

He Loveth That Which is Right

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I want to talk about the significance of a special painting that hangs on a wall on the fourth floor of the Salt Lake Temple. It is where the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve meet weekly to discuss Church affairs as they pertain to worldwide structuring and management.

On this fourth floor is the beautiful First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Room. It is approximately 30 feet wide, 50 feet long, and has a ceiling height of 12 feet. It is decorated in soft pastel colors with fixtures and furnishings that are in good taste and practical. In the front of this room and in the center are three chairs for the First Presidency to occupy. In a semicircle across the room from them are twelve seats where the members of the Twelve sit. In this setting of privacy and temple warmth, the various divisions, departments, councils, programs, and other needs of the Church are studied and reviewed and decisions are made. Worldwide areas and growth challenges are examined and supervised. Personnel needs are discussed, prayed over, and service calls determined.

On the front wall of this fourth-floor temple room are three original Harry Anderson paintings, each 40 x 34 inches. One painting, titled "Christ Calling Peter and Andrew," is of the

Savior in white robes walking along a seashore. He is beckoning to Peter and Andrew, who are on a fishing boat with other fishermen, to follow him and "be fishers of men." The painting depicts Christ's calling of Peter and Andrew, later ordained as his apostles, to follow him.

Another painting, titled "The Crucifixion," is rendering of the Savior hanging on a cross at Calvary. Two thieves, also hanging on crosses, are at the left and right of Christ. Numerous observers, including Mary, the mother of Christ, Mary Magdalene, other mourners, and Roman soldiers are gathered around the crosses. Thunder clouds are gathered in the sky.

The third painting is titled "The Resurrection." Mary is the garden by the open tomb, looking up at the resurrected Christ before his ascension.

Around the other walls and parts of the room are pictures beginning with Joseph Smith and including the other twelve presidents of the Church; namely, Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow,

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Joseph F. Smith, Heber J. Grant, George Albert Smith, David O. McKay, Joseph Fielding Smith, Harold B. Lee, Spencer W. Kimball, and Ezra Taft Benson. In this setting there is only one other picture in the entire room, and that is of Joseph Smith's brother Hyrum. It is not only appropriate but a genuine tribute, proper and purposeful, that the portrait of this great man is on display with the Savior and the prophets of this dispensation. Not only a faithful brother and advocate of Joseph's, but to all of us who meet there regularly he is the personification of integrity.

"The Integrity of His Heart"

"And again, verily I say unto you, blessed is my servant Hyrum Smith; for I, the Lord, love him because he loveth that which is right before me, saith the Lord" (D&C 124:15).

John Taylor said of Hyrum: "If ever there was an exemplary, honest, and virtuous man, an embodiment of all that is noble in human form, Hyrum Smith was its representative." John Taylor also said of Joseph and Hyrum Smith that they are "two of the best of Adam's race." Hyrum was an older brother, six years senior to Joseph, and stood by his side in life and death. The age differential never seemed to make much of a difference in Hyrum's attitude toward his younger brother. He was his friend, his advocate, and strength.

Joseph maintained an especially close tie to his brother Hyrum. "Never in all my life have I seen anything more beautiful than the striking example of brotherly love and devotion felt for each other by Joseph and Hyrum," recalled a friend of the Smiths, William Taylor. "I witnessed this many, many times. No matter how often or when or where they met, it was always with the same expression of supreme joy. It could not have been otherwise, when both were filled to overflowing with the gift and power of the Holy Ghost! It was kindred spirits meeting!"

In section 11 of the Doctrine and Covenants, verses 6 through 10 cover some direct revelation instructions, guidelines, and promises for Hyrum Smith.

Now, as you have asked, behold, I say unto you, keep my commandments, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion.

Seek not for riches but for wisdom; and behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, even as you desire of me so it shall be done unto you; and, if you desire, you shall be the means of doing much good in this generation.

Say nothing but repentance unto this generation. Keep my commandments, and assist to bring forth my work, according to my commandments, and you shall be blessed.

Behold, thou hast a gift, or thou shalt have a gift if thou wilt desire of me in faith, with an honest heart, believing in the power of Jesus Christ, or in my power which speaketh unto thee.

Also, in section 138, verse 33, the mighty ones in the spirit world are mentioned—Hyrum was one of these. "These were taught faith in God, repentance from sin, vicarious baptism for the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands."

And verse 55 reveals that Hyrum was "among the noble and great ones who were chosen in the beginning to be rulers in the Church of God."

