

The Lord's Country and Kingdom— Your Passport

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I am honored to speak to you today, but first I need to deal with that quizzical look on your faces about my last name. Yes, it really is Money, and *yes*, I really am a professor at the business school. It was even better when I worked at the bank. My colleagues would say, “Mr. Money’s here now; we can open the vault.”

A reporter from the *Wall Street Journal* called a few years ago to interview me for a story she was doing about professors whose fields fit their names, like a Dr. Payne she had found at a dental school. She asked, but I assured her I was not going to name a daughter Penny. The story was indeed published on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal* as one of those “fun” stories. So there you have it—how I managed to use up a few minutes of my fame in this life.

Now we can move on. Devotionals are a special part of being at BYU, and I commend you for taking advantage of the opportunity to learn and to grow, in spite of the fact that I am the one speaking today. Devotionals help you think about the difference between things that are really important and things that are not.

When I was asked to speak, I asked my kids, several of whom are BYU students, what I should talk about. We were at the dinner table,

and my nephew was visiting. He said, “Hey, that’s easy. If you want to play to the crowd, just talk about dating.”

Well, I am not going to talk about dating, but I am going to talk about something very important to me, and I believe it is important to you—that is, how you, as a member of this global church, can stay within the borders and be a strong citizen of “the Lord’s country and kingdom” (which phrase I will explain a little later), no matter where you come from or travel to—Moscow, Russia, or Moscow, Idaho, or any one of the seventeen small towns in the United States named Paris, or even the one in France. Just as with citizenship in temporal countries, you need a passport for the Lord’s country and kingdom; I will talk about how to stamp that passport and keep it valid.

Before doing that, however, let me just say a word about getting out of Provo. If the world is our campus, then we need to get out there

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on that campus. I was introduced as director of the Global Management Center, overseeing the international activities of the Marriott School. I *love* BYU international experiences. A few weeks ago I attended a reunion of the London study abroad program on which I was a student; that program started thirty-three years ago this month. Amazingly, many of us still keep in touch. I have directed many study abroad programs of my own as a faculty member, and I love to see the growth in students as their horizons expand.

Former secretary of state Condoleezza Rice gave a forum speech on this campus a few years ago; a major theme of her remarks was this: while a student at BYU, you need to learn a language, leave Provo, and do some studying abroad to enrich your education and perspective greatly. To quote Mark Twain, “Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness.”¹

May I reiterate: if the world is our campus, then let’s get out “on campus.” In the large atrium of the Tanner Building, where I work, there hang eighty-two flags representing the countries from which our business students hail. The flags are not just for decoration. Our business school’s mission statement reinforces the imperative to train global leaders for a global economy and a global church.

I have encouraged you to get out of Provo—sort of my commercial message, if you will. One noncommercial thing you will learn out there on the campus of our world is an appreciation for the privilege of studying and living here in the United States and the price others have paid for your freedom to worship “according to the dictates of [your] own conscience”—“how, where, or what [you] may” (Articles of Faith 1:11).

During my first BYU London study abroad program as a student, my father came to visit. We took an excursion to France, where his uncle is buried in a World War I military cemetery. The young Lars Lester Larsen—big

brother to my dad’s mother—was sent to France as a private in September 1918 and was last seen alive filling his canteen in a small creek before enemy artillery fire set in. He was killed just weeks before the armistice.

The blue star on the banner in the Larsens’ living room window, a national tradition that indicated a son was serving in the military, was changed to gold, the sign that the son had died in combat. His mother—my great-grandmother—was heartbroken and fell ill; her health never recovered. After the war the government organized a trip overseas for those “gold star mothers” of soldiers buried in Europe to visit the graves of their sons. My great-grandmother died the day the ship set sail from New York. So my father and I were the first two relatives ever to visit his uncle’s gravesite, to dedicate it for a glorious resurrection.

When we arrived at the grave marker for Private Larsen, in the midst of thousands and thousands of crosses, with nobody else around, the first thing my father did was put on a suit coat and tie.

He said, “Son, we are here to dedicate a grave, a priesthood ordinance, and when you perform the duties of the priesthood, you do so appropriately attired.”

After his dedicatory prayer he said, “Grandmother would be happy.”

Not only did I learn to be appropriately dressed to perform the duties of the priesthood but I also learned of the terrible price that was paid for our citizenship in a free country—much like the sacrifices of our spiritual forebearers and Jesus Christ Himself to allow us to be members of “the Lord’s country and kingdom.”

