

## Farewell Talk

That is one of my favorite songs, it is so powerful and says so much. I can't express how grateful I am for that, and all you for being here, it's great to see so many of you. I'm excited to share a message with you today about a few things that have helped me to get to where I am today, standing here before you, about to embark on such a wonderful opportunity by being able to serve the Lord for two years.

A couple years back if you were to ask me if I would be serving a mission I probably would have said no, it wasn't something that stood out to me, I didn't like the idea of leaving everything behind and moving to a foreign place for two years teaching strangers something as sensitive as religion. But in the past couple years I had come to the realization that it's not about me, it's about the people that I will teach and it's about the Lord and his plan for them. I'm okay with leaving everything behind and devoting to years of my life to serving the Lord because I know the amount of joy that comes from having his gospel in our lives and I want others to have that same feeling.

In the past few years I have experienced things that have opened my eyes to see that most of what goes on in our lives, we may not have control over. The Lord has a plan for each and every one of us and the choices that we make everyday are ones that are part of his plan. The choice that I made to go on a mission was something that I felt, was an opportunity that I needed to take. It was something that I felt so strongly about that I couldn't pass it up. I didn't know why I needed to go, but I knew I had to; it is something that is far greater than myself. The past few years I've come closer to some people and saw how great of a blessing it was to have them apart of my life, but I have also lost a few friends. The friends that I lost were some of the most amazing people and it was hard to understand why it was them. This was one of the biggest things in my life that taught me to trust in the Lord that he knows what is best for us. It wasn't till they were gone that I realized that things are going to happen in our lives and we may not know why until later. But through this experience I found that as I continue to live my life I start to see things around me transform, I started to see others and myself differently than in the past. My life started changing. I was noticing that each person you meet will have an impact on your life, some may be little others may turn your whole life around. And knowing that, I want you to listen carefully to this next sentence and let your mind kind of ponder on it. Each and every one of us at some point have affected someone's life in one way or another, whether we know it or not. It's amazing to think that one little decision we make in our life can change ours or someone else's around us. Now we normally don't think of the decisions we make, some are just second nature, others we might have thought really hard about. But no matter what, the decision that is made, is one that not only affects you but those around you.

I don't know how many of you have tried this, but a few times I would go to bed at night with the plan that the next day I would try to make someone's day. Whether that was giving someone a compliment or helping them in some way, whatever it was, the plan was to just make someone's day better than it might have been before they came in contact with me. And I'll tell you, it was one of the most rewarding feelings of knowing that you helped someone smile, even if it was just for

a few moments. Ill share a quick example, one night before I went to bed, I typed up a bunch of compliments, printed them out, and cut them so it was a strip of paper that had a random compliment on it or an inspiring quote, like you have an amazing smile, keep your head up, or something like that. But I had about 10 of these, and I put them in my wallet for the next day and the goal was give them all away to random people. So the next day came and I got up and I went to school and I realized, I don't want to hand these out in high school what if I see this person again and they thought it was creepy so they confront me about it. So I decided to wait till after school and I'd go to the mall, cause there always seems to be random kids at the mall. So while I was at the mall I realized that a school was having a homecoming or something and there were people dressed up, so I thought, perfect. So I waited and waited till I found someone to give it to. Then Boom I saw it, it was a group of girls dressed all fancy, so I walked up to them, tapped a girl on the shoulder and said "Hey you dropped this." Then walked away. I decided 1 was enough and that I'll go home because that was very nerve wracking. Once I got into my car I realized that giving a compliment to one girl in a group of girls that were all dressed up probably wasn't a good idea. But hey at least I made one girl smile.

But the point of the story was that I wanted to make an impact on someone's life. And I encourage you to try this, not what I did in my story, but try setting a goal before you go to bed, to reach out and try and make a positive impact on someone's life. One little decision you make can have a ripple affect on your life, at the time you might not think to much about it but as you go on you'll start to see how powerful that decision was.

The decision I made to follow Heavenly Father and live my life in the footsteps that his son Jesus Christ has set before us has humbled me a lot. Being a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been a great comfort to me and has helped me grow to understand things that probably wouldn't have made sense had I been taught otherwise. Serving others is the other powerful thing in my life that I have learned that has brought me closer to Heavenly Father and gave me the desire to serve Him. The joy that comes from helping others is one of those feelings that you can't really explain. Living your life for Heavenly Father is something that brings such wonderful blessings. Serving Him doesn't have to be a just a mission, We can serve Heavenly Father in so many ways throughout our life, and one of those ways is reaching out to those around you and doing things for others.

