



Bring Forth the Kingdom

July 27, 2014

Thought For The Week

We Are Children of God

*As you recall our discussion last week proposed that we are dual beings,
that each soul is comprised of body and spirit,
both of which emanate from God.
A firm understanding of body and spirit will shape our thoughts and deeds for good.
So let's continue the discussion of our nature as Children of God.
We continue with "The Spirit, Physical Limitations & Personal Behaviors"*

The Spirit

Prior to our mortal existence here, each spirit son and daughter lived with God. The spirit is eternal; it existed in innocence in the pre-mortal realm and will exist after the body dies. The spirit provides the body with animation and personality. “

“The spirit of man is in the likeness of his person.” Jesus so explained, as the brother of Jared viewed the Lord’s pre-mortal body:

“Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image? Yea, even all men were created in the beginning after mine own image.”

“... This body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh.”

Development of the spirit is of eternal consequence. The attributes by which we shall be judged one day are those of the spirit. These include the virtues of integrity, compassion, love, and more. Your spirit, by being housed in your body, is able to develop and express these attributes in ways that are vital to your eternal progression.

Spirit and body, when joined together, become a living soul of supreme worth. Indeed, we are children of God—physically and spiritually.

Physical Limitations

For reasons usually unknown, some people are born with physical limitations. Specific parts of the body may be abnormal. Regulatory systems may be out of balance. And all of our bodies are subject to disease and death. Nevertheless, the gift of a physical body is priceless. Without it, we cannot attain a fullness of joy.

A perfect body is not required to achieve a divine destiny. In fact, some of the sweetest spirits are housed in frail frames. Those with physical challenges often develop great spiritual strength precisely because they are challenged. Such individuals are entitled to all the blessings that God has in store for His faithful and obedient children.

Eventually the time will come when each “spirit and body shall be reunited again in perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame.” _ Then, thanks to the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can become perfected in Him.

Personal Behavior

How should these truths influence our personal behavior? We should gratefully acknowledge God as our Creator. Otherwise, we would be like goldfish swimming in a bowl, oblivious to the goodness of their provider. “You must give thanks unto God,”

saith the Lord, “for whatsoever blessing you are blessed with.” _ And we can practice virtue and holiness before Him continually. We should regard our body as a temple of our very own. We need to control our diet and exercise for physical fitness.

Should not equal attention be paid to spiritual fitness? Just as physical strength requires exercise, so spiritual strength requires effort. Among the most important of spiritual exercises is prayer. It engenders harmony with God and a desire to keep His commandments. Prayer is a key to wisdom, virtue, and humility.

Who are we? We are children of God. Our potential is unlimited. Our inheritance is sacred. May we always honor that heritage—in every thought and deed—I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Prayer for Peace

For love of you and all creation, O God, may our lives reflect your joy, hope, love and peace. Forgive us when we have denied our role in sharing your love with others. As we recognize the gift of your grace, may we be generous in sharing that gift with others.

We uphold the people of Belize and seek for all your blessing of peace. Guide & sustain all who work for justice & peace within & beyond their nations' borders.

We praise you for the Holy Spirit, which sustains us in times of need. Guide us as we strive to be your presence of healing and peace in our world.

For your love and your grace we give thanks, O God of peace. Amen.

Stewardship Thought For The Week

There's no accounting for taste, “they say”. The poet James Russell Lowell posed, “And what is so rare as a day in June? Then, if ever, come perfect days.” However, I'll go with September every time, when the summer heat has broken and the leaves are just showing signs of turning their bright autumn colors, but except in the Far North the winter cold is still to come.

For most of the country, the fall also brings the completion of harvest. Although most of us live in suburban areas and many of us rarely even see a farm, the foods we all eat – fruits and vegetables, meats, milk, and the grain for our bread – come from farms and ranches across America and around the world. We may feel far away from farm life and think that the harvest has little to do with us, but we are connected with agriculture more closely than we realize. How the harvest goes affects the prices we pay; and if the harvest were to fail completely, there would soon be nothing available to put on our grocery shelves.

In the Old Testament world, most people were farmers, and the Israelites were to bring offerings to God from the harvest of their fields and flocks. The success of the harvest directly affected their wellbeing during the next year. At their agricultural festivals, “the measure of your own freewill offering shall be in proportion to the blessing the Lord, your God, has bestowed on you” (Dt 16:10) they were told.

So it is for us. We may not have a harvest of fruits or grains, but we do receive a return for our own labor, whether it's in a factory, an office, a classroom, or wherever. And, as stewards, we also are invited by God to return a portion to Him for His glory and our own spiritual welfare, in proportion to the blessings we have received.

As stewards, it's ultimately a choice we make. Are we going to hoard everything we get, or are we going to give back to God a portion of what He gives us? When we give back to God, will we return just what's left over after everything else is paid, or will our gifts have a higher priority? The Israelites brought the “first fruits of the various products” (Ex 26:2) they raised, the first fruits, rather than the leftovers. Is that the choice I will make? Is that the choice you will make?