



'Hastening the Work'

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It's a delightful honor for me to be here with you today. I have to tell you, I really resonate to smaller schools. I've been to all sizes of them, and the ones I really enjoy are the smaller schools.

This last year has been a very, very busy time in Church headquarters. Many of you are aware of some of the things that have happened but maybe some of you aren't aware. In the 88th Section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the 73rd verse, the Lord said he would hasten His work in it's time. As I've thought about that, I've wondered if this isn't one of the times when the Lord is really hastening the work along. I'd like to share with you some of the things that happened last year, and then see if you don't agree with me that there is some real hastening. I won't ask you to respond, but, can any of you think in your mind what were some very significant things that happened within the last twelve months? I'll tell you one. I am confident that many of the Saints heard but it might have gone over their head as to how very significant it was. Can I tell you that in April conference last year, you sat through and were part of this community when one of the major decisions of this dispensation happened. It happened in your time and you can tell your children. In April conference brethren were called and ordained Seventy that were not part of the First and Second quorums. Now what's the significance of that? You see these brethren belong to quorums that are not associated with the normal general authority concept that we have. They're called area authorities but with all of the authority to act within their areas. That is significant. With the church growing like it is--now you know that we just passed 10 million members. That's quite a few people. The Church now is over a hundred and fifty years old, and we have 10 million people. Do any of you have any idea how many members of the Church there will be in 50 years? I'll tell you. It won't be 10 million. It'll be 225 million. Now that's a lot of people. If we think we've got challenges now, can you see the challenge's we're going to have when we'll have over 200 million members. The challenges

we face today will be that much bigger. Now, with the change to the Seventies, for the first time we have an ability to grow about as fast as we want. Why, because we have brethren out there who are well trained, who have had experiences in stake presidencies and as bishops, who speak the language, and who can run the Church. They have all the authority to act. So now we have not only the First and Second quorums, but also the Third, Fourth and Fifth quorums. The First and Second quorums are here, they reside here, and serve full time. The Third Quorum includes Europe, Asia and the Pacific; the Fourth Quorum includes South America and Mexico; the Fifth Quorum includes the United States. These are brethren who are tried and true and who are called now to serve as Seventies.

There was another major announcement. You sisters weren't there for that announcement, it was in Priesthood meeting. What was it: The building of the small temples. Can you imagine the impact of areas of the world where there are people who pay so much to get to the temple and make such a tremendous effort, financially, to get there. Manaus is up the Amazon River, at the north of Brazil; a thousand miles up the Amazon. It's literally in the jungle. We only have, at this time, one temple in Brazil. In order for members to get from Manaus to the San Paulo temple, they get on a boat and travel three days up the Madata river. That will put them in Puerto Velo. Then they get on a bus and cross the country from West to East for three days. That's a total of six days if everything goes well. Any flat tires or problems with the bus makes it that much longer. So generally we figured from six days to a week to get there. They'll spend a week at the temple and then it's six to seven days to get back. That's just one place. All over the world there are people who are making such tremendous sacrifices to get to the temple. It's significant that saints will soon be able to get their endowment, which is essential to receiving the sealings necessary for exaltation, closer to their homes. A very significant announcement.

We'll see hundreds of temples soon. I don't doubt President Hinckley will see a hundred temples on the earth before his days come to a close. When President Hinckley gave that talk, how many of you brethren listened to it? Did you catch this: after he made this major announcement and had explained it all he said, "Well, now enough of that." Enough of explaining that magnificent concept. Then he said, "Now I want to talk to you about something very important." I thought, "What could be so important?" What did he say? What does he feel is one of the most important things? Rivaling in his mind the announcement of the small temples. I'll tell you: the thing he has talked about constantly and that is retention of the new convert. I hope that all of you are aware of that topic and what it means to us; the importance of loving our neighbor, being kind and helping those who are coming into the church.

