

**ELDER VAUGHN J. FEATHERSTONE
GUEST SPEAKER -
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The poet said “When any man holds twixt hand and chin a violin of mine, they will be glad Stradivarius lived, made violins and made them of the best. The master’s only know who’s work is good and they will choose mine, for while God gave them skill, I give them instruments to play upon, God choosing me to help them. For God could not make Antonio Stradivarius violins without Antonio”. This great Endowment could not happen without all of you. What a great, tremendous thing you are doing. What a wonderful blessing to Scouts in the future. There is only one quote I have behind my desk, I think all the years I served as a General Authority. It is not a scripture. I had one of those while I was in business but I did not have it during my years as a General Authority. Just one quote on the cabinet behind my desk, I believe it is by John Ruskin. “I believe that the test of a great man is humility. I do not mean by humility the doubt in one’s own personal power. But really truly great men have the curious feeling that greatness is not in them but through them and they see the divine in every other human soul and are foolishly, endlessly, incredibly merciful.”

I think I qualify for part of that and I think that all of you do, I know all of you do. I think that we qualify to be able to see the good in every other human soul. I wish we could qualify for all of that statement. You do and you have invested in the youth of this great Council. What a tremendous blessing that is. When I was eleven, Dad and Mom were in the throws, I guess, of a divorce almost, and Mother was working full time at Garfield Smelter. On Wednesday night I went over to the ward, laid down upon my stomach, looked down through the window into the Scout meeting and watched the Scouts, and I did that every Wednesday night until I turned twelve. Then I joined the Scouts. It was difficult to raise the .50 cents for registration, but I raised it some way and got in the Scouts. I think I have been registered for 63 years since that time. I don’t think there’s ever been a year I haven’t been registered. All these wonderful awards you heard them talk about earlier that we receive, I think it is most of the calling in the Church that received, it wasn’t me. I tried to do a little bit but they are far behind what I should have received as a Scouter. So I commend that to you.

I think the great problem we have in Scouting is communication. We really need to tell our story better. You know the dissidents and those who are opposed to our stand on the alternate lifestyle and our stand on our duty to God, and some of those things that are very, very important to us. I remember it is like the judge who was visiting with a woman about a divorce.

He said, ‘Why don’t you tell me about the grounds for your divorce?’

The woman said, ‘Oh’ we live on about 3 1/2 acres and we have a little home and stream running through the property.’

He said, ‘No I mean what is the foundation of your marital problems?’

‘Concrete and brick, mortar I guess, I don’t know about those things.’

‘Well how are your marital relations?’

‘Well his uncle and aunt live in town and my mother and father live here, and everybody does just great.’

‘Well is there a real grudge?’

She said, ‘No, we’ve never owned a garage. We have a carport and that takes care of all of our needs.’

The judge was getting desperate and he said, ‘Well is there any infidelity?’

‘Yes there is, my son has a hi-fi set and my daughter has a hi-fi set.’

Finally the judge said, ‘Does your husband beat you up?’

She said, ‘Yes he does, about three mornings a week he gets up before I do.’

The judge said ‘Why do you want the divorce?’

The woman said, ‘Oh’ I don’t want the divorce, my husband does. He says he can’t communicate with me.’

I’m like the 66 year old golfer that can drive the ball a long way but would loose it right in the middle of the fairway. He couldn’t see very far, his eyesight was failing so he went to the pro and he said, ‘You know I hate to loose golf balls right in the middle of the fairway.’ He said, ‘I am still young enough I can drive the ball way out there far beyond where I can see. Do you have any ideas?’ The pro said, ‘Oh sure, we have this 88 year old golfer. He’s all crippled up but he hangs around here all the time and has eyes like an eagle. Why don’t you take him with you and he’ll help you find the ball. He’ll spot it for you.’ So they teamed up together and went out to the first tee, and the younger golfer teed the ball up and drove the ball far beyond where he could see. He said to the older golfer, ‘Did you see where that went?’ He replied, ‘Yup!’ ‘Where did it go?’ He said, ‘I forget.’

