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The Pathway of Discipleship

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The Pathway of Discipleship

NEAL A. MAXWELL

Thanks to all of you for coming to your various assembly points tonight. I feel deeply touched by what has been said and even more by your presence and what you represent. I am not able to respond adequately to the outpouring of love and faith in my behalf except to try to be better and do better. I want you to know how deeply appreciative I am of that love and those expressions of faith in my behalf.

I am pleased Elder Henry B. Eyring could be here. He is serving as commissioner of Church education, and it will be under his leadership, in my opinion, that the Church Educational System will become even more of a system than it has ever been in the past. The two phrases that come to mind from scriptures are “knit together” as never before and “fitly framed together” as never before (see Colossians 2:2, Mosiah 18:21, Ephesians 2:21).

For Brother Stan Peterson, who watches over our wonderful seminary and institute system, I express deep appreciation. It is, in my judgment, one of the two or three most effective programs in the entire Church. I am grateful President Bateman is here and for his wonderful leadership of a wonderful university. He will be part of this knitting together in ways that will yet have to be determined, but it will be a special thing.

I am delighted Sister Janet Lee is here tonight. She is the gallant wife, as you know, of our valiant President Rex Lee, a special man.

These wonderful stake presidents and their wives on the stand represent so many stake presidencies throughout the Church who love the youth and young adults of the Church in special ways. I am grateful to be in their midst.

I take note of the fact that Sister Maxwell and I were privileged to meet at the University of Utah Institute of Religion. What a special day it was for me to meet her. I must confess I can't tell you what the lesson was that day, but I will always be grateful for that blessing, among the many, that the Church Educational System has given to me. Colleen has been wonderful as a nurturer and as an encourager—in the last year in particular.

So tonight as we are bound together by the satellite system, let that be symbolic of how we are bound together in the entire Church Educational System and, even more, in the

Neal A. Maxwell was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this fireside address was given at Brigham Young University on 4 January 1998.

increasingly expansive brotherhood and sisterhood of the kingdom of God on the earth. So let us focus tonight on our shared discipleship amid this shared mortal experience—a subject dear to my heart and about which I know a little more than I did a year ago.

When striving disciples reflect deeply upon this mortal experience, certain realities become even more clear. This includes a clarifying and particular reality, which is my theme for tonight: We are immortal individuals whose constant challenge is to apply immortal principles to life's constantly changing situations. Seen in this way, life's varied situations are more sharply defined. With this perspective we can improve our daily performances because we have fixed our gaze on eternity and its great realities.

Though we share immortality, our individual traits, talents, trials, opportunities, and circumstances vary widely. Even so, it is ever the case that whatever the particular, passing mortal situation, all of the individuals involved are immortals with immense possibilities. C. S. Lewis put this so well when he said:

*It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilisations — these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit. [C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (New York: Macmillan, 1980), p. 19; emphasis in original]*

It is a profound quote.

I readily recognize that you will be living in an increasingly secularized society in which people simply don't see other humans in this true light. Many don't even believe in an individualized resurrection. I grant, too, that some

also assume that there is an absence of immortal truths and absolute principles. As a result, these people prefer to view humans as being without real behavioral boundaries. Given such disbelieving views, it is no wonder that the ways of the natural man quickly prevail. Whether by giving way to materialism or to the things of the flesh, these individuals live without a knowledge of and a commitment to Heavenly Father's plan of salvation.

An eminent Japanese thinker recently looked at our pleasure-centered Western society and wrote insightfully of a dilemma growing out of this sense so many mortals have of planlessness and purposelessness. He wrote:

*If there is nothing beyond death, then what is wrong with giving oneself wholly to pleasure in the short time one has left to live? The loss of faith in the "other world" has saddled modern Western society with a fatal moral problem. [Takeshi Umehara, "The Civilization of the Forest: Ancient Japan Shows Postmodernism the Way," *At Century's End: Great Minds Reflect on Our Times*, ed. Nathan P. Gardels (San Diego: ALTI Publishing, 1996), p. 190]*

Nevertheless, as striving disciples, our strategic focus must fall on the interaction of immortal individuals and immortal principles as applied to life's changing tactical situations. It is vital, therefore, for you and for me, in the words of Jacob, to see things "as they really are" and things "as they really will be" (Jacob 4:13). It's interesting that those who have eyes single to the glory of God are those who see the most of reality.

