

## Elder Henry B. Eyring

### The danger of procrastination

There is a danger in the word *someday* when what it means is “not this day.” “Someday I will repent.” “Someday I will forgive him.” “Someday I will speak to my friend about the Church.” “Someday I will start to pay tithing.” “Someday I will return to the temple.” “Someday . . .”

The scriptures make the danger of delay clear. It is that we may discover that we have run out of time. The God who gives us each day as a treasure will require an accounting. We will weep, and He will weep, if we have intended to repent and to serve Him in tomorrows which never came or have dreamt of yesterdays where the opportunity to act was past. This day is a precious gift of God. The thought “Someday I will” can be a thief of the opportunities of time and the blessings of eternity.

There is solemn warning and counsel in the words recorded in the Book of Mormon:

“And now, as I said unto you before, as ye have had so many witnesses, therefore, I beseech of you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end; for after this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity, behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed.

“Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis, that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world.”<sup>1</sup>

Then Amulek warns that procrastinating your repentance and service can cause the Spirit of the Lord to withdraw from you.

But with the warning he gives this hope: “And this I know, because the Lord

hath said he dwelleth not in unholy temples, but in the hearts of the righteous doth he dwell; yea, and he has also said that the righteous shall sit down in his kingdom, to go no more out; but their garments should be made white through the blood of the Lamb.”<sup>2</sup>

### Serving the Lord without delay

The scriptures are filled with examples of wise servants of God who treasured the day they were in and chose to do what they could to bring cleansing. Joshua was one: “Choose you this day whom ye will serve . . .,” he said, “but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”<sup>3</sup>

Serving Him invites the Holy Ghost to be with us. And the Holy Ghost is a cleanser of sin.

Even the Savior, who was without sin, set an example of the need not to procrastinate. He said:

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”<sup>4</sup>

As the risen Savior, He is this day and forever the Light of the World. It is He who invites us to come unto Him and serve Him, without delay. His encouragement to you and to me is this: “I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.”<sup>5</sup>

That is as true of a day as it is of a life. A morning prayer and an early search in the scriptures to know what we should do for the Lord can set the course of a day. We can know which task, of all those we might choose, matters most to God and therefore to us. I have learned such a prayer is always answered if we ask and ponder with childlike submission, ready to act without delay to perform even the most humble service.

### The test of faithful obedience

On many days, doing what matters most will not be easy. It is not supposed to be. God's purpose in creation was to let us prove ourselves. The plan was explained to us in the spirit world before we were born. We were valiant enough there to qualify for the opportunity to choose against temptation here to prepare for eternal life, the greatest of all the gifts of God. We rejoiced to know the test would be one of faithful obedience even when it would not be easy: "And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them."<sup>6</sup>

Hard as we knew the test would be, we felt joy because we had confidence that we could pass it. Our confidence came from knowing that Jesus Christ would come into the world as our Savior. He would overcome death. He would make it possible for us to be cleansed of our sins by qualifying for the effects of His Atonement.

We also knew some reassuring facts about what it would take to receive the purifying which we would need. Everything that cleansing would require—baptism by authority, receiving the Holy Ghost under the hands of authorized priesthood bearers, remembering Him and therefore having His Spirit to be with us, and then keeping His commandments—all would be possible for the humblest of us. It would not take superior intellect, nor would it take wealth, nor long life. And we knew that the Savior would draw us to Him and would have the power to help us when the test would be hard and the temptation to procrastinate great. Alma, the great prophet, described how Christ gained that ability:

"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."<sup>7</sup>

All of us will need His help to avoid the tragedy of procrastinating what we must do here and now to have eternal life. For most of us the temptation to delay will come from one or both of two feelings. They are polar opposites: one is to be complacent about what we have already done, and the other is to feel overwhelmed by the need to do more.

### The danger of complacency

Complacency is a danger for us all. It can come to naive youth who feel that there will be plenty of time in the future for spiritual things. They might think that they have already done enough, considering the brief time they have lived. I know from experience how the Lord can help such a youth to see that he or she is in the midst of spiritual things now. He can help you see that classmates are watching you. He can help you see that their eternal future is shaped by what they observe you do or not do. Your simple thanks for their influence for good on you can lift them more than you imagine. When you ask God, He can and will reveal to you the opportunities to lift others for Him, which He has placed around you from your infancy.

Complacency can affect even the seasoned adult. The better and the longer you serve, the more likely that the tempter can place this lie in your mind: "You have earned a rest." You may have been the Primary president in your little branch twice. Or you may have worked long and hard on your mission and sacrificed so much to serve. Or perhaps you were the pioneer in the Church where you live. The thought may come: "Why not leave the service to

the new people. I have done my part.” The temptation will be to believe that you will return to serve again, someday.

