

The Dyrengs Speak on Charity and Missionary Work

by

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Charity: A Love of Infinite Worth

by Sister Betty Dyreng

Brothers and sisters, I'm grateful for the opportunity to be here. I'd like to ask you a question today as I begin, and I'd like you to think about this for a few minutes. How have you been blessed by someone who has shown charity to you?

Suppose that you came hurriedly in to this meeting today. You have a lot on your mind—school, projects due, reading and more reading. At least three tests this week. And you've been asked to present a paper on a Gospel principle in your institute class. And then, on top of all of that, you have a calling, you have a job, you may be married, you have a family, or you may also have a social life. At least, you hope to have a social life.

Well, you think about these things, and you feel a little rushed as you come in today. And then, as you climb those stairs, you look to the front. And you see a man sitting at the front of the room. You are immediately drawn to him. His countenance is something you have never seen before. You notice the fellow students around you. Some are busy talking, and yet there are others who are sitting quietly in their seats, watching this man. His eyes meet yours and you find yourself moving forward, and before you know it you are standing by his side.

Your eyes at that moment notice his white robe, but your heart feels this overwhelming sense of love that you have never felt before. You lean over reverently and quietly whisper, "Thank you, Jesus." And then you take your seat.

Can you imagine having an experience like that, and the love that you would feel?

Well, today I wanted to talk for a minute about charity, and recognizing that love is many things to many people.

There are three basic kinds of love, and want to touch on them briefly today. The first kind of love is, "I will love you if..." This type of love is conditional. It is selfish, and there are always strings attached. Some examples of this love would be:

"I will love you if you're popular."

"I will love you if you have a car."

"I will love you if you attend church."

"I will love you if you are nice to me, or if you do your chores."

"I will love you if you do what I say."

There's a second kind of love, and this kind of love is, "I love you because..." This type of love emphasizes the selfish or the worldly aspects. It, too, is conditional when people love each other because of some attractive quality rather than because they see someone as their Heavenly Father would see them. Some examples of this would be:

"I love you because you have pretty eyes."

"I love you because you're handsome."

"I love you because you're on the team."

"I love you because you make me happy."

“I love you because you help me with my homework.”

“I love you because you do what I say.”

Both of these kinds of love are not true love. They are conditional, they are selfish, and they are based on our own desires. These types of love could be called manipulative—they could be called controlling. And sometimes they’re the kind of love, if you want to call it that, that requires that “I” idea—I need to be prominent, I need to be seen—rather than the kind of love that we want to add praise and glory to our Heavenly Father.

The first type of love is celestial love—“I will love you if...” The second type of love is the terrestrial type—“I love you because...” But there is another type of love, and it uses the phrase “even though.” This is a type of love where a person is loved not for any deserved reason, but because he is who he is. This is a type of love that we love a person as if they are of infinite worth. It’s the kind of love that we all thirst for. This is the type of love that Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, have for all of us. It is called charity. Another definition of this love is “the pure love of Christ.” (Moroni 7:47)

Some examples of this type of love would be:

“I love you, even though you know your scriptures better.”

“I love you even though you’re a better athlete.”

“I love you even though you may have weaknesses and imperfections.”

“I love you even though you make mistakes.”

“I love you, even though you may not always do the things I want you to do.”

This truly is Christlike love. Accepting people as they are, and loving them as sons and daughters of God is a part of this type of love—it is charity. You know, brothers and sisters, we’re commanded to have charity, which means that we don’t just love others as ourselves, but that we must love each other as Christ loves us, and that means totally.

In the scriptures, in Moroni 7, it talks about charity. If you’d like to turn with me there, Moroni 7, beginning with verse 45. It says: “Charity suffereth long, and is kind.” In other words, it’s patient. It “envieth not.” It’s satisfied. It “is not puffed up.” It is humble. It “seeketh not her own.” It is unselfish. It “is not easily provoked.” It is good-tempered. It “thinketh no evil.” It is pure. It “rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth.” It is honest. It “beareth all things.” It is obedient. It “believeth all things.” It has great faith. It “hopeth all things.” It carries a positive attitude. And it “endureth all things.” It is steadfast. It perseveres.

And then in verses 46, 47 and 48, it says: “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, for charity never faileth. Wherefore, cleave unto,” or grab onto, or hold securely to, “charity, which is the greatest of all...”

“But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him.

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure.”