But this road of discipleship about which we are speaking tonight is not easy. It requires sturdy, all-weather souls who are constant in every season of life and who are not easily stalled or thrown off course. Likewise, even with this accurate view of the mortal experience, we still need time and the wise use of our moral agency. We still need God's long-

suffering to help us. We need all of these combined in order to gain experience in life amid this ongoing process. And amid this ongoing process you and I can actually come to know for ourselves, like Alma of old, who “fasted and prayed many days that I might know . . . of myself” (Alma 5:46), that these immortal principles are true.

We can also come to know, through obedience, how much God loves us as his immortal children. It happens just as President Brigham Young said it would:

How shall we know that we obey [God]? There is but one method by which we can know it, and that is by the inspiration of the Spirit of the Lord witnessing unto our spirit that we are His, that we love Him, and that He loves us. It is by the spirit of revelation we know this. [JD 12:99]

If we can get that witness for ourselves that we are his and that he loves us, then we can cope with and endure well whatever comes in the varied tactical situations of life.

Of course, there are going to be puzzling moments. Nephi, paralleling what Brigham Young said, had this reaction when he was perplexed: “I know that [God] loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things” (1 Nephi 11:17). We cannot always fully or glibly explain everything that is happening to us or around us, but knowing that God loves us is absolutely crucial. Then, as immortals possessed of immortal principles, we can overcome the mortal trials and we can put the pressing things of the day in precious perspective.

Besides, the divine attributes of love, mercy, patience, submissiveness, meekness, purity, and others are those attributes we have been directed to develop in each of us—and they cannot be developed in the abstract (see 3 Nephi 27:27, Mosiah 3:19). These require the clinical experiences—those things through which we are asked to pass. Nor can these

attributes be developed in a hurry. Thus the scripture says, “All these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good,” referring to the mix of mortal experiences, immortal individuals, and immortal principles (D&C 122:7). And when that interplay occurs, and we see things through the lens of the gospel, then we can see things more clearly and navigate the road of discipleship.

Another thing will happen: We will become much more aware of and alive to the many possibilities for doing good that are present in life’s daily situations. Even the moments that seem humdrum are full of possibilities. Nothing is really routine.

I speak tonight, therefore, not only of life’s large defining moments but also of the seemingly small moments. Even small acts and brief conversations count, if only incrementally, in this constant shaping of souls, in this strategic swirl of people and principles and tactical situations. What will we, for instance, bring to all of those moments small and large? Will we do what we can to make our presence count as a needed constant in such fleeting moments, even in micro ways? Do you and I not sometimes say appreciatively of individuals who have helped us, “They were there when we needed them”? Will we reciprocate?

The daily discipleship of which I’m speaking is designed to develop these very attributes that are possessed to perfection by Jesus. These attributes emerge from a consciously chosen way of life; one in which we deny ourselves of all ungodliness and we take up the cross daily—not occasionally, not weekly, not monthly. If we are thus determined, then we are emulating yet another quality of our Lord, of whom we read: “And there is nothing that the Lord thy God shall take in his heart to do but what he will do it” (Abraham 3:17). True disciples are meek but very determined.

To underscore further what is being presented tonight concerning the mortal experience, one way of looking at the “thou shalt

not” commandments is that these prohibitions help us to avoid misery by turning us away from that which is enticing but harmful and wrong. However, once we are settled in terms of the direction of our discipleship and the gross sins are left firmly behind—“misery prevention,” it might be called—then the major focus falls upon the “thou-shalt” commandments. It is the keeping of the thou-shalt commandments that brings even greater happiness. True, as the scripture says, “Wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10), but neither is lukewarmness full happiness. Failing to be valiant in Christian discipleship will leave us without significant happiness. Therefore, our active avoidance of wickedness must be followed by our active engagement in righteousness. Then we can come to know true joy—after all, man is that he “might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25).

It is very often the sins of omission that keep us from spiritual wholeness because we still lack certain things. Remember the rich, righteous young man who came to Jesus asking, “Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?”

“Keep the commandments.”

“All these things have I kept from my youth up.”

