

“Go Forth to Serve”

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Some of you may have had your picture taken today at one corner of the campus. There is a motto inscribed there. Both parts of that motto present a challenge. The first part invites you to “enter to learn.” You had lots of temptations to focus on other things than learning. I won’t list them for fear that I would put bad ideas into the heads of prospective students. But for you who have come to this point of honor, it took some discipline to put learning first.

The second part of that motto will be even more of a challenge for you. It exhorts you to “go forth to serve.” That will require resisting the forces that will pull you away from service to serving your own wants and needs. You will only have the strength to resist those forces if you have a view of who you are, a view that is at odds with most of your experience.

It was not hard to come to see yourself as a learner. Seeing yourself that way fits what most of you have been doing for a good part of your waking hours since you were little children. And, if we succeeded at this university, you will for a lifetime see yourself as better for having become a perpetual learner.

It is not as easy to see yourself as a perpetual servant, but you must if you are to achieve the purpose of your education here. The word *servant* is not an exalted title for most of us. The picture it brings to mind—probably from an old movie—is of you as a server standing behind people of higher social status than you. They are seated at a table, and the servant waits on them. The servant may be dressed beautifully and may even stand with head carried at a noble angle, but few of us would find ourselves pleased with the thought that our education had prepared us for what appears to be a demeaning place. Most of us have, at least unconsciously, seen ourselves as working for an education so that we might sit at the table of abundance—not become a servant of others.

But there is another way to see the word *servant*. When the Lord Jesus Christ wishes to dignify those He loves and trusts, He uses the

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title as praise: "My servant." Listen to His voice as recorded in His revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants:

Therefore, as I said unto you, ask and ye shall receive; pray earnestly that peradventure my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., may go with you, and preside in the midst of my people, and organize my kingdom upon the consecrated land, and establish the children of Zion upon the laws and commandments which have been and which shall be given unto you.

All victory and glory is brought to pass unto you through your diligence, faithfulness, and prayers of faith.

Let my servant Parley P. Pratt journey with my servant Joseph Smith, Jun.

Let my servant Lyman Wight journey with my servant Sidney Rigdon.

Let my servant Hyrum Smith journey with my servant Frederick G. Williams.

Let my servant Orson Hyde journey with my servant Orson Pratt, whithersoever my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., shall counsel them, in obtaining the fulfilment of these commandments which I have given unto you, and leave the residue in my hands. Even so. Amen. [D&C 103:35–40]

Your key and mine to rising to our potential as servants is to know our Master, to do for Him what we can, and be content to leave the residue in His hands. Let me give you an example that will face you in the days ahead. You will be torn between the demands to put bread on the table and a roof over your head, to take care of a family need, to respond to the cries of the widows or the orphans around you, and at the same time to meet the requirements of the calling you have accepted in the Church. When that happens, you will be sorely tempted to murmur, perhaps even to complain.

But remember that you serve a Master who loves you, who knows you, and who is all-powerful. He has created not demands for your service but opportunities for your

growth. You can pray to Him with confidence and ask, "What would you have me do next?" If you listen humbly and with faith, you will feel an answer. And you will, if you are wise and good, set about to do that which your Master has commanded. And you will leave the residue in His hands. As His servant I promise you that you will find that some of those residual tasks you left will be done when you return to them. Others will have been prepared for you. And you will be the stronger for the task you already tackled.

Then, when you pray again, an answer will come again. And you will move on to the next task, at peace and not complaining.

Sometimes you may not feel an answer to your prayer because your Master may not care which task you start next. But He will care that you asked. And whatever you choose to do next, you will know that the residue is in His hands.

You will in time come to see that your Master is not using you but drawing you to Him. You will come to know that the scripture is for you that says, "For how knoweth a man the master whom he has not served, and who is a stranger unto him, and is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart?" (Mosiah 5:13).

When you have long enough prayed, listened, and obeyed, He will no longer be a stranger to you and you will begin to know the thoughts and intents of His heart. Then you will come to know that another scripture can apply to you. This is what the Savior said to His beloved servants during His mortal ministry when they had begun to understand His heart and His mind and that of His Heavenly Father:

This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. [John 15:12–15]

You may not be asked to face death in the service He requires of you, but you will be asked to love and to sacrifice for a lifetime. And you will be blessed by your faithful and loving Master beyond what you would have asked of Him. And, above all, you will, as the faithful servant, become His friend.

As you go forth to serve Him, rather than being demeaned, you will be lifted up. And in the world to come you will find yourself in His exalted presence.

As His servant I testify to you that His commands are kind and His promises sure. Our Heavenly Father lives, and He loves us. Our Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, is our Savior and Redeemer, and He lives and leads us and comforts us. I leave you my blessing that you will find happiness in a lifetime of service—not in spite of the demands of the tasks you will be given, but through them. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.