

"Them That Love Him"

NORMA B. SMITH

I would like to thank the choir for their beautiful musical number "Let the Mountains Shout for Joy." They couldn't have chosen a song that I would have enjoyed more.

You see, I collect mountains. I treasure them. I think it began by being raised at the foot of Timpanogos on the Wasatch side (that is where you can see the sleeping princess). I love that mountain and everywhere I have gone I have found a mountain to love. We lived in Salt Lake City by Twin Peaks, and in Preston, Idaho, by Little Mountain, that for no reason just sprang up in the middle of a valley. Now we look out of our dining room and kitchen windows in Ogden to Ben Lomond Peak. Ben Lomond, I understand, was the prototype used in Paramount Pictures for their logo. It is a beautiful mountain.

Now let me tell you why I love them so. They have built my self-esteem, ever since I came across a little poem by Helen Lowrie Marshall. It is entitled "Greater the Soul."

*I looked upon a mountain high
in grandeur rising to the sky.
And then I contemplated me,
how very small I seemed to be.*

*Yet, in this fragile frame of mind
God chose to house a soul divine.
Not in that glorious, sun-crowned peak,
but in this body, frail and weak.*

*God chose to give to you and me
the promise of eternity.
A child of His can such be small?
A soul is surely Heaven-tall.
No, the mountain stands that I might see
how greater is the soul of me.*
[Helen Lowrie Marshall, *The Gift of Wonder*]

Will you think of that every time you go outside the buildings on this beautiful campus, framed by these wonderful mountains, and think of how much more worth you are than that gorgeous sight?

Norma B. Smith was second counselor in the Young Women General Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this fireside address was given at Brigham Young University on 6 May 1984.

Young People

Well, I look about you and you look like a convention of the teenagers that have graced our home while we have been raising our eight children, sharing with us hundreds of gallons of ice cream and great barrels of carmel popcorn. On one occasion, when I was downtown, I called home and a young man answered the phone. I asked for each of my children in turn and he said, "None of them are here right now."

I said, "Oh? Who is this?"

He said, "This is Brent."

"What are you doing, Brent?"

"Oh, Bill and I are just sitting here having some chocolate ice cream and watching television."

It is always open house at our place, and they know it. I thanked him kindly and told him to keep taking messages, and if anyone needed me I would be home soon.

I have been trying to tell myself that you are just like those kids that I have laughed with and loved over the years and that I didn't really need to agonize like I have been doing over coming here to talk to you. But you see, I realize now that you are older and wiser and that most of you are students at this great university where the motto is "enter to learn and go forth to serve."

You advertise that the world is your campus, and I know that to be true. Wherever we go and see the Mormons meeting and greeting each other, someone is bound to say, "Rise and shout, the Cougars are out!" or "Did you hear about the BYU game?" Or you ask couples where they met and find that they were students together at BYU, and you know what a successful job BYU is doing. They are sending them out to serve, and what a great and wonderful contribution they are making everywhere in the world.

Love the Lord

I thought very carefully about what it is that I should say to you and would help you

to be more prepared for your present and your future responsibilities. My message is very simple. It is to love the Lord.

In Corinthians it says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9). Be among them that love him! I just hope and pray that all those happy surprises promised for the obedient will be yours forever.

I want you to know that there is a generation of young people who are sending down tendrils of testimonies that are growing strong and taking root. All over the world we see them, and we know that the future is in good hands. But you must realize how few you are, compared to the rest of the world, and how very needed each one of you is in spreading this marvelous gospel.

I want you to appreciate the great miracle it is that we have the knowledge available to us today. It isn't just happenstance. I wish I had time to relate all of the stories we have that are examples of this. We feast at a table that we didn't even help to prepare.

For example, the prophet Mormon was only ten years old when he was given his first assignment. All the time he was performing his labors of abridging the records of this wonderful Book of Mormon, he knew that it wasn't for his people. He knew they wouldn't listen. They had proven it to him so many times that he gave up directing them as leader of the army, then repented, went back, and helped them again because he loved them. But he knew it wasn't for them that he labored. He saw *us* down the corridors of time and did all that he did and served all his life that we might have this great knowledge.

