

THE CHURCH  
OF JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS  
**salt lake  
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UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

# Devotional

**"SUCH AS IS COMMON TO MAN"**

**(I COR. 10:13)**

**ELDER NEAL A. MAXWELL**

**OCTOBER 5, 1980**

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I appreciate Patty's sweet introduction, the music from Becky and Kathy and those in our neighborhood, and the chance just to be with all of you. I have affection for this campus, having spent my days here as a student and 14 years in the administration here. My last social event as I left ten years ago was a lovely dinner in the Union Building during which they were kind enough to blink the "U". Colleen and I have a lot of ties here, having served as a bishop of a student ward which, in those days, included all the fraternity and sorority houses, all of which adds to our sense of belonging.

When I first met President Swinton he was a student leader. And now he is an ecclesiastical leader of students and it doesn't surprise me at all, because he was headed for success in terms of the devotion and the ability which I saw in him then.

I'm grateful the full-time missionaries are with us. And we have some non-members here whom I especially welcome. My father is a convert to the Church and I'll always have that sense of special involvement with missionaries for that reason. I said to all the General Authorities and Regional Representatives Friday that "in member missionary work, finders are keepers." One of the most important things you can do here is to be a part of bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to someone. Do it, and you will have that sense of identification and watching over them forever.

Now we've come out of the warm afterglow of Conference and listening to prophets, seers, and revelators. One of the things to bear in mind, my young brothers and sisters, is that prophets are for following and they can, as in the case of Elijah and his servant, see trouble when it is a cloud in the sky--no bigger than a man's hand. It is inconsistent to say that we accept their prophetic counsel on this or that issue but not on other issues. I don't think we'd have felt very comfortable going to the Savior and saying that "we like your Sermon on the Mount, but we wish you wouldn't scold the Pharisees quite so much." Or that we appreciated something else that He said, but wish He hadn't called Herod that "old fox." Prophets are not containable in the sense of what God may require them

to say. I just wanted to make that comment to you.

Now, brothers and sisters, we face some hard times which will require us to become even more familiar than we now are with what I call the hard doctrines, because each of us has to make some hard choices. I want to speak about some of those basic hard doctrines tonight and about putting first things first. My remarks are made in the context of urging us all to be of good cheer because we, of all people on this planet, have the best reasons to be of good cheer. We know what the ultimate realities are in terms of the gospel truths and all the reassurances that those will bring to us.

Just as the people of God need each other, so do the doctrines of God need each other. These principles and truths in the gospel of Jesus Christ are so powerful that they need to be held in kind of a tension balance with each other. It is called orthodoxy. They are so powerful that if one spins off by itself, it's dangerous. And we see this all the time. We see people become fascinated by a particular principle of the gospel. They don't keep it in balance with the other principles and then they spin off, and there is sadness. The adversary can for awhile often have it both ways. He can take a principle, for instance a very valid principle like personal revelation, and speak out against it and say that it isn't real. If that doesn't work, then he can get some people, having not kept the principles in balance, to become fascinated with that particular principle and be led off into phoney and false "revelations" which will, of course, then diminish their faith. So, in a sense, he has it both ways. This illustrates the importance of orthodoxy.

I would hope your attendance in classes at the Institute is regular enough to give you the maturation in your gospel scholarship that would match the kind of maturation that's occurring in the University classrooms across the street. Furthermore, another virtue of an institute class is that it permits you to weave these principles together in a way that gives you the happiness that orthodoxy brings.

Now, on to hard doctrines. One of the things that is imperative for each of us to understand, not just mentally assent to it, but really understand it, is that we must not make the mistake of assuming that we've been overprogrammed so far as temptation and tribulation are concerned, concluding wrongly that if we yield to the ways of the world, somehow it's justifiable and understandable. We are in the world. It's a risk-filled world. But our vulnerability to the things of the world is actually determined by us. The final judgment will find us without excuse. We may wish to invoke extenuating circumstances, but we can't because it could be shown to our satisfaction that these circumstances, which might otherwise

have been an excuse, could have been escaped from or endured righteously somehow.

