

course I do. Isn't it great?" We would hope and pray that the missionaries throughout the world would have that same feeling and that same understanding and that same determination—to want to so declare this message of hope and salvation and eternal life to all the world.

I thank the Lord every day for the health and determination I have to make the best use of every hour I have upon the earth to help in the spreading of this work. I leave you my love, my witness, and my own deep knowledge and conviction that it is true. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## President Thomas S. Monson

### Christ heals at the pool of Bethesda

One of the most famous art galleries in the world is the National Gallery of Art, situated adjacent to Trafalgar Square in the city of London, England. The gallery has on display many priceless masterpieces.

Just a few weeks ago my wife, Frances, and I visited the National Gallery and admired the display of inspired genius which met our gaze and touched our hearts. A large painting occupied most of the wall of one room. It was an incomparable piece by the renowned Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, completed in the year 1670 and titled *Christ Healing the Paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda*. The centuries have not dimmed its beauty, dulled its appeal, nor diminished its impact.

I could not avert my eyes, nor could I transfer my thoughts. I was carried back through time as I saw the crippled man lying on his crude crutch with his arms extended and his hands upturned as he appealed to the Savior of the world. The words and thoughts expressed in the book of John coursed through my mind. I share them with you this morning:

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The chorus sang "What Glorious Scenes Mine Eyes Behold."

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### President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother Haight, for your wonderful remarks. Brother Haight recently had his 90th birthday. He's a demonstration that age is only a state of mind.

The chorus has sung "What Glorious Scenes Mine Eyes Behold." President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our concluding speaker.

"Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

"In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

"For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

"And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

"When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

"The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

"Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

"And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked."<sup>1</sup>

At length, after pondering this scripture, I left the reverie of the room; however, the impact of that masterpiece was indelibly impressed on my soul.

I have thought since of the majesty of the Master's command, the tenderness of His heart, and the incredible joy His act had brought to the afflicted man.

Jesus, the very thought of thee  
With sweetness fills my breast;  
But sweeter far thy face to see  
And in thy presence rest.  
Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,  
Nor can the mem'ry find  
A sweeter sound than thy blest name,  
O Savior of mankind!<sup>2</sup>

### Follow the Savior

Do we remember the question posed by one Pontius Pilate as he spoke to those who would shed the blood of Jesus and thus end His mortal life? "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified."<sup>3</sup> And so He was.

The question each of us must answer is the same: *What shall I do with Jesus?* He Himself has provided us the answer: "Follow me, and do the things which ye have seen me do."<sup>4</sup>

The mortal mission of our Lord was foretold by the holy prophets, as was His birth. For generations, enlightened mankind in the Old and the New World anxiously sought the fulfillment of prophecies uttered by righteous men inspired of Almighty God.

Then came that heavenly pronouncement to the "shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. . . . For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."<sup>5</sup> Born in a stable, cradled in a manger, He came forth from heaven to live on earth as mortal man and to establish the kingdom of God. His glorious gospel reshaped the thinking of the world. He

blessed the sick; He caused the lame to walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear. He even raised the dead to life. He provided for you and for me the greatest gift we shall ever receive: the Atonement and all that it conveys. He willingly died that we might forever live.

### Listen to the Savior

From time to time the question has been posed, "If Jesus appeared to you today, what questions would you ask of Him?"

My answer has always been, "I would not utter a word. I would listen to Him."

Down through the generations of time, the message from Jesus has been the same. To Peter by the shores of beautiful Galilee, He said, "Follow me."<sup>6</sup> To Philip of old came the call, "Follow me."<sup>7</sup> To Levi who sat at receipt of customs came the instruction, "Follow me."<sup>8</sup> And to you and to me, if we but listen, shall come that same beckoning invitation, "Follow me."

"Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."<sup>9</sup> Have we? Of Him it was said that He "went about doing good."<sup>10</sup> Do we?

