

Family Home Storage

MARVIN J. ASHTON

Brothers and sisters, I am very pleased to be with you tonight. You represent my favorite congregation.

Tonight I would like to direct your thoughts toward home storage. I hope it won't be too disappointing for you to hear I have selected this subject as my topic of discussion. And before some of you tune me out, let me put your minds at ease. I am not going to talk to you about honey, salt, wheat, water, and peanut butter. Rather, within the framework of real family storage, I am going to talk to you about money, children, mother, father, husband, and wife.

In recent weeks, some—with the advent of severe weather, possible water shortages, and future food uncertainties—have moved with great haste to hurriedly surround themselves with food commodities. There has actually been some panic buying on the part of the unprepared and frightened. While I wholeheartedly recommend family and personal preparedness in the accumulation of basic foods on continuing and orderly basis, I take this occasion tonight to sincerely remind us all that there should be a continuing personal home storage, if you please, going on without delay, interruption, or misunderstood priority.

It is true that “man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live” (Deuteronomy 8:3). The kind of storage I am advocating today is sometimes better performed by casting your bread upon the waters rather than in the freezer. The only real home storage you can take with you is yourself and your family. Once stored, the things I am talking about can constantly be shared and your supply will never be depleted. We need to be anxiously involved in the type of family storage that will sustain eternal life: “Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (1 Timothy 6:19).

Now, let me get back to home storage—avoiding at this time honey, salt, wheat, water, and peanut butter, and dwelling on money, children, mother, father, husband, and wife. “Life is more than meat, and the body is more

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that raiment" (Luke 12:23). Happiness is more important than money. Certain gifts and powers you and I possess are far more important than money. Money cannot buy those priceless gifts you have in your possession to store and share. In the past some of us have had a great deal to say about money and the importance of proper money management, but tonight I want to emphasize that money makes available none of the basics of the kind of family storage I believe to be of the greatest importance.

Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.

And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something to them.

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

And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

And all the people saw him walking and praising God:

And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or

why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? [Acts 3:1–12]

Peter was able to lift, lead, and act because he had stored his priestly powers in a clean vessel and knew the processes of sharing. The certain lame man did not purchase Peter's powers with money nor did the apostle of God acquire them through worldly wealth. They were accumulated by the grace of God and by personal preparedness.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. [Matthew 6:19–21]

President Spencer W. Kimball, eighty-two years of age tomorrow, stores as he shares. I thank God for his leadership, his example, and his love.

Some of my recent experiences and observations I would like to share with you at this time. I hope they will give a new light on real home storage.

A few weeks ago we had the opportunity of being in Suva, Fiji. I was surprised after registering at a motel to have the clerk look up and say, "Elder Ashton, could my husband and I and our children visit with you tonight?" I didn't know that she knew who I was. Because we had meetings until ten o'clock in the evening, I told her the situation and she said, "We'll come at ten o'clock in the evening." And at ten o'clock in the evening this lady—and we will call her Jessie because that is her name (I would hate to try and pronounce her last name)—and her husband and six children crowded into our motel room.

After proper introductions and getting as comfortable as possible in almost impossible conditions, Jessie led off with this question. "Our son over here is nineteen years of age. The question we want to ask you, Elder Ashton, is, should we continue to save our money so that our son can go into the mission field, or should we continue to save our money so that some day all of us can go to the temple in New Zealand and be sealed to each other?"

My answer: "In the Church we do both."

Another question. "Is it true that some missionaries can get money from other families for assistance when the missionary's own family doesn't have very much in the way of money?"

I said, "Yes, that is possible, but never deprive your family of the opportunity of taking part in some way to furnish money monthly to your son. Do not let that opportunity escape your family no matter how slight the contribution." Brothers and sisters, money, like people, is only valuable when it is put to worthy purposes. In this case, money will be nothing more than a means to an end. It is not money, but a lack of it, that is making this family strong.

Just last Friday Sister Ashton and I had a letter from Suva, Fiji, indicating that the nineteen-year-old son was now in the mission field. I am pleased to add that to the remarks tonight.

A few days after we returned from a trip to Fiji, I had a private talk with a six-year-old-boy friend of mine—when he is on good behavior I recognize him as a grandson. When he is not on good behavior, he just belongs to Sister Ashton. I said, "Michael, I know a good guy who lives on an island a long way from here, away out in the Pacific Ocean. He's old enough to go on a mission, but he doesn't have much money. Would you like to help him?"

"Yeah, I'll help him. My mom and dad will too."

"Michael, how much would you like to give?"

"Would a quarter be all right?" May I say in passing: you and I know that Michael's quarter is not much, but his willingness to give and share is everything. It also makes grandparents proud and talkative.

We need to teach our youngsters in the home today that it is not enough to save for a mission, but we need to teach them to assist others who may not have the opportunity to save or have the advantage of home life that recommends this type of conduct. May I say today that the unwise pursuit of money is a deterrent to missionary service.

May I share another recent experience to try to put over in our minds tonight the values as well as the opportunities of proper home storage by using the occasions of the day to store as we share and grow.

During a recent stake conference assignment, I was accompanied by an outstanding regional representative of the Twelve. As we flew between Salt Lake City and San Francisco, I was interested in his telling me about his wife, three sons, and two daughters. One daughter, the youngest of the five children, born about seventeen years ago, passed away within the last year. At birth she suffered severe brain damage and, as a result, in the sixteen years of her life was never able to grow or develop. Constant care from a loving mother, patience and warmth from a kind father, and understanding from three noble brothers and a thoughtful sister made her presence special in the family. I was moved to new depths of understanding when this traveling companion told me what a blessing this soul had been to their household. He said, "Nothing that money could buy could have ever brought us together in love, patience, and humility like just taking care of her did." Here was a tragedy, here was a trial if you please, turned into an opportunity for blessings for eternal family storage and sharing. I thank this noble father,

mother, and children for sharing with me out of their home storage.

