

## *Be Honest, Be Pure, Be Humble*

JACK H GOASLIND

**M**y dear young brothers and sisters, it is wonderful to be on this campus. I recognize that it is both a rare privilege and an awesome responsibility to occupy this podium today. It is also a privilege to be a student at this institution. I honor your president and my brother in the Quorum of the Seventy, President Merrill Bateman. I'm especially grateful for the confidence of those who have entrusted me to address you and pray that you might come away today with a message that will strengthen you. In section 50 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord reminds us that both "he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together" (verse 22). I pray that such will be the case today.

I honor you for your willingness to take counsel from those of us who are older and are supposed to be wiser. I know that there is also great wisdom, experience, and tremendous potential among this group. I am not unaware of the generations that separate us. Most of you are the age of my children or grandchildren. I want you to know of my love and support for you and of my sincere appreciation for the good choices you are making. I know that it is not always easy to be young. And you must also understand that it is not always easy to be old.

Together, however, we can work to make better homes, increase the love in our families, bring peace to our neighborhoods and communities, and make the world a better place for you, for your children, and for your grandchildren.

Somewhere between your age and my age there is common ground that binds us together. And since truth knows no age nor generation, today I'd like to focus on some truths that bless us and help us have happier, more productive lives in our homes, in the Church, and in our work.

Your generation has grown up in the "information age." You have at your fingertips vast stores of data. You can carry around on a CD-ROM an entire encyclopedia. The scriptures are contained—along with a variety of commentary—on a small magnetic disk. You can download from the Internet volumes of information of every kind. You can access information around the clock on cable, satellite, and digital TV channels. To the uninitiated, this is an overwhelming resource. The key in using this

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information to our advantage—as in all things—is to know how to manage it. Of all the stores and stores of information available on the topic of William Shakespeare, for example, what do you include in your report, how do you write it in an interesting and informative way, and how do you select the sources you’ll quote? It seems to me that with the availability of that kind of information, there is a danger of either using too much or not using enough as we try to apply it to our lives.

I want to talk to you today in a way that will give you enough information, yet not overwhelm you. I’d like to begin by sharing with you an example of information that has been put in the format of a “to do” list. I think you’ll recognize them.

A few years ago Robert Fulghum became an overnight household word when he published his little guide *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. His counsel was pretty sound—even in the sophisticated world in which we live:

*All I really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate-school mountain, but there in the sandpile at Sunday School. These are the things I learned:*

*Share everything.*

*Play fair.*

*Don’t hit people.*

*Put things back where you found them.*

*Clean up your own mess.*

*Don’t take things that aren’t yours.*

*Say you’re sorry when you hurt somebody.*

*Wash your hands before you eat. . . .*

*Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.*

*Live a balanced life—learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.*

*Take a nap every afternoon.*

*When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands, and stick together.*

*Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup: The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.*

*Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the Styrofoam cup—they all die. So do we.*

*And then remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned—the biggest word of all—LOOK. [Robert Fulghum, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten* (New York: Villard Books, 1988), pp. 6–7]*

Mr. Fulghum’s little list is concise and to the point. It gives us enough information to clearly see his wisdom and boils it down just enough to tell a wonderful story.

For all the years that you and I have been alive, we have benefited from the foresight of the Prophet Joseph Smith, who sought to give a brief but concise summary of what it is the Latter-day Saint believes. We know his work to be the Articles of Faith, and they are dutifully memorized by almost every Primary child. I could call upon most of you to come forward and recite them, and it would not cause you any distress whatsoever. I will spare you that exercise, but I invite you to draw upon those time-tested and honored points of living belief.

Indeed, Heavenly Father has shared with us a concise list of the Ten Commandments. It is not by any means an all-inclusive list, but it’s sure a step toward exaltation to be able to say that your life conforms to them.

I’d like to continue by sharing with you today my own list. It is brief and contains a few principles that I think you can easily remember and that I think will ultimately add a great dimension to your lives. I sincerely doubt these principles will ever be published as “The Goaslind Guidelines” or the “Three B’s” or enjoy the popularity of any of the lists I’ve shared with you thus far today, but I still stand by them and hope that you will find them useful as you think about how to go on from here.

There are, in fact, three *be's*: Be honest. Be pure. Be humble.

Now I would not wish to imply that you can forget everything else and just focus on my list, but if you will make a diligent effort to include these elements in your daily life, I can almost surely promise you that you will find happiness—and that much more rarified goal, joy.