I have seen, my young brothers and sisters, members of the Church remain steadfast under the most difficult of trials--several of whom I will mention to you at the end of my talk. However, I have seen other Church members yield to temptation after almost no resistance--indeed, I have been puzzled and disappointed at how easily they were drawn away. Were they taken by surprise?

If we understand the scriptures, we should never be taken by surprise, since we should never be surprised when temptations and trials come to us (1 Peter 4:12). If we understand the scriptures, we will also know that the trials of life are metered out to the faithful in such a way that we are not asked to endure more than we can bear. The margin of safety is thin, at times, but it is there.

The scriptures say that, developmentally, the Lord will not give us more than we can bear if we are humble. When our problems, including the thorns in the flesh we are given, seem almost too much by way of trial and tribulation, let us not forget that God has also promised that His grace will be sufficient for us. Paul opened the window of his soul to teach us this basic lesson:

And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.  
(2 Cor. 12:7-9, underlinings added).

Moroni confirmed and amplified this vital doctrine, saying:

And when I had said this, the Lord spake unto me, saying, Fools mock, but they shall mourn; and my grace is sufficient for the meek, that they shall take no advantage of your weakness;

And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.  
(Ether 12:26-27, underlinings added).

Even so, it is not uncommon for individuals to feel that the temptations and the trials they face are simply too much for them to bear. Self-pity sets us up and adds to our vulnerability. Paul gave us, therefore, a much-needed promise when he wrote this to the Saints at Corinth:

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it (1 Cor. 10:13, underlinings added).

Certain temptations are "common" to those who come to this earth. It is our task to deal with these common temptations in an uncommon manner, rather than wrongfully assuming that we have been given more than we can bear. The Lord has promised to succor us in our temptations, reminding us that He ". . . knoweth the weakness of man and how to succor them who are tempted (D&C 62:1). By succoring us, He does not mean He will indulge us. In fact, the more we become like God, who cannot look upon sin "with the least degree of allowance," the less can we, (D&C 1:31) especially in ourselves, which accounts for some of our divine discontent.

Nor should we make the further mistake of those who think that our temptations come from God. James said it very bluntly, almost as if (in interviews with Church members) he had heard the same excuses too many times:

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.

But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed (James 1:12-14, underlinings added).

Peter promised: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations" (2 Peter 2:9). The same promise was reaffirmed by the Lord in this dispensation:

Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you whom I love, and whom I love I also chasten that their sins may be forgiven, for with the chastisement I prepare a way for their deliverance in all things out of temptation . . . (D&C 95:1, underlinings added).

We are promised deliverance but the Lord will not kidnap us; for the doctrine of free agency will not permit us to be held hostage against our will--even for righteous cause.

The promise given through Paul that we will not be overwhelmed is echoed in other scriptures (see D&C 64:20), and it is amplified in the Book of Mormon in a conditional way:

But that ye would humble yourselves before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and watch and pray continually, that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear, and thus be led by the Holy Spirit . . . (Alma 13:28, underlinings added).

Presumably to "watch and pray" means having a large regard for the power of temptation and a humble estimation of our own powers to resist it.

Thus, in connection with this basic hard doctrine, what the Lord has promised to do is to: (1) make a way for us to escape--and these ways are there, if we will use them, including the exit route Joseph courageously used when entreated by Potiphar's wife: he fled; (2) succor us by helping us to bear and to endure. It is always we who give up, not He who will lift us up!

The Model with regard to resisting temptation, as in all things, is the Savior Himself. He not only bore tribulations but also temptations--far beyond any we can possibly imagine. Paul reminded us of this reality in these verses to the Hebrews:

For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted (Heb. 2:18).

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15).

