

“That Ye May Be Filled with Love”

HARTMAN RECTOR, JR.

Good morning, my brothers and sisters. I consider it a privilege and an honor to greet you there this morning in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are met in his name. I’m not sure that there is another university on the face of the earth where that could be said. You have a devotional; you meet in the name of the Lord. The Lord Jesus Christ loves this university. I love it, too. I love the blue and the white. I love to see the name *Brigham Young*, for I know that for which it stands.

I have opportunity to interview some of the faculty that teach here from time to time. Many times they are not members of the Church, but they have to agree to observe the standards of the Church, or they can’t work at Brigham Young University. I always leave them a slight challenge. After I determine they are willing to live like a Latter-day Saint, I always suggest to them, “Now, if you’re going to live like a Latter-day Saint, you ought to get credit for it. You can’t get credit for it without being baptized. So think about that.” I hope they think about it. I wish everyone would think about it.

A Chosen Generation

You here today are a chosen generation. In the words of Peter, “a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew

forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). We are living today upon an earth that is dark. Perhaps just before the time of the flood was an even more difficult time to live than is today, but not much. We know that prior to the coming of the Master in his glory, the conditions will be almost exactly as they were at the time of the flood. In his own words he said, “As it was in the days of Noah, so it shall be also at the coming of the Son of Man” (JS–M 1:41). That means, I presume, they will be doing the same kind of things they were doing at that time and for the same reasons. So living here upon the earth in this day and time is a very trying, difficult experience. Obviously the Lord would see fit to reserve those who had ability to withstand such temptation for this particular time. I don’t think that you are here by accident. I don’t think that, because the Prophet Joseph Smith said one time:

Hartman Rector, Jr., was a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this devotional address was given at Brigham Young University on 3 May 1983.

Every man [that is a collective term. It means woman, too. The Lord doesn't talk much about women, you notice, but that doesn't mean he doesn't think about them. Many times when he says man, he means woman too—just as the Lord said in the beginning that he created man in his own image, male and female]. *Every man* [and woman] *who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was.* [Teachings, p. 365]

No, you aren't here by accident. There is design in your being here at this time. The prophet Alma said essentially the same thing. He was talking about the ordination of certain priests, and he said:

And those priests were ordained after the order of his Son, in a manner that thereby the people might know in what manner to look forward to his Son for redemption.

And this is the manner after which they were ordained—being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works. [Alma 13:2–3]

Called because of “their exceeding faith and good works.” Now, I am presuming that that had something to do with what you did before you were born because I've had a number of young men that were called and ordained and set apart and sent to me as a mission president, and I am quite sure it wasn't anything they had done since they were born that got them ordained. It's who they were before they were born and the “foreknowledge of God.” They didn't know what they could do, but after they arrived in the mission field, they were powerful; they found they could do all things.

Why Chosen?

Called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on

account of their exceeding faith and good works; in the first place being left to choose good or evil; therefore they having chosen good, and exercising exceedingly great faith, are called with a holy calling. . . .

And thus they have been called to this holy calling on account of their faith, while others would reject the Spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts and blindness of their minds, while, if it had not been for this they might have had as great privilege as their brethren.

Or in fine, in the first place they were on the same standing with their brethren; thus this holy calling being prepared from the foundation of the world for such as would not harden their hearts, being in and through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son. [Alma 13:4–5]

And then we come to a verse that tells us precisely why all this has been done:

And thus being called by this holy calling, and ordained unto the high priesthood of the holy order of God, to teach his commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter his rest. [Alma 13:6]

It has all been done so that we can teach the commandments of God to the children of men. That was said in ancient times. The prophet of our own day and time, Spencer W. Kimball, has said essentially the same thing. It is recorded in an *Ensign* magazine. I am sure you are all familiar with the *Ensign* magazine, aren't you? We never ask you if you read the *Ensign*, but we want to know if you “take” it. But it is vitally important that you also read it. It doesn't mean much if you don't read it. I'm convinced that you can get as quick a revelation in the *Ensign* magazine as you can through the Holy Scriptures, maybe a little more applicable revelation. In this particular edition, May 1979, was reported the activity of the 149th general conference of the Church. In his closing remarks President Kimball said a very, very

important thing. It is entitled “Let Us Move Forward and Upward.” I would like to read a couple of excerpts from it. I’m not going to read all of it. We never read all the scriptures, do we?—just a few excerpts. By the way, I know that’s how you say the word *ensign*. I had a letter from a sister long ago, and she said, “Elder Rector, I love to hear you speak, but I do wish you’d learn how to say, ‘*Ensign*.’” It’s not *ensign* like a Navy officer. Well, it’s spelled the same, it looks the same, and I was an *ensign* a long time. I must admit I called it the *Ensign*. But I don’t do that any more because she had the word diagrammed for me, with the accent in the right place, and I now say, “*Ensign*.” You might be interested to know that that letter was addressed to “Hartford Rector.” People are funny, aren’t they?