Examine with me for a few minutes these three broad categories of endeavor and see if together we can't make a meaningful effort at changing our lives.

### **Be Honest**

As children we grew up (in this country, at least) hearing about the honesty of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. "I cannot tell a lie" and "Honesty is always the best policy" still ring in my ears today. I expect they were taught to most of you as children. In Primary, and throughout our learning experiences in the gospel, we hear lessons on always telling the truth, not taking things that don't belong to us, and returning things we've borrowed. A popular *Homefront* series a few years ago depicted—in operatic quality—the story of a boy who broke a storeowner's window and could not lie about it. He confessed in song that he had broken the window and was ready to pay the penalty. Indeed, the ninth commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour" (Exodus 20:16), reminds us that God expects us to be honest.

All of these are good and workable definitions of honesty. They are the foundation for helping us to define ourselves as "honest." But as you and I both know, there is an honesty much deeper and perhaps much more important than the answer we give our mothers about whether we took out the garbage.

Perhaps the honesty I'm probing for today can be dealt with much better by asking ourselves a few questions like "Who am I?" "Who have I become?" or "Who am I becoming?"

Shakespeare reminded us, "To thine own self be true" (*Hamlet*, 1.3.78), and even these 400 years later, that wisdom is good counsel.

I love the wisdom shown by the young Joseph Smith when he related the experience of the First Vision. He said in his first-person account, "I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it" (JS—H 1:25). It's the honesty you show when no one else is around, or when there is no chance of getting caught, that makes all the difference in who we are and who we become.

I love the Robert Frost poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening." You'll remember it, I'm sure. In it the old poet recalled youth and the opportunity to do something other than what he knew he should be doing. The final stanza records a young man's coming to terms with his own will to do what's right, even when it might not be observed by others:

*The woods are lovely, dark and deep.*

*But I have promises to keep,*

*And miles to go before I sleep,*

*And miles to go before I sleep.*

[Robert Frost, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" (1923), st. 4]

The story of a young man's wrestle 30 years ago with whether to be honest helps to illustrate the point further. Brother Warren Johnson related this poignant experience in a June 1989 *Ensign* article:

*My friend Bob had to do a lot of persuading in order to get another Marine to loan him his new camera to take to a servicemen's conference in Japan. But Bob assured him that he would take good care of it, and the Marine consented.*

*We were stationed in Vietnam at the height of the war. For months the Latter-day Saints in our battalion had looked forward to this conference, and Bob wanted to take the camera along.*

*Our departure from Vietnam was hectic, with lots of red tape and much confusion. Two of the men*

*in our small group could travel only if space was available, and we were all grateful for the two extra seats on the huge jet bound for Japan. The Spirit was mindful of us! At last we were on our way.*

*For three days we attended meetings, talent shows, dances, and other social activities at the conference, held at beautiful Mount Fuji. After months of exposure to the ugliness of war, we enjoyed the kindness of the members and appreciated the spiritual uplift of hearing a General Authority speak. Battle-hardened men shed tears in some of the meetings because of the great joy they felt in the fellowship of other Saints.*

*As we neared the end of one of our last meetings, Bob quietly excused himself to return to the hotel and get the camera, which he had left in the room we had shared.*

*When he returned, we could tell by his expression that something was very wrong. He said that he couldn't find the camera. I reassured him that it had to be in our room and told him to look again.*

*He was even more visibly upset when he returned the second time. He knew where he had left the camera in the room, and he knew that it was gone. Locks to hotel room doors were not common then, and both of us realized the possibility of someone entering our room and taking the camera. We knew what a burden it would be to try to replace it on his corporal's pay, especially with a wife and two small children to provide for. Our elation of the three previous days was gone, and our good feelings were replaced with regret and misgivings.*

*Bob said that he would pray about the matter and ask the kindly hotel manager if he had noticed anyone carrying that particular kind of camera.*

*The meeting was over when Bob returned again, this time smiling, with the camera in his hand. He related what the hotel manager, in his halting English, had told him he had seen: an American had come downstairs into the lobby carrying the camera. He had then sat down and looked at it for a long time, as if he were contemplating something or wrestling with himself. Suddenly he had stood up, placed the camera where the manager could retrieve it, and departed.*

*Since the only Americans in the hotel at the time were those attending the conference, the manager assumed the man was one of our group.*

