

That is why we must not despair. As we offer the legacy of testimony to our families, some may not receive it. It may even seem to skip over generations. But God will reach out to offer the legacy again and again. More than we can imagine, our faithful effort to offer to our family the testimony we have of the truth will be multiplied in power and extended in time.

We have all seen evidence of that in families we have known. I saw it in South America as I looked into the faces of missionaries. Hundreds of them passed by me, shaking my hand and looking deeply into my eyes. I was nearly overwhelmed with the confirmation that these children of Father Lehi and of Sariah were there in the Lord's service because our Heavenly Father honors His promises to families. To nearly his last breath, Lehi taught and testified and tried to bless his children. Terrible tragedy came among his descendants when they rejected his testimony, the testimonies of other prophets, and of the scriptures. But in the eyes and faces of those missionaries I felt confirmation that God has kept His promises to reach out to Lehi's covenant children and that He will reach out to ours.

I testify that I know that God, our Heavenly Father, lives and that He loves us and that He knows us. I know that Jesus Christ lives and that we will be resurrected and can be sanctified because of His sacrifice. I testify that we can know the truth by the power of the Holy Ghost. I know that we can live together in families in eternal life, the greatest of all the gifts of God. I pray that we may, with all our hearts for all our lives, offer testimony of the truth to our families. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Henry B. Eyring, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, has just addressed us.

Following my remarks, the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Each Life That Touches Ours for Good."

The benediction will then be offered by Elder Cecil O. Samuelson of the Seventy.

A one-half hour video production, *The Lamb of God*, will be broadcast following this session for those across the nation. The concluding session of this conference will begin at 2:00 this afternoon.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Announcement of a new meeting hall

Now, my brothers and sisters, if I may say a few words. First I'd like to say that it's wonderful to see all of you gathered in the Tabernacle this Easter morning. You're a wonderful sight. It is a remarkable thing to contemplate the many more who are assembled in more than 3,000 halls in various parts of the world.

I regret that many who wish to meet with us in the Tabernacle this morning are unable to get in. There are very many

out on the grounds. This unique and remarkable hall, built by our pioneer forebears and dedicated to the worship of the Lord, comfortably seats about 6,000. Some of you seated on those hard benches for two hours may question the word *comfortably*.

My heart reaches out to those who wish to get in and could not be accommodated. About a year ago I suggested to the Brethren that perhaps the time has come when we should study the feasibility of constructing another dedicated

house of worship on a much larger scale that would accommodate three or four times the number who can be seated in this building.

We recognize, of course, that we can never build a hall large enough to accommodate all the membership of this growing Church. We've been richly blessed with other means of communication, and the availability of satellite transmission makes it possible to carry the proceedings of the conference to hundreds of thousands throughout the world.

But there are still those in large numbers who wish to be seated where they can see in person those who are speaking and participating in other ways. The structure we envision will not be a sports arena. It will be a great hall with fixed seating and excellent acoustics. It will be a dedicated house of worship, and that will be its primary purpose. It will be fashioned in such a way that only a portion or the entire hall may be used, according to need. It will accommodate not only religious services but will serve other Church purposes, such as the presentation of sacred pageants and things of that kind. It will also accommodate some community cultural events that will be in harmony with its purpose.

The architectural and engineering studies have not gone far enough for us to make a detailed announcement, but the results thus far are encouraging, and we're hopeful that they will materialize.

Gratitude for sustaining and for leaders

Now for a moment I wish to speak of a personal matter. It was a year ago at this conference when in a solemn assembly you raised your hands to sustain me in this great and sacred calling. My heart swells with gratitude for your expressions of confidence. I am humbled, I am overwhelmed by your words of kindness, loyalty, and love. I think I understand, in a measure at least, the magnitude of this responsibility. I have no desire other than

to do that which the Lord would have done. I am His servant, called to serve His people. This is His Church. We are only custodians of that which belongs to Him.

