

Gordon B. Hinckley. May we reach out and rescue those who have fallen by the wayside, that not one precious soul will be lost. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. In Conference Report, Apr. 1937, 46.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 107:99.
3. *Stand Ye in Holy Places* (1974), 255.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 18:10, 13.
5. Judges 7:12.
6. Judges 7:2.
7. Judges 7:3.
8. Judges 7:4.
9. Judges 7:7.
10. Judges 7:15.
11. Judges 7:17–18.
12. Judges 7:18, 21; see also Judges 6–7.
13. *Priesthood Home Teaching Handbook*, rev. ed. (1967), ii–iii.
14. Mosiah 2:17.
15. “I Am a Child of God,” *Hymns*, no. 301.
16. “A Creed,” in James Dalton, ed., *Masterspieces of Religious Verse* (1948), 464.

President Monson

We remind you that the Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 tomorrow morning. The Sunday morning session will immediately follow.

Daylight saving time begins tomorrow at 2:00 A.M. We encourage you to move your clocks ahead one hour before you retire this evening. Remind your wife to remind you.

As you leave this priesthood meeting tonight, we ask you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in driving.

We express our gratitude to the Melchizedek Priesthood choir for the beautiful music they have provided this evening. Following the remarks of President Gordon B. Hinckley, the Lord’s prophet, this session will conclude with the choir singing “More Holiness Give Me.” The benediction will then be offered by Elder Spencer J. Condie of the Seventy.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Meeting in the bonds of brotherhood

There is not another meeting in all the world comparable to this meeting. Wherever we may be, whatever the language we speak, we are all men who have had hands laid upon our heads to receive the priesthood of God. Whether we be boys who have received the lesser or Aaronic Priesthood, or men who have received the higher or Melchizedek Priesthood, we each have had bestowed upon us something wonderful and magnificent, something of the very essence of godhood.

I repeat, there is no gathering in all the world like this. We meet together in the bonds of brotherhood, in a vast assemblage of men who have been endowed with a certain power or authority, honored

with the privilege of speaking and acting in the name of the Almighty. The Lord God of heaven has seen fit to confer upon us something of that which is uniquely His. I sometimes wonder if we are worthy of it. I wonder if we really appreciate it. I wonder about the infinity of this power and authority. It is concerned with life and death, with family and Church, with the great and transcendent nature of God Himself and His eternal work.

Brethren, I greet you as members of quorums of the holy priesthood. I greet you as servants of the living God, who has laid upon each of us a responsibility from which we must not and cannot shrink.

In harmony with that greeting, I have chosen to speak on various aspects of one word. That word is *loyalty*.

Loyalty to your best self

I think of loyalty in terms of being true to ourselves. I think of it in terms of being absolutely faithful to our chosen companions. I think of it in terms of being absolutely loyal to the Church and its many facets of activity. I think of it in terms of being unequivocally true to the God of heaven, our Eternal Father, and His Beloved Son, our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We must be true to the very best that is in us. We are sons of God, honored to hold His divine authority. But we live in a world of evil. There is a constant power pulling us down, inviting us to partake of those things which are totally inconsistent with the divine priesthood which we hold. It is interesting to observe how the father of lies, that wily son of the morning who was cast out of heaven, always has the means and capacity to entice, to invite, to gather to his ways those who are not strong and alert. Very recently a certain moving picture was acclaimed the best of the year. I have not seen it, nor do I anticipate doing so. But I am told that it is laden with sex, that the use of profanity runs throughout.

Pornography is one of the hallmarks of our time. Its producers grow rich on the gullibility of those who like to watch it. In the opening lines of the revelation which we call the Word of Wisdom, the Lord declares, "In consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days, I have warned you, and forewarn you, by giving unto you this word of wisdom by revelation" (D&C 89:4).

He then goes on to talk about the food we put into our mouths. The same language might be applied with reference to that which we take into our minds when we indulge in pornography.

Brethren, every man and boy within the sound of my voice knows what is de-

grading. You do not need a road map to foretell where indulgence will take you. Contrast that with the beauty, the peace, the wonderful feeling that comes of living near to the Lord and rising above the insidious narcotic practices that are all about us.