Well, there are a number of other items I'm going to quickly list. You of the Relief Society and the Priesthood have already recognized something different. Do you know what it is? It's the new curriculum for the Relief Society and the Priesthood. Now that's significant. But I'm not so sure that that didn't go over the top of some of our heads. Why is that so significant? Well, you'll say because husbands and wives can be studying the same thing. It's true the manual on Brigham Young is one of the finest books ever written and you're going to love it as you go through it. But to me that is not the most significant. The significant thing is for the Priesthood. Harold B. Lee said, "The thing we need to do if we're going to see the Church move forward is to stress the priesthood." We tell the brethren, "You're a priesthood quorum." And then we said, "Now take this time and study a lesson." Now for the first time, one Sunday a month is devoted only to Priesthood quorum activities allowing priesthood quorums to really be quorums. That is significant.

Another announcement. These may seem like small things, but they're eternal in their nature. The next one was that on Saturday evening there is going to be a difference in our Saturday evening sessions. Those of you who are accustomed to going to Saturday evening of conference are going to find that you're not invited to go to the Saturday evening session. That'll break some people's hearts because it was one of the finest sessions of conference. But to take its place is a training session for stake and ward councils. And in that, there will be an opportunity for the sisters to be trained jointly with the brethren, something we've wanted to see for years. So now the sisters will be trained with the brethren, then it will be less likely that the sisters go home and say, "I don't know what's going on." That's part of the hastening of the work. The preparation of the sisters that are leaders along with the brethren.

I'm going to leave that now and talk with you about a very personal experience. As Sister Hillam and I were serving as a mission president, we had five missionaries out at the

same time. Three of our children were serving at one time, and Sister Hillam and I considered ourselves missionaries, so there were five of us serving at one time. It was a great experience -- economic disaster -- but a great experience. When our children came home off their missions, we were in Brazil, as mission president. They started their missions and reported their missions and we were never there. Of our seven children, and incidently they've all served missions, we've only been home to hear one of them report their mission. We've only been home to see two of them go on their missions, and we've not been home when they started college. I'd like to just take a few minutes that I have now and share with you what council, I'd give them.

First, I would remind them of the Doctrine and Covenants, the 9th section, the 8th verse where the Lord says:

"Behold I say unto you that you must study it out in your mind (this was to Oliver Cowdery); then you must ask me if it is right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right."

Now what does that scripture mean? What I would say to my children is be sure that when you go to school you've really studied it out in your mind as to what you want to do. Don't go just with the idea, "I'll go put in a few hours." Study it out. Don't expect that the Lord is just going to tap you on the shoulder and say, "Now Harold, you go into orthodontics or you do whatever." You really study it out, and then, when you know that it's the right thing, take it to the Lord and ask him: "Heavenly Father, is this what would help me the very most?" Then I'm sure we will have that feeling in our bosom and we will know that it is right.

I can tell you when I decided that I wanted to go into dentistry that's all I could think of. That literally just permeated my thoughts. I wanted to be a dentist so bad I could almost taste it. I don't know what it is to taste dentistry, but it just permeated all my thoughts. And I think I had that sensation that it was the right thing.

Once you've made your decision, be ready to stand by it. And be ready to not move your position, not to start this one day and that another day. Brigham Young gave us some good council. He has been credited as being one of the greatest colonizers in modern history. I think he's the greatest colonizer in the history of mankind. Many times we talk about Moses. I think he was even greater than Moses. Let me tell you what I think is one of the keys to his greatness. He said, "I have Zion in my view constantly." See, he had a vision. He knew what Zion was going to be. And everything he did was to build Zion. Now the Lord has told us in this last dispensation, there have been four brethren that have gone to the Prophet Joseph Smith and said, "What would be the most important thing that I could do?" And in the 6th section of the Doctrine and Covenants and the 11th section, the 12th section, and the 14th section the response is almost the same. "Inasmuch as you have asked the thing most

important to do;” number one keep the commandments, number two build Zion. I think that’s something we need to have in our vision. Brigham Young taught us that once we know what we want to do, once the Lord has given that confirmation, have it in your vision constantly. Have it in your vision and don’t plan on moving it.

