

**FROM THE
PASTOR'S DESK**

Rob Rolfe • 619 S. State, Lamoni, IA 50140 • 515-784-6030

The Little Red Hen

Most of us have heard the children's story about the little red hen. This was the hard-working but frustrated hen that asked everyone in the farm yard to help with her project. All were too busy to help until it came time to enjoy the eating part. In the version of the story that I remember, the little red hen ate it all herself.

Perhaps the establishment of Zion is going to be like the story of this "hen." Many people are too busy to help? Others offer excuses for not helping. Some expect God to do everything, which means of course they don't have to do anything. This is basically the attitude the grasshopper had in the fable of the grasshopper and the ants.

Fortunately for us the establishment of Zion is not a fable. God said it is going to happen. His Word is sure. We can always rely on his promises. Unfortunately, when God talks, (unlike the advertisement), most do not listen. Jesus said "the harvest is truly plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." (MT 9:43-44) We are the laborers. We are supposed to be harvesting. Imagine a farmer not harvesting his crop. We would think that man was a fool!

Are we any different kind of man (or woman) if we don't work in the harvest when the call has been issued? Jesus also said ". . . Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he who reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life." (John 4:37-38)

**TESTIMONIES AND
SERMON NOTES**

**The Time is Fulfilled.
The Kingdom of God is
at Hand.
Repent Ye and Believe
the Gospel.**

The first Sunday of May was truly a beautiful day -- the day we partook of the bread and wine in remembrance of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The sermon of the morning was brought to us by Seventy George Knotts. He began his sermon reading to the congregation from the Third Book of Nephi, Chapter 8, verse 41. The scripture added to the spirit which the people felt during the serving of the sacrament prior to the sermon.

Brother Knotts presented many testimonies during his time with the saints. He began by telling of the blessing which the people who had attended prayer service the previous Wednesday night experienced as a tremendous storm advanced toward Lamoni during the prayer service. Word was received that 2 tornadoes were seven miles from Lamoni and were traveling toward the city at a speed of 35 mph. But, the Lord was with the people. No one was harmed and very little damage was done to property. The Lord truly blessed the people.

The time is fulfilled. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Repent ye and believe the gospel. George went on to tell us about an incident that occurred while he was attending the communion service at the Auditorium last month. A lady approached him, telling him about a sermon that she had found in her father's belongings that George had preached 36 years ago. She read it, and it ministered to her greatly. It was a good feeling to know that something that had been shared so long ago could still minister to someone today. As George read the sermon he had written, it ministered to him as well. The Lord does good work, and when we trust him, we shouldn't hesitate, because He is ready and available. Some of us are willing, and some of us are able. But with God we have both -- He is willing and He is able to bless us if we will ask

Him and trust Him. In the Book of Mormon we will find that what made God's joy full was when the people trusted him. Because of their faith, His joy was full.

Brother Knotts went on to tell the congregation about an experience he had recently at a track meet. While at the meet, George sat near Kim and Nancy Burks who had come to watch their son in a pole vaulting event. They entered into a discussion about where they were attending church. George added to the conversation by telling them that he knew they would be happy at the Mount Ayr congregation because we have been so abundantly blessed. The Burks had visited Mount Ayr and agreed by saying that they loved being at Mount Ayr. George reminded the congregation at this time that the trouble with being blessed is that we often become comfortable. He reminded us of when the Lord said He does all these things for us and we forget Him. He said then the Lord has to bring on death and sorrow to get our attention so that we will be responsive to Him. Brother Knotts declared that when he dies, or rather when he goes back with Jesus, he wants carved on his tombstone 'He was responsive to God.'

Next Brother George drew our attention to a diagram of a hand he had drawn on a nearby white board. Each finger of the hand was meant to be a reminder of the covenant that we make with Christ and the Father during communion. The wedding ring on the ring finger represents that we are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus. The little finger represents that we witness of the Father. The longest finger reminds us to always remember him. The pointer finger is to remind us to keep his commandments -- where he points the way, it is our responsibility to go. And the thumb represents that we will always have His spirit to be with us.

One night George woke up in the middle of the night with two words on his mind: spiritual bastard. After thinking about it for a while he woke up his wife and asked her what she thought that might mean. It came to George that what it means is someone who claims God as his father, but he really isn't. The phrase is a little rough, but what it means is that you would take the communion of Jesus and you're claiming to be his, but you have no intention whatsoever of doing what he said to do in the commandments. It was Brothers Knotts' hope that none of us would fall into that category.

Since George is an artist by profession, he shared with the congregation a cartoon he once designed where a person was ready to take communion with the wine glass right at his mouth, and the words on the cartoon said "Betrayal happens here." We can betray our Lord Jesus, if we have no intention of doing what His commandments want us to do. The Lord has told us that if we do what He asks us to do, then we have His promise. If we don't do what He tells us, then we are on our own. In the day we are living in, it would be a terrible calamity to be on our own. No matter how much insurance we have, it's not going to be enough if we're all by ourselves. We were very thankful that we were not on our own during the prayer service last Wednesday night during the terrible storm. No matter how strong a house is, it's not going to be strong enough if you have two tornadoes coming toward you at 35 mph.

Brother Knotts referred to a poetry meeting he went to a few weeks ago when a tornado came toward Lamoni, lifted as it got to the city, and went over them, as the people proceeded to read their poetry. They felt very blessed. There is no amount of money you could pay for that kind of insurance. God told us if we trust Him, if we knock, seek, and ask, He will bless us.

George remembered one time when he used to substitute teach. He would quickly draw a Jayhawk on the board, and some of his

students would time him. He could draw one in 19 seconds. The students thought that surely he must be wealthy to be able to do that. George suggested that he who has eternal life is rich. It is good to be blessed.

The only time it is appropriate for you to be sharing is when you are caring. Brother Knotts believes that the people of the Mount Ayr congregation are a group of caring people. So many people have done things for the others in the congregation to make it a pleasant and spirit-filled place to worship. George also acknowledged several of the parents and youth who are attempting to bear good fruit throughout their lives.

However, Brother Knotts warned us that when we get too confident, when we think that we are doing all right, then it may be a time when we are about to be humbled by the Lord. There have been places where he was tempted to retire because it seemed like everything was going well, and it looked like it was "down hill from here", but it didn't take long for the Lord to move him out of there and move him on. When it was time for George and his wife to sell their house in Blue Springs, to move to Lamoni, a man came to the house to buy it before they were able to put a for sale sign on it. This same thing happened when they lived in Oklahoma, and they needed to move to the Independence area to coordinate with George's job schedule. Beth, George's wife, decided they should "put out a fleece". They decided to raise the price of the house from what they paid for it and "put a fleece out" that it would be sold before the next weekend. That was a difficult thing to do, but before they got a sign out in the yard, a realtor came by with a person who wanted to buy the house and pay cash for it. They didn't realize how significant that was until they arrived in Blue Springs to purchase a house, and the person who owned the house they wanted needed to be paid in cash. It worked out beautifully for them. If the Lord shows us what is in the future, then we might get anxious and frightened. But the Lord is big enough to handle all our problems no matter how big they are.

