

no criticism of leaders, if they heed the Word of Wisdom, if they cheerfully pay their tithes and offerings, if they honor covenants made in the temple, and if other commandments are lived and taught, children will receive a priceless foundation. Sons and daughters will treat their wives and husbands in the future as they see their parents treat each other. We can indeed make our home a bit of heaven here, as President McKay stated. We also set the groundwork for our children's homes to be so too.

I love my wife, Marilyn, so very much and am so grateful for her, for the years we have had together, and for her love given to me in so many ways. She is a marvelous wife and mother and grandmother and a faithful servant of the Lord in her own right. My daily prayer includes feelings of gratitude for her and a plea that I might be the kind of husband that I should be and want to be. I'm grateful for

our children and our grandchildren and the love that we share together.

I bear my witness that God and Jesus Christ live and that if we will love them and keep their commandments and love each other—particularly our companions and our children—we will be happier here and more secure eternally. I'm grateful for these great Brethren who lead us, and I testify of their sacred callings. I'm grateful for and humbled by the opportunity and blessing of serving with them. I pray for them and for each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### President Monson

Elder Albert Choules Jr. of the Seventy has spoken to us.

Sister Elaine L. Jack, general president of the Relief Society, will now speak to us, and she will be followed by Elder Malcolm S. Jeppsen of the Seventy.

## Sister Elaine L. Jack

I stand before you today grateful for our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, grateful for this gospel, grateful for the priesthood that blesses our lives and for the goodness of all of you. This gathering of Saints at general conference reminds me of the joyous proclamation "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isaiah 6:3). Righteous Saints are the glory of God, and there are mighty legions gathered here and in many lands.

#### "Walk with me"

Before we came to this earth, we shouted for joy at the opportunity to take this leap of faith in our eternal progression. When we were baptized, we stepped firmly onto the path to eternal life. The prophet Nephi said:

"After ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? . . . Nay; for ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him. . . .

"Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ. . . .

". . . Behold, . . . this is the way" (2 Nephi 31:19-21).

How do we press forward on the straight and narrow way? How do we focus on our eternal progression when we live in a world that demands such attention to daily tasks? How do we remain steadfast when so much around us is laden with sin? The people in Enoch's day faced these same challenges. Enoch began his ministry preaching to an unrighteous audience, but the people softened their hearts and heeded the words of the Lord to "walk with me" (Moses 6:34).

So can we.

## The journey of eternal progression

Our eternal progression on that straight and narrow path in the company of the Lord Jesus Christ is the focus of my message today. This is a journey made up of many steps. Our progress on this journey is determined by recognizing the straight and narrow path, having an eternal perspective, and acting accordingly.

Remember, our eternal progression is the very essence of our earthly existence. It is the Lord's plan to get us all the way home to our Father in Heaven. This I know: Each of us can get there from here.

President Spencer W. Kimball promised, "It may seem a little difficult at first, but when a person begins to catch a vision of the true work, when he begins to see something of eternity in its true perspective, the blessings begin to far outweigh the cost of leaving 'the world behind'" ("The False Gods We Worship," *Ensign*, June 1976, p. 6).

## The straight and narrow path

Some of our steps come in learning that the path is indeed straight and narrow. The concept of a straight path intrigues me. So often we go around in a circle, spinning our spiritual wheels while only our temporal treads hit the road. That seems out of step and out of balance with the way the Lord intended. We have knowledge and spiritual power; such momentum far exceeds anything the world has to offer. Putting off until tomorrow is to fall behind, step backward, and open the door to the subtle influences of Satan. "There is no such thing as standing still in the eternal work of our God" (George Q. Cannon, *Mil-lennial Star*, 23 Feb. 1899, p. 117).

Elder Neal A. Maxwell has said: "There are no separate paths back to that heavenly home. Just one straight and narrow way, at the end of which,

though we arrive trailing tears, we shall at once be 'drenched in joy'" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1978, p. 15; or *Ensign*, May 1978, p. 11).

Indeed, the path is not soft, green grass; it is not without hardship and heartache. It is often an uphill climb strewn with rocks, many of them in the shape of mighty boulders. We can't predict what our challenges will be because our lives are all different. Though the path is narrow, our moves are not scripted. There are diversions which attempt to lure us from the straight and narrow. It is our covenants that are the road signs to eternal life. Just as it is more difficult to read the signs on the main road from a side street, so too it is more difficult to hear the still, small voice warning of rough road ahead when we have distanced ourselves from our covenants.

## Develop spirituality

When the Lord says "walk with me" (Moses 6:34), He is asking us to become more spiritual by being obedient to His word. Developing spirituality is critical to our eternal progress.

Our prophet has spoken for the Lord in our day, and his messages have been explicit: rid your heart of pride; read the Book of Mormon every day. In following that counsel, I discover new insights suddenly appearing in my Book of Mormon which are so pertinent to my immediate needs.

We've been given tools to develop that spirituality. We are told to attend Church meetings, work hard in callings, go to the temple, be generous in offerings to the Lord, hold family home evening, and visit one another. But simply being there does not sanctify us; statistics do not drive eternal progression. Still, we cannot ignore that being in the right place at the right time will put us in a frame of mind to learn, in an

environment where the Lord's influence is invited and strong.

