

April 2026 General Conference



Introduction

By President Dallin H. Oaks

President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The conference we convene today is different because it begins with what we call a solemn assembly.

My dear brothers and sisters, welcome to general conference. I now address members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, numbering over 17 million worldwide, and others who are interested in the remarkable progress and inspired teachings of this Church.

Most of you know we have these general conferences twice each year. But as many of you are not aware, the conference we convene today is different because it begins with what we call a solemn assembly. For more than a century, this has been an event of great significance to members of the Church.

In a solemn assembly, we will sustain members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, voting by quorums and groups. We do this only in the first conference where a new President and prophet of the Church has been called.

I am grateful to be among those whose leadership callings are formally recognized in this way and to express appreciation for your participation in this significant occasion.

In advance, I express our gratitude as leaders of the Church for our members' sustaining vote, prayers, and support. We also pray for you to be guided and prospered as you continue the great service you give to the children of God throughout the world.

At this Easter season, I reaffirm our testimony of the resurrected Lord and recognize that He is the head of this Church. We pray for His blessings upon this conference and upon all of you in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Solemn Assembly

Presented by President D. Todd Christofferson

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

Brothers and sisters, I have been asked to handle the business of the solemn assembly, the sacred event for which we are gathered today.



In this solemn assembly, as noted, we will vote by quorums and groups. We will call on each quorum or group in turn. Wherever you are, you will then be invited to stand and express by your uplifted hand that you choose to sustain those whose names will be presented. You should vote only when asked to stand with your quorum or group.

Please express your support in the usual way with the uplifted hand. If there are those who oppose any of the proposals, we ask that you contact your stake president.

We will now begin. Again, please stand and vote only when asked to do so.

We will begin with members of the First Presidency. Will the First Presidency please stand?

It is proposed that the First Presidency sustain Dallin Harris Oaks as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Members of the First Presidency in favor, please manifest it.

It is proposed that the First Presidency sustain Henry Bennion Eyring as First Counselor and David Todd Christofferson as Second Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church.

Members of the First Presidency in favor may manifest it.

It is proposed that the First Presidency sustain Henry Bennion Eyring as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Dieter Friedrich Uchtdorf as Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Members of the First Presidency in favor may manifest it.

It is proposed that the First Presidency sustain the following as members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: Dieter F. Uchtdorf, David A. Bednar, Quentin L. Cook, Neil L. Andersen, Ronald A. Rasband, Gary E. Stevenson, Dale G. Renlund, Gerrit W. Gong, Ulisses Soares, Patrick Kearon, Gérald Caussé, and Clark G. Gilbert.

Members of the First Presidency in favor, please manifest it.

It is proposed that the First Presidency sustain the counselors in the First Presidency and the

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators.

Members of the First Presidency in favor will please manifest it.

The First Presidency may be seated.

Members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will now vote. We invite the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles please to stand.

It is proposed that the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles sustain Dallin Harris Oaks as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, together with his counselors and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as they have been presented and voted upon by the First Presidency.

Members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in favor, please manifest it.

You may be seated.

We ask the General Authority Seventies, Area Seventies, and members of the Presiding Bishopric please to stand.

It is proposed that all General Authority Seventies, Area Seventies, and members of the Presiding Bishopric sustain Dallin Harris Oaks as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, together with his counselors and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as they have been presented and voted upon by the First Presidency.

All General Authority Seventies, Area Seventies, and members of the Presiding Bishopric who are in favor, please manifest it.

You may be seated.

We ask the following to please stand, wherever you may be throughout the world: ordained patriarchs, high priests, and elders.

It is proposed that Dallin Harris Oaks be sustained as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, together with his counselors and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as they have been presented and voted upon.

All in favor, please manifest it.

Any opposed may manifest by the same sign.

Please be seated.

Will all members of the Relief Society—that is, all women 18 years of age and older—please stand?

