

Carried by Our Covenants

ELDER DAVID B. HAIGHT
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

This address was given, May 2, 2003 at the BYU Women's Conference

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For further information write:

BYU Women's Conference,
352 Harman Continuing Education Building,
Provo, Utah 84602.
(801) 422-7692

E-mail: womens_conference@byu.edu
Home page: <http://womensconference.byu.edu>

It's a joy and an honor to be here, and to think that the new president of Brigham Young University is here sitting on the stand in his second day in office. Remember—it would be one to put in your scrapbook that you attended a meeting when he was only on his second day. What a marvelous president he will be of the university. He is such an outstanding individual, a doctor and famous in that profession. He helped keep the University of Utah on track for a long time before this call came to him. As we thought of all the people in the world who could be called to preside over Brigham Young University at this time, there wasn't anyone to compare with Cecil Samuelson.

What a thrill to be here with you and to know that you've been here these days and hours and sessions listening to people giving you ideas, giving you suggestions, talking about your opportunities in life, your obligations, what needs to be done, and what you might be able to accomplish and that you will go home with ideas and desires and recommitment, all things that you would want to do. What an influence you women can have upon the lives of people—and upon the lives of your husbands, and your sons, and your daughters, and all the people you come in contact with—and the responsibility that we have as members of the Church in this glorious

gospel plan.

You will remember that Matthew was one of the apostles of the Savior, and in his writings—his testimony and his remembrance of what happened while he walked those dusty paths with the Savior—we have the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament as it has been transmitted and translated. Right at the end of Matthew, in the last verse, he tells of the Savior meeting the apostles and some disciples on the Mount just before His ascension into the heavens to be with his Father. We're talking about the resurrected Lord and Savior just before His ascension, which took place on a hill just outside the walls of Jerusalem. According to his own message, in his own writing, in that last verse, Matthew wrote that the Savior spoke to them, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18).

Let me say that again, as you try to imagine it in your mind: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18–20).

He's talking to us. This is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, restored to the earth through the instrumentality and faithfulness and obedience of a young lad, Joseph Smith, fourteen years old. We all know the account of heavenly messengers meeting with the Prophet Joseph Smith on different occasions, and what transpired was the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. Then, of course, we accumulated the Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, and the other scriptures that we have.

The Prophet Joseph called some of his trusted men to go to England in 1838 (D&C 118). In that group were Heber C. Kimball, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and George A. Smith. A little later Brigham Young joined with them, and the Pratt brothers (Orson and Parley) were in that same group.¹ When they arrived in Liverpool, they needed something to tell the people why they had come from the United States to the homeland of many of them to attempt to teach the new principles of the gospel as it had been revealed to a group of people in the United States. Imagine, these men from the United States traveling to solid, old, staid England to teach the people there. In preparing the way and wanting the people to know that what they were going to teach was new and different—that the heavens were open and they could pray to a Heavenly Father and receive answers to their prayers—Elder Parley P. Pratt wrote these words:

The morning breaks [a new day, a new dawn, a new event in life], the

shadows flee;

Lo, Zion's standard is unfurled! [that's running the flag up the pole and
having it wave in the breeze]

The dawning of a brighter day

Majestic rises on the world.²

The apostles began explaining the restoration of the gospel, and they started almost immediately having some success. That went on and on, giving the Church some strength and extra support and manpower, and people started to come to America to learn more because what they had heard sounded good to them. They were touched in their hearts, and they were touched spiritually, in feeling that they were hearing something that would be important to them.

I want to remind you to be conscious of impressions that you have. Be mindful of them. Sometimes you'll get an impression of such power that you know you need to pay heed to it. Such an event happened a few years ago one evening when the *Deseret News* was delivered to my desk. An article in it told about a young man who was to be honored by the governor of the state of Utah for the heroic deed he had performed in rescuing a man and two girls who capsized in a canoe on the Jordan River near Salt Lake. This young man was in a canoe, too, and he helped them to shore. As he was leaving in his own canoe to go back onto the Jordan River, he had an accident and was drowned after he had saved the lives of three other people. The governor of Utah was going to present to him posthumously a hero's award. I saw the name of the young man, but I didn't pay much more attention to it and tossed the newspaper aside. Instantly, I received the impression I should read the article again. I took it out of the wastebasket, put it on my desk, and read it to get the name of the young man. That very evening, at that very moment, in the Deseret Mortuary in Salt Lake City a viewing was being held before the burial of this young man. I had a strong impression that I should attend. I didn't know the people—in fact, I didn't know anything more about it than I've told you—but I called Ruby on the telephone and told her to put the beans on the back burner, that I'd be a little bit late because I was going to the mortuary.

I went to the mortuary and stood in line—there were a lot of people—and up near the front I could see a casket and the parents standing beside it. A young man, probably in his twenties, was standing beside them. As I was standing in line, the young man walked down to me and said, “Who are you?”