This is what the Prophet said.

Now, my brothers and sisters, it seems clear to me, indeed, this impression weighs upon me—that the Church is at a point in its growth and development when we are at last ready to move forward in a major way.

Is that exciting to you? Here is the Prophet saying the Church is going to move forward in a major way. I heard him say that; I was there, and I thought to myself, “Oh, something great is going to happen in the Church. I can hardly wait to see it; I want to watch it.”

Have you ever thought that? You want to watch it? The Lord through his Prophet, in talking about the Church, was talking about you and me. We are the Church. He literally is saying that we are going to do something great and tremendous. Wouldn’t you like to know what you are going to do? He tells you; you don’t have to wait very long. He says:

We have paused on some plateaus long enough. Let us resume our journey forward and upward. Let us

quietly put an end to our reluctance to reach out to others.

Would you say that is your problem? Are you reluctant to reach out to others?

Whether within our own families, wards, or neighborhoods. [Ensign, May 1979, p. 82]

I presume that is the order in which you reach out. Your prime responsibility, of course, would be to your family. You are held responsible for you family.

Inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, . . . that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents. [D&C 68:25]

So we do have a responsibility for members of our own family. We have a responsibility for members of our own wards, too. There are some in every ward, I presume, that are not wildly active in the Church. We have a responsibility to reach out to them. And, of course, we have the responsibility to reach out to those in our neighborhoods as well. These are those who are not members of the Church. If we could discharge this particular responsibility and quietly put an end to our reluctance to reach out to these people, we probably would do what the Lord would have us do because that is what the Prophet says he wants us to do.

As we drove here today, we came onto the campus of BYU; I thought how apropos the motto of BYU really is: “Enter to learn, go forth to serve.” Go forth to serve your fellowman, which is the prime purpose of our existence. It is obvious that we will never make it with the Lord unless we serve each other. The Prophet Joseph Smith indicated that was absolutely essential, and we have it in modern revelation.

Love is Essential

In order to serve your fellowmen, you have to love them. It is vitally important that you love people if you are really going to serve them. Otherwise, they will not allow you to serve them. Love is the basis of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and I submit that it is the basis of our lives—the lives of each one of us. We were conceived in love. We have heavenly parents who love each other, and we have earthly parents who are commanded to “live together in love” (D&C 42:45). It is a commandment. The most important thing parents could possibly do for their children is to love one another. Love each other with all their hearts. I have never been able to embrace my wife with my children around without their trying to get in the act. You feel little arms wrapped around your leg, and they try to push in between. I had one that would pull a chair up and try to hug us both together. Children love to see their parents love each other. As a matter of fact, if little children do not receive love, they die. Babies must be loved, or they cannot live. The same is true with old people. There are places in the world today where government workers are paid a salary just to visit old people because their children will not visit them. That is what happens in a socialistic society where the government takes care of you from cradle to grave. Children no longer have to take care of their parents; therefore, they don’t spend any time with them. And old people die if they don’t get loved. I submit that every one of us between old age and newborn babes must be loved.

So the commandment is very plain to us. Do you remember when the Master had washed his apostles’ feet the night before he was nailed on the cross? He said to them,

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. [John 13:34–35]

He called that a new commandment, but there is nothing new about it. That bothered me for some time. It is the law of Moses. You will find it in Deuteronomy; you will find it in Exodus—love the Lord, love you fellowman; yet he called it new. What’s new about it? I guess it is like the new and everlasting covenant of marriage. New and everlasting. It is new when you receive it, but it is everlasting in its application. It was a rather new commandment, I think, to those apostles. I could see how they would take very unkindly the crucifixion of their Master. We know how Peter felt. He took out his sword and cut off the high priest’s servant’s ear. Now I don’t know whether he was just a poor swordsman, or whether he was trying to make a point. The Master said, “Put up again thy sword unto his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” (Matthew 26:52). Then he restored the ear. Then in an object lesson for all, as he hung on the cross, he said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