Then his son Moroni, who wandered in the world alone for twenty years, finished the record, secured it, and put it in the stone box in the Hill Cumorah to be found 1400 years later

by Joseph Smith as he was directed by our Father in Heaven.

Don't Take It for Granted

When you think of all the effort that was given so we might have a knowledge of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, can you wonder that when Joseph Smith, a teenage lad, went to take those plates from the box, Moroni stopped him and said, "No, not yet"? Then, for at least four more years, Moroni helped to teach and prepare Joseph before he let those precious records go into his hands. Because of his trials, Joseph Smith made the statement, "If I had not actually got into this work and been called of God, I would back out. But I cannot back out: I have no doubt of the truth" (*Teachings*, p. 286).

Don't ever take it for granted. Don't ever just put it aside and think that it is something you will learn about later. Many of you are returned missionaries, and I'll bet you can recite exactly what happened on the day you received your call. I know what happened in our house every time a mission call was received. You wait eagerly for your letter from a prophet of God. You immediately call the family and tell them where you are going to serve and what your instructions are. Can you imagine such a scene as having that letter arrive at a home and the missionary picking it up and tossing it on the table, or putting it on the bookshelf, or leaving it in a drawer, and saying, "Well, I'll read that some day and find out what my instructions are"? But we do this often with the scriptures, and they are our mission call, they are our books of instructions.

Where's the Manufacturer's Guide?

Not long ago I had the great privilege of visiting with my daughter as she moved into a new home, the home that had been built just for them. They were putting things away and as they started to use the new equipment, they found things didn't work just the way they

were supposed to. The first time they tried to use the oven it nearly fell out of the wall. They said, "Where is that manufacturer's guide?" From that, my son-in-law found how to secure the oven to the wall and how to connect the power and make it useful.

A little while later the dishwasher flooded. They said, "Where is that manufacturer's guide?" We found it and learned that the packing hadn't been taken out of the dishwasher before it was run. Over and over we found ourselves needing these guidebooks.

I had the special assignment of putting things away in the laundry and sewing room because that is my personal domain. Every time I visit, it is my privilege to reign supreme over that room and the mending. I intended to be a cookie grandma, but that is not the way it turned out. My daughter says, "Mother, I'll fix the food; you just thread the needle." As I was putting things away, I said to her, "Where do you want me to put this little book of instructions for your sewing machine?"

She said, "Very close! Every time something disturbs the tension we have to read it and see how to adjust it again." She was expounding wisdom that even she didn't realize.

You who have spent Christmas Eve putting tab A into slot B and trying to connect angle C to D, know how important a manufacturer's guide can be. Wouldn't you think that if it is so critical for such things as dishwashers, ovens, vacuum cleaners, sewing machines, and toys, that it would be even more important for the greatest creation of all?

In Psalms it says, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? . . . For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour" (Psalms 8:4, 5). That includes you girls too, you know, because it says in Genesis "So God created man in his own image . . . ; male and female created he them. . . . And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:27, 31).

Our Book of Instructions

Oh yes, you have a manufacturer's guide. He wouldn't send us, the greatest creation of all, without a book of instructions. We have in our possession those instructions that can give us all the answers for our day. Appreciate the knowledge that you have available to you. I say to you the answers are there. Whatever your problems are, you can find the answer in the manufacturer's guide written by the creator of us all, who knows us best and understands our problems.

I heard Elder Paul Dunn challenge the students of Weber State College at one time to make a periodic comparison between their scriptures and their textbooks. Some of you know that you have to have a new textbook for the same class by the time next semester comes because either theory has changed or man's meager knowledge has increased. Elder Dunn knew wherewith he spoke because his college chemistry book says the atom cannot be split. I also know about change because my college chemistry book says uranium is a useless metal. We laugh at this now, but uranium had no use at that time.

Have the scriptures changed? No, they are constant. They can be counted on. They have weathered the test of time. They have the revealed word of God and the truth for our day or for any day.