It is proposed that Dallin Harris Oaks be sustained as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, together with his counselors and members of the Quorum of the Twelve

Apostles as previously presented and voted upon.

All in favor, please indicate by the uplifted hand.

Any opposed may so indicate.

You may be seated.

Will all those holding the Aaronic Priesthood only—that is, ordained priests, teachers, and deacons—please stand?

It is proposed that Dallin Harris Oaks be sustained as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, together with his counselors and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as previously presented and voted upon.

All in favor may indicate by the uplifted hand.

Any opposed may so indicate.

Please be seated.

Will the young women who are ages 11 to 18 please stand?

It is proposed that Dallin Harris Oaks be sustained as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, together with his counselors and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as previously presented and voted upon.

All in favor, please indicate by the uplifted hand.

Any opposed may so indicate by the same sign.

You may be seated.

We now ask the entire membership of the Church, wherever you are located, including all who have stood previously, to please stand.

It is proposed that Dallin Harris Oaks be sustained as prophet and seer and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, together with his counselors and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as they have been presented and voted upon.

All in favor, please indicate by the uplifted hand.

Any opposed, by the same sign.

You may all be seated.

Thank you, brothers and sisters, for your sustaining vote on behalf of these leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We are grateful for your faith and prayers in our behalf.

About His Business

By Elder Patrick Kearon

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Life is better—everything is better—when we are about His business.



I was baptised into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in my mid-20s in London, joining a host of new young single adult friends in my newfound faith. During the first sacrament meeting following my baptism, I was asked to come to the front of the chapel, and the congregation was invited to raise their hands as a sign of welcome to the ward and to the Church.

This was an unfamiliar practice to me. But I looked into those smiling faces, and I felt as if they were cheering me on, genuinely thrilled that I had discovered faith in Jesus Christ and a desire to follow Him. Many of my new friends had recently experienced this same welcome and transition into a life of faith.

A week later, I was invited to meet with the bishop. He had taken time to get to know me when I was being taught by the missionaries. He rocked back in his chair, thwacking a ruler into his palm, and told me that we were meeting because he had a *calling* for me. He had prayed—about me—and he told me the calling would be of benefit to me and my future service to the Lord in His Church. He extended the calling of assistant ward clerk. The reaction in my mind was, “Assistant ward clerk? Well, *that is not me!*” Fortunately, a little grace intervened, and I responded with a “thank you” and that I would endeavour to learn what was involved. I did not have a clue.

At church the next Sunday, I was asked to stand as my calling was announced. My ward family was invited to raise their hands if they agreed to sustain me. Comfortingly, I saw those same raised hands and smiling faces surrounding me in the congregation, reassuring me that these new friends would support me with their goodwill, patience, and faith.

The ward clerk I was to be “assisting” came straight to me at the end of the meeting and said, “Come on, Patrick. I’ll show you how this works.” Over the coming months, he did show me how everything worked, sitting side by side, often for hours—in the small clerk’s office. (To be clear, that’s a small office for clerks, not an office for small clerks.)

Other callings followed. My bishop kept a loving eye on me and eventually shared that he had felt prompted by the Lord to extend callings which would be stretching for me but, he trusted, not overwhelming. I came to see purpose and power in each calling I received, and with hindsight, the bishop’s inspiration came to make sense to me.

I also had the opportunity to sustain many others, happily trying to support them as we all learned to serve together. Often the calling was an obvious fit to the person’s gifts and talents. Occasionally I thought, “Hmm, interesting choice,” though never more than when I was that choice.

Common Consent

With those raised hands and encouraging smiles, we were participating in *common consent*, where we can choose to sustain, by the raising of the right hand, those called to serve. Common consent is not a mere formality but a beautiful mix of our agency, unity, and faith. It is a voluntary, personal commitment to support, uphold, and help the Lord’s called servants in their responsibility, whether bishopric member, Young Women adviser, Sunday School teacher, or stake Primary president. We sustain each other with our prayers, our love, our patience, and our faith. Will we always agree with those we are invited to sustain? Will we always think they are doing a good job and serving as the Saviour would? Perhaps not, and we might be right, but as we pray for them and they for us, important bridges of unity are built.