I said, “My name is David Haight.”

He asked, “Are you something in the Mormon church?”

“Yes.”

“Well, what kind of position do you have in the Church?”

“I’m a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.”

“What are you doing here?”

“I came here to honor a brave young man and to pay my respects to him.”

The young man said, “Please come up and meet my parents,” and he took me out of the line. (I don’t like to do that sort of thing, but that is how it was.)

As I met the father standing by the casket, I said, “I hope our bishop has been kind to you and helpful during this serious tragedy you’ve had in losing your son.”

The man said, “Humph! I said to him, ‘What a hell of a way to meet my bishop.’”

As we were standing there visiting, I looked at the young man lying in the casket. It was like a high school picture: he was there in a tuxedo, he had a little beard, and his hair was a little on the long side. He had a kind of lei around his neck, and he was holding something in his hand. I said to his mother, “Could you tell me the significance of the lei around his neck?”

She said, “Well, he belonged to a naturalist group, and they liked the out-of-doors—different flowers, wildflowers, and kinds of weeds—and they made one from some wildflowers.” That was the dry lei he had around his neck.

I noticed that his hands were folded over his chest, and he held a feather in them. “Could you tell me the significance of the feather your son is holding?”

They said, “Our son belonged to the Audubon Society. He loves birds. When this happened, we looked all around for something that we might give to John, and we found this long feather and put it in his hands. We wanted John to have something to hold on to when he passes over to the other side.”

I looked at that twenty-year-old young man, not in temple clothes but in a tuxedo, a feather in his hands so he would have something to hold onto, given to him by parents who had

drifted away from the Church and become inactive.

I shook hands with the parents and said, “I’d like to ask you to come to my office one of these days after you’ve gone through this time of mourning and sadness and bring whatever family you would like. Why don’t you come to my office and let’s talk about John?”

The mother said, “Well, maybe we could do that.”

We followed up with them on the telephone later, and they came to my office, the father and the mother who were at the casket as well as the young man who invited me to leave the line, along with other members of the family. We had a visit, talking about John, gospel principles, and eternal life. I gave them a paperback copy of the Book of Mormon, signed it for them, and told them I would stay in touch with them.

Through our ongoing friendship of many years, I was privileged to seal the family a few years ago in the Salt Lake Temple—the parents together and then their three sons to them, including their deceased son. It happened that the son who recognized me at the viewing of his brother and took me out of the line to meet his parents was the paramedic who came to my rescue a couple of years later when I had a ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysm. He gave me a priesthood blessing at the hospital.

This experience became a great testimony to me of the importance of following through on impressions we may receive. The majesty of this work that we’re in is really beyond much of our comprehension.

When I was an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, I was having a meeting in my office. It was a serious meeting, so I told my secretary that if there were any phone calls just to take a message and I’d call them back.”

In a few minutes (this happened to be on a Thursday morning, during the temple session with the First Presidency and the Twelve), she opened the door of my office and said, “Elder Haight, I thought you would like to know President Kimball’s on the phone.”

Well, that changes your plans pretty fast. I picked up the phone and said, “Hello, President.”

He said, “Is that you, David?”

I said, “Yes.”

He said, “I’m on the fourth floor of the temple. I would like you to come over and see me right now.” Then he repeated, “Right now? Can you come right now?”

I said, “President, I’ll come just as fast as I can.” But the fact that he repeated it twice—“right now” and “can you come?”—I knew I was in some sort of difficulty. I walked over there as fast as I could, through the garage into the temple and up to the fourth floor. As I stepped off the elevator, there was President Kimball with that warm, wonderful personality. He shook my hand and invited me into a little room I had never been in before. We sat down in two chairs facing each other, and he wanted to know about my personal life. It was interesting for me to attempt to tell him of my personal life. What would you say to the prophet of the Lord if you were being interviewed in a room in the temple and he asked you about your personal life? What would you say? “Oh, just dandy”?

I explained to him as best I could that I thought I was living the commandments of the Lord. Then he asked me to stand up, and he took hold of both my hands and said to me, “With all of the love that I possess, I’m calling you to fill a vacancy in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.”

I almost fainted. I couldn’t imagine that happening to a kid like I am, out of southern Idaho, having something like that happen with all of the talent we have in the Church. He put his arms around me and told me he loved me, and as I put my arms around him, I knocked his glasses off. I thought, *Well, here I am, not only standing here dumbfounded about what he said to me but feeling awkward because he beat me in picking his glasses up off the floor.*

He said, “Let’s go across the room and meet the Brethren.” We went across the room, he opened a door, and there were eleven of the Twelve. There was one vacant chair, number twelve. President Kimball said to me, “Would you go over and take your seat in that chair?” As I walked across the rug to that chair to sit down—again, thinking of the hymn, “I Stand All Amazed”³—no one could have been more amazed than I was on that day. As I went over and sat down in that chair and wondered how I would ever, *ever* be able to measure up to those people that I have admired all of my life, to hold that position of responsibility, or to be able to measure in some way the challenge and the opportunity and the responsibility to be a witness to all of the world.

