout that experience there is one particular feeling that began in-

side of me almost immediately and intensified as time went on and became overpowering during my illness and during my recovery and remains with me still. I became overwhelmed with a feeling of deep gratitude for the goodness of God.

### Gratitude for the Atonement

My deepest gratitude is for the atoning sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The Atonement is the foundation upon which all gospel truths reside.

The Savior tells us:

"I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

"And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross" (3 Nephi 27:13-14).

The Prophet Joseph Smith recorded "that he came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness; That through him all might be saved" (D&C 76:41-42).

I bear my testimony in all gratitude for the knowledge that our Savior lives, that he was resurrected, that there is a redemption and a salvation through the Atonement for all mankind—that all will be resurrected. I am thankful for that knowledge.

#### Show gratitude through obedience

The Lord said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Our obedience to the laws, ordinances, and commandments is the greatest expression of love and gratitude that we can bestow upon him.

#### Gratitude for repentance

Gratitude is also the foundation upon which repentance is built.

The Atonement brought mercy through repentance to balance justice. How thankful I am for the doctrine of repentance. Repentance is essential to salvation. We are mortal—we are not perfect—we will make mistakes. When we make mistakes and do not repent, we suffer.

The prophet Mormon taught us that he saw people sorrowing, thinking it was repentance; but then he taught us, "Behold this my joy was vain, for their sorrowing was not unto repentance, *because of the goodness of God*; but it was rather the sorrowing of the damned, because the Lord would not

always suffer them to take happiness in sin" (Mormon 2:13; italics added).

Mormon teaches us that there will always be suffering and sorrow in sin, but to repent only because we feel bad or because we have suffered or because we are sorrowful does not show that we understand the goodness of God.

The point I would like to make is that when we express thankfulness to God and to his Son, Jesus Christ, we base our faith and repentance upon their forgiveness and their goodness.

#### Jesus' expressions of gratitude

How grateful I am for the scriptures, which give examples of Jesus' expressing thanks to his Heavenly Father.

At the Last Supper, "the Lord Jesus the same night . . . he was betrayed took bread: And *when he had given thanks*, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you" (1 Corinthians 11:23-24; italics added). "And he took the cup, *and when he had given thanks*, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it" (Mark 14:23; italics added).

Like the Savior, it is important for each of us to prepare ourselves to give thanks for the atoning sacrifice each week as we partake of the sacrament.

The story of Lazarus is of great significance to me as I have studied the goodness of Jesus.

Mary greeted Jesus. Her brother, Lazarus, had died. Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her were also weeping. Jesus, in great compassion, "groaned in the spirit, and was troubled" (John 11:33). Jesus asked, "Where have ye laid him?" (11:34). "Jesus wept" (11:35).

"Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, *I thank thee that thou hast heard me*" (11:41; italics added).

And then Jesus asked Lazarus to come forth from the dead (see 11:43).

Might it be well for us to remember to give thanks to our Heavenly Father prior to asking for his help in solving our problems?

John 6:5–14 beautifully tells the account of Jesus and the five loaves and two fishes:

“And Jesus took the loaves; *and when he had given thanks*, he distributed to the disciples” (John 6:11; italics added).

On another occasion the disciples of Jesus prayed earnestly for the Holy Ghost. And when they were filled with the Holy Ghost, Jesus “bowed himself to the earth, and he said:

“Father, *I thank thee* that thou hast given the Holy Ghost unto these whom I have chosen; and it is because of their belief in me that I have chosen them out of the world.

“Father, I pray thee that thou wilt give the Holy Ghost unto all them that shall believe in their words” (3 Nephi 19:19–21; italics added).

### Express gratitude through prayer

Prayer is an essential part of conveying appreciation to our Heavenly Father. He awaits our expressions of gratefulness each morning and night in sincere, simple prayer from our hearts for our many blessings, gifts, and talents.

Through expression of prayerful gratitude and thanksgiving, we show our dependence upon a higher source of wisdom and knowledge—God the Father and his Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are taught to “live in thanksgiving daily” (Alma 34:38).

“O how you ought to thank your heavenly King!” King Benjamin taught (Mosiah 2:19).

### Gratitude for parents and family

As the years pass I become more grateful for my parents. They lived the gospel, studied the scriptures, and bore

testimony of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. They also bore testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Even as a child it was through their teachings and example that I received an absolute knowledge of the existence of eternal life with our goal to return with honor, as a family, into the presence of our Heavenly Father.

Among the lessons taught me by my father was gratitude for what it meant to be a General Authority. Some years ago Father, then over eighty years of age, was expecting a visit from a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on a snowy winter day. Father, an artist, had painted a picture of the home of the Apostle. Rather than have the painting delivered to him, this sweet Apostle wanted to go personally to pick the painting up and thank my father for it. Knowing that Father would be concerned that everything was in readiness for the forthcoming visit, I dropped by his home. Because of the depth of the snow, snowplows had caused a snowbank in front of the walkway to the front door. Father had shoveled the walks and then labored to remove the snowbank. He returned to the house exhausted and in pain. When I arrived, he was experiencing heart pain from overexertion and stressful anxiety. My first concern was to warn him of his unwise physical efforts. Didn't he know what the result of his labor would be?

