

“And as I partook of the fruit thereof it filled my soul with exceedingly great joy.”

Dear brethren and sisters, stay strong and make good choices that will allow you to eat the fruit of the tree of life. If, for any reason, you have erred or left the path, our hand is extended and we say to you, “Come. There is hope. We love you, and we want to help you be happy.”

Heavenly Father loves us so much that He has given His only Son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ loves us so much that He gave His life in atonement for our sins!

What are we willing to give to be clean and receive that joy?

Of these truths I bear my testimony in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder Mervyn B. Arnold

### “What have you done with my name?”

When President George Albert Smith was young, his deceased grandfather George A. Smith appeared to him in a dream and asked, “I would like to know what you have done with my name.” President Smith responded, “I have never done anything with your name of which you need be ashamed.”<sup>1</sup>

Each week as we partake of the sacrament, we covenant and promise that we are willing to take upon us the name of Christ, always remember Him, and keep His commandments. If we are willing to do so, we are promised that most wonderful blessing—that His Spirit will always be with us.<sup>2</sup>

Just as President George Albert Smith had to account to his grandfather for what he had done with his name, someday each one of us will have to account to our Savior, Jesus Christ, for what we have done with His name.

### The legacy of a good name

The importance of having a good name is spoken of in Proverbs, where we read: “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold”<sup>3</sup> and “The [name] of the just is blessed.”<sup>4</sup>

As I pondered these scriptures and the importance of having a good name, a flood

of memories came into my mind about the good name and legacy my parents left my four brothers, my two sisters, and me. My parents did not have the riches of the world, nor did they have silver or gold. Nine of us lived in a two-bedroom, one-bath home with an enclosed back porch, where my sisters slept. When my parents passed away, my brothers and sisters and I gathered to divide their earthly possessions, which were few in number. My mother left a few dresses, some used furniture, and a few other personal items. My father left some carpenter tools, some old hunting rifles, and little else. The only things of any monetary value were a modest home and a small savings account.

Together we wept openly, giving thanks, knowing they had left us something much more precious than silver or gold. They had given us their love and their time. They had often borne testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel, which we can now read in their precious journals. Not so much by words but more by their example, they had taught us to work hard, to be honest, and to pay a full tithing. They also engendered a desire to further our education, to serve a mission, and most important, to find an eternal companion, be married in the temple, and endure to the end. Truly they left us the legacy of a good name, for which we shall ever be grateful.

When the beloved prophet Helaman and his wife were blessed with two sons, they named them Lehi and Nephi. Helaman told his sons why they were named after two of their ancestors who had lived upon the earth almost 600 years prior to their births. He said:

“Behold, my sons, . . . I have given unto you the names of our first parents [Lehi and Nephi] . . . ; and this I have done that when you remember your names . . . ye may remember *their works*; and when ye remember *their works ye may know how that it is said, and also written, that they were good.*

“Therefore, my sons, I would that ye should do that which is good, *that it may be said of you, and also written, even as it has been said and written of them.*

“. . . *That ye may have that precious gift of eternal life.*”<sup>5</sup>

Brothers and sisters, in 600 years, how will our names be remembered?

Speaking of how we can take upon us the name of Christ, and thus protect our good name, Moroni taught:

“And again I would exhort you that ye would *come unto Christ*, and lay hold upon *every good gift*, and *touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing.* . . .

“Yea, *come unto Christ*, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness.”<sup>6</sup>

### The commandments are protective

In the inspired pamphlet *For the Strength of Youth*, we read that freedom of choice is a God-given, eternal principle that carries with it moral responsibilities for the choices made. “While [we] are free to choose for [ourselves], [we] are not free to choose the consequences of [our] actions. When [we] make a choice, [we] will receive the consequences of that choice.”<sup>7</sup>

Shortly after my sweetheart, Devonna, and I were married, she shared with me a story about how she learned in her youth this important doctrine that we are free to choose but that we are not free to choose

the consequences of our actions. With the help of my daughter Shelly, I would like to relate Sister Arnold’s experience:

“When I was 15 years old, I often felt that there were too many rules and commandments. I wasn’t sure that a normal, fun-loving teenager could enjoy life with so many restrictions. Furthermore, the many hours spent working on my father’s ranch were seriously dipping into my time with my friends.