The phrase comes from Doctrine and Covenants 88. This first verse is quoted often:

Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the

gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God. [verse 78]

But here are the verses I am emphasizing today:

*Of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; **things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms—***

That ye may be prepared in all things. [verses 79–80; emphasis added]

What I would like to talk to you about today is your citizenship in the Lord's country and kingdom; what puts you on His side of the borderline; how to make sure you always have a stamped, valid passport; and what keeps us strong within the Lord's province. If you lose your passport on an international trip, or if it is not valid, that trip stops—rather abruptly. Let's not let that happen on our eternal journey.

Let me illustrate the theme of borders with a true tale from one of my study abroad programs as a director. We were in Venice, Italy, having taken a very small ferryboat from our bus terminal to a dock across the Grand Canal. The appointed time to leave was approaching, and all but a handful of my BYU students were aboard. The Italian boat captain revved his engine, signaling departure. His English was poor and my Italian was worse, but somehow we communicated that he wanted the boat to leave and I wanted the boat to stay for the missing students. His next load of passengers was waiting on the other side. To emphasize my negotiating position, I placed one foot on the dock with the other foot on the boat—not too smart. To emphasize his rather superior

negotiating position, the captain slowly began pulling away from the dock, with me about to fall into the water.

I will tell you what happened later, but, for now, that experience illustrates how impossible it is to have one foot on the Lord's side and one on the adversary's side—and the gap is getting wider and wider. What is at stake for you is more than a refreshing dip in the Grand Canal of Venice and a soggy wallet. What is at stake is your very soul. My message, therefore, is less about tourism and more about a spiritual journey, with way stations of experiences that happened to me out there on the campus of our world (many times with BYU students), where I learned very important eternal lessons.

So what of the Lord's country and kingdom, its borders, your citizenship, and your passport?

Sheri Dew gave a devotional speech some years ago entitled "Living on the Lord's Side of the Line."² Therein she described her experience visiting the Demilitarized Zone, or DMZ, that divides North and South Korea. She described the anxiety of leaving the protection of the United States and compared it to leaving the Lord's side of the line. Having stood with BYU students in that same DMZ, and having a father who had served as an army chaplain in the Korean War, her message was all the more personal to me.

So what is it that we need to do specifically, at home or abroad, to live within the borders of and be strong citizens of the Lord's country and kingdom with a valid passport? I will name four things, the first two being *private* religious behavior and *public* religious behavior; the third I will call "just being nice"; and fourth, remaining true in the face of trials. You know these things—there is nothing new here—but, as Elder Neal A. Maxwell liked to quote from C. S. Lewis, "People need to be reminded more often than they need to be instructed."³

The First Stamp: Private Religious Behavior

The first stamp in your passport to the Lord's country and kingdom is private religious behavior, one component of which is prayer. By the time I was a returned missionary, I thought I had learned all about the need to pray as a kid in Sunday School. But let me tell you where I really learned about my duty to pray. I learned it from a Polish man in a youth hostel in Innsbruck, Switzerland, when I was traveling around Europe during my study abroad as a BYU student.

As you may know, youth hostels are cheap and gender-separate but communal lodging with large rooms full of bunk beds. There I was, about to retire for the evening in a room full of people I did not know and a little shy about praying in front of strangers. This older Polish man, with a jovial laugh, went around the room asking each of us where we were from. His English was limited, but he ascertained as he pointed: "American-need?" Next. "American-need?" Next. "American-need?" "Ohhhhhhh! Everybody American-need!"

After joking around some more about being outnumbered, he excused himself, knelt beside his bed, and offered up his evening prayers in Polish as the rest of us milled around a bit and a hush fell over the room. I will always remember being slightly embarrassed—me, a returned missionary who had taught others to pray—because I had not led the way. Though I was not necessarily wanting to perform my "alms before men" (Matthew 6:1; 3 Nephi 13:1), I committed then and there to never fail to pray, no matter what the circumstances.

Pray for your families and pray for those around you who struggle. Pray for the rulers of nations and their people, that the work may be hastened throughout the world, as the Prophet Joseph prayed at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, the first dedicatory prayer of this dispensation. He prayed for "the kings, the princes, the nobles, and the great ones of the earth, . . . that their hearts may be softened . . . ,

that all the ends of the earth may know that . . . thou hast sent us" (D&C 109:55–57).