Problems Make Us Grow

This morning in our Relief Society lesson the teacher said, "Do any of you have problems?" We all chuckled and laughed. She asked, "Are there any of you who do *not* have problems? If there are some who have no problems, I really feel sorry for you, because it is the problems that make us grow." It is part of the plan. It is the reason we came. We voted for it. Not only did we vote for the plan, but the scriptures tell us in Job that we shouted for joy (Job 38:7). So we feel sorry for you if you don't have some problems. But somewhere we all

agreed to come and face the very problems we are facing today.

So what are your problems? You are here as students. What might you find as an answer? The Lord says "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all they getting get understanding" (Proverbs 4:7).

Are you looking for a way to make a living? Of course you are. What does he say, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). Are you looking for a mate? Of course you are. Do you know what he says about that? He says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). If you are making a hard decision he says, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6:14). Is there a lesson in that for you? Are you tempted? Read the story of Joseph sold into Egypt by his brothers. His father thought he was dead; his mother was dead. He was a seventeen-year-old boy, with nobody to give him support, no one to see what he was doing. Yet when Potiphar's wife tempted him, he said, standing firm and true, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9).

God Is Our Refuge and Strength

In times of calamity is there hope? Is there help? Oh, how I clung to certain words when our second daughter died! How much it meant to me to read "be still and know that I am God" or "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (D&C 101:16, Psalms 46:1). Do you feel your own inadequacies sometimes? I do, and then I think of 2 Timothy:

Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.
[2 Timothy 1:6, 7]

Oh, there is great comfort in that for every assignment that comes our way. Do you worry about peer pressure? Are there those who are trying to convince you to do something that you know you shouldn't do? It's getting difficult these days to decide how not to hurt a friend who invites you over to show a movie on a VCR and you find it is something you really didn't want to take into your heart and mind.

Think of the story of Elisha, whose servant awoke one morning and found that they had been surrounded by all kinds of chariots, horses, and armies. He said, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" Elisha answered, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (2 Kings 6:15, 16). And the poor servant, seeing only the two of them, didn't understand. So Elisha prayed that his eyes might be opened, and the servant saw Elisha surrounded by hoards of chariots of fire and armies to battle for them.

If you only knew how many people on the other side are cheering for you, if you knew in a hard moment how many are over there saying, "Come on, you can do it, you can do it," you would know that there are so many more with you than with your enemy or those who would lead you astray.

If you would just read the scriptures. I could go on and on. If you think your prayers aren't being answered, read the story of Daniel. Daniel pled with the Lord and finally the Lord said,

Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard.
[Daniel 10:12]

Your words are heard. All of our words are heard by a loving Father in Heaven who wants to help us and who will do so if we will but let him. But if we put our letter of instructions in

the drawer or over on the table and don't get into it to find the answers, he can't give us the answers. I plead with you that you will take these into your hearts, into your hands, and into your heads—that into these wonderful books you will enter to learn and go forth to serve.

An Average Day in America

I wish that all were well in Zion and that I could just tell you how wonderful the young people are across the world in the Church. But I picked up an article called "On an Average Day in America" in an airline magazine. Besides telling how many hot dogs are sold in the O'Hare Airport and how many gallons of mustard go on them, it gives some more important statistics.

On an average day in America

—5,962 couples will wed and before the sun sets
2,986 will divorce

—2,740 teenage girls will get pregnant

—someone is raped every 8 minutes, murdered
every 27 minutes, robbed every 78 seconds

—a car is stolen every 33 seconds

—3,231 women will have an abortion

[*American Way*, July 1980, p. 64–67]

Can you begin to see the need? Oh, how our Father in Heaven is counting on you! There is a great responsibility that goes with the privilege and blessedness of having received the added knowledge that is ours.

"I Don't Want You to Move"

Who's responsibility is it? Well, I've told and retold a little story about one of our sons, but I think it illustrates a point so I will tell it to you. Our youngest son has lived all of his life in one house. It isn't a grand mansion, but it has been a good home. He never intends to leave it or live anywhere else. He always expected to go on a mission, but he said, "I'll go and then I'll come back." He went around

to the neighbors and said, “I don’t want you to move, and I don’t want you to move, and don’t you dare let them sell the house. I’m the youngest and if they move into a condominium, I’ll be devastated and have to come home.”