*The servicemen's conference had uplifted all who had attended it—including, quite possibly, a young man who, though tempted to steal a camera, had ultimately obeyed his conscience. [Warren Johnson, "The Camera and the Conscience," *Ensign*, June 1989, pp. 69–70]*

I promise each of you here today that in your advancing years you will focus less and less on things that are immediate and demanding of your time. You will instead recall and reflect on the successes of your life—and, unfortunately, a failure here and there. The events of your life will become distilled in your memory. Thousands of unimportant or less fulfilling occurrences will fade from view. But the truly important decisions, actions, and events will be indelibly written in your ability to remember. You are in control of them now. You can choose, you can decide, you can write what will emerge 30 years from now as the significant events that shaped your life. I can assure you that among those vivid memories will remain the overall degree to which you have been an honest man or woman, husband or wife, father or mother, son or daughter.

Be honest in your dealings with one another—not just when you sell a car or get too much change at the supermarket—but honest in your relationships, honest in your dating, honest in your marriage. Be honest with your children and with your parents. Allow only the truth to emerge, however tempting it might be to color, change, or revise it as occasion seems to warrant.

Being honest, I think, is broad enough to include loyalty and fidelity. Jesus taught in Matthew 21 the parable of the two sons. It is an important lesson for us on honesty and integrity. Beginning in verse 28, the Savior teaches us:

*But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.*

*He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.*

*And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.*

*Whether of them twain did the will of his father? [Matthew 21:28–31]*

Be a man or woman of your word. If you said you would go, then go. If you said you would be true, be true. If you said you would love, then love. If you said you would honor, then honor.

Of course all of this places an enormous burden on each of us to weigh carefully the things we promise. Sometimes in the moment that we make a commitment to someone or something, it seems easy and right and exactly what we want. Peter himself wrestled with this kind of wavering. At the moment, his loyalty to the Savior seemed well and good, but before sunrise there had been wavering. Perhaps it is not a change of heart: our hearts may be pure and our intentions well in place. But we often find that some of the commitments we make become rather inconvenient. So perhaps my final point regarding honesty would be: Above all, be honest with yourselves. When you stand in front of yourself in the mirror, be sure that the person you see is someone you are comfortable with, approve of, and love. That person is less likely to make commitments, promises, and oaths that he or she is unable to honor.

### **Be Pure**

The second point I wish to make is to be pure. The Savior Jesus Christ taught in the Sermon on the Mount, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). I have thought a great deal about this promise because, like you, I would like to be among those who see God. It seems a simple enough

thing. We are born pure, and most of us are taught right from wrong. We learn about choices and we find the strength to make commitments. But then life does tend to get complicated. Here we are in 1998. A great deal of pressure of every kind pounds in on each of us every day. If we are wrestling with axiom number one, above—that is, if we are finding it difficult to be honest—becoming pure is also going to present a challenge.

I’m fond of a poem by Ella Wheeler Wilcox that helps to bring the issue into focus:

*It is easy enough to be pleasant,  
When life flows by like a song,  
But the man worth while is one who will smile,  
When everything goes dead wrong.  
For the test of the heart is trouble,  
And it always comes with the years,  
And the smile that is worth the praises of earth  
Is the smile that shines through tears.*

*It is easy enough to be prudent,  
When nothing tempts you to stray,  
When without or within no voice of sin  
Is luring your soul away;  
But it’s only a negative virtue  
Until it is tried by fire,  
And the life that is worth the honor on earth  
Is the one that resists desire.*

*By the cynic, the sad, the fallen,  
Who had no strength for the strife,  
The world’s highway is cumbered to-day,  
They make up the sum of life.  
But the virtue that conquers passion,  
And the sorrow that hides in a smile,  
It is these that are worth the homage on earth  
For we find them but once in a while.*

[Ella Wheeler Wilcox, “Worth While,” in *Poems of Sentiment* (Chicago: W. B. Conkey Company, 1906), pp. 11–12]