Alma described what happens when we are not only present but counted as Christ's disciples when he said: "Have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts?" (Alma 5:14). Have ye "felt to sing the song of redeeming love?" (Alma 5:26). Spirituality is all about feeling the Spirit of God, wanting it with us, sharing the Spirit with others, and heeding its prompting.

### **Serve and be charitable**

Finally, progressing along the straight and narrow is characterized by making the Lord's work our work, serving as He would. Such work is grounded in charity, a principle that Relief Society sisters have embraced for many years, for "charity never faileth" (1 Corinthians 13:8). Charity helps us maintain our footing when all around us are skidding about.

Priscilla Samson-Davis, a sister in Ghana, has known struggles. There have been many rocks on the path of her life. As a teacher she has watched families nurse children through dysentery and malaria, work hard, barter daily for sacks of rice, onions, tomatoes—any food to keep their loved ones alive. She serves as a visiting teacher, regularly traveling on the bus to see a sister on the other side of town. When asked if this task were a burden, given all she had to manage, she simply replied, "It's not hard. The woman I visit can't read. When I go, I read the scriptures to her."

Her simple answer testified of the faith and assurance she had that she was on the proper path. Though her bus route was halting and likely wound up and down streets, in the Lord's eyes it was truly straight and narrow, for she was going in the right direction. She was about her Father's business. She exemplified the spirit described by President

Ezra Taft Benson when he said, "The best measure of true greatness is how Christlike we are" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, p. 100; or *Ensign*, May 1986, p. 78).

### **A bishop teaches members to read**

Without question, those progressing eternally are those on the straight and narrow; they are spiritual and charitable. A bishop in the Dominican Republic exemplifies such a life. After sacrament meeting in his ward, a new convert approached him and said, "Bishop, I notice that the members are always looking at books when they sing. I want to do that. They look at books in Sunday School class. I want to do that." Quietly the brother said, "Bishop, I want to be a good member. I want to do all the Lord's work. But I can't read. Is there someone who can teach me?"

"Yes," said the bishop. And then he tried to think of a likely tutor. He found himself saying, "I'll teach you to read."

For many months this new convert and his wife met weekly with the bishop. They learned to read using the scriptures. Now this was a busy bishop, like they all are. He could have delegated the responsibility, but the Spirit had prompted him to take the assignment. They became friends in the gospel as they studied together. After two years the bishop was released and a new bishop called. Sustained to follow him as the leader of the ward was his student of the scriptures. This bishop set out to teach his friends how to read the gospel message, and in the process he showed them how to live it. Could this bishop have seen the end when he began? How often do we follow the dictums of the Lord and in doing so influence eternity?

### **A sure path**

Focusing on our eternal purposes can ease our burdens and make our lives

happy and more productive. Indeed, we often can do less and have it mean more.

In Luke we read of Martha receiving Jesus into her home. Her sister Mary "sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving" (Luke 10:39-40), and she complained that Mary did not help her. Did Jesus urge Mary to rush back to the tasks of the day? No. "Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, . . . thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part" (vv. 41-42). The message holds true today: Choose the Lord's way, for it is glory everlasting.

We know why we are here. When we are on the path, we can feel it. The fruits

of eternal progress are manifest in joy, peace, love, hope, and increased confidence in the Lord. Though the path is narrow, it is sure. It is on this path that we testify daily of our love for the Lord, His children, His church, His counsel, and the richness of His blessings. By our good works we magnify what is mighty in us all, one step at a time, one day at a time, all the time.

We know the path; in fact, we know it well. The prophet Nephi promised, "If ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life" (2 Nephi 31:20). May it be so. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder Malcolm S. Jeppsen

### Observations about healing

Following Elder Scott's masterful address on healing, I would like to add a few observations by someone whose entire professional life was that of a healer. As a practicing physician for over forty years, I've had occasion to see many patients who were sick or who had sustained injuries to their bodies. I hereby make an admission: physicians do not cure patients. This marvelous and complicated machine we call the human body has built into it its own wonderful healing mechanism. All a physician can do is provide a good healing environment.

I soon learned in my medical practice that the ultimate healing process for an injured or sick body was already provided by our Heavenly Father. I also learned that a patient's attitude has much to do with healing. Those who would rely on Heavenly Father and exercise faith in the power of priesthood often enjoyed faster recoveries.

I have witnessed miracles! Many times when my medical training suggested a dismal prognosis, I have seen

individuals fully recover. I have also witnessed others who relied with faith on the Lord and sought blessings with their prayers, which were not answered in a way the person or loved one desired.

### A condition for healing

The Lord has given a condition for healing blessings: "He that hath faith in me to be healed, and *is not appointed unto death*, shall be healed" (D&C 42:48; italics added). Even when a person relies on faith in the Lord for blessings, if it is his or her appointed time to die, there will not be restoration of health. Indeed, "death [must come] upon all men, to fulfil the merciful plan of the great Creator" (2 Nephi 9:6). President Spencer W. Kimball has written:

"If all the sick for whom we pray were healed, if all the righteous were protected and the wicked destroyed, the whole program of the Father would be annulled. . . . No man would have to live by faith. . . . There would be little or no suffering, sorrow, disappointment, or even death, and if these were not, there