I am deeply grateful for the two good and able men who stand at my side as counselors and who have been so loyal and helpful. I am grateful for my Brethren of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Nowhere else will you find a more dedicated and able body of men who love the Lord and seek to do His will. I am likewise grateful for the Quorums of the Seventy and the Presiding Bishopric. I am grateful for the Area Authorities, for stake presidents and bishops and those who preside over quorums, for faithful mission presidents and temple presidents. I am thankful for the auxiliary organizations and for the strength and capacity and dedication of those who preside over the Relief Society, the Young Women, the Sunday School, and the Primary organizations.

Gratitude for faithful members

I am thankful for every member of this Church who walks in faith and faithfulness. We are all in this together as Latter-day Saints bound by a common love for our Master, who is the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world. We are a covenant people who have taken upon ourselves His holy name.

The Church is the stronger or the weaker as each member is strong or weak in his or her faith and performance.

During this past year I have traveled extensively. I am determined that while I have strength, I will get out among the people at home and abroad to express my appreciation, to give encouragement, to build faith, to teach, to add my testimony to theirs and at the same time to draw strength from them. I thank all of those who are assisting in this.

I intend to keep moving with energy for as long as I can. I wish to mingle with

the people I love. Recently I have met with many of our youth, thousands of them. These have been wonderfully reassuring experiences. It is an inspiration to look into the eyes of young men and women who love the Lord, who want to do the right thing, who want to build lives that are productive and fruitful of great good. They are working hard to develop skills that will bless them and the society of which they will become a part. They are serving missions for the Church in unprecedented numbers. They are clean, bright, able, and happy. Surely the Lord must love those of this choice generation of youth who learn and serve in His Church. I love them, and I want them to know that. Life is not easy for them. I think that never before has evil been presented in so attractive and beguiling a manner by those who with sinister designs seek to grow wealthy on the tragedies of lives that become blighted and marred as they partake of these evil goods.

I salute fathers and mothers who are loyal to one another and who nurture their children in faith and love. There has been a wonderful response to the proclamation on the family, which we issued last October (see *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102). We hope you will read it and reread it.

This work is growing across the world in a remarkable and wonderful way. The Lord is opening the doors of the nations. He is touching the hearts of the people. The equivalent of 100 new stakes of Zion are coming into the Church each year. This brings with it significant challenges. As has been widely noted, we have passed the line where we now have more members of the Church outside the United States than we have in the United States.

Thank you, my brothers and sisters, for the goodness of your lives. I thank you for your efforts in trying to measure up to the very high standards of this, the Lord's Church. Thank you for your faith.

Thank you for your sustaining hands and hearts. Thank you for your prayers.

As everyone here knows, there is only one reason for any of us serving. And that is to assist our Father in Heaven in His declared work and glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of His sons and daughters (see Moses 1:39).

The Savior's victory over death

There is one grand key in this vast divine program, and that is the redemption of mankind by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is that of which I now wish to speak briefly.

This is Easter morning. This is the Lord's day, when we celebrate the greatest victory of all time, the victory over death.

Those who hated Jesus thought they had put an end to Him forever when the cruel spikes pierced His quivering flesh and the cross was raised on Calvary. But this was the Son of God, with whose power they did not reckon. Through His death came the Resurrection and the assurance of eternal life. None of us can fully understand the pain He bore as He prayed in Gethsemane and subsequently hung in ignominy between two thieves while those who looked at Him taunted Him and said, "He saved others; himself he cannot save" (Matthew 27:42; Mark 15:31).

With sorrow unspeakable, those who loved Him placed His wounded, lifeless body in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. Gone was hope from the lives of His Apostles, whom He had loved and taught. He to whom they had looked as Lord and Master had been crucified and His body laid in a sealed tomb. He had taught them of His eventual death and resurrection, but they had not understood. Now they were forlorn and dejected. They must have wept and wondered as the great stone was rolled to seal the burial place.

The Jewish Sabbath passed. Then came a new day, a day that ever after

was to be the Lord's day. In their sorrow, Mary Magdalene and the other women came to the tomb. The stone was no longer in place. Curiously they looked inside. To their astonishment the tomb was empty.

Distraught and fearful, Mary ran to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved. She cried, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him" (John 20:2).

They came running, and their fears were confirmed. Disconsolate, they looked and then "went away again unto their own home" (John 20:10).

"But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,

"And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

"And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

"And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

"Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

"Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:11-17).

