

OK for Hellmuth. j

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Dear Mom and Dad,

I love you both very much. I hope that you are both healthy and feeling well in body, mind, and spirit. I worry that because of the pressures of work and modern-day life, that you are feeling down.

I can't tell you how grateful I am to both of you for your celestial marriage and love for God. I cannot thank you enough. If I had only listened to your pleadings to study harder, be more righteous, etc., I would be even farther along in development.

I love the gospel. I love studying the scriptures. I feel that I've read them so many times and not understood what they were saying. There are so many mysteries and so many wonders. I study the Book of Mormon every day. Right now, I barely finished the 5th Chapter of Helaman. What an incredible chapter. I'm going to read in the Book of Mormon every single day for the rest of my life. There is always something new.

Here in the mission, I've finally learned something of the value of scriptures, family home evening, church literature, etc. Sometimes we as human beings are so blinded by the world. I feel like I'm finally able to see. I look back and see I've wasted a lot of time. Hopefully the Lord will bless me that I might use the rest of my life constructively.

I'm also studying in the O.T. I'm going to make a historical chart. Anyway, the work is going well. We've had only two baptisms this past month, but we're working hard.

Baptism is such a sacred thing, and yet it really is a new beginning. I don't think there is anyone who truly understands where they are or what's going on when they're being baptized. If they understood, there wouldn't be so many inactives.

The world lies in sin because of ignorance. Very few know why we're here. Very few in truth understand the plan of salvation. I, myself, have a very small grasp on it. Right now I'm building and putting together a puzzle. Every piece needs to be painstakingly measured and put into place. I feel that only a God understands the complete puzzle. And that's the problem.

Elder Faust spoke to us in the MTC about the Book of Mormon. In doing so, he showed us the worn copy his mother had used and explained that no one could "inherit" the mysteries of God or an understanding of the plan of salvation.

If it were so, we as missionaries would find our task so much easier. I can put the puzzle together myself, but it is impossible to give someone else your own knowledge. It has to be gained personally by the individual. Too bad that we are not like



computers in that we can exchange disks and files from one memory to another and thus learn! (Smiley face.) Well, enough profound stuff.

Anyway, I'm finding that each day or week there is a new mystery or piece to consider, and the funny thing is, that for every answer there are a multitude of new questions. I wonder how God felt when He finally knew everything. Or how He felt when He was working on that last equation, pondering that last mystery. It must have been a very interesting feeling.

The work is going well. Working hard and doing the best we can to help others to do what's right. If there's one thing I have learned--it's that the desire has got to be in the heart of the person to get them to do something. I remember all the times that you (Dad) tried to get me to sit down with you to learn mathematics. You had the knowledge and the righteous intention of sharing it with a hard-hearted son. I'm now finding myself in the same situation every day. Sorry for my being such a stupid, lazy lump. When I come home, I hope to sit down with you and learn how to solve problems. (Smiley face.)

Love, Elder Bartholomew

P.S. Dear Mom, don't worry, I remember all the times that you tried to teach your hard-hearted son to clean up his room, too; but I'm afraid that I have not humbled myself and I am determined to remain in my hard-hearted state. I NEVER am going to clean my room (smiley face - Ha Ha Ha --[this is funny?]).

That's what you get for thinking I've suddenly become mature. It's also to keep you from getting up in testimony meeting and talking about, "Oh, I can't believe how much my son has changed...sniff, sniff....Why I remember when he absolutely SWORE he'd never do a math problem...sniff...swallow....I'm ever so grateful for my missionary son... (Smiley face.) Hee hee hee. Forget it!

JUST KIDDING....Maybe I'll pick up some socks once in a while.

Go eat some Ben and Jerry's and stop laughing in your hands like that. Get your elbows off the table. Stop smacking! Have you done your homework? IS THE BASEMENT CLEAN? If I get home in two hours and it isn't clean, well, I'll just have to.... (He still hasn't forgotten how to be a smart aleck!)

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*Hi! Hope you had a great Thanksgiving!*