Brother Knotts has 72 people on his prayer list. His prayer for them is simple. He lists their name and then says "with Jesus". He told us there is no better thing to ask for anyone than that they would be with Jesus. That is good insurance because the closer we are to Jesus, then the better off we all are.

The time is fulfilled. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Repent ye and believe the gospel. George mentioned that he has been with the Mt. Ayr congregation for 8 years and has tried to share his "What is Your Heart's Desire" tract or program with the people. He has been discouraged because it seems like he hasn't heard any testimonies about how it has taken hold in people's lives.

He would also like to see the seventies meet in the morning during the reunion that will be coming up in June at Graceland University. The seventies could fast and pray for the meetings of the day. He would like to see the people come to the prayer meetings fasting. He remembered how Brother Arthur Oakman used to do that, and there were some beautiful things happen during the reunions he attended. George suggested maybe we need to move the prayer service farther away from the dining room because it is hard to fast when you are at a "potluck". There was a retreat George went to one time at the Ozarks where the theme for the retreat was fasting. Food was available if you wanted to eat, but no one did until the last meal of the retreat when they all had a meal together. It was a beautiful experience. During the week they had one activity where you were given a scripture and then sent out in the woods by yourself for a while. After a few minutes you would come back

together and share some of the insight you gained while meditating. George also mentioned the weekends of fasting that Mt. Ayr has had. Brother Ron Smith has counted the many things that have happened throughout the world which were probably due to the fasting.

If we don't believe the gospel, if we don't read the scriptures, how can we expect to help the people in Africa who can't read the scriptures? When the American Indians were presented with III Nephi 9, one Indian from AIMS was upset. He believed that the white men had taken all their land, and now they also had their Book of Mormon. He believed that the Indians should get all the Books of Mormon and lock them up. Brother Knotts thought to himself that if they did that there would be a big dust storm, as all those dusty Book of Mormons were gathered. We haven't been trying to keep the Book of Mormon a secret, but it is about the same effect. Many years ago a hundred chiefs came to Nauvoo, and wouldn't talk to anyone except Joseph Smith. Keokuk told Joseph Smith he still had the Book of Mormon Joseph had given to him when they talked before. They had a feast together and talked about religion, and then the Indians went back to their territory. But the Book of Mormon never took great root. There are a few Indians in the Southwest preaching from the Book of Mormon. But George believes there is a time coming when we will see a great blossoming of the Book of Mormon among the Indians. It will be a blessing to all of us, and some will probably be surprised. There are some Indian prophets now. One received a message in Michigan, and he was told to go to a place in Michigan. Several others also received that same message, and they all went there. They were told to go to a place where there is water that comes from the center of the earth. They said there is another place where the water comes from the center of the earth, and that place is supposed to be Independence. When the time comes they were told that they should gather there, and then they would be told where to go after that.

Brother Knotts ended his sermon by saying once again: The time is fulfilled. The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent ye and believe the gospel. He shared with the congregation that the scripture he used at the beginning of this sermon is the same scripture he used 36 years ago in the sermon which was so meaningful to his friend at the Auditorium. He reminded us that this day was a day to remember the sacrifice the Lord Jesus made for all of us.

Mother's Day Every Day

This Mother's Day, as last, Michael Jordison was in charge of the service and Ed Anderson was the speaker. In introducing the service, Michael read a Mother's Day story of a man who made a date with his elderly mother, took her out to dinner and intended to take her to a movie, except they go so involved in conversation that they missed the movie. The mother was so delighted with the experience that she wished to repeat it with her the host, but had a feeling that would not be possible. Instead, she purchased the gift for her son and his wife and passed from this earth unexpectedly shortly after the event.

Ed used Ephesians 6:1-2 for his introduction to his sermon. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." He began by referring to a bit of humor referring to mothers

day which was proffered by his wife Diane as they traveled the day before.

"What is your definition of a perfect world?" "All of the kids would be following the mother around picking up after her."

"What should be a soccer mom?" "That's where the kids go and watch the mom play soccer on the Olympic Team."

"That's a true soccer mom." Ed affirmed with a smile.

Then he spoke of his mother. "Mom was the kind of individual, who never went anywhere. Dad worked from eleven in the morning until about ten at night. We had one car. Mom never did get her driver's license, and doesn't have one today. So us kids and Mom were stuck at home doing whatever. That whatever was precious time with Mom. It included everything from playing games with her. I remember one particular game, and I may have probably told you about it once before, called hide and seek in the dark. You pick a very dark night, pull all the shades on the windows, turn off all the lights, unplug the night lights, and then you play hide and seek in the dark. We played it one day for Heidee. On that particular game, people get kind of scared. You'd be surprised how many corners there are in a house that you can hide in that you don't even notice in the day time.

"I particularly remember Mom made sure that, first of all we had food - howbeit it wasn't that much - peanut butter sandwiches and Kool-Aid a lot of the time, with Kool-Aid always available in the refrigerator. She made sure that we received our educational training. She taught us to write and to read long before we went to school. She also taught us about God and Christ, made sure we had our family worship, made sure we got to church on time. We went very few places other than to town on Saturday and church on Sunday, but one of those few places was to Zion's League. Mildred Amundson always had Zion's League, I don't remember exactly what night that was on, but Mom always made sure that we got to Zion's League.

"When I think of all the things that she has done for me, from changing diapers to teaching me of Christ, I can't think of a way to repay her. There's nothing I can do to give her everything she deserves for what she did for me. I know she sacrificed monetarily. She sacrificed her time. We came first! What she wanted to do - what her goals were were secondary to our needs - whether it be money to buy lunches at school, or buying clothes. We bought our clothes from the Sears catalogue - sent off for them. She shopped at the commodity shop for hers. That kind of tells you the amount of dedication and sacrifice that she put out. I'm lax on visiting her. She lives half a mile away. When Dad was alive, we would get to together occasionally when there was a basketball or a football game on, we would just go down and watch it. She had to have an excuse. She hated it. She never ever, ever, ever sat down and watched the games with us. Never! But I received a call, probably last fall sometime, and she says, 'Ed, there's a football game on. Do you want to come down and watch it?' I said, 'Mom. You don't watch football! You never have watched football!' It was her effort to encourage me to come down and visit, and I'm kind of ashamed that it took that for me to go down and watch it. She knows that we don't have television. We're not hooked up to cable. We're not hooked up to television at all, so that our only way to see these events is to come down and watch."

A Piece To Share

"Brother Anderson then shared with us an article Brother Rob Rolfe had shared with him on ten ways to love your mother.