We said, “What if we’re called on a mission?”

He thought it over very seriously and replied, “I think we had better take turns. I’ll go and you take care of it and when I get back you can go.”

We said, “What if we’re still here when you bring a bride home?”

He said, “I’ve thought about that. I’m considering remodeling the garage into an apartment for you.”

Well, his father had had a heart attack and no one else was home but just Scott. One day, as things were looking pretty bad, I appealed to this next owner of the property and said, “You know we need to do the lawn, the shrubs, and a little painting.” And he couldn’t have been less interested in anything. I mean he had important things to do. I think right then he was recording the Beach Boys and Fresh Aire tapes.

Well, I thought it was time for one of those “reprove with sharpness and then show forth an increase of love lest they esteem thee to be thine enemy” (someone called them “woodshed”) talks. I daresay each of you has had a few of them. I said, “If you really do intend to live here the rest of your life, then you of all people should be concerned about the kind of repair it’s kept in, because, before you know it, it will be yours with all of its accumulated problems. Not ours, but yours.”

A little minor miracle happened. The shrubs were trimmed, the lawn was not only cut but crosscut. I didn’t know that it could look like green velvet if you went in two directions. He began to take great interest in calling it “the best yard on the block.” It became almost that. With his effort we even got a little painting done.

It Is Your World

Why do I tell you this? Because I think every one of you is in exactly the same position, only it is your world. Young people, you had better see to its repair! Before you know it, it will be yours, with all its accumulated problems. If you intend to spend the rest of your life in it, and raise your family in it, then you had better see to its repair.

Where could you begin? I think of the statement by President Kimball who was speaking to youth some years ago and said:

What a glorious day in which to live! O Youth of a noble birthright, the world is at your feet! You were born at this time to have dominion tomorrow over the earth and all things therein. What a priceless heritage. But there are detours and you could miss the way. You can grovel in the earth or you can climb to the skies. In this life’s university you can fail or you can graduate with high honors. All depends on you and your attitudes and determinations. [Church News, 13 February 1960, p. 4]

What kind of a world is it you want? I think you had better decide and decide to do something about it, because until you see it as your problem, it is not going to change. Listen to these words of your BYU president, Jeffrey Holland. He feels it is incongruous that we live today in a society in

Which a whale or porpoise or snail darter or lousewort, along with any bird or blade of grass in a national park, [is] entitled to greater legal protection than a five-month-old fetus. [“Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall: A Look at the Me Decade,” 1979 Devotional Speeches of the Year, p. 47]

The world will be influenced by what you learn, by what you think, by what you do. You have a great message to carry and a great responsibility to share it with others.

They Are Everyone's Problems

My sister Jennie Carlile is a seasoned counselor at Provo High School. Coming into this area, I asked her, "What do young people here need to hear?"

She answered, "I wish we could teach our students to accept the responsibilities and consequences of their own actions."

Are these just others' problems that I have talked about on an average day in America? I had two calls last month from Utah County in my office; one of them pleading for help because their Laurel president had just overdosed on drugs and was in the hospital. The leader said, "We have an epidemic down here. What can we do to help them?"

The other caller said that three in their Young Women's program were pregnant out of wedlock. No, these are not just someone else's problems. They are your problems, and my problems, and the problems of everybody who wants to turn the world around.

Someone asked President Elaine Cannon, "How bad does the world have to get before the Lord will cleanse it again?"

She said, "That is not the question. The question is 'How good do we have to get?' " We are the Lord's chosen people. We are charged with raising a generation worthy to receive the Savior when he comes. Will you be part of that generation? Will you help to bring about that great event?

As we look to the scriptures, we have the word of our maker. He says:

Hearken, O ye nations of the earth, and hear the words of that God who made you.

Behold, verily I say unto you, that these are the words of the Lord your God.

Wherefore, labor ye, labor ye in my vineyard for the last time—for the last time call upon the inhabitants of the earth.