His beloved Apostles noted well His example. He lived "not to be ministered unto, but to minister";<sup>11</sup> not to receive, but to give; not to save His life, but to pour it out for others. It has been said, "If they would see the star that should at once direct their feet and influence their destiny, they must look for it, not in the changing skies [of] outward circumstance, but each in the depth of his own heart and after the pattern provided by the Master."<sup>12</sup>

### Peter heals a lame man

Reflect for a moment on the experience of Peter at the Gate Beautiful of the temple. One sympathizes with the plight of the man lame from birth who each day was carried to the temple gate

that he might ask alms of all who entered. That he asked alms of Peter and John as they approached him indicates he regarded them no differently from others who must have passed him each day. I love Peter's simple and direct instruction: "Look on us."<sup>13</sup> The lame man gave heed to them.

"Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

"And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up. . . .

". . . He . . . stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple."<sup>14</sup>

### **The rich young man**

Not all who approached the Master abided by His divine direction:

"And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

"And Jesus said unto him, . . .

"Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

"And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

"Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

"And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions."<sup>15</sup>

### **Randy Spaulding's faithful parents**

Some time ago I received a touching letter from Randy Spaulding, who lived in northern Utah. The letter explained the composition of his family and then

the gradual onset of an illness that took his father from a healthy, strong individual to a weak and crippled middle-aged man. The father's physical condition deteriorated until he could not work, could not walk, became confined to a wheelchair, and was almost helpless.

Randy told how the family and ward members have taken over the care of the farm and have provided much help to the family. Father can no longer speak; Mother is his constant provider of care—yet neither of them has uttered or written those words, "Why us?"

Let me return to Randy Spaulding's actual words. He wrote: "One morning as I was thinking about the mundane things of life and hurrying out the door to begin the day, I happened to notice my father sitting in the corner of the room reading his scriptures. I stopped and went over to speak to him. I noticed the difficult circumstances he was under. With his right hand, he was trying to hold up his head enough to see me and read the Book of Mormon. I learned that at one of the most trying times, he still had enough faith to read about a God of love, a God of miracles who heals and makes us whole, and a God of life—eternal life. My father still believes. Oh, how I long to take him back in time to the Pool of Bethesda and to ask our Master if He would please have mercy on us, so that my father, also, could take up his bed and walk."

His letter continued: "That day I returned to my bedroom and thanked my Heavenly Father for a father and mother second to none."

### **The Lord will bless the humble**

Let us remember that it was not the waters of Bethesda's pool which healed the impotent man. Rather, his blessing came through the touch of the Master's hand. From the beautiful Psalm we learn: "Lord, thou hast heard the desire

of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear."<sup>16</sup>

He has heard, and He indeed has blessed you and yours. An angel wife and mother who, without stint, sacrifices her own comfort for the blessing of her eternal companion; neighbors with hands that help, hearts that feel, and whose feet and talents all come quickly to rescue—are manifested blessings of the Lord's promises. Though Bethesda beckons, the Lord has heard. Said He: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, even as you desire of me so it shall be unto you."<sup>17</sup>

President Harold B. Lee comforted us with these words: "[Those] who have been denied blessings . . . in this life—who say in their heart, *if I could have done, I would have done, or I would give if I had, but I cannot for I have not*—the Lord will bless you as though you had done, and the world to come will compensate for those who desire in their hearts the righteous blessings that they were not able to have because of no fault of their own."<sup>18</sup>

On every side there are those who suffer pain, who endure debilitating illness, who battle the demon of depression. Our hearts go out to all. Our prayers ascend in their behalf. Hands that help are extended.

### "Living what we pray for"

I love the sentiment contained in the words of the poem entitled "Living What We Pray For":

I knelt to pray when day was done  
And prayed, "O Lord, bless everyone;  
Lift from each saddened heart the pain,  
And let the sick be well again."  
And then I woke another day  
And carelessly went on my way;  
The whole day long, I did not try  
To wipe a tear from any eye.  
I did not try to share the load  
Of any brother on the road;

I did not even go to see  
The sick man, just next door to me.  
Yet, once again, when day was done,  
I prayed, "O Lord, bless everyone."  
But as I prayed, into my ear  
There came a voice that whispered  
clear:

"Pause now, my son, before you pray;  
Whom have you tried to bless today?  
God's sweetest blessings always go  
By hands that serve Him here below."  
And then I hid my face and cried,  
"Forgive me, God, I have not tried.  
Let me but live another day,  
And I will live the way I pray."