My father, from whom I acquired my love of travel, would always kneel with us in prayer before setting off on the day's adventures. I remember that so vividly—more than many of the adventures. In your life, pray hard, then work hard. Go and "do something more Than dream of your mansion above."⁴

Another component of private religious behavior is scripture study. In the current study guide for Melchizedek priesthood quorums and Relief Society, Joseph Fielding Smith asked us:

Can we not arrange to find at least fifteen minutes in each day to devote to systematic reading and reflection? . . .

. . . Very few among us read too much; most of us read too little.⁵

Don't be guilty, as most of us have been at times, of saying, "You know, what is in the headlines today is just more interesting and important than what somebody wrote hundreds or thousands of years ago." It is not. Scriptures are somebody's spiritual journals, and those somebodies are prophets of the living God.

Temple worship is another aspect of private religious behavior that can stamp your passport to the Lord's country and kingdom. As a family, one thing we like to do abroad is visit temples, from Hong Kong to Switzerland. Closer to home, every time a new temple holds an open house, we try to go with all of our children, younger and older. As we gather in the celestial room, we try to make the point that we only have one goal in life as their parents—to see all seven of our children and their spouses eventually back in a temple celestial room someday. Because if we get that head start, maybe, just maybe, our whole family will be back in the presence of our Heavenly Father in the celestial kingdom. And if your family is

anything like ours, I guarantee that your parents feel exactly the same way. The temple is “the mountain of the Lord’s house”—“and all nations shall flow unto it” (Isaiah 2:2; 2 Nephi 12:2). Temples are certainly within the boundaries of the Lord’s country and kingdom, and your recommend is a passport stamp.

The last element of private religious behavior I will mention is to follow the prophets. We sustain fifteen of them on the earth today. About two years ago I stood in the church in Copenhagen, Denmark, in which stands the original *Christus* statue—renowned and beloved by our faith—by the Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen. Around the chapel also stand statues of Christ’s Twelve Apostles.

President Spencer W. Kimball visited that church in 1976, accompanied by several members of the Quorum of the Twelve. President Kimball said to a kind maintenance worker, pointing to the statues, “These are the dead Apostles.” Then, pointing to his Brethren, he said, “Here we have the living Apostles.” He said, “Elder Packer is an Apostle.” And, pointing to the others, he said, “Elder Monson and Elder Perry are Apostles, and I am an Apostle. We are the living Apostles.” The custodian, who up to that time had shown little emotion, was suddenly in tears.⁶ Incidentally, exact replicas of these twelve statues will greet guests in the new Rome Temple Visitors’ Center.

The Second Stamp: Public Religious Behavior

In addition to private religious behavior, the second passport stamp for the Lord’s country and kingdom is public religious behavior. This includes service to others. Countless talks have been given on service—not to make you feel even more guilty that you are not out right now mowing somebody’s lawn but to keep it at the top of your mind. As the poet John Milton said, “Our voluntary service [God] requires.”⁷ Think

about that. How can service be both voluntary and required? Because God requires your heart as a freewill offering. If you have to force yourself to give, it doesn’t count!

As a young boy, my son Tanner thought the Tanner Building was named for him; actually, both my son and the building are named for President N. Eldon Tanner, counselor in the First Presidency when I was a youth. I had the honor of meeting him once when I was in high school. Just that brief interaction had a profound impact on my life. Underneath the bust of President Tanner in the lobby of the Tanner Building reads this inscription: “Service is the rent we pay for living in this world of ours.”

Two months ago, along with BYU students, I visited the Mother Teresa House of Charity in India and held a small orphan in my arms. Seeing India with its hundreds of millions of people living in crushing poverty somehow changed me. I am not sure what the answer is. The easy questions in world economics have already been answered; only the tough ones remain. But this I do know: I will never look at the line on the Church donation slip that says “humanitarian aid” quite the same. We who have been given so much, we too must give—let us all pay generous fast and other offerings. I have seen places in which our contributions will go far and wide.

Another aspect of public religious behavior is fulfilling Church callings, whatever or wherever they may be. Here is my favorite example.

