

The Greatest of All of These

Katy Stake Relief Society Conference

FEBRUARY 24, 2001

READER 1: “Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great.” (Doctrine and Covenants 64: 33)

Sister Barbara Smith, former general President of the Relief Society said, “Serving together, in an organized manner, women can be a marvelous force for good. Combining their efforts to serve the Lord, sisters throughout the history of the Church have helped and will yet help, to solve many pressing problems of the Saints. Uniting in these causes, they enjoy a bond of understanding and love that is felt churchwide. . .(The Bonds of Sisterhood”, Ensign, March 1983, p. 23)

SONG: *Make Us One*

READER 2: The Prophet Joseph Smith visited with the sisters at the first meeting of the Relief Society. He read them the 13th Chapter of I Corinthians.

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

“And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

“And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”

READER 3: Many times throughout the scriptures the Lord teaches us that true charity, or the pure love of Christ is one of the most important attributes we can develop. We may have many virtues, but if we do not also have charity, the others will have a hollow ring.

READER 1: What is Charity?

SONG: *Fill the Well Within*

- READER 4:** Charity suffereth long. Long suffering means bearing with the frailties and mistakes of others, sometimes over long periods of time, without becoming full of hate and bitterness.
- READER 1:** Charity is kind. If we have been observant, we all know that anger, scorn, meanness, or revenge do not work upon men for good.
- READER 3:** Charity means that we genuinely respect all of life, especially the children of God.
- READER 2:** Charity envieth not. When we allow envy to creep into our souls, we cease to be thankful to God for our blessings, we do not see the guidance of the Lord in our lives, and we do not rejoice in the blessings of the Lord received by our brothers and sisters.
- READER 3:** Charity is not puffed up. We can only have the pure love of Christ if we have a broken heart and a contrite spirit.
- READER 1:** One who has the pure love of Christ recognizes his complete dependence upon the Savior and does not boast or take glory to himself.

SONG: *He Gave His Life for Me*

- READER 4:** Charity seeketh not her own. Elder Neal A. Maxwell said, “You and I will not go to sleep tonight without having confronted several specific, if only minor, situations in which we can choose to be either selfish or selfless. Who will get his car out of the crowded parking lot first? If one wishes to be selfless, there are people in each of our lives, by the time we go to bed tonight, whom we need to have thanked.”
- READER 1:** Charity is not easily provoked. Peter once came to the Lord and asked, “Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times; but, until seventy times seven.”
- READER 3:** We are to continually forgive others, not allowing their faults to provoke us to anger or retaliation.
- READER 2:** Charity thinketh no evil. The Lord has given great promises to those who think only virtuous thoughts. “Then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven. The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever.” (Doctrine & Covenants 121:45-46).

READER 3: If we do allow the love of Christ to fill our souls, we have the great promise: “But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possess of it at the last day, it shall be well with him”.

SONG: *Window to His Love*

READER 3: It is in giving service that we find love for one another, the pure love of Christ, or charity. We lose ourselves only to find our greatest opportunity for growth, joy and fulfillment.

READER 2: As sisters in the Gospel, we are linked together by the service we give so that individuals and families will be strengthened.

READER 4: We can look back on our days filled with child care, laundry, cooking, cleaning, office work, errands, phone calls, and school volunteering and often feel discouraged, that we haven’t contributed anything, whether it be missionary work or community service.

READER 3: We MUST NOT be fooled by the adversary!

READER 4: We must not be discouraged.

READER 2: Our simple actions, prayerfully considered each day, accumulate into something incredible!

SONG: *Miracles*

READER 4: Many mothers feel unappreciated and wonder if they are really good mothers. The positive influence of a mother may not be apparent for many years, as children often recognize the greatness of their mothers only after they mature.