Brothers and sisters, I asked a question as I began: How has some one act of charity impacted your life? I think each of us could answer that today with a statement that we have been affected more than anything else by the charity our Savior has shown to us. The act of the Atonement, His great love, His sacrifice, His suffering is the greatest of all examples. Now brothers and sisters, the pure love of Christ is the hardest principle of the Gospel. It is the one

characteristic of godliness that, if acquired, will enable us to become as Heavenly Father is. And all that He has, we will inherit. Charity is a gift of the Spirit. It is not something that we can acquire on our own. It is a gift from our Heavenly Father. It is a gift that the Savior has shown us how to develop and how to give back to others.

I would like to express my gratitude to my Heavenly Father and His Son for His great blessings in my life, even the great gift of the Atonement. The Atonement works, brothers and sisters. I would like to thank you for the privilege we have had of rubbing shoulders with you. We are better because we have had the privilege of being here at the LDS Business College and knowing you. This gospel is true. We belong to the only true Church on the face of this earth. We have a Heavenly Father who loves us, and He has a Son who is our brother, who has given us the greatest gift of charity in our lives. We have a living prophet who walks the earth, and we have been blessed with the Restoration, with the Book of Mormon. It is true, brothers and sisters. The reality of Joseph Smith being an instrument for the Lord truly took place, and has affected all of our lives. I am grateful for all of the blessings that Heavenly Father has given to us.

I once made this statement in one of Brother Dyreng's classes, that I would follow this man to the end of the earth. And now, I think that may happen. I am grateful for all of our blessings, and I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

A Message That Will Bless the World **by Brother Dyreng**

Isn't she wonderful?

This is truly a humbling experience. You guys are really scary when you're sitting in this room.

I'd like to start off with this little story that I found the other day. I think it just verifies what you've just seen with my sweetheart.

There was a lady, and she says: "I was out walking with my four-year-old daughter. She picked up something off the ground and started to put it in her mouth. I took the item away from her and asked her not to do that. 'Why?' my daughter asked.

"'Because it's been lying outside. It's dirty and probably has germs,' I replied.

"At this point my daughter looked at me with total admiration and asked, 'How do you know all this stuff?'

I was thinking quickly. 'All Moms know that stuff. Uh, it's on the Mommy test. You have to know it or they don't let you be a Mommy.'

"We walked along in silence for two or three minutes, but she was evidently pondering this new information. 'Oh, I get it,' she beamed. 'So if you don't pass the test, you have to be the Daddy.'"

Back in October of 2002, I had the opportunity to speak in a stake conference. At that time I challenged all the members of our stake to set a date by which they would serve the Lord in the mission field. And that was for Primary, Mutual, Young Adults and older couples and individuals. I asked each of them to set a date whereby they could serve. For the younger ones, it was when they turned nineteen for the boys, twenty-one for the girls. For the adults, it was when their retirement date came up and they would be ready to serve after retiring. As Betty and I talked about this, we had decided that in 2009 we were going to retire and then we wanted to

go on a mission. Betty didn't have the opportunity to serve and has always wanted to serve a proselytizing mission. And so that was going to be our first mission.

One of the things that I have found in the last few months is that the Lord knows us better than we know ourselves. Because 2009 is when Betty and I will be returning from our proselytizing mission. And what a great opportunity it's going to be to serve.

Because missionary work, for some reason or another, has been so much on our minds lately, I'd like to base my remarks around some things I learned from the mission field. I'd like to start off by sharing a couple of thoughts from the conference reports of conferences in the recent past. This first one is a talk given by Elder Ballard in the April Conference of 2005. You'll recognize that is the date when the famous talk was given where the bar was raised. Let me read just a few things from that.

He says, "When our youth understand the significance of the Restoration of the Gospel and know for themselves that God is our Heavenly Father and He loves all of His children, that Jesus is the Christ, and that together they personally visited Joseph Smith to open this...final dispensation...they will want to help carry this message to the world. When our youth see the Book of Mormon as tangible evidence that the message of the Restoration is true, they will be filled with the desire to do their part in teaching these truths to our Heavenly Father's children.

"We learned from the missionaries at the Missionary Training Center what would have helped them most to prepare for their mission. Above all else they wished they had:

Learned the doctrine better through focused scripture study.

Learned how to study and...pray sincerely.

Been more disciplined and worked harder.

Understood better what is expected.

Had more teaching opportunities."

And lastly, had "had more searching interviews by bishops and [interestingly enough] parents." (*Ensign*, May 2005, p. 69)

It was at that conference where they called for the bar to be raised not just for missionaries, but in all of our lives. At this last conference, Elder Bednar gave a wonderful talk about becoming missionaries. Let me just share a couple of paragraphs from that.

