

Elder David B. Haight

Gratitude for parents' temple marriage

My dear brethren and sisters, I have prayed for the blessings of heaven to be with me in these few moments that I occupy the pulpit here this afternoon. I want to say a few words about gratitude and thanksgiving to people who have influenced my life.

Imagine in your mind May 1, 1890. A young man and a young lady in a little country town about 250 miles from the Logan Temple decided to be married. Highways—none. Fancy roads—none. Trails through the sagebrush and wagon trails—yes.

It probably would have taken six or seven days at least to make the journey. In May it rains in southern Idaho and in Utah. Imagine riding in a buggy with all of your clothes—taking something along, I guess, for the horses; taking some food in little sacks of some kind. Fancy clothes, warm clothes—they had none. Sleeping bags—none. Coleman lanterns or cooking stoves—none. They would have had matches and had to find dry sagebrush to make a fire to cook their food.

Just imagine, just run it through your mind for a moment and think of the gratitude that I have and of the blessings they brought into my life by traveling to a place to be married a long ways away. Inconvenience? That wouldn't be a problem; they would do it. And think of what's happened in the last few years with President Hinckley—the inspiration and direction he has had in the building of temples all over the world. And think of what people went through a few years ago.

Those blessings have come into my life from my parents and their parents and others who have affected my life—teachers and good people I have been associated with.

A performance on an out-of-tune violin

When I was about 11 years old, a man came to our little town to teach at the Church academy. He played the violin a little, and we hadn't had anyone there for a long time who had played the violin. My mother was impressed and picked up a little violin, I guess at some little rummage sale somewhere, and decided that I should learn to play the violin.

Even though I had never seen anyone play the violin in public, he came to our house and started giving me some little simple lessons on playing the violin. I was coming along fairly well by the time we graduated from the eighth grade in grammar school, and for the graduation exercises held in the high school I was asked to play a violin solo.

I'd carefully practiced the little song "Träumerei," as I remember the name. My sister who was four years older than I and was then one of the popular girls in high school was my pianist. At the graduation exercises, Connie McMurray was the valedictorian. Girls are always smarter in school than boys. As she was giving the valedictory address, there was a little pedestal with a pitcher of water and a glass on it for the school board. The school board was on the stand, plus a little handful of us who were graduating from the eighth grade.

As Connie McMurray was giving her famous valedictory address, near the end of it we noticed the little doily under the pitcher of water on the pedestal was moving over a little bit toward the edge, and over it fell with the pitcher and glass of water! Connie McMurray fell in a dead faint.

In the scurrying around of cleaning the water off the stage and rearranging the chairs, they announced that we would

now have a violin solo from David Haight. I walked over to the little old piano, and my sister came up from the audience. I took that simple violin out of the wooden case as my sister sat down at the piano and sounded an A. I said, "Go ahead and play."

She said, "David, you'd better tune it."

I said, "No, no, I tuned it at our piano at home." We had an old Kimball piano at home. You know, homes in those days—if you had a piano and books, that's all you needed for the family. I had carefully tuned the strings by twisting those ebony pegs of that violin, but I didn't know that all pianos weren't the same. So as my sister said, "You'd better tune it," I said, "No, no, it's all tuned. I tuned it at home."

So she went ahead and played the introduction, and then I came down on the first note. We were off about two notes.

As she slowed down, I said, "Keep playing," because I couldn't imagine anyone would take the time of a famous audience like I was playing to—you know, 100 people in that little high school auditorium. You wouldn't hold up Carnegie Hall while you tuned your violin! That would be shop work. You would do that in the back room so that when you would start to play, why, you'd be all ready to play.

She slowed down. I said, "Keep playing." We finished it, and she didn't speak to me for days following that show.

Gratitude for family

I want to honor the little country town that I grew up in with my parents, where I was raised and where they were kind and good to me. I am thankful for the knowledge that I acquired from my loving parents.

I am grateful for my wife, Ruby, coming into my life, for our children, and then their children, and then their children, and the people who are part of my life today who influence my life. And I

hope that I have some influence for good in their lives.

Gratitude for a witness of the Savior

You remember the account of John the Baptist speaking to John the Beloved and to Andrew on the occasion when the Savior met them. And John the Baptist commented, "Behold the Lamb of God!" (John 1:36). And as the Savior met those young men—John the Baptist, John the Beloved, and Andrew—He said, "What seek ye?"

And in that conversation that's reported, they said, "Where dwellest thou?" (John 1:38).

And the Savior said, "Come and see" (John 1:39).

They followed the Savior, and according to the brief account that we have, they stayed with Him. They may have spent the evening together, but it is not known where He was staying or what accommodations He had.

John and Andrew were with the Savior for several hours. Just imagine being in His presence or being able to sit and look into His eyes or to hear Him explain who He was and why He had come to earth and to hear that inflection in His voice in describing what He would have told those young men. They would have shaken His hand. They would have felt of that precious, wonderful personality as they listened to Him.

And following that encounter, the account says that Andrew went to find his brother Simon because he had to share it with someone. As we meet in a great conference like this and talk about the gospel and talk about our responsibility and the opportunity we have, just imagine if that had happened to any of us, to have been in that divine, precious personality's presence and to have listened to Him and to have shaken His hand and to have looked into His eyes and to have heard what He would say.