These sobering verses tie in to several of the most stunning verses in all scripture as Alma spoke of the suffering Savior:

And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people.

And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities (Alma 7:11-12, underlinings added).

The immensely important but simple key was, the Lord Himself told us, the fact that "He suffered temptations but gave no heed unto them" (D&C 20:22, underlinings added). What a grand yet practical insight! Some of us sometimes process temptations, time and time again, savoring them and thus strengthening the impulse to sin and weakening our will to resist--rather than dispatching the temptations in the way that Jesus did when He "gave no heed."

We build our own temptation traps. By paying even small heed to a temptation,

we forget the fact that temptations are like a poison gas--they spread through the time and space available to them; they are not easily contained. One great advantage, by the way, of dispatching temptations, peremptorily, is this: The human mind is remarkably retentive--in spite of the jokes we who are aging sometimes make. We must be careful, therefore, what we allow in our mind, because it will be there for a long time, extruding at those very times when we may be most vulnerable. Just as harmful chemicals heedlessly dumped in a vacant lot can prove lethal, so seemingly neglected toxic thoughts and the mulching of the wrong memories in the idle, vacant corner of the mind take their toll, too.

What happens, of course, when we persist in savoring temptations (whether they are temptations of wealth, power, status, or sensuality, etc.) is represented by what we read of another people in another time:

Now the cause of this iniquity of the people was this-- Satan had great power, unto the stirring up of the people to do all manner of iniquity, and to the puffing them up with pride, tempting them to seek for power, and authority, and riches, and the vain things of the world (3 Nephi 6:15, underlinings added).

This people finally lost personal and social control as these vivid words portray:

And thus, in the commencement of the thirtieth year-- the people having been delivered up for the space of a long time to be carried about by the temptations of the devil whithersoever he desired to carry them, and to do whatsoever iniquity he desired they should--and thus in the commencement of this, the thirtieth year, they were in a state of awful wickedness (3 Nephi 6:17, underlinings added).

Surely it should give us more pause than it does to think of how casually we sometimes give to him who could not control his ego in the premortal world such awful control over our egos here. We often let the adversary do indirectly now what we refused to let him do directly then.

Thus, brothers and sisters, we can expect no immunity from either trial or temptation because these are the "common" lot of mankind. On our response to these real challenges hangs our eternal future! Indeed, these features of mortality were among the very conditions we agreed to before we undertook this mortal experience. No wonder the Gods said of us and of this world in prospectus: "We will prove them herewith" (Abr. 3:25). We cannot renege on that commitment now; nor can the Lord hurriedly redesign this mortal experience just because we have a bad day!

In my estimation, therefore, the real heroes and heroines of our time are the

men and women of the earth who resist the world's temptations and who surmount the tribulations of the world and who continue in righteousness--though they are sorely beset at times with thorns in the flesh. Somehow, the real heroes and heroines understand that these thorns in the flesh will appear even when there does not seem to be a rose garden near at hand!

Responding uncommonly to the common challenges hinges on our obtaining a clearheaded understanding of who we are and what life is all about and Whose world this really is, after all. While Malcolm Muggeridge came late in life to discover God, he wrote of that perceptual and experiential breakthrough with eloquence:

When I look back on my life nowadays, which I sometimes do, what strikes me most forcibly about it is that what seemed at the time most significant and seductive, seems now most futile and absurd. For instance, success in all of its various guises; being known and being praised; ostensible pleasures, like acquiring money or seducing women, or traveling, going to and fro in the world and up and down in it like Satan, exploring and experiencing whatever Vanity Fair has to offer.

