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Email from Mom, 5-9-11

Joyce Larsen <linenlady9@gmail.com>

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To: Phillip Larsen <phillip.larsen@myldsmail.net>

Cc: John Larsen <john@larsen-family.us>

Hello, Dear Phillip, Elder Larsen!

How wonderful it was to talk to you yesterday! I had meant to make a list of things to ask you about, but never did. And before we called, I was going over and over the Portuguese phrases I have been learning, to try to remember how to ask if someone speaks English, or to even ask if I may speak to Elder Larsen. But it all was not necessary. But I'm still working on the Portuguese so I can maybe do that at Christmas (if necessary). And of course, by then you will be more comfortable speaking in Portuguese anyway :).

I awakened this morning with the words for a couple of the verses of "The Time Is Far Spent" going through my mind: "Shrink not from your duty, however unpleasant, But follow the Savior, your pattern and friend. Our little afflictions, tho painful at present, Ere long, with the righteous, in glory will end, Ere long, with the righteous, in glory will end." (that is the 2nd verse), and the 4th verse is: "Be fixed in your purpose, for Satan will try you; The weight of your calling he perfectly knows. Your path may be thorny, but Jesus is nigh you; His arm is sufficient, tho demons oppose. His arm is sufficient, tho demons oppose." The words that especially came to my mind, over and over, were, "shrink not from your duty, however unpleasant" (like dealing with heat and humidity, strange bugs, being far from home, etc.), and "Be fixed in your purpose, for Satan will try you; The weight of your calling he perfectly knows." I always think that if something is extra hard for me (like getting in the habit of journal-writing), it may be an indication of how important it is, maybe more than a small thing that takes just minutes a day might seem. So I really liked what you said yesterday about how Sis. McFadden (I think) gave you the advice to cherish the moments, and enjoy every little thing. That goes for your mission now, and for when you have little kids and daily life might be a bit challenging, or any time things are hard, for whatever reason.

I was thinking one day about how you spent several months in TX at first, and wondering why the Lord might send you there instead of to Brasil sooner. One thought that comes to my mind is that, in addition to whomever you may have been sent to teach in TX and NM, you were able to work hard, and love being a missionary and know what it feels like to be successful at that. Now you are in Brasil, and the climate and language are very different, and there are cultural differences as well,

every day, so you have not been able to communicate in the way you would like. But on days you may be discouraged, you can remember that you CAN do well at teaching people (because you have before), so once the language is more comfortable for you to speak, testimony will just flow from you and your teaching of the people of Brasil will be as powerful as when you would bear testimony to the people of TX and NM. Now as I write this, I think, too, that the people of Brasil who are listening with the Spirit will understand when you teach with the Spirit, whether your Portuguese is fluent or not, so just be guided by the Spirit in the teaching you do, and keep at it! The Lord will let you know what people need to hear that you can teach them.

After our conversation yesterday, I took Rachel home (after she had ice cream, of course!), and she gave the rose she had gotten from church to her mother. I saw her mother in the gym this morning, and we talked for a few minutes. I've been seeing her more often in the gym lately, and it's fun to see people I know. Today I was on the treadmill next to Kendall Hood.

Then, last night, I took the girls to the Potters' house to take care of the cats, which we are doing this week. It's fun to have little things like that to look forward to. This week we will choose the scholarship recipient for this year. We are pretty much settled on a name, but Dad and I still need to spend more time going over the papers, and praying about it. We'll let you know who gets it when we turn in the name. Since we just talked to you yesterday, there is not as much news to talk about. I told Jeana Lopez-Carrasco this morning about how we had talked to you, and she said one of her sons called from school and she said it was the first time in four years they have not had a missionary call on Mother's Day. We talked about what a blessing missionary work is, and how good it is to have kids on missions, even though we miss them like crazy. It is such a blessing! I feel the Spirit in your emails, and your testimony strengthens mine. Thank you. I've used bits of several of your emails as parts of talks (I spoke in Stake Conference in January, and also on Easter Sunday, also gave the spiritual thought on Thursday at Stake Council).

The Book of Mormon is true, and missionaries are part of God's Army, representatives of Christ, as you know. I'm so proud of you! You have humbled yourself to be an instrument in God's hands, even now when you do not know the language as well as you will in weeks and months to come. You keep trying, even when it's hard, and even when kids find your accent humorous. That is inspiring me to learn a little Portuguese myself, and not be afraid to try.

I love you, and I pray for you each day, throughout the day. Enjoy every moment, take pictures when you can, and write things down in your journal!

Love,

Mom