

Don't "Miss the Majesty of this Moment!"

In October 2024 General Conference after announcing 17 new temples, our beloved prophet, President Russell M. Nelson said in his talk entitled "The Lord Jesus Christ Will Come Again":

"My dear brothers and sisters, do you see what is happening right before our eyes? I pray that we will not miss the majesty of this moment! The Lord is indeed hastening His work.

"Why are we building temples at such an unprecedented pace? Why? Because the Lord has instructed us to do so. The blessings of the temple help to gather Israel on both sides of the veil. These blessings also help to prepare a people who will help prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord!"

Just last month our prophet announced 15 more temples—bringing the total number of temples announced, under construction, and in operation to 382. The year I was born there were 20 temples in operation and no new temples were dedicated. There have been new temples dedicated every year since I graduated high school, with 27 temples dedicated in the last two years alone. I am a witness to the hastening of the Lord's work in these latter days.

The prophet invites us to ponder: "why are we building temples at such an unprecedented pace?"—because the Lord has instructed us to do so, because he wants us to help gather Israel on both sides of the veil and to make available the blessings that will prepare each of us and the world for the second coming of our Lord and Savior.

President Russell M. Nelson also said this in his most recent conference address:

"Regular worship in the house of the Lord increases our capacity for both virtue and charity. Thus, time in the temple increases our confidence before the Lord. Increased time in the temple will help us prepare for the Second Coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We do not know the day or

the hour of His coming. But I do know that the Lord is prompting me to urge us to get ready for that 'great and dreadful day.'"

If you were like me when you heard those words your ears pricked up. Maybe you had some mixed emotions. Maybe you thought that if that great and dreadful day came tomorrow you wouldn't be ready. After the week I have had at work that day being tomorrow sounds pretty good right now. Or maybe the thought "the prophet is urging me to get ready, and I am very much not ready for that" crept into your mind.

I am not going to speculate when the Lord is coming, the prophet himself reiterated "we do not know the day or the hour of his coming" so it would be pointless to guess. I am not going to rundown a checklist of which of the signs of the times in scriptures have been fulfilled and come up with a prediction for how soon the Savior's return will be. It is significant that the president of the church did instruct and urge us to prepare ourselves and the world for the Savior's return in the last two General Conferences.

I do want to point out that every prophet from Joseph Smith until today has urged us to get ready for the second coming. This is not new counsel.

So how do we do this? How do we ready ourselves?

The prophet gave us a major key in both of those quotes I have just read. We need to go to the temple as often as we are able.

We are in the last days. Whether it is the very very very last days or just the very last days is not super important. But it does seem like to me that we are in the days prophesied by Joseph Smith when it "shall be heard of wars and rumors of wars, and the whole earth shall be in commotion" when "men's hearts shall fail them." (D&C 45:26) Seems like a pretty accurate description of what is going on in the world. The world being in commotion and the failing of men's hearts doesn't sound like a very happy state of affairs. In that section Joseph Smith also speaks of scourges, sickness that will cover the whole earth, the love of men waxing cold, and that iniquity shall abound (D&C45:26-27,31). A casually reading of the

section might give us pause or make us feel possibly a little sad or fearful. But, in the heading of section 45 Joseph Smith explains that the revelation was received, “to the joy of the saints.”

How can we find joy in the midst of the iniquity and calamity in the world that has long been foretold by ancient and modern day prophets? We stay close to our Savior who is “the light that shineth in the darkness.” (D&C45:7)

The Lord tells us where we need to be in these latter days. “But my disciples shall stand in holy places, and shall not be moved.” (D&C 45:32) When I read this verse I don’t read it like the Lord is saying, “thou shalt stand in holy places and thou shalt be immovable,” like is some sort of directive. The way the sentence is structured it reads like a statement like, when all this bad stuff is happening, you guys, my disciples, will be standing in holy places and don’t worry you won’t be moved. You will be safe. You will be protected by my shadow by day and my pillar by night (Exodus 13:21-22). If you are worthy to be here in the temple, you don’t need to worry about the mess outside.