When Andrew found his brother Simon, he said to him, "We have found the [Messiah]" (John 1:41). He probably said, "We've been in His presence. We've felt of His personality. We know that what He is telling us is true." Yes, Andrew had to share it with someone.

That is what we do in sharing what we know and what we understand. And I'm grateful for that knowledge I have that God lives, that He is our Father, and for the understanding that I have of our Heavenly Father and of His Son, Jesus the Christ, our Savior and the Redeemer of all of mankind.

A Scottish man's gratitude for the gospel

I had a letter only a few days ago from a man in Edinburgh, Scotland. His name is George Stewart. He'll be surprised at my mentioning this, but he wanted to thank me because when he was 15 years old (some 40 years ago), I was presiding over the mission in Scotland. He wanted to thank me for the missionaries' coming to their home in Thornliebank, one of the areas of Glasgow. He had joined the Church along with his mother.

He said that as he developed a testimony of the Book of Mormon, as he started reading it and kept reading it, he couldn't put it down because he knew it was true. He kept reading and reading and developing a testimony of the gospel as a young man. He told how he used to come over to the mission home and how we were kind to him and would spend time with the young people because they were getting into Mutual, which we were starting in the branches.

Then he told of the blessings that came into his life as a young man, that he had met his sweetheart in that branch—his wife—and that they were married and that they had four children: a son who had finished a mission in the Washington D.C. Mission, a son who served in the England Leeds Mission, a daughter who was married in the temple, and one

who is waiting for the return of a missionary. He expressed gratitude for all of the blessings that had come into his life and the lives of his sons who have been on missions and his daughters.

During the past 40 years he has served as a bishop four times in four different units, and his wife has served as a Relief Society president on three occasions. He is currently serving as a counselor in the Edinburgh stake presidency. He said, "And I'm going to be retiring very shortly from the company I'm with. I've done very well, and we plan to go out on a mission together."

Then he said these words to me: "This amazing Church has woven a pattern of miracles in our lives." Let me say that again: "This amazing Church has woven a pattern of miracles in our lives."

And he says the gospel came into his life, to his wife, to all of his children, and to their children. The grandchildren are active in the Church, and he and his wife now have a great desire to go out into the world when they retire from their profession.

When you think of the majesty and the impact and the spiritual direction of this work out in the world and that this work is meant to reach the people of the world, it is thrilling just to contemplate what lies before us.

The word *retirement* is not in the Bible

There was a Brother and Sister Andrus from Walnut Creek, California, who had served four missions, and then they were called to go to Zimbabwe and assigned to the district in Bulawayo in Zimbabwe. This was their fifth mission.

As they told of the marvelous things that they were able to do in reactivating people, she told a story of how there was a little portable electronic organ in the chapel and how she started showing some of the boys and girls in Bulawayo how to play the organ. There was also a little piano keyboard in another room, and she

would have a class where the organ was and another one where this little keyboard was. She would teach these children to play the organ after school. They said they started a temple preparation class in the reactivation process, and before they left they were able to put 28 people on the bus to go from Bulawayo all the way to Johannesburg to the temple, 650 miles away—two days and one night. They said, “We’ve talked about how we are in our late 70s now—these two old people wandering around in Africa having the greatest period of our lives, the greatest excitement we could have.”

Think of Dr. Alan Barker, who had retired from the Salt Lake Clinic, a wonderful cardiologist here in Salt Lake. He and his wife accepted a mission call to the Philippines. While there, they accomplished a marvelous work in helping correct a serious disease problem. He was there long enough to help find a solution to the problem and obtain the needed medical equipment and medication.

These are examples of the marvelous service being given by senior missionary couples in various parts of the world.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

The Church is centered on love

My beloved brethren and sisters, I feel as you do that Elder David B. Haight is an inspiration to the entire Church and so many others.

Two thousand years ago, upon the sand and stones of Galilee, walked a man that few recognized for who He truly was: the Creator of worlds, the Redeemer, the Son of God.

A lawyer approached Him and asked, “Which is the great[est] commandment?” Jesus answered:

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

I leave you my love, my witness, my testimony that God lives, that this work is true. You can’t find the word *retirement* in the Bible. I don’t think you can find the word in the Bible Dictionary. Isn’t it interesting to think what can happen in our lives today and what possibilities lie ahead for us if we believe and understand and have a commitment and a dedication to live the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ and to bless the lives of people?

May you be so blessed. May you have a burning feeling in your heart. May you feel as I do on this day that this work is true and that it is meant for us to help bring about God’s eternal plan of salvation and exaltation. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We’ve just heard from Elder David B. Haight of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who is a marvelous work and a wonder.

We shall now hear from Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He will be followed by Elder John K. Carmack of the Seventy.

“This is the first and great commandment.

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

“On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”¹

Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord has established His Church once again among men. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, restored to the earth in these latter days, is centered on those commandments the Savior proclaimed as the greatest: to love our Heavenly Father and to love our fellowmen. Our Savior said, “If thou lovest me thou shalt serve me and keep all my commandments.”²