You have to love people to do that. If the apostles had gone out the next day to get even, with revenge and vindictiveness in their hearts, I submit to you that the gospel of Jesus Christ would never have gotten off the ground. It would have died right there, that day. The same, I presume, as the Church would have died when the Saints were being driven out of the continental limits of the United States, driven from their homes many times, out to this desert valley (Salt Lake was a desert, then; I think it is becoming a rain forest this year). They could have said, “Okay, that’s enough. We’ve done all we’re going to do for you. You can go your own way now.” But, you know one of the very first things they did was turn around and send missionaries right back to those who had driven them out. Because they did, the gospel of Jesus Christ is once again

founded on a bedrock foundation here in the Salt Lake Valley, and from this place we have sent missionaries through all the world, in fact, to every kindred, tongue, and people where we are permitted to go. I am sure there are going to be more doors opening in the not too distant future, too.

Yes, the gospel must go forth, but it must be preached with love. Only if we can love people will they listen to us. Some people are not easy to love. The Lord didn't say to love those that are easy to love. As a matter of fact, he said, "Love your enemies. Do good to those that spitefully use you. Turn the other cheek. Go the second mile." That's not easy. In fact, it is very difficult. It is easy to love people who love you, isn't it? Right away you know they must have excellent judgment. But you don't really get credit from the Lord, I don't believe, for loving the people that love you unless you can love people who not only don't love you, but don't even like you. Then you will be like your Father in Heaven, or that much like him anyway, who lets his rain fall on the just and on the unjust.

Why God Loves Us

Yes, you must love them. You have to be awfully good to love people that don't love you. How do you suppose you could get that good—that you could love people whether they love you or whether they don't? I wondered about that for a long time. I wondered about that before I ever heard of the Mormons, as a matter of fact. I was talking with my aunt one time about this particular thing. Why does God love us? Knowing you as well as you do and knowing God knows you just that well, you might well ask, "Why on earth would he love me?" We always talk about getting what we deserve. That is the last thing in the world we really want, isn't it? I don't want what I deserve. I'd like to have something a little better than that, please.

But, he does love us. Why do you suppose God loves you? Maybe if we could find out, we would know how to love others. There are a lot of reasons why God could love us, I guess. We are his children. Generally speaking, you love what's yours, don't you? That's awfully selfish, don't you think? I don't think God loves us because we are his children, though we are. I think he would love us if we belonged to someone else, don't you? Sure, he'd love us, anyway.

Maybe he loves us because we are good. You sure hope not, don't you? We certainly don't want that. No, he doesn't love us because we are good, though I am sure he is more pleased with us when we are good. I believe that because I find that I am more pleased with my own children when they keep my commandments. If they don't keep my commandments, they could get spanked. It has happened before; it could happen again. If you don't keep the Lord's commandments, I promise you you'll get spanked. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son [and daughter (that is a collective term, too)] (Hebrews 12:6). The fact that I spanked my children doesn't mean I don't love them.

Maybe he loves us because of our potential. It is easy to love people that have a lot of potential. We all have heroes. I find I really love Abe Lincoln. I love the Prophet Joseph Smith. Maybe the Lord loves us because of our potential, and boy, do we have potential! We can become as he is, and that is horrendous potential, isn't it? But some people seem to have more than others. Does that mean he loves you more than he loves me? He said he doesn't. "And the one being is as precious in his sight as the other" (Jacob 2:21). It never ceased to amaze me that he can love Baptists and Methodists and Catholics as much as he loves Latter-day Saints, and I am sure he does. We baptized more than 70,000 Catholics last year. The Lord must love them.

He doesn't love us because of our potential. He doesn't love us because we are good. He doesn't love us because we're his. Well, why on earth does he love us then? My good aunt told me. She said, "Junior (I didn't have a name until I was twenty years old; I was Junior), God doesn't love us because we are good; he loves us because he is good." And I knew that was true. When you hear the truth, you recognize it, don't you? Yes, he is all good, and so he loves us. He'd almost have to be all good to love us, wouldn't he?

How We Learn to Love

How do you get that way? How do you get so good that you can love people whether they deserve it or whether they don't? I found the answer in the Book of Mormon. It is in Mosiah, chapter 2, verse 4, where King Benjamin was talking to his people, and he said that he taught them "to keep the commandments of God, that they might rejoice and be filled with love towards God and all men."

If you keep the commandments, they are calculated to make you so good that you can love people whether they deserve it or whether they don't. So our first responsibility, then, in order to serve would be to keep the commandments of God. And keep them precisely. I promise you it will turn you into a loving, serving son or daughter of Heavenly Father. The Master said, "I am among you as he that serveth" (Luke 22:27). He said he came to give his life as a ransom for many. Then it is love plus sacrifice, which I would interpret to mean charity, that really permits us to render service. It is difficult, of course, as I said before. You will find it through obedience to the commandments. I don't think you will find it any other way.