And then came Jesus’ searching response: “One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor . . . : and come, . . . and follow me.” (See Matthew 19:16–21 and Mark 10:17–21.)

A customized commandment thus came for that man. It was something he needed to do, not something he needed to stop doing, that kept him from wholeness.

Furthermore, certain taste buds of our souls may have been burned over by sin, and our Father desires that we regenerate these taste buds of the soul by means of repentance. Our Heavenly Father also desires the development of what are presently the many other neglected taste buds of our souls. These, when they are

really developed, will bring even greater happiness and true joy. If it were not so, how could we anticipate with Paul the music and scenery that “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard” (1 Corinthians 2:9) and be prepared to enjoy it except we have cultivated these taste buds of great refinement?

Wickedness is not the only mortal failure. Yes, the avoidance of wickedness remains ever important, but the sins of omission also represent a haunting failure. How often, may I ask you, do we speak about the need for repentance concerning our sins of omission? Or how often do we make personal confessions of them to God?

There is a memorable scriptural phrase about our need to have “faith unto repentance” (see Alma 34:15–16). Faith unto repentance covers both sins of commission and sins of omission. And so the faith of discipleship about which I speak briefly tonight isn’t simply for life’s crises, though they will come. Rather, it is especially needed to ensure our regular repentance. After all, the scriptures are filled with thou-shalt commandments and with so many exhortations for us to do good. James, for instance, speaks of pure religion, urging us to visit and bless the variously deprived (see James 1:27). Significantly, James also declares that those who would do lasting good should themselves also *be* good—“unspotted from the world” are his words.

This is no small point. We live in a world, for example, in which some individuals do some good but do so while breaking the seventh commandment—chastity before marriage and fidelity after. If we really want to do much good, we must also *be* good. Instructively, in the Book of Mormon we read about a political leader, Morianton, who dealt justly with his people but not with himself. Why not? “Because of his many whoredoms,” the scriptures say (Ether 10:11). This is a fascinating insight regarding the ecology of the soul.

The promptings for us to do good come from the Holy Ghost. These promptings nudge us farther along the straight and narrow path of discipleship. The natural man doesn't automatically think of doing good. It isn't natural. How many people worry about the car behind them or the person below them? The natural man just doesn't do it. For us, however, these promptings enlarge our awareness of other people's needs and then prod us to act accordingly. This is why, I believe, when the Lord speaks of enlarging the soul, he adds, in the Doctrine and Covenants, that it must be done "without hypocrisy" (D&C 121:42). Our personal righteousness, more than we know, governs how much good we can do.

It is sadly true, as we all know, that many on this planet hunger for bread, but many also hunger deeply to experience the reassuring eloquence of example. This represents a desperate need that is incumbent upon us to provide as part of our discipleship.

You and I all know individuals who do much quiet good by following the scriptural injunction about lifting up the hands that hang down (see Hebrews 12:12, D&C 81:5). Some of those hands that hang down once grasped the iron rod and then let go, having simply given up. Hence, those hands need to be reached for because they will not be proffered by such discouraged individuals.

But it takes faith to persist in doing good, particularly quiet good, for which there is no recognition. Otherwise, why bother? Therefore, faith in Heavenly Father's plan of salvation is needed not just for life's turbulent, traumatic moments but also for daily life's seemingly small but nevertheless defining moments.

Will we, for instance, remember our true identity as we move through daily life? How much sin occurs because people momentarily forget who they really are?

Will we, for instance, always remember that our behavior must be connected with our beliefs? It must be done without hypocrisy.

The unrelenting reality, brothers and sisters, is that we are never very far away from the need for "faith unto repentance," including repentance of our sins of omission. Such faith unto repentance is not just for next year or next month or next week, but also for tomorrow.

One of the seemingly small things involves being more willing than we sometimes are to give the needed conversational correctives instead of engaging in "conversational cloak holding" by merely going along silently with the prevailing tide of discussion.

I recall reading of General George C. Marshall, whom President Franklin Roosevelt appointed to be his chief of staff early in World War II. Roosevelt was a very persuasive, informal man. During one of their first meetings, desiring to be friendly, perhaps even palsy-walsy, he called General Marshall "George," to which the reply came, "It's General Marshall, Mr. President" (David McCullough, *Truman* [New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992], p. 534). Think about the courage that simple act took—but it helped to define a relationship that, by the way, became a rich relationship.