For in mine own due time will I come upon the earth in judgment, and my people shall be redeemed and shall reign with me on earth.

For the great Millennium, of which I have spoken by the mouth of my servants, shall come. [D&C 43:23, 27–30]

Get Ready for That Day

Do you remember the story in 3 Nephi where the Savior appeared on this continent? Oh, I love the Book of Mormon and I love those who prepared it for putting a little line at the bottom that gives us the chronology of the time. It starts at 600 years before Christ. Then it is 500, 400, 300, 75, and 33, and then Samuel the Lamanite, standing on the walls of the city, says, "Oh, get ready for the day. It is only five years until the Savior will be here. Put your lives in order and prepare to receive him when he comes."

The five years passed and nothing happened. So the ruler of the day said, "Oh, those foolish people who listened to Samuel the Lamanite. If they don't put away that belief, they will lose their lives on the morrow." Another Nephi, who was their leader at the time, pled with the Lord and cried unto him that they shouldn't be destroyed for their obedience. Finally, through his pleadings came the voice of the Savior saying, "Lift up your head and be of good cheer; for behold, the time is at hand, and on this night shall the sign be given, and on the morrow come I into the world" (3 Nephi 1:13).

The sign was that the sun would go down but the light would remain; a day and a night and a day as bright as day. When the sign came, many believed and repented and put their lives in order. They knew by that sign that the Savior had been born. Yet thirty-three years later the world was so wicked that it was cleansed with trials and tribulations such as the world had never seen before. Those who were left, the more righteous of them (2,500 of them, as the scriptures tell us; see 3 Nephi 17:25), found their way to the temple, heard the voice of God introducing the Savior, and saw him as he descended and came among them.

This was no passing vision. This was no dream. He stayed with them and taught them. We have that beautiful story of how he called the children and blessed them one by one. As angels surrounded them with fire, he said, “Behold your little ones” (3 Nephi 17:23). After this magnificent event there was peace on the earth for 200 years because all those who had seen, all those they told, and all those *they* told, for that many generations, believed in Jesus Christ. Oh, how many times do we read that pride came in and destroyed the people again.

We don’t know what the chronology of our time is. No one has marked down on our calendars just how long it will be again. But you have to take your cue from a dynamic prophet of God who has told us to lengthen our stride, increase our faith, extend our reach, and “do it.” Someone asked President Kimball, “What is it we need to do?” and he said, “You all know what it is you need to do. The problem is doing it.”

He has given us our cue. He is the one who tells us we are in the Saturday night of time. Is there a moment to lose? Is there time to take things for granted? Is there time to let the dust accumulate without reading our instructions, finding out what it is we are supposed to be doing and then doing it? The time is urgent.

You Are Called in This Day

I plead with you to take it seriously, to accept the responsibility of your own actions, and to make a difference in the lives of others. I love the story of Queen Esther in the Old Testament. What a very difficult thing she had to do. It would have cost her life if she went before the king unbidden. But Esther’s cousin Mordecai said to her, “Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14).

If I could call you each by first name, I would say, “Liz and Nicki and Jan and Betty, or Robert, John, Bill or Todd, who knoweth but *thou* are brought to the kingdom for such

a time as this?” You have already proven that you have all the qualities of excellence that are needed to succeed by being reserved this long to come forth at this time.

Don’t waste it after waiting so long for your turn. You aren’t called to cross the plains. You aren’t called to seek the Holy Grail. You are called to stand firm in a world that needs you badly and to stem the tide of sin and error that is in the world today. Those are the words President Kimball said to us as we were called to the Young Women presidency.

You are called in this day and age to stem the tide of sin and error in the world today. Oh, how much there is to do. How few are the laborers in the vineyard. How we need every single one that will hear.

As I talk about those things that are happening around us, I want to make one thing very clear to you. If some of those mistakes that I have mentioned have been made by you, please do not think for one minute that I am here to condemn you. One of my other favorite stories is of the Savior, who said to the accusers of the adulteress, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” Each one went away with his stone unthrown, carrying the weight of his own iniquities, “and Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more” (John 8:7, 11).