May I close with the story of a young man who taught me this principle very forcibly. I was serving as a mission president in San Diego. I got a call from the Missionary Department one day, and they said they had a young

man over in Thailand who had been there for nine months. He had learned the language fluently, but he had quit and come home because he hadn't had a baptism. See, you have to have success to be happy. You can't be happy and fail, I don't care who you are. I presume the ultimate success will be eternal life, and that's ultimate happiness, too. They had asked him to come by and talk with me on the way home. He wanted to go home so badly that he was willing to do that. So he came into my office, and there he sat, a handsome, good-looking, obviously smart young man. He had learned that language and could speak it fluently in nine months. There are people born and raised in Thailand that never speak the language fluently.

I said, "Elder, how on earth could you spend nine months in Thailand, learn the language fluently, and not baptize anybody? All you would have had to do is walk out on the streets of Bangkok and say, 'Excuse me, I'm a Mormon elder, I have authority to baptize. Would you like to be baptized?' That's really all you have to do—ask people. I'm sure you would have baptized somebody in nine months, speaking the language the way you do. I know it works that way."

I told that to a young man in Frankfurt, Germany, one time who had been there for a year and hadn't had a baptism. He was very distressed; he wanted to go home. We went over the handbook to see if there might be a few things he should be doing that he wasn't doing and a few things he wasn't doing that he should be doing, and we found a few things. He committed himself to follow the mission rules, to live the commandments.

I said, "The only other thing you have to do, Elder, is just promise me that one day a week you'll get out on the streets here in Frankfurt, and I recommend that you pick a nice shopping center where there are lots of people. Don't let anybody pass you that day without saying, 'Excuse me, I am a Mormon

elder. I have authority to baptize. Would you like to be baptized?' Before I see you again you'll have a baptism, I promise."

He said, "I'll do it."

I saw him six months later and he had had five baptisms. I said, "Elder, how did you get your contacts?"

"I just asked people if they wanted to be baptized."

I told that to a ward mission leader up in Carlsbad, California, one time. Two weeks later he baptized his very best friend, a lifelong childhood friend. I said, "How did you do it?"

He said, "I said to him, 'I'm a Mormon elder. I have authority to baptize. Would you like to be baptized?'"

His friend said, "Yes I really would, but is there something else I have to do first?"

He said, "Yeah, I have to teach you a little bit." Two weeks later he baptized his best friend. That's what it takes: you have to ask people.

The young man from Bangkok said, "President Rector, I don't like those people. I don't like the way they look, I don't like the way they act, I don't like the way they smell. They are arrogant." And he knew about arrogance.

I said, "Well, Elder, I understand why you haven't baptized anybody. You have to love people in order to baptize them. Why don't you let me send you up to Carlsbad, California? We're having a little success up there with the Spanish-speaking people. I'm sure that you could love them enough to bring them into the Church. I know you don't speak Spanish, and we could send you down to Provo, Utah, to the Missionary Training Center for two months. You would learn to speak the language fluently. But there's no sense in doing that. I can send you up to Carlsbad and you can get on-the-job training."

He said, no, he didn't want to go. I said, "What difference does that make? How many times on this earth do you have to do things

that you don't particularly want to do? Isn't that what life is really all about, doing a bunch of things that you don't want to do? I don't suppose that Abraham wanted to offer his son as a burnt sacrifice, do you? I don't think the Master wanted to die on the cross either. If he did, he was acting very strangely in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before it happened. And I know for sure that Jonah did not want to go on a mission."

I was talking to a reluctant missionary one time. He didn't want to go either. And I told him, "You know, if I had a friendly whale, I could put you in for about three days, and you probably would change your mind about this."

The Lord has better methods than we, of course. I was taught that lesson by my father. He was a Missouri farmer. He hoodwinked me into milking the cows. He said to me one time, "You're not old enough or big enough to milk." And I knew I was. I was seven years old. Of course, I was big enough to milk. And so I proved to him that I could milk, and I really can. I still have a milking muscle. Do you see that? There are no city boys that have one of those. I can make the foam stand that high in the bucket. He said, "I believe you can milk; you've got the job." And for the next twelve years I milked from eight to twelve cows night and morning. I did not want to milk. I said that to him one time: "Dad, I don't want to milk."