I came to understand why everyone serves one another in a ward or branch: it affords us all the opportunity to pursue Christ and His virtues—such as charity, humility, meekness, forgiveness, and love—with people who may be very different to us. I clearly saw how faith is fortified and the body of Christ bonded together. I could see the Lord working through imperfect servants, very much including myself, who were striving to discern His will for those they were serving.

Some callings are highly stretching, while others may leave us wondering, “Isn’t there more I could be asked to do?” You might serve in a very visible role for a time, only later to be called to quiet, unseen service—or to support those with less experience. When callings change in ways that deeply impact you or your family, it can require great faith and trust in the Lord while you adjust.

I also acknowledge that there are those who, owing to exceptional circumstances, are unable to respond to a calling at a given time. Careful leaders will be sensitive to this, and through prayer, the Lord can help you know when the time is right for you to serve again.

Is it sometimes inconvenient to serve in a calling that asks something of us? Might we become jaded or reluctant? I have learned over and over again that—whatever our offering—in the Lord’s economy we *always* come out ahead.

When the Saviour called Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow Him, they instantly dropped their nets. If a call were ever inconvenient or incomprehensible, it must have been this one on the shore of Galilee, yet with faith they followed. And what of feeling disheartened or

flagging? Well, even with all they saw, felt, and experienced, those first Apostles needed the Lord's gentle reminding and His repeated invitation to feed His sheep.

Our service is a choice, an offering to God, and a blessing. We all know that prayer, study of scripture, and worship at church and in the temple are critical to the development of our faith. Have we also come to see our callings as having a foundational role in the expansion of our faith? Callings from the Lord are tailor-made for our growth, as we humble ourselves, look outward, and learn that, indeed, when we are in the service of our fellow beings, we are in fact in the service of our God. It really isn't where we serve but how that matters to the Lord.

And it matters for us too. There was nothing half-hearted about those friends I talked about. They were living their faith at full speed, and it was contagious. I could see the joy that came to them from their whole-souled devotion—which brings us to today.

Solemn Assembly

We have had the sacred opportunity to come together to raise our hands in support of President Dallin H. Oaks, to sustain him as the Lord's prophet, seer, and revelator. I'm sure that if he were to review his Church service in his 20s and 30s in the way that I just have my own, nothing would have been further from the realms of possibility in his mind than becoming the President of the Church. This is a call he didn't seek or aspire to. The weight of this responsibility is colossal and sobering. I can't help but think of his daddy, who died when young Dallin was only seven, and his faithfully resolute mother, who raised a resilient, hardworking son who would later be called from an illustrious yet modest life to serve as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Now, 42 years later, we joyfully sustain him as the Lord's chief Apostle, as *his whole soul* once again responds to a call, claiming no infallibility while trusting in the Lord's guiding hand.

Since 1880, we have called this kind of moment a *solemn assembly*, a sacred gathering for a holy purpose such as this. While today is certainly solemn in purpose, it is also a day full of gratitude and rejoicing at the opportunity for the whole Church to come together and exercise common consent. We have signified our willingness to uphold President Oaks with our confidence, faith, and prayers.

"Every individual [has stood] equal with every other in exercising with sobriety and in solemnity his or her right to sustain or not to sustain [him] who, under the procedures that arise out of [revelation], [has] been chosen to lead."

About His Business

When 12-year-old Jesus was found by His parents teaching in the temple, He told them that He had been "about [His] Father's business." And we can be too. Every calling,

whatever it may be, is "His business" when embraced with a humble and willing heart and a desire to lift and comfort His children and share His good news. We are not merely filling an assignment when we respond to an inspired call but joining the Saviour of the world in His infinite, redeeming work. He needs you, and He needs me. Life is better—everything is better—when we are about His business. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Ministering—"That Ye Love One Another; as I Have Loved You"

By Sister Kristin M. Yee

Second Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency

Ministering is truly loving and caring for others as the Savior would. It is a way of being; it is the way of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

In my first general conference message, I briefly shared how the transformative power of the Savior's Atonement changed my father.