While I was attending school someone told me this story once about a time that he was asked the question, are you willing to die for your Heavenly Father? And with out a doubt he said yes. Then the person continued to ask, are you willing to live for your Heavenly Father? And the guy paused for a minute and thought about it. You see dying is the easy part. It may be just a few short moments and then it's over. But living on the other hand, is something that takes literally everything we have. We all have a trial that we are facing in our life that is something no one will ever understand or know what it takes to endure it every single day. Except our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ suffered and died for all the sins and mistakes we have made and are yet to make. He died so that we may have the

opportunity to overcome those trials and be forgiven of the sins that we have made so that one day we could live in the presence of our Heavenly Father again. As children of God we are asked to live his commandments and follow him, and to be an example just as his son Jesus was, so that others can see the light of Christ and know with surety that there is hope, and that there is love that exists that is more powerful than we can imagine. Heavenly Father's love is constant, it will never change. He is always going to be there for us and help us through anything as long as we ask him. But just because we ask doesn't mean that it's bound to happen, sometimes it will happen when the Lord knows we are ready for it. But until that moment comes we need to put in the effort and still try our best and prepare ourselves to receive his help.

Having the joy and happiness that comes from knowing that no matter how many times we fall down in life Heavenly Father is there with an open hand ready to help us get back on our feet and encourage us to keep going through the journeys of life. I like to think of life like this, you're in a car (which is your life), traveling down a long road, sometimes the road is straight and nice (those are those moments that are great and you cherish) but those moments can't last forever, you have to keep moving. The further you go you will run into bumpy rocky points that might set you back by giving you a flat or having car trouble, but without those troubles you wouldn't really appreciate your car and the little things like air conditioning and gas (those are the trials you go through, break ups, addictions, losing your job, deaths, those kind of heart-breaking things that nag at you and hurt). But we can overcome those by calling a mechanic or someone for help. That can be asking Heavenly Father for help or turning to friends and family for comfort. Those trials help you appreciate those around you that are there for you. By doing those things it may cause you to take detours and change your route, why? Because sometimes the decisions we make will change what we had originally planned. But we can't forget that it's for a reason. Maybe there was something on that road that you were not ready for just yet and you needed to take a safer route to protect your car from getting hurt so much that you can't come back or keep going. Maybe there was ice on a windy road on a mountain that if you went that way you'd slide off.

You get the idea that there are many things on this road, it's not always going to be straight and nice like we may want. Because when we finally reach our destination we can look back and think "I remember that time I got a flat. Because of that I learned how to change a tire." (I remember that time I grabbed a curling iron when it was on. Because of that I learned not to touch those because they burn you. True story btw.) You see, what I'm getting at is that we have a destination, to return to our Heavenly Father, but our life isn't about who can reach that destination fastest, it's about slowing down and enjoying the journey that it takes to get there. Along that journey we have to learn to keep driving and not let these little car troubles affect us, we can look in the rear view mirror all we want but if we look too long we'll crash into something ahead of us that we won't be expecting because we were too focused on what's behind us.

It was through the bumpy rocky roads in my life that I learned to appreciate Heavenly Father's love for me. No matter how dented and wrecked my car may be, he still looks at me with love and genuine care, and it gives me hope that everything

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would be okay and that he is there to help me. Through him I have seen things that I never thought was possible and because of his help it has turned my life around and helped me get on the road I need to be on. Heavenly Father has done so much for me and has helped me more than I can repay him for. I am truly grateful for his hand in my life and the opportunity to be able to devote every fiber in my body to serving him and spreading his gospel throughout these next two years and the rest of my life. I wanted to end with reading the words of the song that was sang previous to me coming up here. I want you to sit still and carefully listen to what is being said:

Savior, Redeemer of my soul,  
Whose mighty hand hath made me whole,  
Whose wondrous pow'r hath raised me up  
And filled with sweet my bitter cup!  
What tongue my gratitude can tell,  
O gracious God of Israel.

Never can I repay thee, Lord,  
But I can love thee. Thy pure word,  
Hath it not been my one delight,  
My joy by day, my dream by night?  
Then let my lips proclaim it still,  
And all my life reflect thy will.

O'errule mine acts to serve thine ends,  
Change frowning foes to smiling friends.  
Chasten my soul till I shall be  
In perfect Harmony with thee.  
Make me more worthy of thy love,  
And fit me for the life above

*(Testimony)*