

# Nathaniel Been Funeral

## May 5, 2005

### **Introduction**

- Thanks to all who are here
  - Great support to the Beens
  - Many here touched by Nathaniel's life
- Express thanks on behalf of the Been family

### ***The faith of the Been Family***

- It is my privilege to know the Been family
- I have marveled at the Been family
- I know others have marveled too
- We have marveled at their faith and attitude while at the hospital
- We have marveled at their faith and attitude at school
- We have marveled at their faith and attitude at church
- We have marveled at the dedication and service they have had toward Nathaniel
- I was at the hospital when Nathaniel passed away
  - Witnessed his parents faith and acceptance of things totally in the Lord's hands
  - "He has passed away, yet is alive, gone to another place"
- Later on I was at their home shortly after they informed their children of his passing away
  - As they spoke about their brother I witnessed the children's faith, understanding and acceptance
    - "He is free now"
    - "We will see him again someday"
    - "He will be able to run"
    - "He is watching over us now"
    - "It's better for Nathaniel that we're on God's plan than if we were on Satan's plan"

### ***Provide understanding***

- I would like to give all here an understanding to the Been family's faith
  - What it is that set them apart from others dealing with difficult circumstances
  - What allowed them to touch our lives and lift us when we felt we should be lifting them
    - At the hospital
    - At school
    - In our church
- Nathaniel, because of his physical limitations was different
  - Yet that wasn't viewed by his family as a tragedy – Instead:
    - A blessing in their lives
    - A temporary condition
    - Why?
- These things I would like to address

### **Plan of Salvation**

- To understand we must understand God's plan for us all
  - Plan of Salvation
  - Plan of Happiness
  - Christ's role
- God's plan answers the questions we might ask about this life:
  - Why am I here?
  - Where did I come from?
  - What happens after this life?
- Let me address God's plan and then against that backdrop let me paint in Nathaniel's life for our understanding

### ***Pre-mortal life***

- The scriptures and prophets teach that we have a dual nature – spirit and body ()
- They also teach us that God is the father of our spirits ()
- That we lived before we were born
  - In the presence of our Heavenly Father as one of his spirit children()
  - We had agency, we made choices, we developed our identity and increased our spiritual capabilities()
- God is a glorified and perfected being of flesh and bone ()
- God presented his plan of happiness ()
  - Those of us that chose to follow His plan were permitted to come to the earth
    - To experience mortality and progress toward eternal life

### ***Mortal life***

- We are now experiencing mortal life
- We were born, which is a uniting of our spirits to our body
- Here we have opportunities to grow and develop in ways that were not possible in our premortal life
- We sometimes experience the bitter in life
  - Sometimes brought on us by our own choices
  - Sometimes through no choice of our own
  - All this that by tasting the bitter we may know to prize the good (Moses 6:55)
- We experience joy, sorrow, happiness and learn through our experiences
- We are tempted and tested
  - To see if we "will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them" (Abraham 3:25)
- Basic to God's plan is the family unit
  - Family is to help, nurture, love, support

### ***Post-mortal life***

- We all die at some point
- What is death then?
  - It is separation of our body and spirit
- When we die it is not the end of us
  - Our mortal body is laid in the grave
  - Our spirits will enter the spirit world and there await the resurrection and judgment
- Julieann Been was right the other night – Nathaniel is alive, but has gone on to a different place
- Amanda Been was right the other night – Nathaniel is free

### **Christ's Atonement and the Plan of Salvation**

- I have presented an outline of the Plan of Salvation
- An important part we must understand in it is the role of Christ's atonement

### ***Resurrection***

- I mentioned that after we die, while in the spirit world we await the resurrection
- 1 Corinthians 15:22
  - " For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive"
  - As part of the plan Adam's transgression brought death into the world
    - Try as we might to prolong it we all die
- 1 Corinthians 15:22
  - " For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive"
  - As part of the plan Christ's atonement and resurrection provides life to us all
    - Resurrection is an "unconditional" blessing of the Atonement
      - All are resurrected regardless
- What does resurrection mean?
  - Re-uniting of spirit and body
- What is our body like then?
- Is it any different?
  - Alma 40:23
    - "The soul shall be restored to the body, and the body to the