Life is not always going to be fair. I suppose that most of you will remember as children

that you were taught to play fair. Take turns. Share. Do all the kinds of things Robert Fulghum wrote about. In an ideal society everyone would honor those rules, and life itself would be colored inside the lines. But one of the most important principles you will learn in university life is that every problem must be viewed in terms of the variables that influence it. One of these great variables is that life is not always fair. We may not always get to choose. We may have influences and challenges in life that are quite out of our control. As much as we would like to have every home be an ideal setting for growth and development, we know that this is not the case. We are quite unable to control how others feel about us or, sometimes, how we feel about someone else. The scriptures teach us to love God and to love our neighbor as ourself. It seems a simple enough request. But I doubt seriously if there is one of us here who has not wrestled in some way with feelings that challenge this commandment. Emotion is a powerful persuader. Together with its companions, passion and desire, it moves upon us in ways that we sometimes do not understand. Like fire, which is a good and useful force on the earth, these enormous forces in our lives have the power to pull us in directions we might not willingly go. The laws of physics explain how the sturdiest of individuals can be pulled through the window of a jetliner when things go wrong. Likewise, the laws that govern our hearts and our souls explain how similarly the sturdiest of us can be pulled through the tiniest hole of indiscretion. What are we to do? How can we stand against this seemingly electromagnetic force?

We develop purity, brothers and sisters. I do not believe purity is a gift for most of us. I believe it is a hard-won, well-practiced skill. Like learning to play Beethoven or being able to apply the principles of math, we must learn and practice to be pure. If it were not so, I think we might not have ever heard from Heavenly Father about an “iron rod.” We might not have

heard about “the mighty change” (D&C 6:33) or received the counsel, “Fear not to do good” (Alma 5:12, 14). Heavenly Father knows that we need anchors to help keep us in place during times of storm.

As you drive up and down the war zone known as I-15, you will see giant rigs pounding vast steel pylons into the ground. They are driven deep into the earth and then reinforced with concrete. Huge bolts are attached to them, and then large slabs of steel and concrete are attached to those, and, finally, we are promised, asphalt will be laid over it all and we will speed over it without a care in the world.

If you will permit me to make what might be a crude analogy, I would point out how much like that anchoring of the freeway our own hearts and minds ought to be. Only as we are able to place anchors deep within the soil of our hearts will we know that we are safe and secure to drive through the heavy traffic of life. We are bound to have a rich variety of life experiences, including happiness and sadness, success and failure, joy and pain, and perhaps even ecstasy or tragedy. On balance, however, we can enjoy life to the fullest, reach our greatest potential, overcome significant challenges, and have a great outpouring of happiness in life if we will steel ourselves to unworthy or unrighteous desires. Am I saying we will not be tempted? On the contrary, I can almost promise you that you will be.

But, as you have heard from so many at this pulpit and others, deciding now and resolving how you will respond in certain situations will save you a lifetime of unnecessary sorrows. President Boyd K. Packer has taught us the power of the hymns of Zion. On numerous occasions he has reminded us that music, that powerful source of strength and inspiration, enables us to recall to our minds resolves and commitments we have made. Could I suggest that you allow the words of a hymn to be in the back of your minds continually? You can select

any one you want, but one that I like and that might closely parallel what it is we have been talking about is “Choose the Right.”

We have taught Primary children to prepare to make right choices in life by remembering to always choose the right. I know that a great many of you have adopted this theme in your own lives and have carried on the Primary practice of wearing the CTR ring. They have become rather trendy of late. Many have purchased rather expensive models, and the concept has enjoyed significant commercial success. I still prefer the simple one that turns your finger green. It was thought up by a wonderful sister who wanted to teach what it is that I am trying to illustrate today: When a choice is placed before you, simply decide to choose what you know Heavenly Father would have you choose. I know it gets more complicated than that, but, believe me, if you will keep it simple, it will bless your lives enormously.

*Choose the right when a choice is placed before you.  
In the right the Holy Spirit guides;  
And its light is forever shining o'er you,  
When in the right your heart confides.*  
[“Choose the Right,” *Hymns*, 1985, no. 239]

Strengthen your resolve now that you will never allow that tiny pinpoint of indiscretion to open wide enough to pull you through. Resolve to be pure. Resolve to be happy, to be successful, to enjoy life to the fullest, to laugh and cry and share in the rich blessing of emotions that will come to you in a lifetime—but resolve to do it with the anchor of purity undergirding all that you do. I do not wish to oversimplify righteous living; it may not be easy to choose the right when often there is such a strong influence toward choosing wrong—but you can do it!