This applies to you, my dear boys who are in this meeting. You are particular targets for the adversary. If he can get you now, he knows he may win you for a lifetime. There has been implanted within you wondrous powers and instincts for a divine purpose. However, when these are perverted, they become destroyers rather than builders.

I am profoundly grateful for the strength of our youth. But I know also that some slip away from us. Every loss is a tragedy. The kingdom of our Lord needs you. Be worthy of it. Be loyal to your best selves. Never stoop to anything that would take from you the strength to abstain.

To you men I issue a challenge. Run from the tide of sleaze that would overcome you. Flee the evils of the world. Be loyal to your better self. Be loyal to the best that is in you. Be faithful and true to the covenants that are associated with the priesthood of God. You cannot wallow about in lasciviousness, you cannot lie, you cannot cheat, you cannot take advantage of others in unrighteousness without denying that touch of divinity with which each of us came into this life. I would pray with all of my strength, brethren, that we would rise above it and be loyal to our best selves.

Loyalty to your wife

Be loyal in your family relationships. I have witnessed much of the best and much of the worst in marriage. Every week I have the responsibility of acting on requests for cancellation of temple sealings. Divorce has become a very common phenomenon throughout the world. Even where it is not legal, men and women simply step over

the line and live together. I am grateful to be able to say that divorce is much less frequent with those married in the temple. But even among these there is far more divorce than there should be.

The bride and groom come to the house of the Lord professing their love one for another. They enter into solemn and eternal covenants with each other and with the Lord. Their relationship is sealed in an eternal compact. No one expects every marriage to work out perfectly. But one might expect that every marriage in the house of the Lord would carry with it a covenant of loyalty one to another.

I have long felt that the greatest factor in a happy marriage is an anxious concern for the comfort and well-being of one's companion. In most cases selfishness is the leading factor that causes argument, separation, divorce, and broken hearts.

Brethren, the Lord expects something better of us. He expects something better than is to be found in the world. Never forget that it was you who selected your companion. It was you who felt that there was no one else in all the world quite like her. It was you who wished to have her forever. But in too many cases the image of the temple experience fades. A lustful desire may be the cause. Faultfinding replaces praise. When we look for the worst in anyone, we will find it. But if we will concentrate on the best, that element will grow until it sparkles.

I am not without personal experience. Sister Hinckley and I will soon have been married for 66 years. I do not know how she has put up with me all this long time. Now we have grown old. But how grateful I am for her. How anxious I am to see that she is comfortable. How much I desire the very best for her. What a wonderful companion she has been. What a marvelous wife and what a tremendous mother and grandmother and great-grandmother.

You, of course, have heard of the man who lived to a ripe old age and was asked

by reporters to what he attributed his longevity. He replied that when he and his wife were married they determined that if they argued, one would leave the house and go outside. He said, "Gentlemen, I attribute my longevity to the fact that I have breathed so much fresh air during all these many years."

Brethren, be loyal to your companion. May your marriage be blessed with an uncompromising loyalty one to another. Find your happiness with one another. Give your companion the opportunity to grow in her own interests, to develop her own talents, to fly in her own way, and to experience her own sense of accomplishment.

Loyalty to the Church

Now may I say a word concerning loyalty to the Church.

We see much indifference. There are those who say, "The Church won't dictate to me how to think about this, that, or the other, or how to live my life."

No, I reply, the Church will not dictate to any man how he should think or what he should do. The Church will point out the way and invite every member to live the gospel and enjoy the blessings that come of such living. The Church will not dictate to any man, but it will counsel, it will persuade, it will urge, and it will expect loyalty from those who profess membership therein.

When I was a university student, I said to my father on one occasion that I felt the General Authorities had overstepped their prerogatives when they advocated a certain thing. He was a very wise and good man. He said, "The President of the Church has instructed us, and I sustain him as prophet, seer, and revelator and intend to follow his counsel."

I have now served in the general councils of this Church for 45 years. I have served as an Assistant to the Twelve, as a member of the Twelve, as a counselor in

the First Presidency, and now for eight years as President. I want to give you my testimony that although I have sat in literally thousands of meetings where Church policies and programs have been discussed, I have never been in one where the guidance of the Lord was not sought nor where there was any desire on the part of anyone present to advocate or do anything which would be injurious or coercive to anyone.