In retrospect all these exercises in self-gratification seem pure fantasy, what Pascal called "licking the earth." They are diversions designed to distract our attention from the true purpose of our existence in this world, which is, quite simply, to look for God, and, in looking, to find Him, and, having found Him, to love Him, thereby establishing a harmonious relationship with His purposes for His creation. (A Twentieth Century Testimony)

The basic ordering truths not only put the purpose of life in bold perspective but also human events. We have a first things first frame of reference within which to view other things. For instance, we can understand what is truly and everlastingly important as contrasted with what we mortals sometimes exclaim over in our understandable but childish enthusiasms of the moment. For instance, economist and free trader, Richard Cobden said in 1846 that the repeal of England's Corn Laws was the "greatest event in human history since the coming of Christ . . ." (Christianity and the World Order, p. 81). As important as that legislation may have been, Cobden was carried away, and not by the Spirit!

President Richard Nixon in 1969 described two American men's walking on the moon as being part of "the greatest week in the history of the world since the creation" (SL Tribune, July 25, 1969, p. 1). Though the President's enthusiasm was understandable, the exaggeration took no note of the atonement or the resurrection.

Edward Norman made these observations about the Christian and his relationship



to changing human enthusiasms:

At the centre of the Christian religion, Christ remains unchanging in a world of perpetual social change and mutating values. To identify him with the passing enthusiasms of men--each one of which, in its time of acceptance, seems permanently true--is to lose him amidst the shifting superstructure of human idealism.

Christians are those who act under the permanent rule that the ways of God are not the ways of men. They will cooperate with others to promote the eradication of agreed injustices, but they will, unlike them, recognize that their language of principles [those of men] and the cultural materials in which they are expressed, are wholly unstable. They will act, therefore, as individuals . . . There can be no proper identification of Christianity with human idealism. Cooperation with the world is always on the world's own terms.  
(Christianity and the World Order, pp. 77, 79.)

Let us, armed with such perspective, remember that the great redeeming plan of salvation of God over which we once shouted for joy (in the world before we came here) was clearly worth it; mere human events are something else.

After finding and accepting God and putting things in proper perspective, we then should also understand that, within the macro-plan of salvation, there are complementary, individual plans for all of us--and each is enfolded into God's overall plan. Therefore, let us believe and trust in God enough that He can see us through our common challenges and on to the accomplishment of our plans if we will but humbly trust Him and have faith in Him. Then His grace will be sufficient for us (2 Cor. 12:7-9; Eth. 12:26-27).

It is necessary for us to understand, however, another dimension of these hard doctrines, that the soul-stretching which God brings to pass by means of high-order suffering is done because He loves us rather than because He does not. The following are powerful and insightful scriptures in this regard:

. . . dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith (Ether 12:6).

. . . becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father (Mosiah 3:19).

There are, of course, different kinds of believers. Some can accept some of the gospel truths but they reject the hard doctrines. I speak to you, however, as those who can be or who are in the process of becoming "true believers in Christ"--a phrase first employed by Alma and later by the Apostle Nephi

(Alma 46:15; 4 Nephi 1:36).

In the parable of the seeds which fell on different kinds of soil, one of the outcomes was the situation in which the seed had no root, typifying those who "for a while believe" but who "in time of temptation fall away" (Luke 8:13). Alma warned us in his own seed analogy about the withering effect when the "heat of the sun cometh and scorcheth" the unnourished tree of shallow root (Alma Chapter 32).

The observations of Jesus recorded by Matthew are briefer than those in Alma but are descriptively parallel with the added insight that the impact of tribulation and persecution cause the weak to be offended and not endure (Matt. 13:6, 21). Of course, those who quit because they cannot stand the heat are not likely to acknowledge these as the real reasons but will usually find a convenient cause over which to become offended.

Just one comment about persecution. There is a gospel glow about a righteous individual or a righteous people. But this is not the only accompanying sign. Enoch could tell us something about how those in an ancient Zion were resented by those who "stood afar off." We are not yet a fully worthy Zion, but even now there is a visible ring of resentment around Zion today including some who had only fairweather faith.

Strange how in racing marathons, one does not see the first to drop out make fun of those who continue; failed runners actually cheer on those who continue the race; they wish they were still in it. Not so with the marathon of discipleship, in which so often the dropouts then make fun of the spiritual enterprise of which they were so recently a part!

