

Talk Given on May 11th, 2014

The Role of Women in Heavenly Father's Plan

It is interesting how the topic that we are always assigned to speak on is not always the one we would be most comfortable with. Today, being mother's day, I have thought much about what the Lord would have me speak on. I have thought about the role of my mother, and the impact she has had on me. I have thought about how Heavenly Father works through His children, but with mothers...He works through them in a very unique and powerful way, to the helping and saving of His children. Today, on this beautiful Mother's Day, I would like to speak about the role of women in Heavenly Father's Plan.

Last October, Elder D. Todd Christofferson proclaimed,

“Most sacred is a woman's role in the creation of life. We know that our physical bodies have a divine origin and that we must experience both a physical birth and a spiritual rebirth to reach the highest realms in God's celestial kingdom. Thus, women play an integral part (sometimes at the risk of their own lives) in God's work and glory “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.” As grandmothers, mothers, and role models, women have been the guardians of the wellspring of life, teaching each generation the importance of sexual purity--of chastity before marriage and fidelity within marriage. In this way, they have been a civilizing influence in society; they have brought out the best in men; they have perpetuated wholesome environments in which to raise secure and healthy children.”

(The Moral Force of Women)

From this we learn that the most sacred role is a woman's role in the creation of life. This means bearing children, yes...but Elder Christofferson goes on to say that women are the wellspring of life. This means much more than bearing children. It means teaching and edifying all around you. Truly, as he said, women have brought out the best in men and continuously help God in His work and glory. Women who strive to teach generations the importance of sexual purity, build righteous homes, and labor in the Lord's work will receive His divine help.

There is a special woman in my life that I am continually amazed by who often talks about her desire to build a righteous home, and to teach children about the Savior and about the Plan of Salvation. I can feel her burning desire to help our Heavenly Father in His work and glory. And because of this desire, I fell madly in love with her. ☺ Surely, women with such desires will receive instruction, guidance, wisdom, and strength from on high to do that which is most sacred before God.

President Monson taught, "If we are on the Lord's errand, we are entitled to the Lord's help." I testify that there exists no other errand more important, or more sacred than that of being a mother.

My mother has made the most powerful impact on me in practically every facet of my life. From teaching me not to jump off stuff too high, that I should eat broccoli and not try to hide it under the table, to teaching me that Jesus Christ lives.

One of the most powerful memories that I have is of my mother testifying of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was around Easter time and I was with my mother alone in our home. If I remember right, I started playing a song on the piano. It was the primary song: "Did Jesus Really Live Again." I remember my mom coming up to me and saying, "That was Jonathan's favorite primary song." Jonathan is one of my older brothers that passed away. She taught me, through powerful testimony, that because Jesus Christ lived again, I shall live again, and we all shall live again. My mother's love for me, and my other siblings, along with her faith and testimony, instilled in me a knowledge of the divinity of Jesus Christ. This knowledge has brought peace and hope to my heart on countless occasions in my life since this precious experience. Her testimony, born to me throughout my life by her example and her words, brought me to yearn for a testimony like hers, and now continues to help me live uprightly before God. Her righteousness has made all the difference in my life.

My dear sisters, do not underestimate your power for good. You are daughters of God with divinity in you. You were called by Him long before this life in the pre-mortal realm to teach and serve this generation and to build up His Kingdom in these the Latter-days. You are precious in His sight, and in the eyes of all who surround you each day. Many times we all find ourselves lacking the kind of faith that we want or perhaps need, and find ourselves fearing one thing or another. One of my favorite scriptures in the Doctrine and Covenants helps me realize that we do not need to fear anything. The Lord is speaking to His missionaries. But surely, whom The Lord called to teach, nurture, strengthen, raise, and even create: mothers and righteous women; are defined as missionaries in the purest sense of the word. The Lord said,

"87 Behold, I send you out to reprove the world of all their unrighteous deeds, and to teach them of a judgment which is to come.

88 ... 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, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up.