The book of Revelation declares:

“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

“So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth” (Revelation 3:15–16).

I make you a promise, my dear brethren, that while I am serving in my present responsibility I will never consent to nor advocate any policy, any program, any doctrine that will be otherwise than beneficial to the membership of this, the Lord’s Church.

This is His work. He established it. He has revealed its doctrine. He has outlined its practices. He created its government. It is His work and His kingdom, and He has said, “They who are not for me are against me” (2 Nephi 10:16).

In 1933 there was a movement in the United States to overturn the law which prohibited commerce in alcoholic beverages. When it came to a vote, Utah was the deciding state.

I was on a mission, working in London, England, when I read the newspaper headlines that screamed, “Utah Kills Prohibition.”

President Heber J. Grant, then President of this Church, had pleaded with our people against voting to nullify Prohibition. It broke his heart when so many members of the Church in this state disregarded his counsel.

On this occasion I am not going to talk about the good or bad of Prohibition

but rather about uncompromising loyalty to the Church.

How grateful, my brethren, I feel, how profoundly grateful for the tremendous faith of so many Latter-day Saints who, when facing a major decision on which the Church has taken a stand, align themselves with that position. And I am especially grateful to be able to say that among those who are loyal are men and women of achievement, of accomplishment, of education, of influence, of strength—highly intelligent and capable individuals.

Each of us has to face the matter—either the Church is true, or it is a fraud. There is no middle ground. It is the Church and kingdom of God, or it is nothing.

Thank you, my dear brethren—you men of great strength and great fidelity and great faith and great loyalty.

Loyalty to God

Finally, loyalty to God, our Eternal Father, and His Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Every man in this Church is entitled to the knowledge that God is our Eternal Father and His Beloved Son is our Redeemer. The Savior gave the key by which we may have such knowledge. He declared, “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (John 7:17).

Judas Iscariot has gone down in history as the great betrayer, who sold his loyalty for 30 pieces of silver (see Matthew 26:15).

How many in our time, to quote the words of Paul, “crucify . . . the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame” with profane and blasphemous language? (Hebrews 6:6).

You know of the profanity of the school grounds and the street. Avoid it. Never let it cross your lips. Show your loyalty to the God of heaven and to the

Redeemer of the world by holding Their names sacred.

Pray to your Heavenly Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and always, under all circumstances, by the very nature of your lives show your loyalty and your love.

Who's on the Lord's side? Who?
Now is the time to show.
We ask it fearlessly:
Who's on the Lord's side? Who?
[“Who's on the Lord's Side?” *Hymns*, no. 260]

May the blessings of heaven rest upon you and your families, my dear brethren. May each of us always be found to be true and faithful, men and boys of integrity and absolute loyalty, I pray in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang “More Holiness Give Me.”

Elder Spencer J. Condie offered the benediction.

SUNDAY MORNING SESSION

The fourth session of the 173rd Annual General Conference convened in the Conference Center at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 6, 2003. President Thomas S. Monson conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir. Craig Jessop directed the choir, and Clay Christiansen and Richard Elliott were the organists. The choir sang “What Was Witnessed in the Heavens?” to begin the session. President Monson then made the following remarks.

President Thomas S. Monson

My dear brothers and sisters, we welcome you to this, the fourth general session of the 173rd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. President Gordon B. Hinckley, who presides at this conference, has asked that I, Brother Monson, conduct the exercises.

We extend our greetings to those of you who are participating by radio, television, cable, the Internet, or satellite transmission.

We are grateful to the owners and operators of the facilities who are broadcasting the conference.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders and members of the Church who have assembled to worship together.

The music for this session will be by the Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Craig Jessop, with Clay Christiansen and Richard Elliott at the organ.

The choir opened this session with the hymn “What Was Witnessed in the Heavens?” and will now sing “Joseph Smith’s First Prayer.” The invocation will then be offered by Elder William R. Walker of the Seventy.

Following the invocation, the choir will sing “He Sent His Son.” President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will then address us.

The choir sang “Joseph Smith’s First Prayer.”

Elder William R. Walker offered the invocation.

The choir sang “He Sent His Son.”