President J. Reuben Clark Jr. had just been released after serving as first counselor to two presidents of the Church. He was then sustained as second counselor to President David O. McKay. Sensitive to the possibility that some might think he had been demoted, President Clark made this public statement:

*In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, one takes the place to which one is duly called, which place one neither seeks nor declines.*⁸

Elder Dallin H. Oaks gave an international perspective in a general conference address about how national culture sometimes conflicts with gospel culture:

*In the world, we refer to the up or down of promotions or reductions. But there is no up or down in Church positions. We just move around.*⁹

The Third Stamp: Just Being Nice

In addition to private and public religious behavior, my third passport stamp in the Lord's country and kingdom is just being nice. Jesus commanded us to love our neighbor, and He illustrated that commandment with the parable of the good Samaritan. As I tell my children, you don't have to go all the way to Samaria to be a good Samaritan.

I ask my children, "If we are commanded to love our neighbor, who is the neighbor closest to you?"

They usually respond, "Well, the So-and-So family across the street."

Then I say, "How about your sister in the bedroom next to yours?"

People in your family are your closest neighbors. Just be nice to them. On my father's retired military uniform, his chaplain's crest reads, "Go, and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:37), the closing line from the parable of the good Samaritan.

One aspect of just being nice is appreciating the dignity of every human soul—even those you don't know, but especially those you do, and even more especially the hard to love among you. On that same London study abroad program when I was a student, the group took an excursion to the Soviet Union. This was not the tourist-friendly, come-see-Anastasia's-parlor Russia of today. It was 1981. The Cold War was raging. The two super-powers were wrestling close to the brink of another world conflict—this one full of nuclear mushroom clouds. Both sides were armed and ready. I was surprised to see on the runway of

the Moscow airport that even Soviet passenger jetliners had guns sticking out of the nose-cones. Anyway, there was nothing a good Soviet bureaucrat would love more than to make life difficult for an American.

Well, the lucky man in our group was a student who also happened to be someone who was less than fully cooperative with our faculty director, even by his own admission—there was a bit of a personality conflict. As we were about to leave the airport, this same student was detained by Soviet officials over some passport issue—real or trumped up, I don't know, but I do know I had never seen just about anyone as scared as he was. He was not getting out of the Soviet Union, he was in trouble, and there was no negotiating.

Our director tried some quick diplomacy, but it wasn't working. One of the director's older children with us, a teenager who knew this was a difficult student and said what most of us were thinking but dared not say. In off-handed teen talk she said, "Oh, Dad, just leave him. He's not worth it."

In the tension of that moment, I will never forget the director's perfectly calm response: "Oh, yes he is. He is worth it. We are not leaving without him."

My director treated this student as the Savior treats us: we are all "worth it." The crisis was resolved, and we were on our way.

The Fourth Stamp: Be True in the Midst of Your Trials

In addition to public and private religious behavior and just being nice, my fourth and final passport stamp for the Lord's country and kingdom is to be true in the midst of your trials. Most of the serious trials I have learned from involve life-changing or life-ending events. People say death is just part of life. That is easy to say unless it is your parent, your spouse, your child, or your close friend who dies.

For example, when I was a first-year MBA student, the only other Mormon in my section

of eighty students was a bright, enthusiastic close friend. One fall afternoon he was crossing the bridge from our student housing to campus and collapsed and died of a heart arrhythmia. He was twenty-six years old and left a young widow and two small daughters. Jim Rasband, now dean of BYU's law school, was a law student in our ward at that time and was the family's home teacher, rendering much-needed service. I had the assignment to speak at this man's funeral as a representative of the business school student body—the most difficult assignment of my life to that point.

I learned for the first time in my short twenty-something years that life is precious—and life is fragile. The question becomes not *why* our loved ones suffer and *why* they are called home when they are but *how*: How can we ease their suffering and how can we be as prepared—as hopefully they were—when our time comes?

I once witnessed a very elderly gentleman pass away in an ordinance room in the Los Angeles Temple. It seemed like a seamless transition from this life to the next. As a fellow temple patron said to me, "At least he didn't have far to go."

I have referenced my father in this talk. The last talk I gave was at the funeral of my father, three weeks ago yesterday. There is an old Church movie called *Man's Search for Happiness*. A line from that film states, "Life's greatest test comes with the death of a loved one."¹⁰ That is when you are faced with what your faith really is. I have faith that I will see my father again someday.

But most trials are not as spectacular as life and death, literally. Most come in the daily struggle to just "keep pluggin'," as my grandmother—my father's mother from Spanish Fork—would often say.