Sometimes that happens, I’m not sure. I think we do have a problem with communication. We sometimes do not communicate about the wonderful things that are happening. There is a verse, the only thing I asked from of my mother before she passed away, she did not have very much. I wanted one thing she had, it was an old 78 record, way before they had 45’s or what ever the next one is. On that was this, I’m not sure if she got it because of her husband, but this is the song that was on that and I have loved it, and have thought about the pain and the ache, and what a wonderful blessing you are to solve these kinds of things.

“Oh where is my wandering boy tonight?

The boy of my tenderest care.

The boy who was once my joy in life,

The child of my lovin’ prayer,

Oh’ once he was as pure as the morning dew

As he knelt at his mother’s knee,

No face was so bright, no heart was so true,

None was as sweet as he.

Oh’ if I could see him now,

My boy as fair in olden time.

His prattle, his smile, would make home a joy
and life a merry chime.

Go find my wandering boy tonight
and search for him wherever you will.

And bring him to me with all of his blight
and tell him I love him still.

Oh where is my wandering boy tonight?
Oh where is my wandering boy?
My heart overflows for I love him he knows.
Oh' where is my wandering boy?

I can just almost feel the heartache in a mother's soul because of that. If it weren't for the endowment funds and things, I wonder how I would have gotten through Scouting all those years.

I was on the plane going over to Denver and I was sitting next to a Japanese, a very well dressed Japanese man. We just started a conversation and finally I said, 'Tell me what you do?' He said, 'I'm a brain surgeon.' I got a little emotional and I said, 'Gee, thank you. You do something with a skill not many people in this whole world can do. What a blessing to mankind you are, I am just really pleased and proud to have the privilege of sitting with you and to have this wonderful and great opportunity to be on the plane together.' We talked for about fifteen to twenty minutes and he looked over and saw a Scout badge on my lapel. He said, 'Are you a Scout?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'What do you do?' At that time I was on the National Council Executive Board. I said, 'I'm on the National Council Executive Board and try to make some small contribution there.' He said, 'Are you an Eagle Scout?' I said, 'Yes,' and like all fathers I said, 'and I have six sons who are Eagle Scouts.' This wonderful man who sat next to me started to cry. He said, 'No, what you have done is far greater than what I am doing. You have those six Eagle Scouts.' He was very complimentary.

I was down in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and for those of you who are not members of the Church, most of our young men go on missions and you probably have something comparable where your young men go out and do things or do service projects and serve other kinds of things so you can at least relate to it. They had a young man who wanted to leave his mission early, so I came out there. The Mission President said that he talked to his Bishop, his Stake President, and two General Authorities in Salt Lake; he said I've talked to him until I am blue in the face and no one can talk him out of going home early from his mission. I said, "Well they told me when I came out to interview him, that I would make the decision whether he stayed or not, or try to talk him into staying. And if he decided he still did not want to stay after talking to me, he could go home." I was standing at the front of the chapel and the President stated that he was coming in the back door just now and into the chapel. So I walked back and said, 'I'm Vaughn Featherstone.' He said, 'I know President, I know who you are.' So I looked on his lapel and he had a Eagle miniature. I said, 'Oh my gosh are you an Eagle Scout?' He said, 'Yes I am.' I said, 'You know if you go home you will be the first Eagle Scout to go home from his mission early.' He started to cry and said, 'You mean I can't go?!' I said, 'Not unless you want to be the first Eagle Scout to ever go home.' He never did go home, he stayed. I thought, isn't that interesting the General Authorities couldn't talk him out of it, his Bishop and Stake President, but something in the honor of being an Eagle Scout did.