He said, "That's okay; you don't have to want to, as long as you do it." That's kind of how the Lord treats us, isn't it? It's okay if you don't want to, as long as you do it. It's the doing that makes the difference.

Well, he went. I gave him a blessing, promised him he would have baptisms, at least two in two months. He almost came home after his first month. But he had committed himself to stay. Commitment is very important to you and me. If you are going to serve the Lord, you are going to have to commit yourself to do so. It's like Abigail Adams said to her

husband, John, president of the United States at the time. “Do you remember what you said to me, John? You said, ‘Commitment, Abby, commitment. There are only two creatures worthy to live, one who makes commitments and one who requires commitments of others.’” If you are going to serve the Lord, you are going to have to help people make commitments. There are certain things you have to do if you are going to make it with the Lord. Those commitments are vitally important.

Well, he stayed. He was twenty-eight days into the second month, and I was getting a little nervous when I got a call from him. He said, “President Rector, I just baptized two people last night.”

I said, “Elder, that’s tremendous. Tell me about it. How did you do it?”

He said, “Well, we were teaching about twenty-five at one time. We were in our commitment lesson where we commit them to keep the commandments, pay their tithing, live the Word of Wisdom, attend church, and so forth. There were two in the group who couldn’t make those commitments. So the elders pulled them out and put them in a room by themselves. They didn’t want any negative influence in their commitment session. I was walking down the hall, and I saw them in the room. The Spirit told me to go in to talk to them.”

Oh, that’s a good sign—when the Spirit starts telling you what to do.

“I went in,” he said. “I pulled up a chair and sat down. One of them looked remarkably like my own brother. As I sat down in that chair, I don’t know what happened to me, but a feeling of love came over me. I said to him, ‘I really do love you.’ The tears rolled down my cheeks, and his cheeks too. A short time later I baptized him; then I baptized his friend.”

In the next six months that young man baptized 350 Spanish-speaking people. I transferred him down to San Diego, where we had some Spanish-speaking people as well. I made

him a district leader. He and his companion were walking down the street one day and saw some Thai writing on the window of a building. He went in and spoke Thai with the proprietor. Remember, he could speak Thai fluently. The proprietor about dropped his uppers because he didn’t look like a Thai. The young man called me, very excited, and said, “President Rector, did you know that there are fifty Thai families that live here in my area?”

I said, “You don’t mean it.”

He said, “Yes, they’re here. Can I teach them?”

I said, “Now, Elder, let’s think about it for a minute. If you teach them, you’ll have to be their fellowshipper too. They have to go to Church. They won’t understand anything in English so you will have to translate everything for them. Are you willing to be their fellowshipper as well as their proselytizer?”

“Yes, yes, I’ll do it,” he said.

I said, “Okay, let’s see what you can do.”

Three weeks later he called me and said, “President Rector, I just baptized the most beautiful family of five you have ever seen—a mother and father and three children, all Thais. They don’t speak a word of English.”

I said, “Elder, that’s wonderful. Tell me about those people, will you? What kind of people are they, anyway?”

He said, “Oh, they are the sweetest people. They are so nice and humble.” They were just like the Mexicans, or the Japanese, or the Germans, or anyone else who comes to this particular point of conversion.

I said, “Tell me, elder, how do they smell?”

He said, “Yeah, that’s right; it’s me. I’m the one that’s changed.”

Go Forth to Serve

When we change, everyone around us changes too. Do you remember what the Master said? In Matthew 25 he said,

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? [Matthew 25:31–39]

Are you sure it was me? People do look a lot alike, you know. You may have me mixed up with someone else.

Have you ever been given credit for something good that you didn't do? How does that make you feel? Not all that good. Sometimes we will let people give us credit for something good we didn't do, but we never, ever would let anybody give us credit for something bad that we didn't do. That's kind of the way we all are, isn't it?

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat. . . .

Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, . . . and did not minister unto thee?

Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. [Matthew 25:40–42, 44–45]

I presume that is how the judgment will really be. It will have to do with whether or not you really serve your fellowman. For John

saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. [Revelation 20:12]

That's what it will all come down to. If you love them, you can serve them. If you don't, you never could because they won't let you.

The secret, then—keep the commandments of God, and I promise you will rejoice and be filled with love for God and all men.

Come here (to BYU) to learn and go forth to serve and be a witness of the Lord Jesus Christ wherever you go when you wear that BYU across your chest. May the Lord bless you to live up to the high standards that the Lord has set for you who are "a chosen generation, . . . an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). I pray that you will in Jesus' name. Amen.