We had a testimony meeting, and each of the Brethren told me that they loved me and bore testimony. I had an opportunity to speak briefly, and then they assembled in a circle and President Kimball ordained me an apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ. After that, he said to me, “Would you like to contact Sister Haight and tell her what has happened?”

I said, “Yes, I would.”

Someone said, "There's a phone right over here."

I stood looking at the phone in this amazed shock that I was in, and Boyd Packer said, "Don't you remember Ruby's name?"

I said, "Yes."

"Do you remember your number?"

I said, "I think so."

So I called Ruby.

She said hello, and I said hello.

She asked, "Where are you?"

I said, "I'm in the temple."

"Well, what are you doing in the temple?"

Then I told her what had happened to me.

She started to cry. Later she told me that when I said hello on the telephone, she knew some change had happened to me because my voice had changed as a result of a great spiritual experience.

I'm grateful for my ancestors who crossed the plains: on my father's side (Haight), my grandfather, fourteen years old; and my grandmother, age eleven, in another company. On my mother's side (Tuttle), my grandfather and grandmother. They were married in a little waystation on the way to Winter Quarters. They had fallen in love on the wagon train and were later sealed in the Endowment House in Salt Lake. They were wonderful people who worked hard, who had the spiritual experience of hearing the gospel, of believing it was true, and of committing themselves to move forward with their friends and others to help establish the kingdom where they could worship as they would please, where the Church could establish itself and grow and move on in the marvelous way that it is happening today.

I know that my time is up because the light is flashing. LeGrand Richards used to have trouble with the clock. Because we couldn't read the time, a little light was put on the rostrum in the old Tabernacle in Salt Lake. Someone pushed a piece of paper to cover it, so LeGrand Richards didn't know it was there. The next time he spoke, they put a red light up there. LeGrand hadn't quite finished and that light came on. He said to the audience, "Someone turned on a silly red light up here. I don't know what's it for, but I'll just put my hand over it." So now the red light is flashing at me, and I have wonderful memories of LeGrand Richards.

God lives. I know that He lives and He loves us. We are His children.

I am a child of God,

And he has sent me here,

Has given me an earthly home

With parents kind and dear.

Lead me, guide me, walk beside me,

Help me find the way.

Teach me all that I must do [D-O]

To live with him someday.⁴

When Ruby and I were married in Salt Lake City and going on our honeymoon across Nevada to a new job in Berkeley, California, we had all of our earthly possessions in the rumble seat of a little Ford A, a one-seated car. Those early possessions were our clothes and some wedding gifts. The rest was an opportunity. And so we go out in the world, we watch what people do, we associate with good people, we learn how to get along and to get things done, and as a result Ruby and I have had seventy-three wonderful years. As I gave her some yellow and red roses on her birthday, I said, “Every year gets better,” And that’s true.

I testify to you that this work is true. I’ve been involved in it all of my life, and I’ve watched the world—the corporate world, the military, and all of the other activities—and there isn’t anything to compare with what we do and teach and say. The gospel is true. And so I say to you women in your roles of all kinds, we are part of the royal army to help people and take advantage of opportunities to help people understand that the gospel has been restored and is on the earth, and you can thrill them as you share your own testimony and tell them what has

happened in your life.

I brought with me today a copy of the Proclamation on the Family.⁵ I wanted to talk to you about it, but time won't permit. I would just say to you, we wrote this in the temple. Every word of it is correct regarding women and marriage and families and children. The gospel is true. It is the hope of the world.

May you all be blessed in all of your activities. And every opportunity that you have, take advantage of it and enjoy it and be a happy, joyful person in helping someone else step onto a little higher plane than he or she might have been on. I bless you, your homes, and your activities, and pray that you will be blessed with the spirit of this work, that your prayers will be answered, and you'll be able to accomplish great things. You do it by living the gospel, the standards of the gospel. Just live the principles, and they will take you where you want to go.

The gospel is true. I've learned it all the days of my life, and it gets more so every day that I live. I declare my love to all of you and wish you well in your life, under the umbrella of the gospel. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

¹ James B. Allen, Ronald K. Esplin, and David J. Whittaker, *Men with a Mission: The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the British Isles* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 67–83.

² Parley P. Pratt, "The Morning Breaks," *Hymns of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), no. 1; see also Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1946–49), 4:51.

³ *Hymns*, no. 193.

⁴ *Hymns*, no. 301.

⁵ "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, November 1995, 102.