- soul; yea, and every limb and joint shall be restored to its body; yea, even a hair of the head shall not be lost; but all things shall be restored to their proper and perfect frame"
- Our body at the resurrection is in a perfect immortal state, no longer subject to disease or death
  - Here now we can have some understanding in Nathaniel's life and the faith of the Been family
    - Nathaniel came to earth and received a body
      - His body required he be in a wheel chair
        - He required feeding and care
        - He had a body that we see as "broken"
    - Yet in the resurrection his will be a "proper and perfect frame"
      - Jared Been was right the other night – Nathaniel will be able to run

### ***Atonement for sin***

- The fall of Adam brought not only death into the world but sin also
- Sin is different than death in that it comes into our lives by exercising our agency, that is by the choices we make
- Here too, Christ's atonement is a gift that can offset sin
  - Forgiveness of our sins and their effect upon us is a "conditional" blessing of the atonement
  - The difference between this gift and the gift of the resurrection:
    - Where the resurrection comes to us regardless
    - We must accept *this* gift by exercising our agency
    - We do so by entering the narrow gate through repentance and by being baptized
    - Then by continuing on the straight and narrow path that leads to eternal life ()
  - This too is part of the atonement of Jesus Christ
    - In Gethsemane and on Golgotha he paid the price for our sins

### ***Atonement for those not accountable***

- I have been asked - What about Nathaniel? – he was not baptized – does he need to be baptized?
- Another "unconditional" blessing of the atonement is that those who are held "not accountable" are redeemed without baptism

- One example of those held "not accountable" is little children
  - Moroni 8:8,11,22 (Mormon)
 

"little children are whole, for they are not capable of committing sin; wherefore the curse of Adam is taken from them in me, that it hath no power over them"

    - The Lord in modern revelation revealed that the age of 8 is when children are to be held accountable
    - Before that do they reach the age of 8, can do things that are "wrong"? – yes
      - But they are not held accountable
    - Christ through the atonement pays the price for these actions
    - Therefore children who die before the age of 8 need no baptism but are saved in the kingdom of God
- But Nathaniel was nearly 13 years old when he died....
- Others who are not held accountable is those who are limited by their mind/body
  - D&C 29:49-50
 

"again, I say unto you, that whoso having knowledge, have I not commanded to repent?  
And he that hath no understanding, it remaineth in me to do according as it is written"
  - Joseph Fielding Smith:

"The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints considers all deficient children with limited capacity to understand, just the same as little children under the age of accountability. They are redeemed without baptism and will go to the celestial kingdom of God, there, we believe, to have their faculties or other deficiencies restored according to the Father's mercy and justice" (Answers to Gospel Questions, 3:20)
  - Nathaniel's bishops all judged that Nathaniel did not to be baptized
- Sam Been was right the other night – It's better for Nathaniel that we're on God's plan than if we were on Satan's plan
  - Because in God's plan, through the unconditional blessings of the atonement he is redeemed
- The Been family is right – they will see Nathaniel again

### ***Source of their strength***

- Their understanding of God's plan as I have described it, is and always has been the source of the Been family's strength
  - They know one day he will be whole
  - They know that one day they will be together with him
  - They know that right now he is free from the limitations placed on him while he was here
- This is the faith that allowed them to agree to have Nathaniel in their lives when they first knew about Nathaniel
  - Instead of choosing to not have him born
- This is the faith that allowed them to keep going and persevere in tough times
- This is the faith that allowed them to find joy where others might only see tragedy
- This is the faith that allowed them to know whether Nathaniel lived or died was in God's hands
- This is why Nathaniel's life was a blessing to those of us whose lives were touched by his

### **Testify**