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Halfway through your mission . . .

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

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

Hello, Dear Elder Phillip Larsen!

Thursday, 15 September 2011

Happy Hump Day! I celebrated your halfway mark by going to the airport to greet Karen Ogden as she arrived back from her mission. Amazing how time passes! I called Patty to find out the flight number and such, and told her it was your halfway mark today, and she said you would be burning a shirt. She said that's what James did on his mission, and at the 6-month mark, they burned a tie. She said she asked the Elders in Nashua if they do that, and apparently they do. I haven't heard that you did that (and I wouldn't mind if you didn't, especially if the shirt and tie are still good and useful). However, please know I'm thinking about you. Well, I always think about you, actually!

Monday, 19 September 2011

It was so fun to welcome Karen back at the airport! Jenny Davis and her family had made a big sign which they held up on the glass so Karen could see it as she came down the stairs. She looked tired, as I would expect, from traveling since the day before. She kept speaking in Portuguese, and said it was hard to remember to speak in English! We took lots of pictures, and a lady at the airport took pictures of the whole group (not with the camera I had, though). Oh, and Patty Ogden bought balloons, one that said Welcome Back, and one that had Cars on it, and two plain regular balloons. I got to meet Stephen's girlfriend. And Michael came. As well as Jenny Davis and her family (they had even pulled kids out of school to greet Karen). And Melanie and Michael Brown, who had come from Idaho to be there, and Melanie's parents, the Grays. It was a good group. And we'll be doing the same thing for you in a year, meeting you at the airport, so be sure to treasure and enjoy every moment of the next year, as I know you do! What a great opportunity a mission is!

You can expect to get a packet of letters from the Primary kids one of these days. This month's theme in Primary is "The Gospel Will Be Preached in All the World", with the scripture being D&C 133:37. So one of the things they did was to write to the missionary from our ward, which would be you!

This week's lesson in some of the wards (it will be this coming Sunday in Heritage Park) is lesson 41, which is the one on "The Postmortal Spirit World". It is a good lesson, though I felt very teary while listening to it, and while reading it. I wish I knew more about what Stanford is doing, and how things are. I guess I'll know the details better when I get there myself, and I'm not in a hurry to do that, so I'll just have to have faith, and be patient.

There is a new family in the ward named Phillips. Sis. Phillips (Ashly) gave a really good talk yesterday in Sacrament Meeting on 2 Nephi, 28:30. "For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have." She talked about receiving personal revelation. She talked about 1 Nephi 18:1-3, where Nephi didn't get all the answers at once, but went to the mountain often (verse 3) and prayed often to get answers. That's how it is with us, we learn as we go, and most of the answers we request do not come on a silver platter. In Nashua 2nd Ward's Sacrament Meeting, the High Council speaker, Bro. Baird, also talked about receiving personal revelation, and how important it is to prepare ourselves spiritually. This would be important before General Conference, and before Sacrament Meeting, and before any time like a wedding or other ordinance. It is important to fill our minds ahead of time with good things. I've noticed this. If I listen to classical radio or silence on my way to the Temple, it is better than if I listen to talk radio. I am thinking that spiritual preparation, and the things we were reminded of about how we get answers in small doses, would apply in the lesson on the Postmortal Spirit World. We can get the answers as we require them, and as we prepare ourselves for them. A little bit at a time.

What was the topic of your talk last week, that you prepared in just a few hours' time? What resources did you use to prepare it? I am looking forward to hearing you speak! When we talk at Christmas, you'll have to give your testimony, maybe in Portuguese, too. I keep trying to learn more of the language each day. I told Karen that I knew how to order a beer (I actually know what NOT to order, and how to say I would like cold water!), but I do not know how to say "welcome home" in Portuguese! But that will come. I'll spend some time with her, going to the Temple sometimes, and working on the language sometimes.

Heather and I went to a movie together on Saturday, called *The Help*. It was a very good movie, and fun to do something with her. Then we went later in the day to see the Orchard House, which is where Louisa May Alcott, the author of *Little Women* lived. That is in Concord, MA, and we went with the Relief Society book group. Things have been so busy that we haven't done an outing together for a long time. Then on Sunday when Dad and Julia were at the fireside, Heather and I talked and

knitted, also took a walk. She had a lesson in Institute a few weeks ago which she will be giving to us for FHE next week, on keeping the Sabbath Day Holy. It is really nice to have quiet time together, without watching lots of shows and such. And it all goes along with the talks from church on Sunday, on spiritual preparation, and personal revelation.

Speaking of taking walks, do you walk a lot on your mission? I know in your mission call booklet, they said to be prepared to walk about 20 miles a day, and that you would go through several pairs of shoes on your mission, also that you need good socks, which you have. I wondered if you actually walk that much? You don't say much about it, so I wasn't sure.

As always, I'm looking forward to hearing from you again this week. I know the Lord loves and guides His missionaries, and it's such a blessing to be able to be a representative of Jesus Christ on your mission! Karen said in her talk that missionaries, when they promise something in the name of Christ, it as if Christ is speaking. She said there is power in being a representative of Jesus Christ. She said she would see miracles every day on her mission. I would love to hear of the miracles you see. I love you, dear Phillip!

Love,
Mom