He said: "Proclaiming the gospel is not an activity in which we periodically and temporarily engage. And our labors as missionaries certainly are not confined to the short period of time devoted to full-time missionary service in our youth or in our mature years. Rather, the obligation to proclaim the restored gospel of Jesus Christ is inherent in the oath and covenant of the priesthood into which we enter." Now this is a priesthood meeting, so he's speaking to the young men and the priesthood of the Church. "Missionary work essentially is a priesthood responsibility." But later on, he talks about the need for sister missionaries also. "And all of us who hold the priesthood are the Lord's authorized servants on the earth and are missionaries at all times and in all places—and we always will be."

Then he said this: "One of questions I am asked most frequently by young men is this: 'What can I do to prepare most effectively to serve...a full-time [mission]?' Such a sincere question deserves a serious response.

"My dear young brethren, the single most important thing you can do to prepare for a call to serve is to *become* a missionary long before you *go* on a mission. Please notice...in my answer I emphasized *becoming* rather than *going*." (*Ensign*, November 2005, p. 44-45, italics in the original) And then he went into an interesting discussion about how we don't just go on a mission; we should become a missionary.

I have a good friend who served as a mission president, and when he came back, he listed twelve complaints that missionaries had. I'd like to talk just briefly about each one of these. I recognize that most in this room either will not be going on a mission until you go with your companion that you can choose when you're later in life, or you've just returned from a mission and so you say it's too late. But I think there are important principles that we can learn from each of these twelve items that we can apply in our lives. And so I share this, not as something that we should have done as missionaries, but for lessons that we can learn in our life.

In 1 Nephi 3:6, it says, "Therefore go, my son, and thou shalt be favored of the Lord, because thou hast not murmured." Now that's, of course, Lehi to Nephi. But it's interesting to think about what Laman and Lemuel very quickly began to do, to murmur and complain. And we often focus on the murmuring of Laman and Lemuel, but we don't stop to think of the consequences that their actions had on generations—in fact, on the whole Nephite nation—because of the traditions that they passed down to their children, which were then passed on down, and the hatred that developed between the Nephites and the Lamanites.

And so my purpose in this is that perhaps we can learn some things from what the missionaries said were the biggest complaints.

Number One: "I can't get along with my companion." Now, for those of you who have been on missions, really, how long were you with most companions? Three, six, nine weeks? A couple of months? Six months, maybe, at the most? Really, can't we endure that short a time? It just seems kind of like a silly complaint, especially when the brethren have said over and over again that the companions we have in the mission field are great training to learn to live with an eternal companion. Now granted, our eternal companion we get to choose, and there ought not to be some of those personality quirks that you had with companions in the mission field that caused the problem.

But let's just take this perspective for a minute. This is from President Kimball: "Marriage is perhaps the most vital of all the decisions, and has the most far-reaching effects of any decision that we'll make in our life, for it has to do not only with immediate happiness, but also with eternal joys. It affects not only the two people involved, but also their families and particularly their children and their children's children down through many generations." So as Betty talked about, we need to learn to develop charity in our relationships with everyone that we're around. As we learn to do that, when the time comes for an eternal companion, we can make some adjustments if we need to.

President Kimball also made an interesting statement, and part of this applies and part of it is for a discussion of another day. He says: "Soul mates are fiction, and an illusion." Now, soul mates—the one and only—are "fiction and an illusion." Then he goes on to say this: "While every young man and every young woman will seek with all diligence and prayerfulness to find a mate with whom life can be most compatible and beautiful," then this statement, "yet it is certain," and this is a prophet speaking, "that almost any good man and any good woman can have happiness and a successful marriage if both are willing to pay the price." Now there's a great lesson to be learned.

Okay, the next complaint. "I'm tired all the time." You know, isn't it interesting. Life is hard, and we'll always have to work hard. There probably is going to be more to do than we have time. But I'd like you to consider for just a minute how important it is to learn to work smarter and not harder. You're here at college to earn a degree. That's going to help you. But let's stop and think why missionaries would say, "I'm tired all the time." I think there are two wonderful reasons, and we need to learn to be grateful for being tired. First of all, I don't know

if you've ever thought of this before, but the Spirit is tiring. Remember the Prophet Joseph Smith, when the First Vision was over, where did he find himself? On his back, as he came to, looking up into heaven. It totally wiped him out.