There's an article in the New Era that I sent in on the Scout Oath. I was down at Philmont a few years back, I have been the chairman of Philmont Scouting for the Mormon Relations for 16 different years and I think I hold the all time record of going down there. At this time, they usually honored the Conference Chairman, which they were kind enough to do and I understand that compliments are not what we are but what we should be. So it is easy for me to accept what they do and simply know that it is not me but the calling that I have. Right at the end of the time to honor the chairman,

they said, 'Scott Featherstone would you come up here.' That was my son who was with me, and about that time we had about four sons. He came up on the stand and was dressed in his full uniform, he walked over and stood in front of me, raised his arm like this in a Scout salute and said: "Dad, On my honor I will do my best, to do my duty to God and my country, to obey the Scout Law; and help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight." He cried through the whole thing and I knew that if anyone ever meant it when he said the Scout Oath, I knew that my son, Scott, did at that time.

I have thought about that Oath, we have a President of the United States who recently took his oath, a Vice President, we have Governor Huntsman who took his oath. Every single week we have Scouts stand in Scout meeting and they take their oath. "On my Honor I will do my Duty to God", what a wonderful blessing to "Do My Duty to God," if they understood what that really means. I thought about that when they asked me to be the Commissary Chairman for the 1985 Jamboree back in Virginia. I had prepared and as Commissary Chairman I was responsible for a million meals in ten days. After they had me all line up and President Monson had asked me to do it, I was already at that time the Young Men's President, was in the Missionary Department, and was also President of the Southeast Area which included all the Caribbeans, so I had just a little to do. I remember they said, 'Oh' by the way, as Commissary Chairman you are supposed to raise \$250,000 of food in-kind.' I thought I hadn't had any contacts in the grocery business for 13 or 15 years and some of you helped me with that, thank you. I went to the Church Office building and knelt down, and said 'Heavenly Father I am just a little busy, I have the missionary department, the Area, and am Young Men's President, I just need some help, I don't know how I've got time to raise that.' I got up off my knees, and boy, duty to God, thank God. I wrote a letter to Public's Food and said, 'How would you like to contribute all the fruit juices and blends?' I sent it to the CEO, all that grapefruit juice, it would have been a \$25,000 gift, and they sent us back a check for \$25,000. I contacted Kraft Foods and they gave us a check for \$65,000. I contacted Robert Bowlingbroke, all of these were the top executives in those companies, with Clorox, and asked how would you like to contribute all or part of Kingsford Charcoal, they are the parent company. He said, well, let us take it to Board meeting and make a decision, he called me back a few weeks later and said, 'We'll contribute all of the charcoal and we'll deliver it back to Fort AP Hill, Virginia and all you have to do is put a little sign that it was contributed by us, and we'll stack it up for you and have it there for you and take care of all of the cost.' We ended up \$335,000 dollars. I said to the man who had asked me to do that job, how much the previous Chairman had raised, were we all right? He said, oh' he raised \$167,000. I thought, isn't that interesting. I will do my duty to God no matter what. Whether the blessings come or not, there is compensating blessings when we do our duty to God and unto my country.

I was over in the Phillippines on an assignment as Area President. The first place we went to on Decoration Day, was the American cemetery. I think there are 37,000 Americans who died in Phillippines, and all their graves and markers are there, along with the Phillippinos who died there. The Americans own that. I think it was Fidel Roberts who later became the President, whom I had the pleasure of meeting with three different times in my position as Area President. At that time he was the Defense Secretary and he told a story about the Phillippinos being captured and the Japanese were putting them before the firing squad, lined them up, and one of the Phillippinos indicated that he wanted to play his accordion as he died. The Japanese captain gave his permission. He went over and picked up his accordion and started to play, "God Bless America." "The land that I love, stand