Today I would like to tell you a little more about how that change began. My father hit a very low point in his life when two ministering brothers began to visit him. One of them invited my father to come with him and his wife to the temple. He accepted the invitation. Each week they picked him up and drove to the next city to worship and serve in the house of the Lord. This continued for three years. Then my dad decided to become a temple worker.

I remember seeing changes in my father during that time. He became aware and attentive to the needs of others. He took better care of his health. He began to care about His relationship with God and subsequently all the relationships in his life. The change was real. He now had the Spirit with him, and I felt it.

Bless this ministering couple for helping my dad. They didn't judge him for where he was in his life. They walked with him and helped him to develop his relationship with God. They are still my father's closest and dearest friends.

Because these humble and devoted disciples of the Savior quietly ministered to a seemingly lost and dejected man, my family and I have been eternally blessed.

When we choose to minister in our inspired assignments and our daily interactions, we are helping to bless someone's father, someone's sister, someone's son. When we minister, we are helping to answer each other's prayers. We

are the Savior's hands. Oh, how I am grateful for all those who have blessed families like mine by ministering with compassion.

I know the Lord is aware of you and your struggles as you strive to keep your covenants and minister to others. He has promised blessings and divine help for you and your family as you exercise your faith to serve Him.

We may not be able to fix difficult or heartbreaking circumstances as we hope; some changes are not ours to make. But we *can* choose to love and minister as the Savior would.

Ministering by the Spirit invites the Savior's healing into our lives and the lives of those we minister to. I often find peace, clarity, healing, and purpose when I minister. I find the Savior when I minister. This is by divine design.

Ministering is truly loving and caring for others as the Savior would. It is a way of being; it is the way of our Savior, Jesus Christ. It is not a program or a checklist; ministering is the essence of who God is and who we can become as we follow Him.

We are not called to or released from ministering. It is part of fulfilling the covenants we made at baptism and in the temple. We covenanted to take upon us the Savior's name—becoming as He is as we sacrifice and consecrate our lives to Him. When we minister as He would, we begin to think, feel, and love as He would.

Our Father in Heaven carries out His eternal work by ministering to the individual needs of His children one by one. The Savior showed us this pattern often during His mortal ministry as He compassionately blessed, healed, and cared for "the one." He invites us to do likewise—to minister in individual and personal ways, ways that help us to feel the love of God. When we feel loved and seen by Him, it changes everything. And when we bless the one, we bless the whole.

The Savior shows us the ultimate individuality of God's love through His atoning sacrifice and the divine capacity He has to heal and minister to you and me on an intimate level.

Jesus Christ chose to suffer for our sins and to atone in indescribable agony that we might be saved and receive divine succor. All this He did without the assurance that we would love Him in return. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

This is the kind of love He has for you and me. And this is the kind of love He desires us to have for each other: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you." We can demonstrate our love for Him by keeping His commandments and ministering to others while they and we are yet imperfect.

We've been sent here to learn to love God and each other as the Savior did—to love in sacrificial and transformational ways, ways that will bring our greatest happiness. Through the Savior's Atonement we can come to love in ways that may feel impossible. Elder Quentin L. Cook taught, "Our love of God and our fellow man is the ultimate test of the condition of our spirit."

Choosing to minister isn't always convenient or comfortable. It requires sacrifice, faith, vulnerability, and trusting things will work out as we let God prevail. When we pause and choose to care for someone over something, His Spirit and love can enter in and we can receive the peace and perspective that we *really* need.

A young sister shared that she often feels nervous about ministering because she doesn't know how others will respond. I asked how she works through that. She smiled and said, "I go—and it usually turns out much better than I thought." She exercises faith, and the Lord helps her.