The Lord talks about our putting our hand to the plow. Now some of you are good farmers, you might understand what the Lord is trying to tell us. In Luke 9:62, the Lord says: “And Jesus said unto him, no man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.” What did he mean by that? No man putting his hand to the plow is fit for the Kingdom of God. The Savior was talking to those who were farmers. They knew what He was talking about. And this was the magnificent part of the Savior. He would talk to the fisherman as fisherman, he talked to the farmers as farmers and they knew what he meant. Do we have any farmers here? Ok, good. You’ll understand what he said. When you get hold of the plow and you’re plowing a furrow, you can’t look back or off you go and your furrow is all crooked, and anybody that’s farmed knows how tough it is to try and straighten out a plowed field. You can’t hardly do it. So how did those farmers keep their rows so straight? Here’s how it’s done. Farmers would take their mule or their horse or whatever was pulling the plow and they’d line up his ears on a tree or something distant. That tree became a goal. And so he would watch that that tree was right between those horse’s ears. Now today, the modern farmers line up the radiator cap on a tree and they know that they can’t let that radiator cap get very far off or they’re going to have a crooked row and they’re going to have to try and straighten it out and it’s not going to be easy. So the Lord said, when we put our hand to the plow, we can’t look back. If we do, we’re not fit for the kingdom because our rows might be crooked. Now what does that mean to us? When we decide what we’re going to do in our schooling, in our life, we put our hand to the plow, we do all we can to make it so that it does happen.

Now there are times when we do have to alter our goal just a little bit. But let me suggest, I know when I went to Ricks College for the first day, we were there and I remember one of the instructors asked, “What are you all going to do?” And I remember some of them raised their hand and said “I’m going to be a brain surgeon.” And another one over here said, “I’m going to be an atomic physicist,” And I sat there and thought “Boy, I’m in the wrong league. I don’t know whether I can keep up with these guys.” But it was interesting how many of them hadn’t really thought it out. And I looked back at them later. Some of them had dropped out of school and some of them hadn’t bothered to apply. It was easy for them to take their goal and let it slip. Instead of raising their goal they were obviously letting them down.

There are times when we do need to modify our goals. I’ll share this with you, by Evelyn Bennitte. As every Young

Woman approaches marriage and child bearing, she sets up goals hoping to make her home a little bit of heaven. As the years roll around, these specific goals have to be reevaluated and changed with the changing times. Now here’s what she said: “My goals 20 years ago included: number one, keeping an immaculate house which would be an ideal setting for the spirit of our Heavenly Father to dwell. Number two, I’d read at least one excellent book a month and become well informed about the world around me. Number three, prepare well-balanced, attractive gourmet meals, experimenting with at least one new recipe a week. Bear many children who will be well dressed, well pressed and well behaved. Keep an optimistic outlook on life. At the end of every week try to evaluate what created in me good feelings or frustrations. And tell my husband once a day that I loved him.

“The first two years of our marriage before children was like a fantasy. I was so organized, orderly and adorable. We ate such creations as cordon bleu’ and pheasant under glass. Our discussions were stimulating in a house which was hygienically spotless, not a thing out of place. And then came our first child. And with the demands of burping, changing, loving, bathing, rocking, washing, praying, some of my goals needed to be modified. I must give up my immaculate house. My revised goals now read: As you pass a table blow hard on the top of it just to rearrange the dust. Number two, put the vacuum in the middle of the floor so that anyone calling on you will think that sometime soon you will intend to get the debris off the floor. Then came the second child. With the demands of burping, changing, loving, bathing, rocking, washing, praying, some of my goals needed to be modified. I must give up my reading books. But not the newspaper. I still snatch time for a little worthwhile reading of my favorite funny paper characters--Mary Worth and Dr. Rex Morgan. But only every other day. And who can live without Ann Landers. Number two, to keep well informed I rush to the door when I hear the mailman to discuss some pertinent problem-- “Has the garbage been picked up down the street yet?”