“Robert,” he said through interrupted short breaths, “do you realize an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ is coming to my home? The walks must be clean. He should not have to come through a snowdrift.” He raised his hand, saying, “Oh, Robert, don't ever forget or take for granted the privilege it is to know and to serve with Apostles of the Lord.”

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve with the Lord's anointed and for the opportunity to give testimony of

those who have been called to lead us as prophets, seers, and revelators in this dispensation.

I am also grateful for my counselors who serve with me and for the Seventy and for all the priesthood and auxiliary leaders throughout the Church for their faithfulness. I am grateful for my father's example of love and caring for my mother. In his eighties he taught us that he would be leaving us and joining Mother, who had passed on before him, and that he wanted us to live worthily to reunite in heaven and become an eternal family. For these teachings we, his children, are grateful.

I am thankful for a mother who was devoted to her husband and children—a mother who taught by example. I am thankful for her dedicated service in the Relief Society for over thirty years. At the age of sixteen, upon receiving my driver's license, I was privileged to learn from her as she took me along when she assisted the bishop in caring for the poor and the needy.

I am thankful for a brother and sister who love the Lord and have remained true and faithful. I express my love for their caring ways these past six decades.

I love my dear companion, Mary, my two sons, Steven and David, and their families. May I express appreciation for all the joy they have brought into my life. A colleague some years ago told me that my greatest asset was my dear wife, Mary. Of that fact I give public appreciation for what she has meant in my life.

Those who are blessed to have their companions, their mothers and their fathers, their brothers and their sisters, sons and daughters with them in this earthly existence, please express your love for them and gratitude to them while you can on this side of the veil.

### **Give thanks for blessings**

We must remember to give thanks to our Heavenly Father for the blessings and gifts that have been given to us.

"And ye must give thanks unto God in the Spirit for whatsoever blessing ye are blessed with" (D&C 46:32).

"And all these gifts come from God, for the benefit of the children of God" (D&C 46:26).

As the Presiding Bishop, I am grateful for the members of this Church who so willingly give of their time, their means, and their talents through tithes and offerings and through acts of compassionate service. What a wonderful example they set for their children and for their neighbors. It would be well to also give thanks for the youth of this Church, for their faithfulness. They are indeed a royal generation, preparing as they and their children and grandchildren prepare for the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Gratitude is a state of appreciation, an act of thanksgiving, which causes us to be humble because we recognize an act of kindness, service, or caring from someone else which lifts us and strengthens us.

Ingratitude is the attitude of being unaware or not recognizing when someone has assisted us or helped us or, even worse, when we know we have been helped and have not given thanks privately or publicly.

### **Gratitude brings peace and healing**

In some quiet way the expression and feelings of gratitude have a wonderful cleansing or healing nature. Gratitude brings warmth to the giver and the receiver alike.

Gratitude expressed to our Heavenly Father in prayer for what we have brings a calming peace—a peace which allows us to not canker our souls for what we don't have. Gratitude brings a

peace that helps us overcome the pain of adversity and failure. Gratitude on a daily basis means we express appreciation for what we have now without qualification for what we had in the past or desire in the future. A recognition of and appreciation for our gifts and talents which have been given also allows us to acknowledge the need for help and assistance from the gifts and talents possessed by others.

### Thank the Lord in all things

Gratitude is a divine principle:

“Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things” (D&C 59:7).

This scripture means that we express thankfulness for what happens, not only for the good things in life but also for the opposition and challenges of life that add to our experience and faith. We put our lives in his hands,

realizing that all that transpires will be for our experience.

When in prayer we say, “Thy will be done,” we are really expressing faith and gratitude and acknowledging that we will accept whatever happens in our lives.

That we may feel true gratitude for the goodness of God for all the blessings that have been given to us and express those feelings of thankfulness in prayer to our Heavenly Father, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

Bishop Robert D. Hales, Presiding Bishop of the Church, has just spoken to us.

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us.

## Elder Boyd K. Packer

I have been a General Authority for over thirty years and a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles for twenty-two. During those years I have interviewed I don't know how many, surely thousands, of members of the Church and have talked with them in intimate terms of their worthiness, their sorrow, and their happiness. I mention that only in the hope that the credential of experience may persuade you to consider matters which have us deeply worried.

### Moral environment

Today I speak to members of the Church as an environmentalist. My message is not on the *physical* but on the *moral and spiritual* environment in which we must raise our families. As we test the *moral* environment, we find the *pollution* index is spiraling upward.

The Book of Mormon depicts humanity struggling through a “mist of darkness” and defines the darkness as the “temptations of the devil” (1 Nephi 8:23; 12:17). So dense was that *moral pollution* that many followed “strange roads” and “fell away into forbidden paths and were lost” (1 Nephi 8:28; see 8:23–32).

The deliberate pollution of the fountain of life now clouds our moral environment. The gift of mortal life and the capacity to kindle other lives is a supernal blessing. Its worth is *incalculable!*

### The spiritual environment

The rapid, sweeping deterioration of values is characterized by a preoccupation—even an obsession—with the procreative act. Abstinence before marriage and fidelity within it are openly scoffed at, marriage and parent-