"1. Love her verbally. When you tell your mother that you love

her, it is important to be specific. Tell her why and how you love her. Express some of the qualities for which you love her, like the fact that you enjoy some of the meals that she prepares or you appreciate how dependable she is. When you stop and think about all the things your mother does to serve her household, you will find plenty of examples.

"2. Love her physically. Your mother was the first person to touch you. Before you were born, she wrapped you in her womb. After you came into the world, she tickled the bottoms of your feet and made you laugh. She kissed your cheeks in the middle of the night and held your little hands when they were soft and tender. She also changed your diapers, tied your shoe laces, combed your hair and buttoned your shirt. She touched you constantly during all those years when you needed the security of her touch. When her primary duties as a mother have expired, she will need to know that she is still needed. She will need your touch.

"3. Love her patiently. Moms have big jobs. There likely is no corporate responsibility that rivals motherhood when it comes to physical, emotional, spiritual commitment. It is easy to become impatient with our mothers when they don't do things the way we want them to. In these times we must exercise patience. It is important to remember that our mothers aren't bottomless wells from which we draw each time we have a need. Our mothers have their own schedules and needs. It is unfair to expect them to align their lives to accommodate ours.

"4. Listen to her. Can you remember a time when your mother stopped what she was doing to listen to you pour out your burdens. Maybe somebody you were dating stood you up. A friend didn't invite you to a party. Or you didn't make the basketball team. What did your mother do? She put her arm around you and encouraged you. She listened. Sometimes our mothers long for someone to talk to. One of the sweetest ways you can express love to your mother is to listen to her. A lot of mothers repress fear, anxieties, frustrations and inner torment because they don't want to worry their children. In fact, there are no parents who never have fears, heartaches or burdens. In her later years, she may face troubles more intense than anything she has helped you overcome in your own life. It is important to keep the door of communication open so that mothers can express their fears when necessary.

"5. Love her gratefully. Think for a moment about all the things that your mother has done for you over the years. How many meals did she prepare for you while you lived at home? How many boxes of cereal did she buy? You wanted Corn Flakes, so she bought that. You switched to Lucky Charms, so she bought that. She asked you how you liked your eggs - fried, scrambled or poached. Mothers never bring these things to our attention. They just make their trips to the grocery store and stand in line with their carts full of food because they love us. If we begin to enumerate all the things that our mothers have done throughout the years, we will realize that we owe them an enormous debt of gratitude.

"6. Love her tenderly. Mothers sometimes need acceptance and understanding rather than a lot of advice. Her actions may seem strange, but when you love somebody, you accept her just as she is. Maybe it's something she can't help. Maybe she can't understand her own emotions. Don't judge your mother. Just tenderly love her and accept that she is going through a difficult time. The best mark of what kind of kid we are is how we respond to our moms when they are going through hardships.

"7. Love her generously. Is anything too good for your mother? When you think about all the things she has done for you, could you

ever do enough to repay her? More than likely your mother sacrificed so you could wear the clothes you wore. When she went to the store to buy herself a dress, she made sure you had the best she could afford first. What was left over she spent on herself. Mothers do this every day with their time and energy, canceling appointments, forfeiting opportunities to take their children to sports practice or friends houses. How can we be stingy toward our mothers when they have been so unselfish, loving and generous toward us?

"8. Love her forgivingly. Perhaps you do not have a harmonious relationship with your mother. You may be resentful and bitter toward her. Whatever has happened between you, you have a responsibility before God to forgive her. Maybe there is no excuse for her sin. However, when we do not forgive, we cannot love, and God tells us to love. If He could forgive us despite our failures, surely we do the same for our mothers.

"9. Love her cheerfully. What comes to your mother's mind when she thinks about you? Does she smile or frown? The next time that you visit your mother, encourage her, laugh with her and do your best to make her happy. In doing so, you will show her how genuinely you feel for her.

"10. Love her honorably. 'Honor your father and your mother that your days may be long upon the earth'. It is the only one of the Ten Commandments with a built in promise for blessing. It doesn't matter what your vocation in life is, how many people you know or the amount of money you earn. When you live the kind of life that honors your mother, she will be proud of you.

How Do you Love Your Mother?

"How do you love your mother? You love her with all of your heart. You demonstrate your love to her in a way that makes her grateful every moment of the time she invested in you, every penny she sacrificed for you and every experience she provided that helped you become the person you are. Whoever you are, you owe a great deal to your mother.

"Along those lines, I don't know how you could say much more about what children owe to their mother and the sacrifice that the mothers have made for their children. The article that Michael read is also in this publication. There was a song out in the sixties or seventies that basically says, 'Those were the days. my friend. We thought they would never end. We'd sing and dance forever and a day.' I don't know about anybody else here, but those days go awful fast, and how many times do we put off something that we should do today until tomorrow? But, and as the old saying is, tomorrow never comes.

"In the article Michael read, the son finally got around to asking his mother, basically on a date to go visit with his mother. That was just days before she had a massive heart attack and died. Once a day is gone, it's gone! There's absolutely no way to get that day back. Things that we think that we should do and need to do, we had better find time to do. Around our house we kept talking about things that are important to us. We make time for things that are important to us. If they are not important to us, we put them off. If it isn't a number one in our lives, we think, 'I'll get round to that tomorrow.' 'I think I can fit that in between Kansas City and the doctor's appointment the next day.' I think I can fit that in there, but what happens? More than likely you will be too tired to do what you had planned to do.

Mothers and Zion

"We owe our mothers - we owe our families so much! As I said, Mom gave me the basics in the gospel which I tried to carry over

into my family, which families are the basic unit of Zion. When we think of the mothers teaching their children, we're talking about something we are trying to build here in the long run. We are trying to accomplish the task of building Zion. We must have people who believe - who are willing to perform their beliefs in Christ. That is our calling. It all fits together in God's plan. The family is the unit for the gospel going into the world. God needs workers. He needs people who are not going to put off to tomorrow to do the things that need to be done - whether it be visiting the sick, the homeless, or whether it needs to be studying.

"And I can't think of anyone here that hasn't had a mother. I think that's one of the prerequisites of being alive - that you have had a mother, a father and a family. When we talk of Mother's Day, it's the same as Christmas for me. We should have every day as Christmas! And we should have every day as Mother's Day!"

Are You in Your Right Mind?

Before I read my scripture, I'd like for you to just think for a minute that you are in Des Moines or Kansas City or Omaha or wherever, and you are walking down the sidewalk there in the shopping area. You look up ahead and here is the scurviest, dirtiest, looking guy you ever saw. He is just sittin' there kind of crouching along the sidewalk and he's talking to himself and his eyes are rolling around, and you're thinking, 'Should I walk next to this person or not?' OK. You got that fixed in your mind? I'd like to apologize for the scripture here because, this is about Jesus. Jesus had never had any courses in psychology, so obviously He didn't know about why this person was suffering the way he was, and He probably didn't recognize that it was his mother's fault that he got a little goofy to begin with. Right?