“This particular summer, one of my jobs was to ensure that the cows grazing on the mountain pasture did not break through the fence and get into the wheat field. A cow grazing on the growing wheat can bloat, causing suffocation and death. One cow in particular was always trying to stick her head through the fence. One morning, as I was riding my horse along the fence line checking on the cattle, I found that the cow had broken through the fence and gotten into the wheat field. To my dismay, I realized that she had been eating wheat for quite some time, because she was already bloated and looked much like a balloon. I thought, ‘You stupid cow! That fence was there to protect you, yet you broke through it and you have eaten so much wheat that your life is in danger.’

“I raced back to the farmhouse to get my dad. However, when we returned, I found her lying dead on the ground. I was saddened by the loss of that cow. We had provided her with a beautiful mountain pasture to graze in and a fence to keep her away from the dangerous wheat, yet she foolishly broke through the fence and caused her own death.

“As I thought about the role of the fence, I realized that it was a protection, just as the commandments and my parents’ rules were a protection. The commandments and rules were for my own good. I realized that obedience to the commandments could save me from physical and spiritual death. That enlightenment was a pivotal point in my life.”

Sister Arnold learned that our kind, wise, and loving Heavenly Father has given us commandments not to restrict us, as the adversary would have us believe, but to bless our lives and to protect our good name and our legacy for future generations—just as they had for Lehi and Nephi. Just like the cow that received the consequences of her choice, each one of us must learn that the grass is *never* greener on the other side of the fence—nor will it ever be, for “wickedness never was happiness.”<sup>8</sup> Each one of us will receive the consequences of our choices when this life is over. The commandments are clear, they are protective—they are not restrictive—and the wonderful blessings of obedience are numberless!

### Cleansing our names

Our Heavenly Father knew that we would all make mistakes. I am so grateful for the Atonement, which allows each of us to repent, to make necessary adjustments so that once again we can be one with our Savior, and to feel the sweet peace of forgiveness.

Our Savior invites us on a daily basis to cleanse our names and return to His presence. His encouragement is full of love and tenderness. Envision with me the Savior’s embrace as I read His words: “Will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?”<sup>9</sup>

Today I would like to extend the same challenge to each one of you that my

parents, who will be forever remembered because of their good names, extended to me. Before you act, picture the Savior standing at your side and ask yourself, “Would I think it, would I say it, or would I do it knowing He is there?” For surely He is there. Our beloved President Thomas S. Monson, who I testify is a prophet, often quotes the following verse of scripture when speaking of our Lord and Savior: “For I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts.”<sup>10</sup>

In that glorious day when we stand before our beloved Savior to report what we have done with His name, may we be able to declare: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”<sup>11</sup> “I have honored Thy name.” I testify Jesus is the Christ. He did die that we might live. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### NOTES

1. *Presidents of the Church Student Manual* (Church Educational System manual, 2003), 134.
2. See Doctrine and Covenants 20:77.
3. Proverbs 22:1.
4. Proverbs 10:7.
5. Helaman 5:6–8; italics added.
6. Moroni 10:30, 32; italics added.
7. *For the Strength of Youth* (booklet, 2001), 4.
8. Alma 41:10.
9. 3 Nephi 9:13.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 84:88.
11. 2 Timothy 4:7.

## Elder M. Russell Ballard

### Counterfeit lures

Brothers and sisters, the advent of the fall season here in the Rocky Mountains brings with it the glorious colors of leaves transforming from green to blazing oranges, reds, and yellows. During the fall all nature

is in a state of transition, preparing for the cold, austere beauty of winter.

Autumn is a particularly exciting time for the fly fishermen, for this is the time trout are driven by an almost insatiable hunger to feast in order to fortify their bodies against the scarcity of winter food.