

What Is Yet Required of Me?

CECIL O. SAMUELSON

I always look forward to commencement and have now been doing so for quite a few years. For Sharon and me, this is a special commencement because it marks a change not only in our ongoing personal activities but also for Brigham Young University. BYU faces a very bright future with the leadership of President Kevin J Worthen. Because we are also leaving, we hope you will not be offended if we consider ourselves to be quasi-members of the class of 2014.

We are sure for you graduates that your experiences have been different from our own during our shared time on this beautiful campus. I am confident in this statement because even for those who may have come to BYU together, chosen the same major, perhaps lived in the same apartments or dorms, attended the same wards, played on the same intramural teams, or served together in BYUSA, your experiences have been unique. What I also firmly believe is that for all of us privileged to have been at BYU, we now bear responsibilities that many others do not share.

Before I say more about that thought, let me express my congratulations to all of you for the impressive accomplishments you have demonstrated. Some are recorded in the commencement program and some are known only to

you or a few especially close to you. Each is important and contributes to what you have become and what you now are equipped to do. All who are honest—and that should include every BYU graduate—will happily admit that their successes were not achieved alone. As we recognize this, let us all acknowledge the positive contributions of family, friends, teachers, support staff, and administrators who have helped us in our efforts here.

For the Samuelsons, the list of those who have helped us, supported us, educated us, and befriended us is long, but we are confident that those of you who have done so very much for us know who you are and hopefully will remember the special places you will hold in our hearts forever. No one can come to BYU and not be touched in important ways by the many positive influences and examples that are so common and yet so significant in our individual lives. There is no community quite like what we have here, and we find it impossible to express the gratitude and appreciation we feel for your goodness and stellar examples.

Cecil O. Samuelson was president of Brigham Young University when this commencement address was given on 24 April 2014.

Now please let me reflect with all of you who join me today in acknowledging the tremendous blessings that have accrued to us while at BYU. The implications of what we have been able to experience are succinctly summarized in the words of the Savior found in section 82 of the Doctrine and Covenants as well as in Luke 12: “For of him [or her] unto whom much is given much is required” (D&C 82:3; see also Luke 12:48). No one with the intelligence and insight we can expect of a BYU graduate would dispute that all here, even those of you who have suffered with the most meager of worldly resources, have been given much.

That part is easy. Perhaps more difficult for all of us is determining what is required of us as we move into the next phase of our lives. We all want to do good and, if possible, even great things, but the details vary so broadly. I would submit, however, that in the differences of our interests, aptitudes, talents, opportunities, and choices there are some commonalities we should consider and take seriously.

For many reasons not necessary to share in our precious time today, I have found the counsel of the Lord to Hyrum Smith—through his brother, the Prophet Joseph—to be helpful and clarifying. When this revelation recorded in section 11 of the Doctrine and Covenants was given in 1829, the Church had not yet been organized and both Joseph and Hyrum were in their twenties. They had no idea, I am sure, about the kind of education you have experienced at BYU, but Hyrum wanted to do something very important in assisting Joseph in the work of the Restoration. In his case it was to do missionary work, but in his thinking process I believe that his ambition was likely very similar to the motivations that most of you graduates feel as you go out into the world to make your way and make your contributions. You might find it profitable to read the thirty verses of this eleventh section because it is packed with relevant counsel for all of us.

Striking to me, however, is the fact that before He gave any specific instructions to Hyrum, the Lord repeated four times that Hyrum’s work was to “keep my commandments” (see D&C 11:6, 9, 18, 20). Knowing as you all do that repetition is a very powerful pedagogical device, I am impressed that the Lord wants all of us to remember that, whatever else we are doing with our lives, our work is to keep the commandments—not to put them on hold until we finish graduate school, land the job of our dreams, acquire a home and a mortgage, or anything else that currently is so proximately important to us. No, what is required of each of us is that we continue to keep the commandments, even with all else that we are doing.

I also love this general advice found in verse 12 that has roots in ancient scripture:

And now, verily, verily, I say unto thee, put your trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good—yea, to do justly, to walk humbly, to judge righteously; and this is my Spirit. [D&C 11:12]

We have all learned much at BYU, but none of us knows everything. Thus it behooves us to listen to and trust the Spirit of the Lord, which will guide and help us in our quest to keep the commandments, to do all that our great blessings require that we do, and to faithfully endure to the end.

As I congratulate and commend you, I again express my appreciation to you and to everyone who has and does contribute to the tremendous successes embodied in the graduates of Brigham Young University. BYU is an important part of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and as such is very significant to all of us. I leave with you my blessing and my testimony of the reality of our loving and living Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ. I share my witness of the reality of the mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his successors, even to President Thomas S. Monson, the prophet of our own day. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.