So it is, my brothers and sisters, that settling in, spiritually, is such an important thing to achieve. In my opinion, the dedicated young adults in the Church are reaching that stage faster than their counterparts in preceding generations.

In the Joseph Smith Translation, Jesus (after a discussion of bearing one's cross and the demands of discipleship) counseled us as follows: "Wherefore, settle this in your hearts, that ye will do the things which I shall teach, and command you (Luke 14:28).

The need for such deep determination--settling in--fits well with other scriptural descriptions of spiritual maturation which occur in the New Testament. Words like these are used several times: "stablished," "settled," "grounded," "rooted." (Col. 1:23; Col. 2:7; Eph. 3:17; I Pet. 5:10)

Getting settled includes getting settled in the behavioral standards of the

Savior. When we do, said Paul, this permits us to know the love of Christ "which passeth knowledge" (Eph. 3:18). Then, said Paul, in an intriguing but not fully amplified verse--we can truly "comprehend" "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of things! (v. 18) Suffice it to say that only with such spirituality can we truly size things up in that grand manner.

These great rewards of added knowledge as well as of added love which come to us when we live righteously, being settled, established, grounded, and rooted in the Savior, are experiences those who "for a while believe" never do have. Their brief tour in the Kingdom may make them feel qualified to comment to those who know even less--but the fact is they were tourists, not natives who really know the countryside.

Let me share with you in closing the gallantry of three young men who have surmounted, or are surmounting, the trials of the innocent and, Job-like, do so--without charging God foolishly (Job 1:22). We must not only endure but endure well--the latter includes avoiding charging God foolishly--no small task while we are in the furnace of affliction.

One wrote this to me:

I have not had leukemia diagnosed for fifteen months, although few people even know about it. My goal has been to lead as normal a life as is possible; hence, the subject rarely gets mentioned because most people I have encountered, doctors included, tend to treat it as a tragedy rather than as an incentive to get one's affairs in order promptly.

My parents took the news quite hard, perhaps because my brother died unexpectedly eleven years ago of undiagnosed causes. Most are pessimistic; however, I have failed to see how pessimism would help me make the best use of my time which is of an unknown length, not only for me, but for everyone.

Against medical and parental advice, I have since been married and am finishing my first year at BYU and we're expecting a baby in July. I feel great and am truly enjoying the blessings that are coming from being married in the temple, studying the scriptures, working hard in school, and living each day rather than simply waiting to die as some would recommend.

Fifteen months ago, my then fiancée and I thought that if I could live long enough just for us to be sealed, that was all we would ask for. Therefore, we consider everything since then a great gift from the Lord. We still dream and plan for a long family life together, and it gives to us a certain comfort to know that our situation is in the Lord's hands and is not bound by man's limitations.

When the Lord says to us to endure to the end, he adds, "endure well, gracefully." That's what this young man is doing. He is enduring well, not

just surviving. And he has refused to forget the blessings he now has because there are other blessings he would like to have in addition to those. So often, brothers and sisters, what we do not have undercuts the blessings that we do have because we don't reflect enough on them.

Colleen and I received a birth announcement when their baby came in July and a little picture the other day of the three of them. He doesn't want his name known and doesn't want any special attention. And I've honored that request.

He is somebody from your generation who knows what the scriptures mean. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing could happen unto you" (I Pet. 4:12) and about being willing to submit to all the things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him (Mosiah 3:19).

On occasion, when we pray to be wrenched free of a certain challenge, we may unwittingly be praying to be wrenched free from the very challenge we most need in terms of the soul-stretching that has to occur. And if we are settled in our faith and established and rooted and grounded, then we can handle it. If, however, we're confused about the purpose of life, and if we do not trust God, then, of course, we will be swept away.