I know when I am in the temple I am able to leave the worries of the world behind and am filled with the “peace that passeth all understanding.” (Phillippians 4:7)

The Lord is truly hastening his work and is using his disciples to build more and more holy places where his people can gather safely. Instead of being anxious about everything that is wrong in the world, let us be “anxiously engaged” in that hastening.

If you are a little anxious at the prospect of meeting the Savior maybe these words from Elder Bruce R. McConkie will offer some comfort:

“Now is the time and the day of your salvation, so if you’re working zealously in this life — though you haven’t fully overcome the world and you haven’t done all you hoped you might do — you’re still going to be saved. You don’t have to do what Jacob said, “Go beyond the mark.” You

don't have to live a life that's truer than true. You don't have to have an excessive zeal that becomes fanatical and becomes unbalancing. What you have to do is stay in the mainstream of the Church and live as upright and decent people live in the Church — keeping the commandments, paying your tithing, serving in the organizations of the Church, loving the Lord, staying on the straight and narrow path. If you're on that path when death comes — because this is the time and the day appointed, this the probationary estate — you'll never fall off from it." Bruce R McConkie "The Probationary Test of Mortality"

"You'll never fall off from it." "You shall not be moved."

I suspect that most people that are willing to show up to the adult session of stake conference are probably doing at least a half way decent job of staying on the covenant path.

But what about those who are not here. Our friends, neighbors, and loved ones who have maybe wandered a few steps of this covenant path of safety and joy?

I love the 19th chapter of 3 Nephi in The Book of Mormon. In chapters 11-18 of 3 Nephi we get the wonderful account of when Jesus descended from heaven and came to visit the people in the Western Hemisphere. He heals them, ministers to them, calls apostles, prays for them, and blesses their children. Then at the end of chapter 18 he tells the multitude to go home and ponder the things they had just seen and heard. He tells them he will come back again the next day.

"And now it came to pass that when Jesus had ascended into heaven, the multitude did disperse, and every man did take his wife and his children and did return to his own home.

"And it was noised abroad among the people immediately, before it was yet dark, that the multitude had seen Jesus, and that he had ministered unto them, and that he would also show himself on the morrow unto the multitude.

"Yea, and even all the night it was noised abroad concerning Jesus; and insomuch did they send forth unto the people that there were many, yea,

an exceedingly great number, did labor exceedingly all that night, that they might be on the morrow in the place where Jesus should show himself unto the multitude.” (3 Nephi 19:1-3)

All night those that had seen the Savior and were individually ministered to by him spent all night doing their ministering. Loving, sharing, and inviting everyone they could find to come to the Nephite temple in Bountiful. To come and see the Savior who was going to be there the next day. As a result of their invitations the multitude gathered at the temple in anticipation of the Savior’s return “was so great that they did cause that they should be separated into twelve bodies.” Maybe I am reading between the lines but that sounds like a 1200 percent increase to me.

What if we approached our ministering and inviting with the same sense of urgency as those from 3 Nephi? Maybe Jesus is not going to show up at the Sunday session of stake conference tomorrow but tomorrow could be the day one of our friends hears the message they need to hear to make the decision to take steps toward the covenant path.

How can we help those who are not here look forward to that great day with hope and joy instead of fear and anxiety. I quote from Elder Steven D. Shumway’s talk in the April General Conference: “President Russell M. Nelson said, ‘Now is the time for you and for me to prepare for the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ.’ When President Nelson said this, the Spirit taught me that as we participate in God’s work, we prepare ourselves and others for Christ’s return. The Lord’s promise is compelling that callings, ministering, temple worship, following promptings, and other ways we embark in God’s work uniquely prepare us to meet the Savior.” (Elder Steven D. Shumway “Participate to Prepare for Christ’s Return”)

One way we can help those that are trying to is by inviting them to serve besides us. I think too often as church leaders or just church members we are hesitant to offer others who we might not perceive as being active or strong in the gospel with opportunities to engage in the work of the lord.