So, to recap, these four things—(1) private religious behavior, (2) public religious behavior, (3) just being nice, and (4) enduring your trials well—will stamp your passport to the

Lord's country and kingdom and keep it valid. But I can almost hear the refrain rising from the audience: "Oh, come on, Brother Money, these are the Sunday School answers." Or, "Hey, if we got all that when we were Sunbeams, that's great. If we didn't, aren't you about twenty years too late?"

True, my young friends, these are the Sunday School answers, but let me say something here and now. The longer I live and the more funerals at which I speak, the more I have come to realize that the Sunday School answers *are* the answers. Let me repeat that: The Sunday School answers *are* the answers. So listen up in Sunday School, passport in hand—stamped with the four things I have discussed today and the other things you learn wherever pure gospel doctrine is taught. You will "land [your] souls, yea, [your] immortal souls," quoting Helaman, "in the kingdom of heaven . . . , to go no more out" (Helaman 3:30). As much as I love travel, when I arrive there, I will not be interested in leaving that country. I will retire my passport.

Therefore, do not ever let your passport to the Lord's country and kingdom lapse. If you do, you will find yourself outside its borders, or at least trying to straddle them. Which means I need to finish my story about the Venice boat dock. The distance between my one foot on the dock and my other foot on the boat slowly became wider and wider. It was clear that the boat captain was not going to hold the boat for my students, and I was not going to leave without them. While my dear wife and students on the boat were screaming as my legs continued to spread and my blood pressure went up, I thought to myself that this was like something out of a Marx Brothers or Charlie Chaplin movie (or now it would be a great YouTube video), with everyone watching me plop into the drink. But no, breaking the stalemate came the sounds of my rescue thundering down the alleyway, and the remaining students scrambled over the dock

and jumped a few ever-widening feet onto the boat. The boat captain and I are not exactly on each other's Christmas card lists, but I did get all the students on board and he made it back to pick up more passengers.

We cannot have one foot in God's kingdom and one in Babylon, a country whose standards are ever distancing themselves from the values we hold so precious at BYU and its sponsoring institution, the Lord's Church. As Elder Maxwell described it, we cannot have our primary residence in Zion and keep a summer cottage in Babylon.¹¹ Take a few moments before school starts again this fall and commit to do what it takes to be a strong citizen of the Lord's country and kingdom. With both feet squarely in it and your valid, stamped passport firmly in your grasp, engage in private as well as public religious behavior, just be nice, and stay true in the face of trials. If you do these things you will have no need to wonder if you are going to make it. You will. By "make it," I mean completing your BYU education; starting your careers of professional accomplishment; continuing life-long service; raising, with your eternal mate, righteous families of your own; and leading them and God's kingdom into the generations to come.

Let me conclude with another of my favorite scriptures, Doctrine and Covenants 90:24:

Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together for your good, if ye walk uprightly and remember the covenant wherewith ye have covenanted one with another.

It is all about that covenant—we can all make it. And *all things shall work together for your good*—not just *some things*, not *most*

things, and not all things *just on Tuesdays and Thursdays*. *All things shall work together for your good.*

I testify that God is a loving Heavenly Father who is concerned about the daily details of your life. Jesus Christ lives and loves us dearly. He is the Savior of the world—the *whole* world, which world is the campus of this special university. I so testify in His name, Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad* (1869), conclusion.

2. Sheri L. Dew, "Living on the Lord's Side of the Line," BYU devotional address, 21 March 2000.

3. C. S. Lewis, "Social Morality," *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1960), 78; book 3, chapter 3, paragraph 1; Lewis was paraphrasing Samuel Johnson, *Rambler*, no. 2 (24 March 1750).

4. "Have I Done Any Good," *Hymns*, 2002, no. 223.

5. Joseph Fielding Smith, "How and What to Read," *Improvement Era*, August 1913, 1004–5; see also *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:207.

6. Boyd K. Packer, *The Holy Temple* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 83–84.

7. John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1667), book 5, line 529.

8. J. Reuben Clark Jr., *CR*, April 1951, 154.

9. Dallin H. Oaks, "Repentance and Change," *Ensign*, November 2003, 38.

10. "Man's Search for Happiness," *Instructor*, January 1967, 9.

11. See Larry W. Gibbons, "Wherefore, Settle This in Your Hearts," *Ensign*, November 2006, 102; also Neal A. Maxwell, *A Wonderful Flood of Light* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990), 47.