“Then came the third child. With the demands of burping, changing, loving, bathing, rocking, washing, and praying, some of my goals needed to be modified. Instead of preparing well-balanced, attractive, gourmet meals, experimenting with at least one new recipe every week, my goal now read, serve a hot dish once a day. This means if I serve hot soup for lunch you can get away with peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for dinner. When I do find an extra hour and decide to go all out on a roast, potatoes, gravy and baked bread the children ask, “Who’s coming for dinner?” or “Is it Thanksgiving already?” Then came the fourth child. With the demands of burping, changing, loving, bathing, rocking, washing and praying, some of my goals needed to be modified. Instead of being well-dressed, well-pressed and well-behaved, my goal simply reads: dress. If the diaper is hanging around

the knees by noon my neighbor will know that I pinned it up properly earlier in the day. I haven't seen the bottom of my ironing basket for three years and really don't know when I ever will. Praise be to polyester.

"Then the fifth child came. With the demands of burping, changing, loving, bathing, rocking, washing and praying some of my goals needed to be modified. My goal no longer reads: Keep an optimistic outlook on life. At the end of the week try to evaluate, what created in you good feelings or frustration. Instead it says: Keep your voice down until noon. At the end of each week count to see if you still have five children. Check your mind to see if you have lost it or not. Check your varicose veins to see if your legs will take you through another week. My last goal, tell your husband once a day that you love him, now simply says: Try to speak to your husband once a day. With cub scouts, little league, watching football, baseball, basketball, track, violin lessons, PTA board meetings, etc., etc., with chicken pox, roseola, hepatitis, Asian flu, tonsillectomies, I feel lucky to call out to him as we rush past each other going in and out of the front door, "Golly dear, I'm overdrawn at the bank again." Twenty years later, my goals are summed up by reading: Sustain life and endure to the end."

Now brothers and sisters, there are times when we need to modify our goals. But I would suggest that you try to modify them up. Don't modify your goal and come down simply because it's easier.

I would like to just share one scripture with you prior to our leaving. If I were to try to determine of all of the scriptures which would be ones I would call pivotal -- on which your destiny and my destiny are connected -- one of the most pivotal scriptures is in the New Testament. I'll read it to you. Prior to reading it, I'd like you to remember the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ had his agency. He was not commanded. He had no responsibility to do what he did in the atonement. He did it simply because he loved us. He did it because he knew that your exaltation depended on what he did. It was not easy. The Savior, as he hung on the cross, agonized more than you or I could ever imagine. All of the pains of this world we can consider, he suffered while he was on the cross. And Heavenly Father had to let the Savior do it all by himself, so He withdrew His presence from the Savior. This is the first time the Savior had ever gone through that, I believe. And now he had all the weight of the suffering of Gethsemane, all of the horrible suffering on the cross, suffering every known suffering we could ever imagine, and then now without the help of his Father in Heaven. And so, my scripture, I think the pivotal scripture on which all the history of the world hung, was this one: "And at the ninth

hour Jesus cried with a loud voice saying, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' which is, being interpreted, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me." (Mark 15:34) He could have quit any time. He had control over life and death. He could have ended it and said, "I cannot." And now that He was without the support of his Heavenly Father, I think we were at one of the most precarious times in the history of this world. I know we watched him as spirit children; we saw it. I am confident that our prayers were with the Savior. And we prayed saying, "Jesus, don't, don't give up. Oh please, finish the atonement. Because my exaltation is tied to your atoning for my sins." If I were to council my children, I would say: "In all of your studying, know the Savior. Know what he really did for us."

And I leave you with my testimony. And my testimony is that there will be nothing greater than the day when I am judged by the Savior, and He, being my advocate, my attorney, will plead with Heavenly Father. I hope He will say, "Heavenly Father, have mercy on him. Have mercy on him." Because He's the only one that can plead for mercy because He died for our sins.

I love you. I love His name. I love His Church and His prophet. I leave you with my testimony that I know that Jesus Christ lives, and his Church is on the earth today and we have a living prophet. And I leave that with you in the name of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.