When the 76th Section of the Doctrine and Covenants was received, Sidney Rigdon could barely move after spending a day receiving this revelation. The Prophet Joseph then said to him, "Sidney, I used to feel that way, but I'm used to it now." So we can kind of get used to the Spirit a little bit, so it doesn't make us quite so tired. The other thing that makes us tired is hard work. As a missionary or in life, we should be grateful at the end of the day, when we're tired because it means that we've been involved with the Spirit, or that we've had a good day's work. And those are blessings.

Number Three: "I feel guilty for past transgressions." From the 58th Section of the Doctrine and Covenants: "He who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more." (Verse 42) The Lord never promised that we wouldn't remember our sins. He just promised that if we truly repent, he would forget them. We need to let bygones be bygones, and if we have truly repented, let the past stay in the past.

From *For the Strength of Youth*, here's what it comes right down to: "The Savior gave His life for us and suffered for our sins. This great sacrifice is called the Atonement. Through the Atonement, you can receive forgiveness and be cleansed from your sins when you repent. When you do what is necessary to receive forgiveness, you will know for yourself the power of the Atonement and the love God has for you. You will feel the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ, which will bring you great strength."

There was a speaker who spoke here in this very room, I think it was last year, who kind of touched on this topic. He said, "There's not a one of us who hasn't done something in the past that we regret. We can't do anything about that but repent. But today is a new day, and every one of us can vow today that we will not do anything that we're ashamed of or that we will feel sorry for." And we can do the same thing tomorrow and the next day. And so, from this time forward, I would just say that if there is something in your life that's not appropriate, let it go. Repent. And you don't have to have those feelings of regret from here on out about that particular thing.

Okay, number 4: "Missionary work is too hard." They don't know how to work. President Hinckley said, "Work together. I do not know how many generations or centuries ago someone first said 'An idle mind is the devil's workshop.' Children need to work with their parents, wash the dishes with them, mop the floors, learn to mow lawns, prune the trees. Parents need to teach their children to learn how to work." President Hinckley is one of the greatest examples of this that you could possibly imagine. The story is told that President Hinckley and Elder [Jeffrey R.] Holland and a number of the other brethren went on a three-week trip throughout the South Pacific. They got back on a Thursday night. Now imagine, those of you who have been on a plane know what jet lag is. Here's President Hinckley, well into his 90s. It's late at night on Thursday night. Elder Holland is purported to have said to him, "President Hinckley, I assume you're going to take tomorrow off. We'll see you in the office on Monday."

President Hinckley said, "Time off?" He said, "Jeff, I'll see you at work tomorrow. You can take time off when you die. There are things to do." President Hinckley is a great example of work.

The next one is, "I can't get up in the morning." Now, I want to share with you a little story that I got the other day that kind of covers "I don't know how to work" and "I can't get up in the morning." I don't know if this is true or not, but it sure should be.

It's a letter from a farm kid:

"Dear Ma and Pa,

I am well, hope you are. Tell Brother Walt and Brother Elmer the Marine Corps beats working for old man Minsch by a mile. Tell 'em to join up quick before all the places are filled. I was restless at first because you got to stay in bed until nearly six a.m. But I'm getting used to it, and I kind of like to sleep late now. Tell Walt and Elmer all you got to do before breakfast is smooth your cot, shine some things, no hogs to slop, no feed to pitch, no mash to mix, no wood to split, no fire to light. Practically nothing. Men got to shave, but it's not so bad. There's warm water. Breakfast is strong on trimmin's like fruit juice, cereal, eggs, bacon, etc., but kind of weak on chops, potatoes, ham, steak, fried eggplant, pie and other regular food. But tell Walt and Elmer you can always sit by the two city boys that live on coffee. Their food plus yours holds you till noon when you get fed again. It's no wonder these city boys can't walk much.

"We go on route marches, which the platoon sergeant says are long walks to harden us. If he thinks so, it's not my place to tell him different. A route march is about as far as to our mailbox at home. Then the city guys get sore feet and have to ride back in trucks. The country's nice, but awful flat. The sergeant's like a school teacher—he nags a lot. The captain's like the school board. Majors and Colonels just ride around and frown. They don't bother you none.

"This next will kill Walt and Elmer just with laughin'. I keep getting medals for shooting. I don't know why. The bull's eye is nearly as big as a chipmunk's head, and don't move, and it ain't shootin' at you like the Pickett boys at home. All you got to do is lie there all comfortable and hit it. You don't even have to load your own cartridges. They come in boxes.