"This is from the fifth chapter of Mark, starting with the first verse. 'And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs, a man with an unclean spirit, who had been dwelling among the tombs. (We were out at the graveyard last night and Lynda said, 'I feel a little creepy here. There was a fresh grave right where we were, see? I don't know why when it's fresh it is any better than the old ones, but she was feeling that way.) Anyway, He was met immediately out of the tombs by a man with an unclean spirit who had been dwelling among the tombs.' I don't know. Have you thought of that as a place to live? 'And no man could bind him, no, not with chains; because that he had been often bound with fetters, and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces; neither could any man tame him.'

"Worse than that, 'And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, and cried with a loud voice and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God that thou torment me not. For he said unto him, Come out of the man, unclean spirit. And he commanded him saying, Declare thy name. And he answered saying, My name is Legion, for we are many. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

"Now there was there, nigh unto the mountains, a great herd of

swine feeding. And all the devils besought him saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And forthwith, Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand,) and were choked in the sea. And they that fed the swine fled, and told the people in the country and in the city all that was done unto the swine, and they went out to see what it was that was done. And they came to Jesus and saw him that was possessed with the devil, and had the Legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind; and they were afraid.'

Graduation Then and Now

"Well this is graduation day, and we notice that because of all those who aren't here as well as the fact that probably in your circle of friends or others you know somebody that's graduating or has gone to graduation, and we're celebrating all of those high school and college students that have had their minds filled with good stuff and are now ready to go out and meet the world. They've accomplished their goal. They have graduated from High School. They have graduated from college. They have graduated from college again with another advanced degree. For those you that may be in that category, don't forget that you get dumber by degrees.

"For some of you who haven't seen these, I passed out an eighth grade graduation test that's a hundred years old or so. This was made at the time that Graceland College was started in 1895, and if you look at those questions - my father graduated from the eighth grade, and for most of us today, you would say, 'That's not much of an education.' In fact I have a couple of uncles that had like second grade, third grade, fifth grade. That's as far as they went to school. You think, 'How could they make a life without getting that education?' It seems really strange now that one of Sherman's grandfathers couldn't even read and write. And did he make a living? Yes, he did. He built houses, didn't he? All I can say is that we have this idea today that if you don't have an education, then, you don't know anything. That's not true. And if you take a look at this test, I challenge many of you here who have college degrees, 'Could you answer all of these questions?' Probably you would say, 'No. I cannot.' In fact when I get to the first one, 'Give the nine rules for the use of capital letters, I'm done for, because I don't know what those are. And how about, 'Give the parts of speech and define those that have no modification.' I don't even know what they are talking about. So we would really be struggling if we had to pass this test.

"And so, because we really think of graduation as a success of things dealing with the mind, I'm going to be talking about our minds today. You know this man I just read about in the scripture, they said he was in his right mind, which would infer that there is something other than a right mind. You've heard lots of sayings about minds, right? One of those is, 'A mind is a terrible thing to waste!' That's on TV. I would like to have you think about 'God's mind is a terrible thing to waste'; and you'll see why I say that.

What Does It Mean, Being In Your Right Mind?

"So for you and yours that have or are about to graduate, I'd ask you, 'Are you in your right mind?' And you say, 'Well, I hope so!' But maybe not. If you can't pass this test that I just handed out, does that mean that you are not in your right mind? Perhaps not. Let me give you some information you already have. On May 12th this year, a young lady appeared in court charged with murder for killing two of her kids. The third (Well, she killed them with a rock, actually, she just - You have heard the saying, 'I'll beat you to death.' Well, she did. The third one is still in the hospital. She called

the police after she killed them and said God told her to kill the kids. Was she in her right mind? Diane says, 'No!'

"Well, if you will remember, Andrea Yates drowned her four or five children, and she claimed she was saving the kids from Satan. Was she in her right mind? Just so you'll know, she was recently convicted by a Texas jury of five counts of murder and sentenced to life in prison. I think she has to serve either forty or forty five years before she is eligible for parole. Was she in her right mind? Some of you would say, 'No!' You know what her husband said? He said it was the mental health community that was responsible because they didn't treat her properly. And the press said, 'She is the victim!' I wish you would tell that to the kids that are already dead - that she was the victim of the mental health community and now she is the victim of the judicial system. Do you know what the standard is in the law? That you know right from wrong! That's all you have to know. It doesn't mean that you aren't a little strange, but if you know right from wrong, you are mentally competent to stand trial. Now, if you've called 911 and said, 'I just killed my kids. Come and get me.' Does that tell you that you may have known that wasn't a good thing? I just point that out because that's what she did. I'm talking about Diane Laney. What do you think her chances are for being convicted? Probably pretty good.

"It's interesting to me that psychiatrists diagnose six different conditions that cause these kinds of crimes to happen. They have broken that all down. And generally their point of view is that these people are not responsible for their crimes. The law says they are responsible. Psychiatrists say they are not. Which group - the lawyers and the judges or the psychiatrists - are looking at these people in their right mind?

"For those of you that have never been a Pastor, I want you to think about something. Now, you know that Lynda has some memory deficit. You probably know that if you know her, and this is being recorded. But I would like to point out to you that that does not apply to everything. One of the things that doesn't apply to, if you are a Pastor, is what you preach from the pulpit, particularly if it applies to yourself. She remembers that. She can quote it back to you years later word for word. Elephants come to the house to get memory lessons in this kind of thing. She does remember those, which is good. In any case, I'd like to just have you think about your mind today. this guy in Mark five. What would the psychiatrists say about him? They would probably say there is no such thing as evil spirits. He was just schizophrenic, that's all! Well, in any case, whatever it was that Jesus did, He had a conversation with someone; so maybe Jesus was just a little bit nuts, too, talking to somebody that isn't there.

"I don't know whether you have ever been around somebody who has been, quote, unquote, 'possessed'. I have, and it's a spooky thing. Today we don't recognize that to be the case, so no psychiatrist would probably say, 'Yeah, that person is possessed.' At least none of them that I know have admitted that.

"Let's go on here. As far as people being in their right mind, this one might shock you a little more. It did me. This is the February sixth edition, 2003 of "Rolling Stones". It's a practice commonly called 'bug chasing'. It is, for those who practice it, the ultimate form of erotic fulfillment. The story says that out of forty thousand cases a year of HIV, they are estimating that ten thousand of those are caused by 'bug chasing'. Do you know what 'bug chasing' is? One homosexual says that it is all about the freedom associated with having HIV. Once you've got it, and you have the most deadly disease on the market, then you are free to participate in any sexual

activity without worrying about the consequences. Are those folks in their right mind? You know we talk about who's crazy and who isn't. By the way, just so you will know, and this may really make you worry, I'm the one in Decatur County that decides whether you are in your right mind or not. Now, how do you feel about that when you go to sleep tonight?

