

“Yea, I would that ye would come forth and harden not your hearts any longer; for behold, now is the time and the day of your salvation; and therefore, if ye will repent and harden not your hearts, immediately shall the great plan of redemption be brought about unto you.

“For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors” (Alma 34:30–32).

Let us be no more tossed to and fro by every worldly wind and doctrine of man (see Ephesians 4:14). We declare to the world that the heavens are open and the truth of God’s eternal plan has again been made known to mankind. We live in the

dispensation of the fulness of times. We live in a day when we have the witness through the scriptures of the great plan the Lord has given to His children from the beginning of time down to this present and last dispensation. The evidence is well documented; we are not left alone to wander through mortality without knowing of the master plan which the Lord has designed for His children. He has bound Himself by solemn covenant to give us the blessings of heaven according to our obedience to His law. Oh, remember, remember that these things are true, for the Lord God has revealed these eternal truths unto us. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Bishop Richard C. Edgley

### Three towels: a lesson in honesty

In front of this vast worldwide audience and with some reservation, I make a personal confession. I do this as an introduction to a subject that has weighed heavily on my mind for some time. In 1955, after my freshman year of college, I spent the summer working at the newly opened Jackson Lake Lodge, located in Moran, Wyoming. My mode of transportation was a 14-year-old 1941 Hudson automobile that should have received its burial 10 years earlier. Among the car’s other identifying traits, the floorboards had rusted so badly that, if not for a piece of plywood, I could have literally dragged my feet on the highway. The positive is that unlike most 14-year-old cars in this time period, it used no oil—lots of water in the radiator, but no oil. I could never figure out where the water went and why the oil continually got thinner and thinner and clearer and clearer.

In preparation for the 185-mile drive home at the end of the summer, I took the car to the only mechanic in Moran. After

a quick analysis, the mechanic explained that the engine block was cracked and was leaking water into the oil. That explained the water and oil mystery. I wondered if I could get the water to leak into the gas tank; I would get better gasoline mileage.

Now the confession: after the miracle of arriving home, my father came out and happily greeted me. After a hug and a few pleasantries, he looked into the backseat of the car and saw three Jackson Lake Lodge towels—the kind you cannot buy. With a disappointed look, he merely said, “I expected more of you.” I hadn’t thought that what I had done was all that wrong. To me these towels were but a symbol of a full summer’s work at a luxury hotel, a rite of passage. Nevertheless, by taking them I felt I had lost the trust and confidence of my father, and I was devastated.

The following weekend I adjusted the plywood floorboard in my car, filled the radiator with water, and began the 370-mile round trip back to Jackson Lake Lodge to return three towels. My father never asked why I was returning to the lodge, and I never explained. It just didn’t

need to be said. This was an expensive and painful lesson on honesty that has stayed with me throughout my life.

### **Dishonesty in the world today**

Sadly, some of the greatest missing values in today's world are honesty and integrity. In the past few years an increasing number of business leaders have been exposed for dishonesty and other forms of bad behavior. As a result, tens of thousands of loyal, long-term employees have lost their livelihoods and pensions. For some this has resulted in loss of homes, change of education and other life plans. We read and hear of widespread cheating in our schools, with more concern about receiving a grade or degree than learning and preparation. We hear of students who have cheated their way through medical school and are now performing complicated procedures on their patients. The elderly and others are victims of scam artists, often resulting in the loss of homes or life savings. Always this dishonesty and lack of integrity are based on greed, arrogance, and disrespect.

In Proverbs we read, "Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight" (Proverbs 12:22).

Mormon, speaking of the converted Lamanites who were known as the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi, wrote: "And they were among the people of Nephi, and also numbered among the people who were of the church of God. And they were also distinguished for their zeal towards God, and also towards men; *for they were perfectly honest and upright in all things; and they were firm in the faith of Christ, even unto the end*" (Alma 27:27; italics added).