The second case began for me in April of 1979 as I went down to the convocation at BYU's Law School. I had learned ahead of time that one young man in his last year of law school there had been diagnosed as having cancer. He had been on his mission to Chile. His name is David Silvester. The law school and the faculty and students had fasted for David. And when he had come across the stage, and I was shaking hands and helping pass out diplomas, he got a standing ovation. That was my first experience with David Silvester but, happily, not my last. He looked good to me then physically, though we knew what he had by way of a health problem.

As he would come up to the University of Utah hospital, in and out for different treatments, I would try to see him here and stay in touch with him in Idaho Falls, which is his home. A remarkable young man. I remember going up one time when, because of the treatments, much of his hair had come out and he would kid about it. I could not find an ounce of self-pity in him. And then things got steadily worse for David. I went up once to see him and he was so thin and emaciated that they spent an hour-and-a-half trying to get a vein to use to feed him intravenously, he was so thin and emaciated.

To show you the class David Silvester had, on another occasion he said, "Brother Maxwell, I know you've just got a few minutes and I'd love to visit

with you and have been looking forward to your coming. But if you've got just a few minutes, could you spend them with my nurse? She's a convert to the Church and her daughter is dying of leukemia." That's David Silvester. I want to console him and was consoled by him. I went to lift him and was lifted by him.

I recall the last visit we had a few days before he died. Colleen and I went to see him in an apartment in Provo. He was very hospitable and wonderful, as usual. But I sensed for the first time that he was anxious to get on with it. His parents (marvelous people also) later told me that they had needed that extra time to get ready for his going. David died several months ago. He understood; he did not charge God foolishly.

The third case started over two-and-a-half years ago. One of the students I had known when I was bishop of a student ward here, who is now a physician in Idaho Falls, wrote me and asked me to see a patient in the University of Utah Hospital who had leukemia.

I went up and found a young man of 35, a bishop--Richard Sharp. His wife, Marylinda, was with him. From Idaho Falls, these good people were full of faith, but understandably anxious. I learned to my dismay as I visited with them that they had lost a daughter to leukemia just two or three years earlier. You'd think that once in a family would be enough. As I searched my heart prior to giving Richard a blessing and saw their faith, my sense of total dependency on the Lord increased. As I placed my hands upon Richard's head, it was made known to me that he was, in the words of the scriptures, "appointed unto death." Therefore, the basis of my blessing shifted in that I pled with the Lord for a remission of sufficient duration that Richard would be able to get some special and specific things done as a father, a husband, and a bishop. Because of their faith, the Lord heard those prayers and there ensued a remission, running over a number of months. Richard would often be in and out of the University Hospital and the hospital in Idaho Falls.

Christmas season of 1978, he was rushed to the emergency room of the Idaho Falls Hospital. They had to do a tracheotomy to keep him breathing. And the doctor said to Marylinda she'd better say goodbye. Being full of faith, Marylinda said, "He's not going. Elder Maxwell gave him a blessing and this is too soon." And it was. And he rallied.

The same thing happened again later with the same faithful display. Among the many things Richard got done were these: Each of his children received a recorded father's blessing; his personal journal and history were brought up-to-date; he challenged three young men in his ward, over age, who hadn't planned to go

on missions to go--and they went; he challenged several of the couples of the ward who had never been sealed in the temple to go--and some did; he helped with the Little League program in Idaho Falls and when he was so sick that he could do nothing but go sit and watch, that was his statement of his love and concern for those young men. The sports columnist of the Idaho Falls paper did a whole column on Richard Sharp.