### **Be Humble**

The last of my three points today is closely related to the two I have described. Humility is

perhaps the most elusive quality we strive after. I say that because it seems to me that as soon as you begin to feel that you have humility, it's a pretty good indication that you may not. I do believe, however, that we will be unsuccessful in developing it if we are not honest and pure. The lack of honesty and purity seem to me to be two of the great stumbling blocks to developing humility. Allow me to share with you a sweet story from the writings of Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, one of my brethren in the Quorum of Seventy and a man who has been my counselor in the Young Men presidency and a friend for many years. He wrote:

*I made a decision not to tell anyone of my mother's death as my feelings were especially tender, humble, and close to the surface. I met all day Saturday with the stake leaders and members. After the last meeting, which ended at 9:00 at night, the mission president came to me and asked me to interview a missionary. We met with the missionary, who had been involved inappropriately with a non-member woman. He had not committed a major transgression but had crossed over the line of propriety. Her husband was offended, and the woman was upset. They no longer had any interest in the Church. The president had counseled the young elder at length. He told me that the elder would not admit he was wrong and would not even say he was sorry. The General Authorities in Salt Lake City had been involved, and I was to make a determination while I was in Florida as to whether or not he could stay in the mission field. I was tender anyway, and I thought that if he would just say he was sorry, I would let him stay. I used every skill I had learned and all the inspiration I could draw upon trying to get him to say he was sorry. He would not. Finally, he promised he would not do it again, but he would not say he was sorry, even though he wanted to stay on his mission.*

*I said, “Let me ask you two more questions before I make a decision.” I had about decided he would have to go home, and the questions were*

simply a last-minute stall before I announced my feelings. I said, “What does your father do in the Church?” He responded that his father was inactive, that he fished, hunted, or sat in front of the television all day long on Sundays. His father did not want him to be on a mission; he wanted him to come home and would have been glad if he did. His father smoked and drank, and, as the elder described him, I realized there was no support from the father. I said, “Tell me about your mother; what does she do in the Church?” His face softened, his eyes moistened, and he responded, “She is the stake young women’s president.” Then he talked about her for a few minutes. When he finished, I said, “I am going to let you stay, but you don’t deserve to. However, your mother doesn’t deserve to have you come home dishonored. You are probably about the only joy she has in this life. I imagine every letter you write to her she reads over and over again. I imagine that she takes your letters as she goes around the stake and reads them to the Beehives, Mia Maids, and Laurels. Her whole pride and joy must be centered around you. She doesn’t have much at home, and I couldn’t bear the thought of having this woman have to go to the airport and pick up her son who had been dishonorably released from his mission.” Then the emotion came, and with tears I reaffirmed, “I simply could not do that to your mother. You do not deserve to stay, but she does not deserve one more trial.” He thanked me for letting him stay but still would not say he was sorry.

The next day at the close of the final session of the conference, I said, “I apologize if I have been a little tender and emotional. My mother died Thursday night, and the funeral is tomorrow.” Then I shared for the next fifteen or twenty minutes what she had meant in our lives. I said, “I will miss the viewing tonight, but I will arrive back in Salt Lake by 1:00 A.M. or so and will be able to attend the funeral.” It was an emotional time for me as I shared my innermost feelings.

At the close of the conference, this young elder whom I had interviewed came running up to the stand. With great tears on his cheeks, he threw his arms around me and shuddered with emotion. Then

he said, “Now I know why you are letting me stay; it is not only because of my mother but also because of yours.” I said, “You’re right, I suppose it’s because of my mother also.” He said, “I humbly apologize for what I have done. I truly am sorry, and I promise I will be the best missionary in this mission.” Later his mission president told me he was true to his word. [Vaughn J. Featherstone, *More Purity Give Me* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1991), pp. 96–99]

I don’t know what it is that makes it so difficult for us sometimes to banish pride from our hearts. I’m not talking about the good kind of pride—the kind of pride that allows you to rejoice in a wonderful accomplishment or be pleased that your team has worked hard and had a winning season. In fact, I’d add here that it’s just as important to be proud of your team when they *don’t* have a winning season as when they do!

I’m talking about the kind of pride that the Savior has asked us to weed out of our lives. There are abundant references in the scriptures to keeping pride at bay, but perhaps one of my favorites comes from section 90 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The Lord is counseling Joseph and Oliver concerning the continuing steps in organizing the First Presidency, but he warns them carefully in verse 17 that they not allow pride to overcome them in their important work and callings: “Be not ashamed, neither confounded; but be admonished in all your high-mindedness and pride, for it bringeth a snare upon your souls” (D&C 90:17).

“It bringeth a snare upon your souls.” What beautiful and descriptive language the Lord uses to caution us in love and kindness! A snare is a noose used in entangling birds or small mammals. Another definition describes it as “something by which one is entangled, involved in difficulties, or impeded.” How often our souls become entangled, involved in difficulties, or impeded because we are unwilling to lay aside our defenses and strip



ourselves of the pride that keeps us from doing what we know to be right.