As we minister in faith, we do not go alone. The Lord will be with us. He will "provide [the] means whereby [we] can accomplish the thing which he has commanded"—including the blessing of God's priesthood power as we keep our covenants and His priesthood authority to represent Him through our assignment. The Lord knows the hearts of those we minister to. He loves them and He loves you. He will help you to bless them in the ways they need.

Think of the significance of our ministering assignments. Relief Society and elders quorum presidencies receive revelation from the Lord to extend inspired assignments to you and me—assignments to represent Him and labor with Him in caring for God's children. As President Jeffrey R. Holland taught, we are invited to give "the God and Father of us all a helping hand with His staggering task of answering prayers, ... drying tears, and strengthening feeble knees."

If you want to feel grounded, gain a sense of divine belonging, and make a real difference in the world, I invite you to follow the Savior and minister in His name. Never was the need greater than now for souls to be lifted, strengthened, and healed through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. "So many of us desperately need to feel of His love." As His disciples, you and I have the covenant blessing and responsibility to bring the Savior's love and relief to all of God's children. When we offer His love and belonging to others, we will find it ourselves. The Savior promised, "Whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

The Savior did not limit His ministering to His family and close associations. He ministered to all and invites us to do the same. We receive ministering assignments to grow our capacity to love others and to ensure no one is forgotten. We pray for them, care for their needs, and strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ.

I believe our Father in Heaven wants you to be happy. He loves you. His work, including ministering, is designed to bring you and me the greatest joy we can experience.

I testify that ministering not only "brings forth the blessings of heaven," it is the way of heaven. I testify that Jesus Christ lives. As we emulate His sacrifice by loving and ministering as He would, we will be blessed to find our own joy, healing, and relief in Him. We will become even as He is. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Come Home

By Elder Clark G. Gilbert

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The Savior loves all of us and is tenderly calling for you and for me to come home.

In Elder Patrick Kearon's remarks of the inadequacies we feel in a new calling, perhaps it was significant that he made reference to a "small Clark."

As Christine and I have felt the overwhelming weight of this calling, we have been grateful to know that Christ's grace makes up the difference in our lives. We have been grateful for the prayers and sustaining support of so many. We have also been strengthened by President Dallin H. Oaks's first message as an Apostle, given nearly 42 years ago. In 1984 he declared, "I will devote my whole heart, might, mind, and strength to the great trusts placed in me, especially to the responsibilities of a special witness of the name of Jesus Christ in all the world."

Today I echo that same declaration. I pledge my life to be a witness to the name of Jesus Christ. Today, I will specifically witness to the names of Redeemer and Repairer, as I focus on Christ's invitation for all of us to come home.

William Shakespeare's famous words pronounce that missed opportunities can bind our future:

There is a tide in the affairs of men

Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;

Omitted, all the voyage of their life

Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

Choices do have consequences, but we know in the gospel of Jesus Christ that when we lose our way spiritually, the Savior still allows us to change. As President Russell M. Nelson taught:

"Because of our covenant with God, He will never tire in His efforts to help us, and we will never exhaust His merciful patience with us."

And "should [we] stray, He will help [us] find [our] way back."

God Is Calling Us Home

After our first son was born, Christine and I struggled to have more children. We found hope in Minerva Teichert's painting of a pioneer mother entering the valley with her little family, beckoning others to follow behind her. Like that young mother, we were pleading for our future children to gather with our family. Eventually they did come, but our years of hoping and praying, for us, were difficult.

In my weekend assignments as a General Authority, I have repeatedly witnessed people finding their way home. It may not always have come quickly, but it happened—over and over again. Let me take you on just a few of those ministering visits.

I will first speak to those who feel they don't belong.