When he became too ill to counsel and interview the members of his ward at the bishop's office, they would come to his home for blessings and counsel. I don't know when I've seen two people pack more into a few months than Richard and Marylinda Sharp did. I came to see him for the last time in late June of 1979 at the University Hospital where they were trying the desperation drugs. By now Richard was very, very weak. And then he asked me a question. He said, "Can I baptize my boy a few weeks before he's eight?" And I asked, "When will he be eight?" And he said, "July 23, and I don't think I'll be here. And I'm the boy's father and I'm his bishop. I'd like to do that before I go." It was a hard question because the answer had to be "no." We've never made an exception, to my knowledge, to that policy. When told, that marvelous Marylinda said, "Well, then, Richard, you'll just have to live until July 23." Which, with the blessings of God, he did.

He went home to die. I called around July 24 and talked to Marylinda and asked, "Has Richard baptized your boy?" And she said, "No, he hasn't." And I inquired why. She said, "He really wants to, Brother Maxwell, but you'll understand this--he realizes doing that will probably be the last thing he does. And so, as much as he wishes to perform the ordinance, at the same time, he's reluctant." I suggested that she encourage him to do it, and she did. It took all the strength he had to perform the baptism. Richard had to rest for about two hours to gather enough strength to bless and confirm his son--after which, Richard proceeded to go into a coma and was dead a few hours later.

I flew to Idaho Falls to speak at the funeral at Marylinda's request. It was the kind of funeral where, if you're speaking, you better talk to the chandeliers some of the time, because if you look at the front row, you're dissolved. Marylinda sat there with a little one over her shoulder and the other children at her side--full of faith. Perplexed and anxious? Of course! What will she do without him? But she understood, and so had Richard, about those very hard doctrines about which I've been speaking tonight. She is a special lady!

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing had happened unto you." In my humble judgment,

if we are settled in our faith, though we will not be able to explain everything, we can cope with everything because God's grace will be sufficient for us!

Now, my brothers and sisters, God will see us through. His grace is sufficient for us. But we will undergo temptation and trial such as are common to man. And we should not be surprised. If we become settled in our faith and move towards becoming true believers in Christ, He will magnify us and help us. But some things will even come to us because we are righteous. God chastens those whom He loves, because such individuals are more willing to be shaped and molded.

As we sang in the song as the service began, one of the things we'll all notice, is that our life passes as a dream, the fugitive moment refuses to stay, the moments are gone. Hopefully we can one day say, "I have fought my way through; I have finished the work thou didst give me to do." This is the nature of this mortal experience. And those of us who are blessed with this knowledge and this witness, as you and I are, need to lift those souls who try to live without God in the world, and for whom whose mortal existence is no more than a night in a second-class motel. This can be a first-class experience only if we put first things first.

God bless you and sustain you! I'm grateful simply to know you. One of the things some of us who are older than you can do is to get out of your way. By having said that, you won't mind if we whisper to you occasionally, because you're not so settled yet that you don't need our encouragement, love, and counsel. But I stand in deep respect of your generation, collectively. I do not know what your personal rendezvous' are to be. I know they are there and that these will carry you into experiences which you can only imagine now. If you triumph and come safely home, in the words and the lyrics of that hymn, God will say, "Enter into my rest and sit down upon my throne."

He loves each of you with a perfect love. His love for you is unconditional and perfect. You can count on His love. Stay close to him. "Drink in" the scriptures. Come to the classes here. Do what you need to do to nourish your scholarship in the scriptures and you will be seen safely through.

If, on occasion, you notice the strange encapsulation we call time, you'll understand it's not our natural dimension. The birds are at home in the air. They don't think about how to fly. Fish are at home in the water. They don't think about how to swim. It's natural. But you and I are cocooned, as it were, in this dimension called time. And it's not our natural dimension. So it is, we're always wishing we could hasten the passage of time or to hold back the dawn.

And we can't do either. We're uncomfortable with time because we belong to eternity. If we were comfortable with time, we wouldn't have clocks on the wall and have calendars and wristwatches. It is not our natural dimension, so time will whisper to you, in the words of another hymn, that you're a stranger here.

May God bring you safely home--and before you return, bless you to maximize your mortal influence among your fellowmen, is my prayer for you, and for me, this night--in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.