"In any case, Ben Mitchell, who is the bioethics consultant for the Southern Baptist Ethics and Liberty commission, (How's that for a title?) says, 'Isn't this a description of the downward spiral of sin? The unthinkable first becomes thinkable, then practiced and then finally accepted with perverse glee.' Isn't that what's happening now if you go down that road? And the interesting thing is for them, would they say that they were not in their right mind? No. They wouldn't. They would say, 'What's wrong with that?'

"Perhaps that's why the Lord said that gross darkness covereth the earth and gross darkness the minds of the people, because this is what happens if you are blind to sin. The Lord refers to those who have a corrupt mind, even those that are in the church are told, that their minds had 'been on the things of the earth more than on the things of Me, your Maker, and the ministry whereunto you have been called.' That's from Doctrine and Covenants section 29.

"Well, anyway, the scriptures have a lot to say about what is in our minds. Paul says in Romans 7 that your body is warring against your mind. Have you ever felt like that is true? You know, when I pass the donut counter, my body says, 'I want one! I want one!' My mind says, 'You don't need one! You don't need one!', and you're getting that push and pull. Hebrews 8:10 says that God will make a new covenant with Israel, and He will put His laws into their minds and write them upon their hearts. That means we won't have to be taught that. We will all have it. Well, that will be great. James 1 says that a double minded man is unstable in all his ways, and he calls the double minded to purify their hearts.

Let This Mind Be In You

"Phillipians 2:5, 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.' I would like for you to think about that for a few minutes. Let this mind be in you. If you have somebody else's mind in you, are you in your right mind? What do we call that when you have somebody else's mind in you? Schizophrenic! Yes! 'Herbie told me to do that. That's why I am doing what I am doing!' But in Phillipians, we are counseled, 'Let this mind be in you which is also in Christ Jesus.' What mind is he talking about? And when we do put on Christ, as Romans 12:2 says, we are transformed by the renewing of our minds.

"Paul says in Galatians, 'For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ' I would like to ask you, think about it for a moment. How do you put on Christ? I brought something along to illustrate that this morning. This is my angel hat. See. I put on Christ! I took him off! I've got other things to do. I just ask you, 'How many of you know who Ken Lay is?' You have probably heard that name, but you haven't made that connection. He was the CEO of ENRON? You did if you invested in it and watched it go from \$200 a share down to 12 cents. He was getting millions of dollars out of that company at the same time it was going broke.

"How about Bernie Ebbers? Did you ever hear of him? He happened to be the CEO of World Com, and he was doing the same thing. In fact, I read this one article that said, 'Why are you feeling sorry for those bankers, anyway? So what if they lost hundreds of millions? Do you know what Ken Lay and Bernie Ebbers had in common? They were both members of an outstanding Baptist

church. I recognize in saying that, some will say, 'You are hammering the Baptists.' No, I'm not, because it had just as well have been Episcopalians or Methodists or Mormons or whatever else. One of them was actually a Sunday School teacher. It's a great example of how we compartmentalize our lives so that we don't have to have what we do here interfere with what we do over there. My spiritual life is here. My business life is there. My social life is there. My family is over there, and that's what James, the brother of Jesus, is talking about as double-mindedness. 'A double minded man is unstable in all his ways'. And in the verse right in front of it, it says, 'Let not that man think he shall receive anything from the Lord.' So it says we are to put on Christ - let this mind be in you. So I go into church, I put Christ on. (Our speaker demonstrates with his angel hat.) I go home. I want to watch the ball game. I take that off. If you notice, I've got a cartoon on the back that has to do with watching the ball game and putting on Christ. You can see that on your way out. OK. Well, I want to go to prayer service. I put Christ back on. I go to prayer service, then I go home. I'm reading the scriptures, I put Christ on. I fight with my wife, I take Christ off, because it isn't fit - I can't do them both. I want to go out and play sports and I want to be dirty and whack people. Well, I've got the hat on. I've got to take it off. You get kind of confused doing it that way, don't you? You can't put Christ on and take Him off, back and forth, can you, because you don't remember where you are. You are going to be a double minded person as James says.

"While that may be a little bit silly, I'm sure you get the point real fast. But don't all of us try to keep some of these things out here, especially when we are doing those things that we are not supposed to be doing? What is the result of not putting on Christ to stay. Well, the Doctrine and Covenants says our minds are darkened because of unbelief and because we have treated lightly the things we have already received. We are supposed to be in our right mind. And what is that? I think that's the mind of Christ. That's the right mind. All these other minds are not right. In fact, I heard a guy this morning - every once in awhile I listen to these TV Evangelists, and they say things that are kind of interesting. Do you know what this guy said? He was talking about stress and he said that one of his Bible teachers told him that one of the things that people worry about is World War three - you know we are going to blow up the world? And this teacher said, 'Well. We don't need it anyway!' Now think of that for a minute. If you are really a Christian, and you get blown to bits in a fiftieth of a second, where are you going to be? Well, we hope to be in Paradise with Jesus. But did you really need the physical world? I guess not - not when you're looking with a long term view. "If we are in our right mind, we are counseled to treasure up in our minds continually, the words of life. Well, how do you do that? You don't do that by five minutes a week reading the scriptures. David, in the Psalms says, 'I meditate on the word of God day and night.' If you don't have the word of God in there, you are into this again - you put on Christ- take off Christ - put on Christ, take off Christ, and you can't live that way. Jesus Himself said you can't serve two masters because you are going to love one and hate the other or vice versa, and that's really the way it is. And the one that's vivid to me is that if you are neither hot nor cold, 'I am going to spew you out of My mouth'. Spew. Do you know what that word is? That's spit. Can you see yourself being spit out of Jesus' mouth because you won't stay one way or the other?

"One of my favorite scriptures that has so much in it is Alma 16. If you are going to take one chapter of scripture and toss the rest, I think I would be very tempted to keep Alma 16 because there is

so much in it. One of the things in it is this parable of faith being likened unto a seed, and those of you who have read the Book of Mormon are familiar with that. One of the things that I noted the last time that I read it, that I didn't see before, was that the reason that seed is standing is because it's receiving light. I thought about that - how plants naturally turn towards the light. Some of those like sunflowers, literally do. Have you ever seen sunflower fields where the whole field just goes like 'plink', and they follow that sun. That's why they are called sun flowers. But Lynda, if you watch her, is going around turning her plants all of the time. She has got them in the window and she is always turning them around. Do you know why? Plants grow towards the light. They have more sense than we do. They know what's good for them and actually turn towards the light. They turn away from the darkness.

"Brothers and Sisters. I just ask you this morning, 'Are you in your right mind?' Are you going to choose to put on Christ in the way that He would have it - as the Apostle Paul tells us, 'Let this mind be in you'? Or are you going to choose to be double minded in all your ways? When that happens, you can say, 'Well, I don't expect anything from God!'

"And I would like to have you write out the answers to the test that I gave you, and I'll grade them before you leave."