She who had loved Him so much, she who had been healed by Him was the first to whom He appeared. There fol-

lowed others, even, as Paul declares, up to 500 brethren at one time (see 1 Corinthians 15:6).

Now the Apostles understood what He had tried to teach them. Thomas, on feeling of His wounds, declared, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).

Testimonies of the risen Lord

Can anyone doubt the veracity of that account? No event of history has been more certainly confirmed. There is the testimony of all who saw and felt and spoke with the risen Lord. He appeared on two continents in two hemispheres and taught the people before His final ascension. Two sacred volumes, two testaments speak of this most glorious of all events in all of human history. But these are only accounts, the faithless critic says. To which we reply that beyond these is the witness and the testimony, borne by the power of the Holy Ghost, of the truth and validity of this most remarkable event. Through the centuries, untold numbers have paid with the sacrifice of their comforts, their fortunes, their very lives for the convictions they carried in their hearts of the reality of the risen, living Lord.

And then comes the ringing testimony of the Prophet of this dispensation that in a wondrous theophany he saw and was spoken to by the Almighty Father and the Risen Son. That vision, glorious beyond description, became the wellspring of this, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, with all the keys, authority, and power found therein, and the sustaining comfort to be found in the testimony of its people.

The assurance of immortality

There is nothing more universal than death, and nothing brighter with hope and faith than the assurance of immortality. The abject sorrow that comes with death, the bereavement that follows the

passing of a loved one are mitigated only by the certainty of the resurrection of the Son of God that first Easter morning.

What meaning would life have without the reality of immortality? Otherwise life would become only a dismal journey of "getting and spending," only to end in utter and hopeless oblivion.

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55).

The pain of death is swallowed up in the peace of eternal life. Of all the events in the chronicles of humanity, none is of such consequence as this.

Contemplating the wonder of the Atonement wrought in behalf of all mankind, the Prophet Joseph Smith declared in words descriptive and beautiful:

"Let the mountains shout for joy, and all ye valleys cry aloud; and all ye seas and dry lands tell the wonders of your Eternal King! And ye rivers, and brooks, and rills, flow down with gladness. Let the woods and all the trees of the field praise the Lord; and ye solid rocks weep for joy! And let the sun, moon, and the morning stars sing together, and let all the sons of God shout for joy! And let the eternal creations declare his name forever and ever! And again I say, how glorious is the voice we hear from heaven, proclaiming in our ears, glory, and salvation, and honor, and immortality, and eternal life; kingdoms, principalities, and powers!" (D&C 128:23).

The Savior shines through all darkness

Whenever the cold hand of death strikes, there shines through the gloom and the darkness of that hour the triumphant figure of the Lord Jesus Christ, He, the Son of God, who by His matchless and eternal power overcame death. He is the Redeemer of the world. He gave His life for each of us. He took it up again and became the firstfruits of them that slept. He, as King of Kings, stands

triumphant above all other kings. He, as the Omnipotent One, stands above all rulers. He is our comfort, our only true comfort, when the dark shroud of earthly night closes about us as the spirit departs the human form.

Towering above all mankind stands Jesus the Christ, the King of glory, the unblemished Messiah, the Lord Emmanuel. In the hour of deepest sorrow we draw hope and peace and certitude from the words of the angel that Easter morning, "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said" (Matthew 28:6). We draw strength from the words of Paul, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ . . . all [are] made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22).

I stand all amazed at the love Jesus offers me,
 Confused at the grace that so fully he proffers me.
 I tremble to know that for me he was crucified,
 That for me, a sinner, he suffered, he bled and died.
 Oh, it is wonderful that he should care for me
 Enough to die for me!
 Oh, it is wonderful, wonderful to me!
 ["I Stand All Amazed," *Hymns*, no. 193]

He is our King, our Lord, our Master, the living Christ, who stands on the right hand of His Father. He lives! He lives, resplendent and wonderful, the living Son of the living God. Of this we bear solemn testimony this day of rejoicing, this Easter morning, when we commemorate the miracle of the empty tomb, in the name of Him who rose from the dead, even the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Each Life That Touches Ours for Good."

Elder Cecil O. Samuelson offered the benediction.