The Lord can help you see the danger in taking a rest because you feel you have done enough. He helped me by letting me have a conversation with one of His aged servants. He was feeble, his body weakened by decades of faithful labor and by illness. His doctors no longer allowed him to leave his home. At his request, I reported a trip I had taken in the Lord’s service, across several nations, in dozens of meetings, and in many private interviews, helping individuals and families. I told him of the gratitude people expressed to me for him and his many years of service. He asked me if I had another assignment soon. I told him about another long trip soon to come. He surprised me, and he gave me an inoculation against complacency which I hope will last forever, when he grabbed my arm and said, “Oh, please, take me with you.”

### **Praying to know what we can do**

It is hard to know when we have done enough for the Atonement to change our natures and so qualify us for eternal life. And we don’t know how many days we will have to give the service necessary for that mighty change to come. But we know that we will have days enough if only we don’t waste them. Here is the good news:

“And the days of the children of men were prolonged, according to the will of God, that they might repent while in the flesh; wherefore, their state became a state of probation, and their time was lengthened, according to the commandments which the Lord God gave unto the children of men.”<sup>8</sup>

That assurance from the Master can help those of us feeling overwhelmed by our circumstances. In the hardest trials, as long as you have the power to pray, you can ask a loving God: “Please let me serve, this day. It doesn’t matter to me how few

things I may be able to do. Just let me know what I *can* do. I will obey this day. I know that I can, with Thy help.”

The quiet invitation to you may be to do so simple a thing as to forgive someone who has offended you. You can do that from a hospital bed. It may be to go to help someone who is hungry. You may feel overwhelmed by your own poverty and the labors of the day. But if you decide not to wait until you have more strength and more money, and if you pray for the Holy Spirit as you go, you will when you arrive know what to do and how to help someone even poorer than you are. You may find when you get there that they were praying and expecting that someone like you would come, in the name of the Lord.

### **Blessings of choosing to serve this day**

For those who are discouraged by their circumstances and are therefore tempted to feel they cannot serve the Lord this day, I make you two promises. Hard as things seem today, they will be better in the next day if you choose to serve the Lord this day with your whole heart. Your circumstances may not be improved in all the ways which you desire. But you will have been given new strength to carry your burdens and new confidence that when your burdens become too heavy, the Lord, whom you have served, will carry what you cannot. He knows how. He prepared long ago. He suffered your infirmities and your sorrows when He was in the flesh so that He would know how to succor you.

The other promise I make to you is that by choosing to serve Him this day, you will feel His love and grow to love Him more. You may remember the scripture:

“I say unto you, I would that ye should remember to retain the name written always in your hearts, . . . that ye hear and know the voice by which ye shall be called, and also, the name by which he shall call you.

“For how knoweth a man the master whom he has not served, and who is a stranger unto him, and is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart?”<sup>9</sup>

By serving Him this day, you will come to know Him better. You will feel His love and appreciation. You would not want to delay receiving that blessing. And feeling His love will draw you back to His service, wiping away both complacency and discouragement.

As you serve Him, you will come to know better the voice by which you shall be called. When you go to sleep at the end of a day, the words may come back in memory: “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things.”<sup>10</sup> I pray for that benediction on this day, on every day, and on our lives.

I know that Heavenly Father lives and answers our prayers. I know that Jesus is the living Christ, the Savior of the world, and that we can choose to feel joy and peace in His service this day. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### NOTES

1. Alma 34:33–34.
2. Alma 34:36.
3. Joshua 24:15.
4. John 9:4–5.
5. Proverbs 8:17.
6. Abraham 3:25.
7. Alma 7:11–12.
8. 2 Nephi 2:21.
9. Mosiah 5:12–13.
10. Matthew 25:21; see also v. 23.

## Elder Gary J. Coleman

### “Are we Christians?”

Christianity celebrates the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God the Eternal Father. Christian churches with great variations of doctrine dot the land the world over. When 14-year-old Cortnee, a daughter of a mission president, entered a new high school as a freshman, she was asked by classmates if she was a Christian. They scoffed at her response that she was a Mormon, a common reference to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Upon arriving home, she asked her mother, “Mom, are we Christians?”

Growing up in my family, we lived as devout members of another Christian faith. I was baptized a member of that church shortly after my birth. Our family went to church each week. For many years my brothers and I assisted the pastors who conducted our Sunday services. I was taught the importance of family prayer as our family prayed together each day. I thought that someday I would enter the

full-time ministry in my church. There was no question in our minds that we could define ourselves as devout Christians.

When I was a university student, however, I became acquainted with the members and teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a Christian faith centered on the Savior. I began to learn about the doctrine of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in these latter days. I learned truths that I had not known before that changed my life and how I viewed the gospel. After much studying, prayer, and faith, I chose to embrace beautiful restored truths found only in this Church.

### The nature of the Godhead

The first restored truth that I learned was the nature of the Godhead. The true Christian doctrine that the Godhead consists of three separate beings was known in biblical times. God bore witness of Jesus, His Only Begotten Son, on several occasions. He spoke at Jesus’s baptism: “This is