The small conversational correctives matter so much. If we have that quality, we will appreciate what General Robert E. Lee reportedly did on one occasion. Asked for his opinion of a military colleague, Lee replied candidly but generously, after which the questioner said, in effect, "Well, he doesn't speak so highly of you." General Lee replied, "Sir, you have asked me for my opinion of him, not his opinion of me." Lee had, as one writer described another leader, "furnished his mind . . . with fixed principles" (Walter Bagehot, "Memoir of the Right Honourable James Wilson," *The Works of Walter Bagehot*, ed. Forrest Morgan [Hartford, Connecticut: Travelers Insurance, 1889], 3:384). If you and I can process life's tactical situations through a mind furnished with fixed principles, integrity is the result.

Conversations and decisions in which we engage, even if they seem small, expose the

heart and the mind and their furnishings. Brigham Young once said, “You cannot hide the heart, when the mouth is open” (*JD* 6:74).

We can be of so much service to others in many thou-shalt ways. Of course, the problem is that rendering such service takes time, and we are all so busy. Some situations may call for service that somehow seems to be beneath us. Besides, we have other things to do. The “thou shalt” are so convenient to put off. Who will notice the procrastination anyway? After all, we are not robbing a bank. Or are there forms of withholding that constitute stealing?

Consider a conversation again—and this conversation was arranged for by an angel:

And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go. . . .

And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.”

[Notice the significant language:] *And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?*

And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. [Acts 8:26–31; emphasis added]

How many times are we too busy to “come up and sit” with someone who needs conversation? You and I have divine promptings all the time encouraging us to do good, but we often deflect them instead of doing like Philip, who “ran thither.”

We sometimes give needed physical cloaks to warm people and to cover them, and it is good that we do. How often do you and I also

give what the scriptures call the “garment of praise” (Isaiah 61:3)? The “garment of praise” is often more desperately needed than the physical cloak. In any case, as we all know, these needs are all around us, every day. There are so many ways we can “lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees” (D&C 81:5).

We can also be generous when there are interpersonal differences of opinion. Generosity and fairness are marks of character. Compared to his early days in Parliament, Winston Churchill later developed his capacity to be generous, including to his rivals. This was seen in his tribute to the just-deceased Neville Chamberlain, whom he had earlier replaced as prime minister. Churchill had once described Chamberlain as looking at foreign affairs through a “municipal drain pipe.” Nevertheless, on the occasion of the tribute for Chamberlain, Churchill said, “In one of the supreme crises of the world [our colleague was] contradicted by events.” In that same speech Churchill praised Chamberlain, saying, “The only guide to a man is his conscience; the only shield to his memory is the rectitude and sincerity of his actions. . . . With this shield, . . . we march always in the ranks of honour” (Tribute to Neville Chamberlain, House of Commons, 12 November 1940). How generous of Churchill. “Contradicted by events” was intended to explain Chamberlain’s gross and naïve failures regarding the rise of Hitlerism.

In each of life’s situations, large or small, therefore, if you and I will bring fixed principles and strive to be more like Jesus, including emulating his generosity, then we will be living abundantly and not just existing. The Book of Mormon has those fascinating phrases about our moral agency whereby we are to act for ourselves and not merely be acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:16, 26; Helaman 14:30).

Now, since we are not always free to choose just when and how all of life’s interactions will occur, we are nevertheless free to choose our

responses to these moments. Since we can't compute beforehand all our responses, it becomes vital to set our course as immortals on the basis of immortal principles to be applied as reflexively as possible. Besides, there may be no time in which to ponder how we will respond anyway. If, for example, one determines that he will keep the seventh commandment, then his applying this fixed principle will result in temptations either being deliberately avoided in the first place or in being quickly deflected. All of this can be achieved without great thought, risk, or needless anxiety. In fact, I would go so far as to say to you tonight, my brothers and sisters, that if we are truly attached to immortal principles, some decisions need to be made only once, really, and then righteous reflexes can do the rest. Absent such fixed determinations, however, one can be tossed to and fro by temptations that then require case-by-case agonizing.