(D&C 84:87-88)"

In perhaps easier words to understand, "Be my disciple, and I will call you my friend." In other words, "Follow me faithfully, and I will always be there for you." I love my Savior. He is endlessly

merciful, and infinitely kind and loving. While life may seem daunting, He will help those who seek His help in righteousness. I asked a special woman in my life about motherhood. I think she explains well many of the difficulties and blessings of motherhood. She said,

“You don’t come home from work. You’re always on, hearing every sound, worrying, feeding, teaching, leading (hopefully by a good example), clothing, laundering, playing, reading, answering questions 24/7 relentlessly. We have to teach academics and gospel and behavior and manners... important things. And there’s never really a break!

Motherhood is also beautiful; relentless, but filled with reward. I get to take care of these sweet spirits entrusted to me by my Father in Heaven. I get to hear their sweet voices sing I am a Child of God and bear testimony of truths they have come to know, some that I helped teach. It is rewarding and humbling.

The Lord blesses me by letting me feel His love for my babies and by blessing me to love them as He does. Even in the hard moments, I can look at my children and be reminded where they came from, and how blessed I am to have them in my care and in my heart. Moroni 7 talks about praying to be filled with the love of Christ, with all the energy of heart. When I pray for help or patience or guidance or peace, and an open heart, He blesses me by filling it with love. Everything else pales in comparison. Love makes it do-able and a lot of times enjoyable, too.

Motherhood is the hardest thing I have ever done, and it is the greatest privilege and blessing in my life.”

The Lord can make all the difference if we seek His help. Elder Ballard said,

“There is nothing in this world as personal, as nurturing, or as life changing as the influence of a righteous woman.” - Mothers and Daughters.

A righteous woman will be used in God’s hands for good. A righteous woman need not fear. We have all known righteous woman, and we have been touched by their love and positive influence. We should remember that no one is perfect. We should not judge others because their circumstances may be different, or because they live the gospel in a different way than we do. We should not judge others because their mistakes are a little different than ours. Every woman has a different role to fulfill before God. Righteousness is not found in perfection, but in constantly striving to be perfect with an eye single to the glory of God. Elder Ballard taught,

I hope all of you dear sisters, married or single, never wonder if you have worth in the sight of the Lord and to the leaders of the Church. We love you. We respect you and appreciate your influence in preserving the family and assisting with the growth and the spiritual vitality of the Church. Let us remember that “the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World”). The

scriptures and the teachings of the prophets and apostles help all family members to prepare together now to be together through all eternity. I pray that God will continually bless the women of the Church to find joy and happiness in their sacred roles as daughters of God. (Daughters of God).

All of us have a divine role to play in God's plan. The Lord counsels,

"seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom, seek learning even by study and also by faith;

8 Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing, and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God;

(D&C 109:7-8)"

We must diligently seek to know what personal role The Lord would have each of us fulfill while in this life. We all have the same commandments to follow, and no one is favored above another in our Heavenly Father's perfect plan. But not all of us will end up with 14 children like the wonderful Lee family. Not all of us are meant to create children while in this mortal tabernacle. All of us have a specific purpose that we should seek to know and fulfill. All of us are children of a loving God who desires our happiness. To all of us, our greatest joys in this life will come from fulfilling our role in God's plan. To us men, one of the most powerful ways that we can honor the Priesthood, is by righteously helping women fulfill their roles.

In closing I would like to share one more thing that Elder Ballard taught about motherhood,

"After observing and empathizing with three generations of mothers and thinking of my own dear mother, I surely know that there is no role in life more essential and more eternal than that of motherhood."

Motherhood is eternal and each daughter of God will have the opportunity of becoming a mother and raising righteous children. It is the most essential role in life. I am so incredibly grateful for all of the wonderful mothers who are such powerful examples to us all. I know that our Heavenly Father loves us perfectly. I know that He gave us all mothers, and other righteous women in our lives to help us come back to Him. One thing that I have continued to learn in my few months of marriage is that women have an ability to love and show compassion that is unlike anything else in existence, except for the Savior's love. I know that He lives. I know that He loves us. I know that He has a wonderful plan for each of us, and that we should trust Him in everything. I know that families can be together forever. On this special Mother's day, may we remember to thank the women in

our lives for their examples and their goodness; and our Heavenly Father for His many blessings in our lives is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.