It has been rightly said that the role of Hyrum Smith in the restoration of the gospel subsequent to the organization of the Church was second only to that of his brother Joseph. History points out to us that the Prophet Joseph Smith did nothing of importance without first counseling his brother Hyrum. Always it seemed when he was in trouble or in deep danger or heavy in burdens, he was to seek out

his older brother for help and advice. Hyrum was always wise and consistent.

Joseph's faith and trust in his remarkable brother Hyrum is displayed in the beginning of the Nauvoo period. Hyrum acted as President of the Church while Joseph went to Washington, D.C., to obtain a redress for losses in Missouri. Hyrum was a peacemaker, a man of integrity, an honest individual. It was said of Hyrum that he would never knowingly offend any man. Nevertheless, he was relentless in hating wrong.

On one occasion, Joseph said that if Hyrum could not make peace between two who were in disagreement the angels themselves might not hope to accomplish the task. About the twentieth of June 1844, only seven days before the martyrdom, Joseph urged Hyrum to take his family to Cincinnati for safety. Hyrum answered simply, "Joseph, I cannot leave you."

It is not uncommon when a younger brother is highly honored for the elder brother in a family to manifest a spirit of jealousy, envy, and resentment, resulting sometimes in discontent and open opposition, but not so with Hyrum. He accepted the great vision and mission of his brother Joseph in the most sacred and loyal spirit of humility. On one occasion, when William Smith, the Prophet's younger brother, took occasion to abuse Joseph with words of violence, Hyrum came to the defense of the Prophet. This loyalty and action elicited the following expression of appreciation from Joseph: "I could pray in my heart that all my brethren were like unto my beloved brother Hyrum, who possessed a meekness and humility of Christ; and I love him with that love that is stronger than death, for I never had occasion to rebuke him, nor he me, which he declared when he left me today."

Hyrum was honest in his dealings with all of his fellow men. He was versatile and could apply himself in all situations. It is reported he could shoe an ox, plow, sell books, trade potatoes, preach a funeral sermon, try a case,

administer to the sick, ordain, rebuke the wicked, give counsel, aid the poor, perform ordinances, and preach the gospel with equal effectiveness. He was trusted and believed. It is reported by one of the biographers: "When Lydia went to his home he [Hyrum] was about thirty-five or forty years of age, tall, well-framed, with a fine, handsome countenance, and blue eyes and his face was full of intelligence and spirit. His manner was dignified, but he was amiable and vivacious withal exceedingly courteous and fascinating to all with whom he ever had [a relationship]. He was really a worthy brother of the Prophet, and together they were a worthy pair" (Pearson H. Corbett, *Hyrum Smith—Patriarch* [Salt Lake City: Desert Book, 1963], p. 148).

The pride Joseph Smith, Sr., had for his two sons, Joseph and Hyrum, was a delight to behold. On one occasion the father laid his hands upon Hyrum's head and said: "My son, Hyrum, I seal upon your head your patriarchal blessing, which I placed upon your head before, for that shall be verified. In addition to this, I now give you my dying blessing. You shall have a season of peace, so that you shall have sufficient rest to accomplish the work which God has given you to do. You shall be as firm as the pillars of heaven unto the end of your days. I now seal upon your head the patriarchal power and you shall bless this people. This is my dying blessing upon your head, in the name of Jesus, . . . Amen" (Corbett, *Hyrum Smith*, p. 240).

When Oliver Cowdery lost his standing, the Lord transferred to Hyrum Smith all the power and authority that had been given to Oliver Cowdery, and Hyrum Smith became the Associate President of the Church—holding these keys jointly with his brother Joseph and standing with him at the head of the great and last dispensation. It was because of this great honor that Hyrum Smith was called to be the companion of the Prophet Joseph in martyrdom.

After sharing many persecutions and life-threatening experiences together, the Prophet wrote: “There was my brother [Hyrum] who next took me by the hand—a natural brother. Thought I to myself, Brother Hyrum, what a faithful heart you have got! Oh, may the Eternal Jehovah crown eternal blessings upon your head, and a reward for the care you have had for my soul! O how many are the sorrows we have shared together; and again we find ourselves shackled with the unrelenting hand of oppression. Hyrum, thy name shall be written in the book of the Law of the Lord, for those who come after thee to look upon that they may pattern after thy works.”

During his whole life Hyrum walked uprightly before the Lord—meaning he was morally correct, honest, just, and honorable. Hyrum Smith seemed to be the embodiment of the thirteenth article of faith:

We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report, or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

“Better to Be Trusted Than Loved”

President David O. McKay frequently said: “It is better to be trusted than to be loved.” A good friend of mine learned the importance of this and the significance of being a person of integrity at a relatively young age in life.