The same could be said of honesty in business or integrity in human relationships. Each day interactions occur relentlessly, involving people, principles, and circumstances.

One of the things we can do to help us develop those reflexes is to further develop our scriptural literacy so that, as Nephi prescribed, we can "liken all scriptures unto [ourselves]" (1 Nephi 19:23). Each day challenges arise, responses are given, and decisions are made. Will it be in the setting of fixed principles, however, as has been emphasized?

To this, the rising generation of youth and young adults in the Church, I say that scriptural memories, spiritual memories, can be lost in a generation:

And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. [Judges 2:10]

In just one generation!

When the scriptures are either not available or are not searched and believed, then two things happen—a loss of belief in God and a loss of belief in the Resurrection: "They had brought no records with them; and they denied the being of their Creator" (Omni 1:17).

Now it came to pass that there were many of the rising generation that could not understand the words of king Benjamin, being little children at the time he spake unto his people; and they did not believe the tradition of their fathers.

They did not believe what had been said concerning the resurrection of the dead, neither did they believe concerning the coming of Christ. [Mosiah 26:1–2]

Those vital things always go first, and they can go within a generation, unless we truly are feasting upon the scriptures. Feasting on the scriptures, combined with the gift of the Holy Ghost, will "show unto you all things what ye should do" (see 2 Nephi 32:3–5).

I testify to you tonight that the scriptures give us nourishment for every season of life and the Holy Ghost can prompt us in all moments so that we can, in fact, be blessed with insight and reassurance.

What can deter our feasting on the scriptures? Jesus warned, "The care[s] of this world . . . choke the word" (Matthew 13:22). They surely do. Still worse, those choked with the pleasures of the world have no time for scriptures. Some actually have pleasure in unrighteousness. Here again we see the natural man gravitating toward the cares and the pleasures of this world.

In that cumulative process, today's small inflection for good adds to what becomes tomorrow's mountain of character. A bad inflection, however, of a defining moment gouges a little more in what later becomes the eroded gully channeling us so swiftly into the "gulf of misery" (see 2 Nephi 1:13). More than we realize, life's experiences of boredom,

exhilaration, deprivation, conflict, compromise, mistakes, successes, resentments, loving, excluding, belonging, repenting, and forgiving swirl about us constantly. How will immortal principles be applied by immortal individuals to these swirling situations?

This is why the plan of salvation, which is so extremely important, came with the Restoration—so we can understand life and the discipleship being described tonight. If people misread life, this leads to murmuring, rebellion, and irreligion. Of Laman and Lemuel we read, “They knew not the dealings of that God who had created them” (1 Nephi 2:12). Decades later in the Book of Mormon, it was said once again, as if it were a part of the institutional memory of the Nephite and Lamanite people, that Nephi’s brethren “understood not the dealings of the Lord” (Mosiah 10:14).

Without gospel perspective in our lives, we just won’t “get it” either. Special moments will come and go unused and unnoticed. How we manage those moments in daily life ends up either developing character or disintegrating character.

These moments of truth may be small, but they give us a chance to express character. Mercifully, when we make mistakes we can recover and learn from them by “faith unto repentance.” We cannot, of course, relive a particular moment in our lives, but we can use it as a spiritual spur to remake ourselves. We need not let yesterday hold tomorrow hostage.

People always matter, of course, but the more I think about this interplay of immortal individuals and immortal principles, it is almost as though the particular tactical situation merely serves as a temporary, focal catalyst for what is really going on. Some other tactical situation might have served just as well. In any case, it is for each of us as immortals to make of these moments in daily life that which eternal principles would have us make of them.

I am the first to acknowledge that we, as Church members, have a tremendous challenge being equal to our theology and our opportunity. We fall short. If we stumble, let us arise and continue the climb. The Lord will bless us because we are possessed of truths about “things as they really are, and . . . things as they really will be” (Jacob 4:13). These truths beckon us, even in our imperfections, to be better.

I share with you tonight, as I near the end of my remarks, what seems to me to be a profound window of divine disclosure through which we are permitted to look. As is the case with many scriptures, there are many multiple meanings. I wish to note one from that moment in which Enoch, in the presence of the Lord, was permitted to see the trauma of the people in the time of Noah. The principle to be noted is that we do not always weep alone:

And it came to pass that the God of heaven looked upon the residue of the people [the Noachians], and he wept; and Enoch bore record of it, saying: How is it that the heavens weep, and shed forth their tears as the rain upon the mountains?