I cannot think on this topic without being reminded of the 2,000 stripling warriors—the sons of Helaman or the army of Helaman. These were good and honest young men, pure in all their doings and unashamed that they were taught by their mothers. Stripped of pride and vanity, but willing to defend what they knew to be right, they marched into battle against those who would destroy them. We pick up the story in Alma 56, wherein the humility of these young men becomes clear to us. Beginning in verse 47, we read:

*Now they never had fought, yet they did not fear death; and they did think more upon the liberty of their fathers than they did upon their lives; yea, they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them.*

*And they rehearsed unto me the words of their mothers, saying: We do not doubt our mothers knew it. [Alma 56:47–48]*

The Savior Jesus Christ suffered as he was nailed upon the cross, but as he languished in the last minutes of his earthly life, he thought and spoke with tenderness to his mother in John 19, beginning with verse 25:

*Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.*

*When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!*

*Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. [John 19:25–27]*

There is a deep and well-regarded relationship between each of us and our mothers. I think even among those for whom the relationship has been unfortunately strained, there are thoughts and feelings regarding our mothers

that bring us to our greatest humility. Jesus' dying thoughts were of the care of his mother; the stripling warriors spoke in humility the teachings of their mothers; the young man in Elder Featherstone's story was touched and finally humbled by thoughts of a caring mother. Abraham Lincoln, one of the greatest of our presidents, once said, "All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother" (Josiah G. Holland, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln* [Springfield, Massachusetts: Gurdon Bill, 1866], p. 23, and George Alfred Townsend, *The Real Life of Abraham Lincoln* [New York: Publication Office, Bible House, 1867], p. 6). I think in this light of my own dear mother, for whom I have the greatest love, and who at age 95 still stands as a wonderful example to her three sons.

Now this is not a talk about mothers, brothers and sisters, but there seems to be a strong and striking parallel between the humility we obtain in life and the influence of our mothers on us as adults. I mention it because I think that it bears reflection and consideration in our lives as we try to become who it is we want to become. If it is as the Savior has suggested, that in becoming like little children we have the greatest faith and humility, perhaps it is in remembering how we were taught by our mothers as little boys or little girls that brings us to this tender, humble, teachable state. In Matthew 18, beginning in verse 2, we read:

*And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,*

*And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

*Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. [Matthew 18:2–4]*

We speak of childlike faith, brothers and sisters, but it is actually the faith and trust of a child that brings the humility we desire in our lives. If we can find it in our hearts to strip

ourselves of worldly pride, tune our hearts to the teachings of Jesus Christ, lose ourselves in the service of others, and, as the stripling warriors did, “think more upon the liberty” of our fathers than we do upon our own lives, we can begin to know in a quiet way the humility we seek.

I rejoice with you that you are where you are today, brothers and sisters. In this place of learning and growing, striving and becoming, it is a tribute to your parents and your teachers that so many of you would be where the Lord can find you. Will you try to remember the three little “be’s” we have thought about this morning? As I have said, they cannot by themselves ensure anyone’s salvation, but they can put us on the path toward perfection. Be honest; be pure, be humble.

Now, without much comment, could I risk adding a fourth? Be courageous. To be honest and pure, to seek humility, and then to move forward with a confidence in life, you will need courage. In fact, none of what we have spoken about today can be done without courage.

Let me leave you today with the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, who encouraged his brethren in the work they had undertaken and bore strong testimony of the Savior, Jesus Christ:

*Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory! Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad. Let the earth break forth into singing. Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained, before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free.*

*Let the mountains shout for joy, and all ye valleys cry aloud; and all ye seas and dry lands tell the wonders of your Eternal King! And ye rivers, and brooks, and rills, flow down with gladness. Let the woods and all the trees of the field praise the Lord; and ye solid rocks weep for joy! And let the sun, moon, and the morning stars sing together, and let all the sons of God shout for joy! And let the eternal creations declare his name forever and ever! [D&C 128:22–23]*

I add my own voice to this joyful sound of praise and honor for the Lord Jesus Christ. I testify of his birth, his life, his death, and his resurrection in our behalf, brothers and sisters. I pray that as you take upon yourselves his holy name and that as you seek to become his disciple, you will make a new start today by striving to be honest, pure, humble, and courageous. I say this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.