### **Integrity and a 25-cent newspaper**

Some 30 years ago, while working in the corporate world, some business associates and I were passing through O'Hare Airport in Chicago, Illinois. One of these

men had just sold his company for tens of millions of dollars—in other words, he was not poor.

As we were passing a newspaper vending machine, this individual put a quarter in the machine, opened the door to the stack of papers inside the machine, and began dispensing unpaid-for newspapers to each of us. When he handed me a newspaper, I put a quarter in the machine and, trying not to offend but to make a point, jokingly said, "Jim, for 25 cents I can maintain my integrity. A dollar, questionable, but 25 cents—no, not for 25 cents." You see, I remembered well the experience of three towels and a broken-down 1941 Hudson. A few minutes later we passed the same newspaper vending machine. I noticed that Jim had broken away from our group and was stuffing quarters in the vending machine. I tell you this incident not to portray myself as an unusual example of honesty, but only to emphasize the lessons of three towels and a 25-cent newspaper.

There will never be honesty in the business world, in the schools, in the home, or anywhere else until there is honesty in the heart.

Important and lasting lessons are often taught through simple examples—perhaps as simple as three towels or a 25-cent newspaper. I wonder how the world would be if simple lessons of honesty were taught in the home at an early age, simple lessons such as "Love your neighbor as yourself" (see Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31) and "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you" (see Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31). I wonder where thousands of displaced employees would be today with their lost pensions if some businesspeople in high places had early experiences of three towels or a 25-cent newspaper.

### **Honesty a fundamental value**

Honesty is the basis of a true Christian life. For Latter-day Saints, honesty is an

important requirement for entering the Lord's holy temple. Honesty is embedded in the covenants that we make in the temple. Each Sunday as we partake of the holy emblems of the Savior's flesh and blood, we again renew our basic and sacred covenants—which encompass honesty. As Latter-day Saints we have a sacred obligation to not only teach the principles of honesty but also to live them, perhaps with examples as simple as three towels or a 25-cent newspaper. Honesty should be among the most fundamental values that govern our everyday living.

When we are true to the sacred principles of honesty and integrity, we are true to our faith, and we are true to ourselves.

My prayer is that as Latter-day Saints we will be known as among the most honest people in the world. And it might be said of us, as it was of the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi, that we are “perfectly honest and upright in all things; and . . . firm in the faith of Christ, even unto the end” (Alma 27:27). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Margaret S. Lifferth

### **Children need the help of each of us**

While I have been serving in this calling, I have made some new friends. Eliza can sing many Primary songs. Lucas is learning the Articles of Faith in Spanish. Caitlyn is shy but curious. I sat by Martha in Primary, and she wrapped her arm through mine. These children reflect the light of the gospel in their faces.

Who are the children in your home or in your neighborhood? Look at them. Think of them. The Savior teaches us that to enter the kingdom of God, we must become as a child, “submissive, meek, humble, patient, [and] full of love” (Mosiah 3:19).

But however full of faith children come to us, they face the challenges of a fallen world. What does it take to help these children keep the light of faith in their eyes? We know that nothing can replace a righteous family in the life of a child. But in today's world, children will need not only a devoted mother and father, but they will need each of us to protect, teach, and love them.

### **Protecting children**

Brothers and sisters, protecting children means we provide an environment that invites the Spirit into their lives and validates it in their hearts. That automatically eliminates any form of indifference, neglect, abuse, violence, or exploitation.

And while conditions of depravity are more serious, we also protect children from other detrimental conditions, such as expectations that are too high or too low, overindulgence, overscheduling, and self-centeredness. Either extreme dulls a child's ability to identify, trust, and be guided by the Holy Ghost.

### **Teaching children**

Children are open to gospel truths more than at any other time, and protected childhood is literally a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to teach and strengthen children to choose the right.

It's easy to know what to teach. The scriptures and our prophets are clear about what to teach our children. Nephi summarizes it in this verse, “And we talk