In one of her high school classes, there was a requirement to attend a lab period before school officially began. It was early in the morning, and in order to get credit for this lab, the students would sign their names in a roll book at the beginning of the class period. This roll book was located on the teacher’s desk at the front of the room. One morning, while standing in line waiting to sign the book,

Roxanne, a very popular girl in school who was standing in the doorway, motioned my friend to come and talk. She did, and Roxanne asked her if she would sign her name for her so that she could get credit for attending the class even though she wouldn’t actually be there. Roxanne was a student body officer and had to attend a special meeting for the student body officers. Without hesitating at all, my friend said, “Sure, I’ll do that for you.” She didn’t really know this girl very well. She was someone whom everyone liked and who was very popular in school, but she was only an acquaintance of hers.

Meanwhile, she went back to the desk and signed her name. Then, below her own signature she signed Roxanne’s name in her handwriting. The teacher was obviously smarter than my friend and realized that there were twenty students attending class, and twenty-one students who had signed the roll. Because the handwriting was the same, she knew that my friend had signed Roxanne’s name for her.

In the middle of the lab session the teacher announced that there was a discrepancy in the number of students who had signed the roll and the number who were there in class. Then she called out my friend’s name and asked that she go to the back of the room while the rest of the class continued their lab assignments. This teacher then proceeded to impress upon her a most important lesson, one that she was never to forget. She can’t remember most of what the teacher said to her, except that she was very embarrassed and ashamed. But the one thing she does remember was this question that the teacher asked: “Why were you willing to sacrifice your *integrity* for the sake of that girl?” You see, she was a very good student, a student who was trusted and respected in that high school, and she had let her teachers down. She was willing to sacrifice something that was most precious to her because of peer pressure, because of the fear that someone wouldn’t like her if she didn’t do a favor for her. My friend

learned in a very significant way that it is more important to be trusted than to be loved, that a person's integrity is of supreme importance.

Never in the history of mankind or the Church as there been a greater need for honesty in personal lives—honesty with neighbors and integrity in discussions and total commitment on the basis of full trust and respect from those who are about us. Certainly we have reason to be disappointed and concerned when we see too many business and professional associates not adopting honesty as the best policy, but instead asking, What can I get away with without being caught? Or what is expedient? What will be the most profitable? What will be the most rewarding for me without regard to permanence or other people? Integrity must be the foundation of moral life. In school and in daily associations we must teach students and children, as well as adults, that honesty must be 100 percent and not treated as a convenience or escape in some situations. We must fight corruption and graft and return people to the basics of integrity, honesty, and fair play. Achievement and talent without character are hollow.

Dr. Madison Sarratt, who taught mathematics at Vanderbilt University for many years, before giving a test would admonish his class something like this: "Today I am giving two examinations—one in trigonometry and the other in honesty. I hope you will pass them both. If you must fail one, fail trigonometry. There are many people in the world who can't pass trig, but there is no one who can't pass the examination of honesty."

An Example to Us Now

The Lord said to Hyrum:

Behold, I speak unto you, Hyrum, a few words; for thou also art under no condemnation, and thy heart is opened, and thy tongue loosed; and they

calling is to exhortation, and to strengthen the church continually. Wherefore thy duty is unto the church forever, and this because of thy family.
[D&C 23:3]

Very often when we think about honesty and integrity, it is well for us to ask the question, How will I feel about my conduct today, tomorrow? Will character and integrity be the foundation of all my performances?

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35). "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). "I am the door" (John 10:9). "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11). "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Hyrum Smith made these goals and characteristics part of his life on a continuing steadfast basis.

AS I look at the oil painting of Hyrum Smith as it hangs prominently in the Salt Lake Temple on the fourth floor among the pictures of other great leaders of the Church and other renditions showing events worthy of remembrance in the life of our Savior, Jesus Christ, I am impressed with Hyrum's life, his attitude, and the love that the Lord has for him. The Lord will always have a special love for those who embrace the right. May God help us to realize that in Hyrum Smith we have a man who is a worthy example today as he was in the early history of the Church—firm, steadfast, and true not only to his prophet, to his father, but to the Savior Jesus Christ and his Eternal Father. May we, when we hear of him or see his picture, recommit ourselves to the principles that he lived for and died for, May our chosen paths lead us to do what is right and let the consequences follow. The consequences of doing what is right, as did Hyrum, will bring personal victory and the love and continuing trust of the Lord.

I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.