Get Up And Win That Race!

Brother Gordon Winkler opened his sermon with a portion of the revelation given to Bishop Edward Partridge and recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 5:5 b&c: "and whoso is found a faithful, a just, and a wise steward, shall enter into the joy of his Lord, and shall inherit eternal life. Verily, I say unto you, I am Jesus Christ, who cometh quickly, in an hour you think not." He then explained that he had attended the Iowa Hospital Association meeting in April where, in addition to discussing items associated with hospital administration, they had started each morning with a two hour session with Mr. Rory Aplanalp.

Mr. Aplanalp describes himself as an inspirational speaker and a story teller. "He really is a master story teller." Gordon said. One of nine children, he grew up in Utah and from a number of things that he presented and the way he talked, our speaker assumed that he probably is Mormon by background. His topic was 'Event Control'. "His premise is that everything we do in life is an event. Going to school is an event, getting out of school is even a bigger event. Going to the grocery store for shopping is an event. Coming to church today was an event. Getting up this morning was an event, and for some of you, that's a bigger event than for others." Gordon was so impressed with Mr. Aplanalp's message that he bought both the CD and the cassette recordings so he could have one in each of the family vehicles to play when he is on the road just to remind himself of what he had to say. The two hour presentation seemed that it lasted about 15 minutes.

Keys To Success

Mr. Aplanalp talked about characteristics of success. He said there are two keys to success, either individual or organizational success, and I will submit to you, it probably has to do with our spiritual success, too. He said the two keys are: first identify the events in our lives over which we have no control and determine what our response will be. The second pertains to our level of

commitment. He said that except organizations have commitment from their employees and from their managers, and also have identified those things that are within their control and spend the majority of their time on those things that are within their control, and do not spend exorbitant time on those things outside their control, they cannot succeed.

“And I think that has application to all aspects of our lives - to our work environment, to our home and family, to our community, and to our spiritual lives and our relationship with God. Mr. Aplanalp did not expand upon our spiritual life and our relationship with God, so those things that I talk about his morning are going to be my expansion of the points that he made. I will intertwine Mr. Aplanalp’s presentation as support for and comparison with the experiences of Saul and other writings of the scriptures.

Control vs No Control

“The first issue he talked about was control and the things we do not have control over; for instance, we don’t have control over the weather. We don’t control death, unless your family physician is Jack Korvokian, I suppose. We don’t control taxes. We are all subject to taxes, however, we do have control over whether we are going to pay them, and the government has some interesting incentives called freedom, if you don’t want to pay them. We don’t have control over natural laws, such things as the tide, the eclipses. And we don’t have control over time. We do have time management, but we don’t really have control over time. We can’t make it slow down during enjoyable events, and we can’t make it speed up to get through unpleasurable situations.

“We don’t have control over the traffic. In Des Moines I 235 is under construction and bridges and viaducts are out, and there is a lot horn honking, lots of hand gesturing, lots of red faces. Does any of that help? No, you don’t have control over the traffic. Probably the biggest thing that we don’t have control over that he talked about is other’s behaviors. You can’t control other’s behaviors. He told the story about his daughter when she was very little. The infant was sitting in the kitchen in her high chair and her mother was feeding her; and when he came into the room, he could just sense the tension between mother and infant daughter. He said to his wife, ‘Honey, what’s the matter?’ And she said, ‘Natalie won’t eat her strained spinach.’ He said, ‘I thought at that time, well, goodness sake. She’s just an infant. You can certainly control her behavior and make her eat her strained spinach.’ So he said to his wife, ‘Dear. I can get Natalie to eat her strained spinach,’ which he admits was probably not a good thing to say to his wife. And he further complicated the matter by saying, ‘Dear, you don’t need to leave. I want you to see how you do this.’ He said that he understood at that age, and probably at any age, if you just grab hold of somebody right here, (Gordon demonstrated) and squeeze in between their jaws, you can open their mouth up wide enough that you can insert a small spoon in with spinach on it.

“So he looked at Natalie, his daughter, as he was preparing to get here to eat her spinach, and he says, ‘I looked at her and she said, ‘Daddy’ - course she can’t speak but her lips said, ‘Daddy, I’m glad you are here because Mom’s trying to make me eat this spinach. She won’t eat spinach. You don’t eat spinach. I don’t think I should have to eat spinach either. ‘ He said, but as I picked up the spoon, and I pinched her jaw, the look of love left her face, and she thought, ‘Dad, you’re in cahoots with Mamma, aren’t you?’ Do he puts the spoonful of spinach in her mouth, and he says, ‘If you just squeeze their lips tight, certainly they have to swallow. Right? Wrong! Natalie spit the spinach out all over him, and his wife was in

hysterics on the floor and said, ‘Dear, show me that one more time, would you?’ And he confesses that was when he first began to understand that you can’t control other people’s behavior, even at that young an age.

“Now, certainly, as parents and teachers and friends and neighbors, we try to influence and impact the behavior of others, and we certainly should. We certainly need to share our experiences, and our learning and our understanding to try an influence and impact their behavior, but we cannot really control other’s behavior. And that’s a tough lesson for me to accept. There have been some events in my life that I really thought I should have been in control of, but as much as I thought I was in control, in the end the decisions and behaviors of others indicate to me that I wasn’t really in control. I think that if you look back in your lives, you will find times in your life when you probably had the same feeling.

“Making application to our being her today. We spend a lot of time talking about the leadership of and events happening in the Community of Christ’s church, and yet, as we sit here today, none of us has control over that. We talk about the second coming of Christ, and yet, we don’t have control over that either. In face, I share with you from the twenty fifth chapter of Matthew, the story of the ten virgins. You recall that story. There were ten virgins, five that are considered to be wise virgins and five that were considered not to be wise virgins because they let the oil run out in their lamps. And when he came, the first five virgins said, ‘Let us share in your oil, that we, too, can go and meet the bridegroom.’ And they said, ‘We can’t. We don’t have enough oil for you. You had better go to the sellers of oil and purchase some oil so that you, too, can have oil for your lamps.’ So as they left to go get oil for their lamps, the bridegroom came. Brother Winkler read the last of the story, “And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. Afterwards came also the other virgins saying, Lord, Lord, Open unto us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, Ye know me not. Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.’

“Also recorded in the first chapter of Acts, Luke says, ‘And He said unto them, it is not for you to know the time or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.’ So we don’t have control over when Christ is going to come again, but we certainly want to be prepared for that time. We don’t want to be like the five virgins that had to leave to go get oil for their lamps.