beside her and guide her, through the night with a light from above, from the mountains to the prairies, to the oceans white with foam, God bless America, my home sweet home.” The shots rang out and the man crumpled to the ground. I sat in that meeting and heard this wonderful man tell that and thought that every Boy Scout in the world, every young man in the world should hear that and have that kind of love and patriotism. Boy do we have problems today about patriotism. I can’t believe that we simply do not stand up and let people know how much we love this country. I am so grateful for Scouts. We give the Pledge of Allegiance, we salute the flag, we sing the “Star Spangled Banner.” Patriotism is important. To be morally clean. Elder Wheeler Wilcox said: “It is easy enough to be virtuous when nothing tempts you to stray. When without or within no voice of sin is luring your soul away. But it is only a negative virtue until it is tried by fire, and the life that is worth the honor of earth is the one that resists desire.” Can you imagine the blessing of being morally clean during all those years when temptation is strong? These wonderful young men and women seem to do it. Most of them, many of them in our Church are represented here, I think most of them do that in a way that is most unusual.

I want you to think about the alternative lifestyle and the pressure they are putting on the Scouts. Can you imagine? I can’t see where they are coming from to save my soul. I love them but I abhor the sin. And I think about those who want us to be not in the duty to God. Hamblin Garland wrote a great verse to Dan Beard, there is a council in the mid-west named after him, its the Dan Beard Council. He wrote this verse, and connect this to homosexuality if you would. I think that when Hamblin Garland wrote this, he was probably understanding the values of Scouting and being in the Wind River Mountains or the Tetons. “You feel the force of the wind, the slash of the rain, go face them and fight them, be savage again. Go hungry and cold like the wolf, go wade like the crane, for the palms of your hand will toughen, the skin of your forehead will tan. You’ll be rugged and swarthy, and weary, but you’ll walk like a man!”

I think all of our young men need to have leaders who are real men. President Benson’s favorite poems, of all the poems, I memorize a lot of things and I just think if you memorize things they’re always with you and I hadn’t planned on saying this. “Men are of two kinds and he was of the kind I’d like to be. Some preach their virtues and a few express their lives by what they do. That was the sort he was, no flowery phrase, or glibly spoken words of praise, one friend for him. He wasn’t sheep or shallow but his course ran deep, and it was pure, you know the kind. Not many in life you find who’s deeds are run their worth so far, but more than what they seem they are. There’s two kinds of lies as well, the kind you live, the kind you tell. Throughout his life he never acted one untruth. In light of day he always fought and never cared what other’s thought or how they felt about his fight if he believe that he was right. The only deeds he ever did were acts of kindness that he hid. What speech he had was plain and blunt, his laws un-attractive front, yet children loved him baby and boy, played with the strength that he could employ. Without one fear in their fleet, to sense injustice and deceit. No backdoor gossip linked his name with any shady tale of shame. He did not have to comprise, but was able to endure shrewd and wise, and let them to imply their vicious trade because of some past escaped. Men are of two kinds and he was of the kind I’d like to be. No door which he knocked against his manly form was locked. If ever a man on earth was free and independent it was he. No broken pledge lost him respect, he met all men with head erect, and when he past, I think there went a soul beyond a firmament so white, so splendid, and so fine he came almost to God’s design.”

I think that's the way the Lord will look at all of you for your generosity to this wonderful and great cause, it's no small thing. I want to close with a couple of quick thoughts. Charles Lindbergh in 1927, climbed in his plane *The Spirit of St. Louis*, it was loaded and gassed up, enough fuel that he thought he could fly across the United States. He taxied down the runway and banked the other direction, out over the Atlantic Ocean with all the wind, the hail, and the sleet, and the freezing of his wings and so forth, I guess it was a tremendous thing. Thirty-three hours and thirty minutes later he landed at Bourgeois Field in France to the cheering of the throngs. They radioed the message back across the Atlantic that Charles Lindbergh had landed in France at la Bourgeois Field. The chairman of the Board of General Motors was Charles Kettering. One of the underlings came rushing in and said, "Guess what Mr. Kettering, Charlie Lindbergh just flew the Atlantic alone." Mr. Kettering thought and said, "Let him try it with a committee." You understand that. The Washington Post picked that up and one of the writers wrote these wonderful words. "Alone? Was he alone by who's right side is right's courage, who has faith on his left hand sitting in the cockpit. And what a solitude to he whom has the self reliance to show the way and ambition to read the dials. Does he lack company for whom the air is cleft by daring, the darkness made light by other enterprise. True, the bodies of other men may be absent from his crowded cabin, but as his aircraft keeps charted course he holds communion with those rare spirits, whose staining potency gives faith to his armory, resourcefulness to his mind and contentment to his soul. Alone? With what more inspiring companions could he fly?"