And Enoch said unto the Lord: How is it that thou canst weep, seeing thou art holy, and from all eternity to all eternity? [Moses 7:28–29]

And then came the marvelous response from God:

The Lord said unto Enoch: Behold these thy brethren; they are the workmanship of mine own hands, and I gave unto them their knowledge, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency;

And unto thy brethren have I said, and also given commandment, that they should love one another, and that they should choose me, their Father; but behold, they are without affection, and they hate their own blood; . . .

Wherefore, [continued the Lord] for this shall the heavens weep, yea, and all the workmanship of mine hands.

And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Enoch, and told Enoch all the doings of the children of men; wherefore Enoch knew, and looked upon their wickedness, and their misery, and wept and stretched forth his arms, and his heart swelled wide as eternity; and his bowels yearned; and all eternity shook. [Moses 7:32–33, 40–41]

An absolutely supernal, marvelous insight! Our Father in Heaven is so tender even for his most mistaken children.

Enoch began to rejoice when God told him of Jesus' coming in the meridian of time and told of the Atonement. He rejoiced again when God told him of the great latter-day Restoration.

Not always, but more than we know, when we are confronted in the human circumstance with the difference between *what could be* and *what is*, we do not weep alone!

I have felt to add these concluding thoughts in friendship and counsel to you.

Do not, my young friends, expect the world to esteem the seventh commandment—chastity before marriage and fidelity after. Some people in the world will fret genuinely over the consequences of its violation, such as staggering and unprecedented illegitimacy and marital breakdowns. However, sexual immorality per se will still not be condemned by the secular world as long as the violators have any commendable qualities at all or as long as they are, in some respect, politically correct. We will have to keep the seventh commandment because it is spiritually correct, not because we will get much support from society's other institutions.

A second suggestion: As you pursue your discipleship and observe the human scene, do not be surprised or unnerved by the natural man's relentless push for preeminence and power. It really reflects the premortal psychodrama. Nor should you be surprised over the

efforts of so many to cover their sins or to gratify their vain ambition.

Be grateful, therefore, for the gospel's emphasis on meekness. Be careful of the natural man's milder expressions—craving for credit and rustling for recognition. Alas, so often the hearts and even the moral agency of others can be crushed in the search for self-glorification.

We have just celebrated the birth at Bethlehem. Another individual sought the role of Redeemer, saying, "Send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost . . . ; wherefore give me thine honor" (Moses 4:1). Brothers and sisters, God would have never permitted a different babe to be born at Bethlehem, of course; nor would he have permitted the destruction of the agency of mankind with all its implications for a very different mortal experience. What happened, as you know, is that precious Jesus stepped forward and said, "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever" (Moses 4:2). He was the babe who was born at Bethlehem!

Remarkable restoration windows such as these are provided for our instruction in this dispensation—if we will ponder over them and make their insights a part of our discipleship.

Lastly, I again express publicly my gratitude for God's having granted me a "delay en route." However long, I know it has not been given merely for loitering or sightseeing along the pathway of discipleship. Perhaps the delay includes moments like tonight, when I can express my love for you, my confidence in you, and my testimony of Jesus, whose work this is. He has shown the meaning of the mortal experience by the eloquence of his example and by his having shown the way to us in every particular, including his gallantry during the agonies of the Atonement, of which he declared, "And would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink" (D&C 19:18). Not shrinking is more important than surviving, and Jesus is our exemplar in every way. I salute him for the

eloquence of his example. I express my everlasting gratitude to the Father for the superb plan of happiness and, with you, my appreciation for the promptings of the Holy Ghost and plead that each of us might not deflect these but might receive them as indicators of how much more we could do if we were more serious disciples. For these things I express my gratitude and my desire to give the honor and the praise and the glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost.

I take heart in the rising generation's capacity to move the people of this planet spiritually in ways not achieved before. You are indeed a generation of destiny, young adults of promise. I do so in love and appreciation, expressing my witness to you in the power and authority of the holy apostleship and in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.