### Mary Watson and Kathleen McKee

When I read the phrase from this poem "I hid my face and cried," the hallowed halls of memory prompt me to share a tender, personal account with you.

Long years ago, when I served as a bishop, I received notification that Mary Watson, a member of my ward, was a patient in the county hospital. When I went to visit her, I discovered her in a large room with so many beds that it was difficult to single her out. As I identified her bed and approached her, I said, "Hello, Mary."

She replied, "Hello, Bishop."

I noticed that a patient in the bed next to Mary Watson covered her face with the bedsheet.

I gave Mary Watson a blessing, shook her hand, and said, "Good-bye," but I could not leave her side. It was as though an unseen hand were resting on my shoulder, and I felt within my soul that I was hearing these words: "Go over to the next bed where the little lady covered her face when you came in." I did so. I have learned in my life never to postpone a prompting.

I approached the bedside of the other patient, gently tapped her shoulder, and carefully pulled back the sheet

which had covered her face. Lo and behold! She too was a member of my ward. I had not known she was a patient in the hospital. Her name was Kathleen McKee. When her eyes met mine, she exclaimed through her tears, "Oh, Bishop, when you entered that door, I felt you had come to see me and bless me in response to my prayers. I was rejoicing inside to think that you would know I was here, but when you stopped at the other bed, my heart sank, and I knew that you had not come to see me."

I said to Kathleen McKee: "It does not matter that I didn't know you were here. It is important, however, that our Heavenly Father knew and that you had prayed silently for a priesthood blessing. It was He who prompted me to intrude on your privacy."

A blessing was given; a prayer was answered. I bestowed a kiss on her forehead and left the hospital with gratitude in my heart for the promptings of the Spirit. It would be the last time I was to see Kathleen McKee in mortality—but not the last time I heard from her.

Upon her death, the hospital called with this message: "Bishop Monson, Kathleen McKee died tonight. She made arrangements that we were to notify you, should she pass away. She left for you a key to her basement apartment."

Kathleen McKee had no immediate family. With my sweet wife accompanying me, I visited her humble apartment. I turned the key in the door, opened it, and switched on the light. There in her immaculate two-room apartment, I saw a small table with a note resting beneath an Alka-Seltzer bottle. The note, written in her own hand, said: "Bishop, my tithing is in this envelope, and the Alka-Seltzer bottle contains coins covering my fast offering. I am square with the Lord." The receipts were written.

The sweetness of the night has not been forgotten. Tears of gratitude to God filled my very soul.

### Caring and seeing with the heart

A message in a birthday card which I received a few weeks ago, from parents who last year lost a beautiful daughter to cancer, expresses this profound thought: "And what is as important as knowledge?" asked the mind.

"'Caring and seeing with the heart,' answered the soul."

This expression describes Bethesda's blessing. Of this divine truth I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### NOTES

1. John 5:2-9.
2. "Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee," *Hymns*, no. 141.
3. Matthew 27:22.
4. 2 Nephi 31:12.
5. Luke 2:8, 11.
6. Matthew 4:19.
7. John 1:43.
8. Luke 5:27.
9. Luke 2:52.
10. Acts 10:38.
11. Matthew 20:28.
12. Thomas S. Monson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1971, 171; or *Ensign*, Dec. 1971, 131.
13. Acts 3:4.
14. Acts 3:6-8.
15. Mark 10:17-22.
16. Psalm 10:17.
17. Doctrine and Covenants 6:8.
18. *Ye Are the Light of the World* (1974), 292; italics added.

### President Hinckley

President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has been our concluding speaker.

We are grateful to the Bonneville International LDS Radio Network and the owners and operators of the many other television, radio stations, and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience in many areas of the world.