I have thought about that and John Gillespie McCready wrote, "Oh' I have slipped the surly bonds of earth and danced the clouds on laughter's silver wings. Sun-ward I have climbed and joined the tumbling mirth of sun-split clouds and done a hundred things you have not dreamed of. Slipped and wheeled and swung high in the sunlit silence hovering there. I have chased the shouting wind along and flung my eager craft through footless halls of air. Up above the long delirious blue, I have topped the windswept heights with easy grace, where never Lark or even Eagle flew. With a silent lifting mind I have trod the high un-sanctity of space, I have reached my hand and touched the face of God."

I think when we are in the Wind River Mountains, or the Tetons, or floating down the rivers, I think that is when the young men reach out and feel a closeness. I don't think I've ever been in the wilderness when I haven't felt that I wanted to just be alone, to ponder and think, and to be constantly involved in prayer. And all of the activities that Scouting has, that is what is so tremendous. Let me share with you one last thought because I think what is taking place is something so very real and so very important. I do not know, I hope somehow your posterity know what you have done, the endowment you have left, the contributions you have left to the youth of your church or this church, or whatever it may be. I know it is major. I think back to when I was eleven and laying on the ground looking in the window, hardly waiting to be able to join the Scouts. I was humbled right to the dust of the earth when I was called to be a Scout. I remember going to one of the Scout meetings at twelve, you know what twelve year olds are like, I was obnoxious. I remember one day I passed off some of my things for Second Class. Brew Reynolds my Scoutmaster said, "You know Vaughn, you have some natural leadership talents." I don't think up until that time anyone had ever said anything good except that I had gotten straight F's in school or something, nothing really big. Then he said, "If you ever settle down we could use you in our Scout troop." I think I was perfect for the next few weeks. He was good and made me an assistant patrol leader, then a patrol

leader, then a senior patrol leader. I remember once he was also over the Sea Scouts, he would come over and would get our meeting started then he would leave it under my direction. Then he would leave and go over to the Sea Scouts get them started then come back and finish us up and return to the Sea Scouts. One time I was there and he did not come back, so we just did what he normally did. We had a Scoutmaster's Minute, we joined arms and I gave a little minute. Some of the District Committee members walked down ahead of him, came back and were listening at the door when he walked up. Here's the Scoutmaster outside of the room, he walked up and tried to tell them what he was doing, they said "Shh" listen. He told me years later when he was a Bishop and I volunteered to speak at his ward, after I was a General Authority. He said, those men said to me, "that's a fine young man in there," whatever it was I was saying. My Scoutmaster Brew Reynolds said, "No he's better than that." He's a great young man and one day he will be a leader of the church." I thought, God bless Brew Reynolds my Scoutmaster who believed things that my Dad would never have believed. I don't think my Dad ever did one nice thing for me except rub my head once when I had the measles in about third grade. I don't remember him ever saying anything kind to me, or being kind to me in any way, but I had a Scoutmaster who was there for me when I needed him. So I commend that to you. I want you to know that I have a witness that Scouting is so very, very important in the lives of these young men. With all the things that are assailing them on all sides, the computer and the Internet, and things that we do not dream they are getting into, and the temptations out in the world, far more than we understand. But always, always there is that foundation base of Boy Scouts of America. God bless you and God bless Boy Scouts of America. Thank you.