“We will fall many times as we engage in God’s work. But in our effort, Jesus Christ catches us. He gradually lifts us to experience salvation from failure and fear and from feeling like we will never be enough. When we consecrate our meager but best effort, God magnifies it. When we sacrifice for Jesus Christ, He sanctifies us. This is the transformative power of God’s grace. As we serve, we grow in grace until we are prepared to ‘be lifted up by the Father, to stand before [Jesus Christ].’”

The Lord doesn’t need our help to do his work and he knows that none of us are perfect or are going to serve perfectly in our respective callings. The Lord doesn’t necessarily give us callings because we are the best and most qualified people for the jobs. We are called to serve so that we can grow and be stretched and reach the “measure of our creation.” For those who are hesitant to accept a call to serve remember the Lord doesn’t expect perfect performance. He wants you to serve so that he may bless you and help you become the person you were meant to be.

I love Zenos’s description of our latter day ministry in In Jacob 5:70-72

“And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard **sent his servant**; and the servant went and did as the Lord had commanded him, **and brought other servants**; and they were few.

“And the Lord of the vineyard said unto them: Go to, and labor in the vineyard, with your might. For behold, this is the last time that I shall nourish my vineyard; for the **end is nigh at hand**, and the season speedily cometh; and **if ye labor with your might with me ye shall have joy in the fruit which I shall lay up unto myself against the time which will soon come.**

“And it came to pass that the servants **did go and labor with their might; and the Lord of the vineyard labored also with them**; and they did obey the commandments of the Lord of the vineyard in all things.”

Let us remember these words from Elder Shumway as we serve: “I do not know all the Savior will ask me when I stand before Him, but perhaps one question will be “Who did you bring with you?” Callings are sacred gifts from a loving Heavenly Father to help bring others with us to Jesus Christ.

So I invite leaders and each of us to more intentionally seek those without callings. Encourage and help them engage in God's work to help them prepare for Christ's return."

If we want to have joy in the midst of these troubling times let us be actively and anxiously engaged in building up the Lord's kingdom on earth. Let us love, share, and then invite all to take their next steps on that covenant path. Let's do all we can to make sure that multitude at that coming marriage feast is as great as it possibly can be. That those seats are filled with as many of our friends and family as is possible.

I asked my 8 year old how would he feel if I told him that the Savior was returning in a couple days. He said that would be pretty cool, what a miracle. He then expressed his excitement for the day he would meet the Savior and then "he wouldn't need glasses anymore."

I pray we can look forward to that "pretty cool" day with the same eye of faith as my visually impaired son. He is right the Savior will return "with healing in his wings." (2 Nephi 25:13)

In closing I want to invite each and every one of us to be a part of the Lord hastening his work. Let us hasten our own efforts. Let us bring others with us as we "labor with [our] mights." (Jacob 5:72) The Lord will labor along with us. I testify that is true. This is his church. President Nelson is his prophet in these days.

I quote from the revelation of John (7:13-17):

"...What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

"And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

"Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

“For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

When reflecting on this scripture Brigham Young prophesied:

"To accomplish this work there will have to be not only one temple but thousands of them, and thousands and tens of thousands of men and women will go into those temples and officiate for people who have lived as far back as the Lord shall reveal.”

We haven't made it thousands yet but we are on our way.

“My dear brothers and sisters, do you see what is happening right before our eyes? I pray that we will not miss the majesty of this moment! The Lord is indeed hastening His work.

“Why are we building temples at such an unprecedented pace? Why? Because the Lord has instructed us to do so. The blessings of the temple help to gather Israel on both sides of the veil. These blessings also help to prepare a people who will help prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord!”