I sometimes am not only disappointed but amused as well as being amazed when I see young couples of college age, married one, two, three, or four years, kind of proud of their year's supply—yet in public they take the occasion to cut each other down by remarks that are intended to impress their associates. Young married couples who take the occasion to cut each other down in public or in private are all mixed up in their home storage priorities. As we learn to build up each other, our personal family storage will grow.

Let me share with you another choice recent experience. It has to do with a calling of a new patriarch. I asked this good brother, following the call, "If you had your choice, where would you like to have your ordination take place?"

"Elder Ashton," he said "we will come to your office."

"That isn't what I asked you," I said. "Where of all the places would you choose to have your ordination take place?"

He said, "As long as you put it that way, we would love to have it take place in our home with our children and grandchildren present." He said this with great feeling.

Sister Ashton and I went to their home and participated in an enlarged family home evening. We heard children pay appropriate tribute to a deserving father and heard grandchildren say, "Grandpa is neat." At the close of the hour, all expressed deep appreciation for this choice experience. It was a long-to-be-remembered evening for us. As Sister Ashton and I drove back to our home—quite a few miles—our thoughts were turned to the fact that proper home experiences with children, mother, father, and even grandmother and grandfather are priceless. We had another evidence of the wisdom found in Doctrine and Covenants 20:47. "And visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and

in secret and attend to all family duties." Here again is home storage of eternal significance going forward.

May I share another experience. In Tonga during a missionary preparation session, with a twinkle in my eye, I was impressed to say jokingly to the full-time missionaries. "Perhaps one of the best ways to increase our baptisms and convert all of the people of Tonga would be for one of you lady missionaries at a later date to become acquainted with the king's son—late in his twenties and unmarried—and to fall in love with him and start the process of conversion from the top level."

To this quip, one of the native Tongan lady missionaries stood up and in broken English said, "None of us would go with him, Elder Ashton. He doesn't hold a temple recommend." I do not mind telling you my mind went again to money, children, mother, father, husband, and wife. Here was a beautiful young lady missionary teaching the lesson, with a smile on her face, that a happy home with children, mother, and father is much more important than money, thrones, and earthly possessions. These attitudes, properly stored and shared, whether they be by missionaries or students or leaders, will prevent spiritual famine.

Let me share with you part of a letter recently received to indicate again how it is possible on a continuing basis to store as we share eternal goods.

Dear Elder Ashton,

At the beginning of the conference session, as I sat meditating, I was overwhelmed with the beauty of the people in attendance and the spirit I felt, but I was still tremendously sad. I knew the talks would be all about the importance of children, and I felt I was a failure as a mother. When you spoke, even though there were thousands in the building, I knew you were talking just to me. You said we are never failures until we give up on family members and weary in well-doing. You also said that our trials

and experiences with our own children will make us more sensitive to the problems of other children that we may be later called upon to serve and lead. I pray that our Heavenly Father will bless our son. It was not his fault that his father and I made mistakes in rearing him. And since he has helped us to better understand other boys, he has done us a good service the hard way. Our son is sixteen. Every time I feel sad, I will remember what you said. We will try to lift others wherever God chooses us to serve without apology and without regret. Thank you for what you have done for me.

I have never met the lady who wrote this letter, but wherever she is, I take this opportunity to publicly thank her for her attitude, her priceless lesson on life—children, mother, father, and true values. Certainly money could not buy the wisdom she shares and stores.

In regard to this family situation and with the hope that it may provide strength and encouragement to some of you this evening, I share a thought I made in general conference a few years ago as follows—again indicating that hopefully someone can be helped as we meet situations this day that are challenging or discouraging, or family tragedies or opportunities in families where we have question to wonder and to ask why.

I believe we start to fail in the home when we give up on each other. We have not failed until we have quit trying. As long as we are working diligently with love, patience, and long-suffering, despite the odds or the apparent lack of progress, we are not classified as failures in the home. We only start to fail when we give up on a son, daughter, mother, or father. [Conference Report, April 3, 1971, p. 15]

and, may I add, a husband or a wife. I believe this with all of my heart. In case some of you need to be reminded, this kind of home storage that we have the possibility to accumulate will never be nil as long as we don't give up.

I humbly suggest that in the days ahead we not only think upon the basics of family food storage—even honey, salt, wheat, water, and peanut butter—but more importantly, upon the eternal basics not available through money—even children, mother, father, husband, and wife wisely sharing as they store eternal non-perishable foods. May I again remind all of us that the only real home storage we can take with us is ourselves and our family. This kind of home storage is replenished as it is shared, and we are able to share only that which we have. I hope and pray that we will look to the future with a positive attitude. There will be a general conference, there will be missionaries called who will go into the field and serve, there will be opportunities for us to be about our Father's business. Be not deceived. Do not be stampeded into doing unusual things because of quotes or misquotes that are given that some people seem ready, willing, and anxious to grasp even though they have no foundation. It is disturbing to me to be way out in the islands of the Pacific and have some missionaries say, "Is it true we will not finish our missions because there will be a famine?" I want all of us to know that the work of the Lord is going forward and it will go forward according to his plans. President Spencer W. Kimball is a prophet of God. I bring you his love and greetings this night and remind you that he is about his Father's business and he stores as he shares and he shares as he stores.

May the Lord help us to be prudent in our daily storage and in our sharing processes and help us to realize that only through children, mother, father, husband, and wife relationships can eternal home storage be realized. This type of family home storage doesn't cost money, but the benefits will go on through eternity. To these truths I leave my testimony and my witness in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.