“Every day we are involved in events that we have no control over. How do you feel when you are involved in events that you have no control over? I know I have a range of emotions and I’m sure most of you do, too. You might include the things such as being frustrated, having stress, being anxious, feeling helplessness. Maybe some of you are somewhat angered by those times when you are involved in those things that you have no control over. All of those emotions are a part of something that is bigger that we call worry. Are any of you particularly enamored with any of those emotions? Are those emotions something that you really want to hold onto - to keep? Probably not. We are reacting in a negative way to events that we have no control over, and probably never will. Can you think of one positive thing that worry does for you? It gives you something to do, but probably not a good positive something. (Someone spoke up saying, ‘It makes you lose weight. Our speaker responded, ‘Yes it does!’ and named a number of physical problems that worry can initiate but declared he did not think those were good things that accompany worrying.) “Those are some of the things that Mr. Aplanalp pointed out to us that have to do with dealing with those

things over which we have no control.

“So what about the things you do control? What things do you control? When it boils down to it, there is only one thing you control - that’s the events of your own behavior - how you respond to things that are involved in your own behavior. We do have control over our own behavior unless we decide to give it up. Some of the things that we do control are our ability to pray, to study, to attend church, to attend youth camps. Those things are all under our control. Successful people exercise control of their behaviors through commitment. I think there are probably any number of definitions for commitment, but what I am talking about is an adherence to an established value system. And that’s why we are here today. You and I have identified ourselves with the value system of Jesus Christ.

What Level Of Commitment?

“I want to share with you the experience of Saul found in the ninth chapter of Acts. I’m going even to read some of this to you, because I think it is important for you to understand where Saul started from, where Saul ended up - what Saul’s level of commitment was and how it changed.”

Brother Winkler then read Acts 9:1-20. Please read it for yourself. It begins with: “And Saul, yet breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly there shined round about him, a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he, trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise and go into the city and it shall be told thee, what thou must do. And they who were journeying with him saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him who spake to him. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man; but they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did he eat nor drink.”

The story continues with Ananias’s coming, at the direction of the Lord to fulfill Saul’s vision of one coming to restore his sight and tell him what he must do, and includes his baptism, “And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.” “Isn’t that a marvelous story?” Brother Winkler commented. Isn’t that quite a change? And you know that Saul, who then became Paul, preached the gospel with the same level of commitment that he pursued the Christians, the believers prior to that. God has the ability to impact our commitment, and to help us in modifying our behaviors and in recognizing those things over which we have control.

“Those of you who were here last Sunday remember when Brother Rob talked about putting on our hats and taking off our hats and putting on our hats. I came across another article that talked a little bit along the same line with what Brother Rob talked about. It says, ‘Now, if Paul were here today, he might say, what we need is 24/7 Christians. There are people today with 24/7 jobs. That does not mean that they are at the job 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but it does mean the job they are on requires them to be so committed that they could be called to work at any time of day or

night, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They could receive a phone call at any hour of the day or night, saying, ‘You are needed.’ Well, Paul is saying we need folks in the church who are Christians 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They are available on time, all the time and any time. We need somebody to stand up and say, ‘For God I will live and for God I will surely die’. Now, when I use this terminology, ‘24 hours a day, seven days a week Christianity’, it doesn’t mean to imply that your salvation can be put on and taken off whenever you might like. I don’t think that was what Rob was implying either. He was saying that you can’t do that. You can’t put it on and take it off if you are really committed to Jesus Christ.

“I’ll share with you a different kind of a story. This one is an AP story that came out of the Creston newspaper May 1st concerned with Iowa State University taking steps to fire coach Eustachy.” The story says that Larry Eustachy made one attempt to save his job by admitting he is an alcoholic, but Van De Velde, ISU athletic director, suspended him and urged that he be fired because his behavior caused profound embarrassment to the basket ball program and to the university. Regardless of the reason, De Velde said the university had a right to expect better from such a prominent member of its community. Eustachy tried to explain that his behavior was dependent on alcohol and was not what he was or wanted to be, but also expressed remorse at what he had brought upon everyone and tried to apologize to the people he had disappointed. De Velde was sympathetic but took the action against Eustachy in the best interest of the University and its student athletes.

Gordon said, “I’m not going to try and play defense counsel or to explain Iowa State’s employment policies for their faculty and coaches, but the point that I am making is that Mr. Eustachy got himself into trouble because he didn’t uphold and represent the values of Iowa State University which were contained in his contract. In other words, he didn’t live up to the commitment that he had made to ISU. So the University decided to make a business decision and fire coach Eustachy. But I just wanted you to see what commitment really means and the consequences of not living up to commitments.

“Now there are other commitments that a lot of us have made and that some of us are going to be making shortly. I made a commitment through baptism to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ and to live a life that exemplified those things that He stood for. Sometimes we find ourselves in situations where we have to evaluate our commitment to our baptism and to our following of Jesus Christ.

“There are other commitments that some of us have made. Linda and I celebrated a commitment yesterday. We celebrated our twenty third anniversary together. And I’m going to talk a little about enduring to the end later, and I don’t want you to confuse that part of my speaking this morning with being associated with Linda. I really, really love Linda and the time I am spending with her. I don’t want you to get confused and think that I’m just enduring to the end.

“I think we recognize that marriage is really a commitment that is bigger than individuals. If you are in a relationship of marriage for your own individual purposes, most of those marriages don’t last. Marriage is the bigger portion of a relationship between two people. When Mr. Aplanalp talked about the level of commitment, he asked us the question, ‘What’s wrong with, ‘I’ll try it?’ His answer was, ‘It lacks commitment’. How many of you have had somebody say to you, ‘I’ll try and give you a call next week?’

Or, 'I'll try and stop by because we haven't seen each other in quite a while, and we ought to get together.' Does that sound like commitment? 'I'll try,' lacks commitment. It would be much better to say, 'Wednesday at four O'clock, I'm going to give you a call. Will you be in your office, Ron?' That has commitment to it. You don't try to be happy. You don't want to say, 'I'll try and be a good student. I'll try to be a good athlete. I'll try to be a good parent. I'll try to be a good spouse. I'll try to be a good teacher. I'll try to be a good Christian. Or do you want to say, 'I'll do it!' 'I'll try it!' vs 'I'll do it!' is more that just semantics. Its a difference in the level of commitment.

God's Plan For Us - Repentance

"Our God has a plan for you and me, and that plan includes the opportunity for us to recognize that there are times we have strayed away from our values system in Jesus Christ, and that we are weak in our commitment. But we can rejoice in knowing that God leads us to repentance. And God has made us to sorrow. If you are heavy hearted today, repent and find comfort in your renewed commitment to Jesus Christ.

"Second Corinthians, Chapter seven, Paul says, 'Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing; for godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death.' Then I was reminded as I was going over this this morning of Luke 15:7 that says, 'I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than ninety and nine just persons, who need no repentance.' So God is telling us to rejoice if we feel the need to repent, because it is God who has impacted upon us the need to repent. And in doing so we can strengthen our commitment to Him and recognize that those things that are not under our control, God can help us to control.