It Is Never Too Late

All of us carry the burdens of some mistakes that we have made. But Enos and Alma and Saul, oh, so many of the prophets, have told us about the joy that can come from turning a life around. It is never too late to turn a life around. It is always worth the effort. It is always worth the pain.

Let me tell you one little story of a man in Haiti named Alexander Moura. He recorded it for us, so I don’t think he would mind my sharing it with you. This man found a little pamphlet of the Joseph Smith story. He picked it up and read it, and he said that he was electrified.

He knew it was true. He can't understand why anyone wouldn't know by reading it that it was true. He had tried everything he knew to find meaning in his life, including voodooism, and nothing had helped. But he knew the truth of that little story.

He wrote to the address on the pamphlet and asked for more information. It was a long time coming, but eventually he received some additional literature and a Book of Mormon. He declares that he never closed his eyes from the time he began to read to the time that he finished it. Now try that for a challenge. He had no need to put the test of Moroni 10:4 to work. He knew from the very first words of 1 Nephi that this was the word of God.

At that point he climbed on an airplane and went to Florida to ask for baptism, with his cigarettes still in his pocket. You see, he hadn't heard about that yet. No one had told him about the Word of Wisdom. As the mission president explained the Word of Wisdom, tithing, and a lot of other things that become stumbling blocks for some other people, he gently moved the wastebasket over and Brother Moura dropped the cigarettes in and never smoked again.

We asked him if this was difficult—a silly question, because this was a man who had smoked four to six packs a day for years and years and years. He averaged about twenty-six cups of coffee in a day, six or seven before he could get to his store and function. He was a frequent drinker of liquor. He answered that he had tried to quit before, many times, but he would get so ill he couldn't get to the store. There wasn't any way he could stop. He would try and try, then give it up and go back. But he testifies that with the help of the Lord he never had another craving.

He knows that a miracle happened in his behalf. Just last fall Elder Thomas S. Monson dedicated the land of Haiti, and with Alexander Moura were 155 members of the Church. All from that small beginning. That

land has many branches now and people are hearing this great voice of gladness, the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our Responsibility

It is the hope of the world. It is the great need of the world. And whose responsibility is it to carry it? It is everyone's who has received it. The scripture says, "it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor" (D&C 88:81). It is our responsibility.

As I think about the people who need to turn their lives around, I wonder why it is that they don't apply the things they learn on Sunday to what they do on Saturday night. So often they don't. We ask groups of bishops, young people, parents, leaders, and we get some interesting answers.

A group of young people from Southern Utah thought about the question and the very one that you would have chosen, the football hero, decided he would be spokesman for the group. He said, "We're going to. We all picture ourselves as good, active members of the Church, but we just have to try the ways of the world a little first."

Oh, what dangerous words those are. Why are they so dangerous? Because the Spirit withdraws if we aren't doing the things we are supposed to do. It is our greatest protection and help in time of need, but it withdraws because it can't dwell in us if we are in the wrong place and are doing the wrong things. And another thing, who knows when we might run out of time? We don't know the chronicle of our days. It may be later that we think. Also, the way of the world is too often the road to heartbreak.

How much better if we could prevent the road to heartbreak, even though there is always hope of turning a life around. It is like the old sage says, that we are "too soon old and too late smart." I echo again my daughter's words. She referred them to her sewing machine; I refer them to you and the scriptures. "Keep the book of instructions very close.

Every time someone disturbs the tension we have to read and find out how to adjust it again.”

You can do that. You can adjust the tension in your lives by keeping the books of instructions very close. And if you think that you are worth it, you will keep the commandments. I am quite sure that it’s when we don’t understand who we are or what we are or how important we are that we make the mistakes we do.

You are Something!

If you need proof of your worth, consider these five things.

First, God is our Father. We are his children. We have in us the spark of divinity that comes from a Father that is divine.

Second, we are made in his image. We are created to be like him. We, male and female, have been created in the image of divinity.

The third one is our choice in the premortal existence. We did something right. We chose the right way! We are here with a mortal body, and that proves we did something right.