"Then we have what they call hand-to-hand combat training. You get to wrestle with them city boys. I have to be real careful, though. They break real easy. It ain't like fighting with the old bull at home. I'm about the best they got, except for old Tug Jordan over in the Silver Lake. I only beat him once. He joined up the same time as me. But I'm only 5'6" and 130 pounds. He's 6'8" and nearly 300 pounds dry.

"Be sure to tell Walt and Elmer to hurry and join before the other fellows get into this set-up and come stampedin' in.

"Your loving daughter, Carol."

Well, those "city boys" thought it was pretty hard work in the military and thought they had to get up awful early. But she slept in and the work wasn't hard at all. It's because she was used to it. Like I've said before, you just have to get used to getting up in the morning. There are very, very few mornings when 5:00 or 5:30 comes and my alarm goes off that I'm not already awake. I think that has come just from the attitude that I have to get up and go to work. I've done that for a lot of years. You can have the same kind of attitude.

Okay, very quickly we're going to have to finish here. Number Six: "Members aren't helping us with the work." I would have to say that's probably the one of all of these that has merit. So I ask each of us to ask ourselves, "What am I doing right now to spread the Gospel and to help missionary work move forward? Do I carry a pass-along card that I can pass on when the time is right? Do I have a Book of Mormon ready, when the time is right, to give to someone? Am I willing to open my mouth when the subject of religion comes up? And above all, is my life a living example of what the gospel of Jesus Christ is?"

Number Seven: "I can't learn the discussions or scriptures." We have to learn. Keep your mind active and alert. One of the great blessings that you have is being in college. Never lose the love of learning. You will never be through learning. Make it a lifelong pursuit.

Number Eight: “Too many rules.” We need to learn obedience. It is a wise person indeed that learns that obedience to rules brings true freedom.

I’d like to share with you what I would consider to be three principles for missionary success. You know, I have seen lists of rules that had as many as twenty rules. This has three: “Turn yourself over to the Lord.” That works for missionaries; it works for us. Sometimes it’s real easy to turn ourselves over to the Lord because times are really tough. But the key is to be able to do it when the times are easy. So turn yourself over to the Lord

“Keep all mission rules.” Keep all Honor Code rules here at the College. Whatever it is—your job, in whatever you do, the laws of the land—learn to be obedient.

The last one is “Work your hardest.” For a missionary, when you first start out a mission, it seems like forever. When you get through, it seems like it went like that. But you know what? You’re going to be looking back at that mission for the rest of your life. And if you can look back without any regret because you have worked your hardest, or if you can look back at your college experience because you did your best, or if you can look back at your employment because you’ve done your best, there will be no regrets.

Number Nine: “I don’t receive enough money each month.” Get used to it. That’s going to happen for the rest of your life. Learn to budget. Learn to live within your means. It’s been said that if you have five hundred... five hundred, yeah, really...if you have fifty dollars left over at the end of the month more than you’ve earned, you’re a happy man. If you have fifty dollars less, it is misery.

Number Ten: “I almost never feel the Spirit.” Learn what the Spirit is, and what it is not. I think many of our youth grow up in homes where the gospel of Jesus Christ has been taught, and they grew up with the Spirit, and so they don’t recognize that they’ve always had it. I think sometimes that we look for the wrong thing. We look for miraculous experiences. Recognize that probably the most common manifestation of the Spirit would be three things: Thoughts and impressions that come into our mind, feelings that come into our hearts, and, the peace that comes as we live the gospel of Jesus Christ. Those are probably the most common manifestations of the Spirit.

Number Eleven: “I wish the scriptures had been more important to me before the mission.” I don’t think there’s ever a time in our life where we probably can’t say the same thing. I wish the scriptures had been more important to me, too. I challenge each one of us—and we’ve heard quite a bit about this around the Institute this year—to take the time each day to “sit under the oak tree.” Take the time to read the scriptures, to meditate and feel the impressions that come to you as to the things the Lord would have you to do.

And the last complaint: “I’m afraid to talk to people about the Gospel.” From the Doctrine and Covenants 12:8: “And no one can assist in this work except he shall be humble and full of love,” as Betty talked about earlier, “having faith, hope, and charity, being temperate in all things, whatsoever shall be entrusted to his care.”

Brothers and sisters, we have been given the truthfulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We have a message that will bless the world. We have a knowledge that families can be together forever. We have a knowledge that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ and that there is a living prophet today. This is a message the world needs. Why would we be afraid to share it?

I leave my testimony with you that these things are true, and would challenge each one of us to open our mouths to share this wonderful message that we have. For it is true. I leave this with you in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.