READER 1: One girl (who resented her mother while she was growing up) looked forward to the time when she could leave home and go away to school. She reports the following: “As time passed and I read my mother’s letters telling me about the day-to-day things she did, I began to realize, deep within me, that she gave all her time, money, effort and thought to her children. I learned that all the meetings, shopping, housecleaning, and teaching, (actually everything), was directly or indirectly related to serving her family. She writes: “One day I came home from classes and found a letter from mom. It was just a regular, everyday letter, but I had scarcely reached the second page when a feeling suddenly started within me and spread throughout me. It was like the sun bursting from behind a cloud, spreading its sunshine. I could see my mother as

she really was—an unselfish, loving, and celestial being, the person who had done more for me than anyone else, and yet a person to whom I gave the least credit.” (“I Found My Mother”, New Era, October 1974, p. 27).

SONG: *The Lesson That I Love Best*

READER 2: David O. McKay told us, “No other success can compensate for failure in the home.” We can let a selfless attitude characterize our service in our homes. We can start in our homes to learn and then teach charity, the pure love of Christ.

READER 3: Each of our prophets of recent years has pointed to saving our homes as an urgent need. The proclamation on the family stresses the importance of our families. In the Family Proclamation we are told, “Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

READER 1: Members of our own families will *come to love the Lord as we serve them* in Christlike ways.

SONG: *If I Have But a Moment*

READER 4: We need the Lord’s help if we are to love purely. He is very willing to give us the gift of pure love. He has said, “But ye are commanded in all things to ask of God, who giveth liberally.”

READER 2: To obtain this gift of love we must also be meek, diligent in prayer, and striving to practice pure love with our family members, neighbors, and even our enemies.

READER 1: The Lord told us to “remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, for he that doeth not these things, the same is not my disciple”. (Doctrine & Covenants 52:40)

READER 3: We should remember that people can be materially poor, as well as spiritually, socially, or emotionally poor. They can be sick in mind and spirit as well as in body.

READER 2: The Lord expects us to love and serve the needy of all kinds who cross our path, as guided by his spirit.

SONG: *This Is Thy Work*

READER 2: Those who need us may refrain from asking us for help and may often keep their pain to themselves.

READER 1: If we are not prayerful and observant, we may not perceive needs and be able to meet them.

READER 3: It is in believing that the Lord's work of caring is done through us that we can truly help. When we are filled with the pure love of Christ, we have a great desire to bless the lives of those around us. Joseph Smith said, "A man filled with the love of God, is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world, anxious to bless the whole human race."

SONG: *My Hands*

READER 4: In the spirit of the instruction from Joseph Smith, when he first organized the Relief Society, women around the world go forward daily blessing the lives of those around them with service filled with charity and love.

READER 3: It is in these quiet acts that the pure love of Christ is developed and the miracle of charity occurs in our lives.

READER 1: Sister Smith said, "Sisterhood is made glorious by the often unheralded efforts of local women who serve the Lord quietly..."

READER 2: "...looking to the needs of neighbors..."

READER 3: "...tenderly serving at the time of a death..."

READER 4: "...faithfully filling assignments in Church organizations..."

READER 1: "...selflessly improving conditions in their communities..."

READER 2: "...courageously teaching and defending the truth..."

READER 3: "...steadfastly supporting the priesthood..."

READER 4: "...and with all, creating loving homes where His spirit may dwell.

READER 1: "These are the living legacies, the saintly sisters, in latter as in former days, for whom sisterhood is not an abstraction but a dynamic statement, a vital force." (The Bonds of Sisterhood, Ensign, March 1983, p. 23).

SONG: *My Sister's Hands*

READER 2: As President Gordon B. Hinckley said, “It is when we overcome our selfishness and reach out to serve and save another that we will come to know the Lord and can begin to establish Zion where we are all of one mind and one heart.”

READER 3: Elder Dallin H. Oaks said, “Serving all men, even our enemies, with Christlike love, is one of the highest ways in which we learn to become like Christ. Learning to serve with this kind of love is worth the entire effort of our lives.”

SONG: *As Sisters In Zion*