We must have done something wonderful to merit what we have. There was a missionary in Brazil that finally came to a realization of how favored and blessed he was. He wrote home and said, “Wow, I must really be something to have been born in this time when the gospel is on the earth, to have been born into my home with my parents and brothers and sisters, to have been called to the best mission in the world, and to have had my companions, my mission president, my converts, and to meet these people.” You are something! Count your blessings.

The fourth one is the plan of salvation—that wonderful plan that was made for us to become like our Father in Heaven. We had come to a point where we couldn’t progress any farther. So this great plan for us to come here and be proven was brought to pass. “And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will

do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them” (Abraham 3:25).

I didn’t realize that everyone didn’t know that when I first left home. I was in Georgia and a girl asked me to tell her about the Mormon church and what I liked about it and what I believed. I told her the obvious things about the Word of Wisdom, tithing, and going to church on Sunday. She threw her hands in the air and exclaimed, “Merciful heavens! I want to be religious and hear a good sermon on Sunday, but I’m certainly not going to let it interfere with my life.”

She didn’t know about the plan of salvation—that life is a part of eternity, as much as any part before we came or after we leave. It is all one round whole of the plan of salvation.

The fifth one, if you need a feeling of self-worth, is to remember that you had an elder brother, Jesus Christ, who lived and died for you. We had Christmas early this year. On 23 October we sat on Shepherd’s Hill, looking across at Bethlehem where the Savior was born, and listen to Elder Mark E. Peterson give that last great address about the life of the Savior. I had a testimony before I went there. It didn’t take that to tell me that he lives and loves us. But to walk the ground where he had been and to feel the spirit of the country and the conditions that are there now, and were there then, gave me an added appreciation for all that has gone before.

Ever since I came to know that my mistakes added to the weight of the Savior’s agony in Gethsemane on that night, I have had a deep appreciation for what happened there. To be there, to feel it and to see it, made me love him all the more. He really did die for us. His suffering wasn’t so much on the cross as it was in Gethsemane. He took upon him all those mistakes that you and I have made. What a tragedy it would be if that sacrifice were in vain. The only way we can make it valid is by doing all we can, by repenting, putting our

lives in order, and making that sacrifice worth it for him and for us.

We Love and Are Loved by Him

I know that the Savior lives and loves us. I know that our Father in Heaven knows every one of us by our first names. He is not remote. Joseph Smith told us at one time, "If you were to see [God] today, you would see him like a man in form" (*Teachings*, p. 345). And later, Brigham Young said, "If the veil were rent today and the great God who holds this world in its orbit and who upholds all worlds and all things by his power was to make Himself visible,—I say, if you were to see Him today, you would see Him like a man in form—like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man" (*JD*, 8:30).

We have a wonderful line of communication. He has given us that great opportunity to talk with him through prayer. He has sent us with a book of instructions, a manufacturer's guide. He knows us better than any one. Will you reach into it? Will you put it into your hearts and your hands? Will you go forth to serve? Will you be heir to and qualified for all those blessings that he has promised the obedient? "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

My only message tonight is be among them that love him. Appreciate what is yours. Count your blessings. Take it to others that they too might share in this wonderful gospel that is ours. I testify to you that he lives and loves us and that he guides our every action if we will but allow it. Truly, "The King of Love Our Shepherd Is," as the choir will sing to conclude this meeting.

I thank you for this opportunity. It is wonderful to be with you and see so many youth gathered in one place. You are dear to my heart and have become more so through my experiences of having served with Sister Cannon and Sister Darger in the presidency of the Young Women. We are thrilled that someone as concerned about you as Sister Ardeth Kapp is called to be the new president. We rejoice with her in the opportunity that is hers to go forth and see the wonderful youth of the Church. And we rejoice for them to have the blessings of her labors and her love.

I pledge with you that the Lord will bless you, whatever your problems are, if you will allow it, if you will get into the scriptures and make them a daily habit. Whatever your problems are, the answers are there. There is peace there, and acceptance, comfort, growth, power, the way to happiness, and the way to eternal life. May you find them all, I pray earnestly in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.