

## **Today While the Sun Shines**

Sister Claudia Eliason, May 4, 2006

President Brigham Young said that the gift of life is time and our power and agency to use it well. It is such a great inheritance that we should look on it as our capital. How do we invest our time each day? How might we use it in such a way that we will cast light into dark places? I propose to you that if we spend our time well, it will be invested, even compounded, and will echo in eternity. Let me suggest six reminders to help us wisely expend our precious daily time:

1. **Take time daily to draw closer to our Savior, strengthen testimony, and assure that the Holy Ghost will be our constant companion.** Today, kneel to pray; stop to feast on the scriptures; attend the temple; pause to read, reflect, and think of how you might apply a conference talk; and, prepare well for your callings in the Church.
2. **Take time to build faith to be ready to face the trials life brings.** Today while the sun shines we need to nourish our faith that will take us through some of the darker days, the days that are full of trials.
3. **Take time to love and serve.** Jesus Christ is the perfect example of love and service. He explained that he did not come to earth to be served, but to serve and to give his life for us (Matthew 20:28). Paul the apostle remembered Jesus' words: "By love, serve one another" (Gal 5:13). There are many examples of our Savior's service and love, but one of my favorites occurred just before his crucifixion when he met with his disciples. After teaching them, he took a basin of water and a towel and washed their feet. In those days, washing a visitor's feet was a sign of honor and was usually done by a servant. Jesus did it as an example of love and service. When we willingly serve others in the spirit of love, we become more Christ-like.

Take time in your busy, daily life to do quiet acts of service without having to be assigned. Look around you, feel the pulse of your family and neighborhood, listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and ACT. When we are our brother's keeper, we are willing to give heart, might, mind and strength to consecrate on the daily altar of brotherhood.

4. **Take time to learn something new each day; work on your education.** Counseling his son Helaman, Alma said, "O, remember, my son, and learn wisdom in thy youth" (Alma 37:35). In D & C 88:118 we are admonished to seek learning by study and by faith. The world of knowledge is moving quickly. Decade by decade there is increasing application of science and technology. Today compared to 100 years ago there is much more knowledge to record, sift through, store, search out and hopefully use with discrimination and effectiveness. Education is at our fingertips. Today, there are about 75,000 scientific and technical periodicals that contain about 2 million articles each year written in some 25 languages. Daily we should seek and work for the knowledge and learning we each deserve. It may mean that we shut out chaos and confusion for a period of time each day and see if we can harness the wonder of learning. We need to view education and learning as a way to live and not as a way to make a living.

5. **Take time to build family connections, traditions, and relationships daily.** Time has a way of slipping away and if your family is like ours, before you know it the children are grown and leave the nest. When you are in the middle of the child rearing days you wonder if they will ever grow up and before a blink of the eye they are grown and gone. We must cherish the moments and take time to build rich and meaningful memories.
  
6. **Take time to appreciate each day the blessings of our own particular life and circumstance.** We are quick to focus on what we don't have instead of what we do have. In the children's book *When I Was Young in the Mountains*, author Cynthia Rylant describes her own life growing up in humble circumstances in the Appalachian Mountains. Her grandparents raised her and she described the simplicity of her life. For example, one page reads: "When I was young in the mountains, we sat on the porch swing in the evenings, and Grandfather sharpened my pencils with his pocketknife. Grandmother sometimes shelled beans and sometimes braided my hair. The dogs lay around us, and the stars sparkled in the sky. A bobwhite whistled in the forest." I read this story to my children many times as they were growing up. When they came to me with "Why can't I have this, or "Why can't I do that?" I pointed to the print we had over our kitchen table that was an enlargement of one of the pages from Rylant's book. It reminded them of the message of the story so beautifully expressed on the last page. She said, "When I was young in the mountains, I never wanted to go to the ocean, and I never wanted to go to the desert. I never wanted to go anywhere else in the world, for I was in the mountains. And that was always enough." She had so little compared to our children today, but it was enough; she was content with what she had. We need to take time to look around us and appreciate what we do have, particularly the blessings we have as members of the Church.

In summary, may we take time to build our testimonies and our faith, to love and serve, to learn something new, to build family relationships, and to find contentment and joy in who we are and our circumstances. When we spend our time well each day, the sun will shine and we will be casting light, that light of Christ, into the dark places of this world and making a difference. May we seek the Spirit to know where it is that we need to cast light today, that we may do the will of the Lord and accomplish the purposes He has for each of us.