"Repentance leads us, then, to endure to the end. We attended the Iowa State Girl's track meet this weekend. Heidee was lucky enough to be a participant in that; and so we went up and watched the events of Friday and a part of Saturday. At the track meet, there were several events that occurred that reminded me of the things I was going to talk about today - things that were examples of control and commitment. During one of the events, the girls 4 by 4 - that's 4 girls, each girl running 100. That's four hundred or one time around the track. One of the girls stumbled - in fact, turned a somersault. She was running for the lead when she did that, and, of course, by the time she got herself righted and up she wasn't able to compete for the lead; but she finished, and she finished second. The stumble was out of her control, but the commitment was that she would finish the race.

"In the 100 meter hurdles, there was a young lady who was running in lane 8, which is the outside lane, and there is a barricade that runs along the concrete wall with things in it. She hit a hurdle, fell and tumbled into the wall. She sat on the track for a minute, gathered herself, got up and finished the rest of the hurdles to a large applause and to hugs from the girls that she competed against in that event. She couldn't control the event of the fall, but she was committed to finishing the race.

"We also witnessed something that was unexpected. We watched the girl's 100 meter wheel chair race. I didn't know they had this event. These were students from Iowa high schools that were wheel chair bound. Some didn't have legs. Some had crippling diseases; but they participated in the Iowa State track meet wheeling their wheel chairs as fast as they could down the straight away.

They were as excited as every other girl there that was participating in an event. They probably didn't have control over what put them in the wheel chair, but they were committed that day to running that race.

"If you are not doing something today about the things that matter most in your life, those things probably are not getting handled. If you are not doing the things you have committed yourself to; if you are occupying your time with those things on the non-control event side, the things that are most important in your life are not getting done. We need to recognize those things and work at them on a daily basis. We need to find ourselves in prayer. We need to find ourselves reading the scriptures. We need to find ourselves preparing so that when that unannounced day when Christ returns, we will be ready. It's not what we know. It's what we do with what we know that we will find to be important.

"I'd like to conclude by leaving you with a poem that expresses everything I have touched upon this morning. It talks about control and our adaptation or adjustment to the events of our lives. It describes some of our relationship with God and His desire for us to come unto Him. And it speaks to repentance and enduring to the end. So please, listen carefully and let your hearts be tuned to the words of this poem, called:

The Race

Whenever I start to hang my head in front of failure's face,
my downward fall is broken by the memory of a race.
A children's race, young boys, young men; how I remember well,
excitement sure, but also fear, it wasn't hard to tell.
They all lined up so full of hope, each thought to win that race
or tie for first, or if not that, at least take second place.
Their parents watched from off the side, each cheering for their son,
and each boy hoped to show his folks that he could be the one.

The whistle blew and off they flew, like chariots of fire,
to win, to be the hero there, was each young boy's desire.
One boy in particular, whose dad was in the crowd,
was running in the lead and thought, 'My dad will be so proud.'
But as he speeded down the field and crossed a shallow dip,
the little boy who thought he'd win, lost his step and slipped.
Trying hard to catch himself, his arms flew everywhere,
and midst the laughter of the crowd he fell flat on his face.
As he fell, his hopes fell too; he couldn't win it now.
Humiliated, he just wished to disappear somehow.

But as he fell his dad stood up and showed his anxious face,
which to the boy so clearly said, 'Get up and win that race!
He quickly rose, no damage done, behind a bit, that's all,
and ran with all his mind and might to make up for his fall.
So anxious to restore himself, to catch up and to win,
his mind went faster than his legs. He slipped and fell again.
He wished that he had quit before with only one disgrace.
'I'm hopeless as a runner now, I shouldn't try to race.'

But through the laughing crowd he searched and found his father's
face with a stead look that said again, 'Get up and win that race!'

So he jumped up to try again, ten yards behind the last.
'If I'm to gain those yards', he thought, 'I've got to run real fast!'
Exceeding everything he had, he regained eight, then ten ...
but trying hard to catch the lead, he slipped and fell again.
Defeat! He lay there silently. A tear dropped from his eye.
'There's no sense running any more! Three strikes, I'm out! Why

try?

I've lost, so what's the use?' he thought. 'I'll live with my disgrace.'

But then he thought about his dad, who soon he'd have to face.

'Get up,' an echo sounded low, 'you haven't lost at all,
for all you have to do to win is rise each time you fall.
'Get up!' the echo urged him on, 'Get up and take your place!
You were not meant for failure here! Get up and win that race!'
So up he rose to run once more, refusing to forfeit,
and he resolved that win or lose, at least he wouldn't quit.
So far behind the others now, the most he'd ever been,
still he gave it all he had and ran like he could win.
Three times he'd fallen stumbling, three times he rose again.
Too far behind to hope to win, he still ran to the end.

They cheered another boy who crossed the line and won first place,
head high and proud and happy - no falling, no disgrace.
But when the fallen youngster crossed the line, in last place,
the crowd gave him a greater cheer for finishing the race.
And even though he came in last with head bowed low, unproud,
you would have thought he'd won the race, to listen to the crowd.
And to his dad he sadly said, 'I didn't do so well.'
'To me, you won,' his father said. 'You rose each time you fell.'

And now when things seem dark and bleak and difficult to face,
the memory of that little boy helps me in my own race.
For all of life is like that race, with ups and downs and all.
And all you have to do to win is rise each time you fall.
And when depression and despair shout loudly in my face,
another voice within me says, 'Get up and win that race!'

"The message of this morning from your heavenly Father is, 'Get up and win the race!'"

News and Notes

Branch Assists Kenyan Saints

The congregation has once more helped two missionaries go to give ministry to the Kenyan Saints. Seventy Ronald and Elder Douglas Smith left Monday, May 26 for Nairobi, Kisumu and all other points in which the church has been established in Kenya. They will be returning in time for last minute preparations for the Missionary Family Reunion that begins June 22 at Graceland. It is planned that some of the Kenyan Saints will also attend the Reunion.

Missionary Family Reunion Imminent

The Missionary Family Reunion, sponsored by the Restoration Seventy will be over before you receive another Newsletter. The dates are June 22 to June 26. At present there are almost 500 registrants, so if you are not registered, it might be wise to hurry.

Seventy Steve DeVera To Speak

Seventy Steve DeVera of Sibley, Missouri will be the morning speaker for the Mount Ayr Restoration Congregation on Sunday, June 22, the opening day of the reunion. Reunion registration opens at 3:00 PM.

Youth Achievements Continue

Cessaries Galusha is the salutatorian of the Senior Class of the Lamoni High school. She continues to win honors in piano competition as she prepares to accompany her group on the trip to sing at Carnegie Hall, New York. Heidee Winkler competed in the Iowa State Girl's Track Meet this past week.

Marriage Celebrated

Alana Rolfe and Steve Watkins celebrated their marriage in a ceremony and reception held at the Community of Christ church in Gladstone, Mo. May 31. The couple will make their home in Colorado.

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
Mount Ayr Restoration Branch
607 E. Madison
Mount Ayr, IA 50854