Sister Anglesey had left her home and her faith 30 years earlier. She had long known something was missing in her life but felt overwhelmed just to walk back into church. She eventually mustered the courage to attend a temple open house. As beautiful as that visit was, Tammy later confided to me, "All I could see was an experience I would never have. No sealing, and no [endowment]." Still, prompted by that visit, she dressed for church one Sunday, only to park her car and watch others walk into the building. Overcome with anxiety, she simply drove home, changed her clothes, and wept alone. An inspired bishop later sent her a note inviting her back to church. I met Tammy on a ministering visit just after her temple endowment. She had been away from the Church for 30 years! She had spent Sundays sitting alone in a church parking lot. But the Lord brought her home and restored her to His light, love, and joy.

Next, I speak to those who feel they don't measure up.

On a ministering visit in San Antonio, Texas, I went to the San Antonio Temple, where we met with the missionaries and the Vargas family. Andrea was then serving as a Primary president in the Church. Her husband, Luis, though not a member, did attend church. The mission president had called me and shared with me that Brother Vargas felt like he wasn't good enough to be baptized—that he couldn't measure up to the other people he saw at church. On the steps of the San Antonio Temple, I said, "Brother Vargas, you don't have to be perfect to be in this Church. You just have to do your best, and Christ will make up the difference." At the end of the tour, Brother Vargas turned to his wife and said, "Honey, I think it's time I join this Church so I can become a better father and a better husband." He was baptized a month later, and their beautiful

family was eventually sealed in that same temple.

To those who doubt.

Justin and Kenna Valdez moved away from family so it would be easier for them to walk away from their faith. But the hero of this story was their eight-year-old son, who still wanted to be baptized. Sensing an opening door, a wise stake president scheduled a ministering visit for us to go to their home. I still remember Kenna's squinty look as she stared at me as I walked into the room. But she eventually confided she still had faith in the Savior and even a testimony of the Book of Mormon. But she faced a few triggering issues that kept her from coming back to church. We promised them that as they anchored in the things they did believe, the Lord would help with the things they didn't. Overcoming their concerns was not an issue of resolving every faith question but of helping them recognize the Holy Ghost. As President Oaks recently taught, "You live in a season in which the adversary has become so effective at disguising truth that if you don't have the Holy Ghost, you will be deceived." Justin and Kenna began to make the changes necessary to come back. Six months after our visit, Kenna texted me, "Hi Elder Gilbert! We are ready to be sealed as a family." This is a photo from the day that they were sealed in the Pocatello Idaho Temple.

I speak next to those who are trapped in traditions.

When I met John Raass, he was not yet a member of the Church. His wife, Kailani, had catered a dinner for the stake presidency, and we invited them to join us. John appeared weary of entering a spiritual discussion, but I assured him we would become fast friends. You see, John was a former BYU football star, and I grew up cheering for him. We eventually asked John why he had never joined the Church. He cited the need to honor the faith traditions of his now deceased parents. We helped him realize that they now understood the Church and they would honor his decision. John then chose to meet with the missionaries. Two months later he was baptized. And a year later his family was sealed in the temple.

Conclusion

Feeling we don't belong, struggling with doubts, or being limited by traditions are just a few of the reasons we don't immediately answer the call to come home. But even as societal pressures pull people away from their faith, life's deeper questions do not go away. As President Nelson taught, "The truth is that it is much *more exhausting* to seek happiness where you can *never* find it!" President Oaks declared that the journey home starts by reanchoring on the Savior. Only Jesus Christ can *fully* restore that light and joy into your life. We all struggle. We need patience, service, and love from others. To those who are trying to

help those they love, hold on to the truth. Keep your covenants. Helping others requires you to stay in your covenants. To those who are struggling to come home, know that it is your Savior who's the one calling you back. In the end, everyone must make their own choices to come home.

In President Dallin H. Oaks's recent historic address at BYU, the Marriott Center initially looked completely full. But if you looked closely, there were still hundreds of unfilled seats, and the ushers struggled to find space for those who still wanted to join the devotional. Then something remarkable happened. Students who had already found their seats began to turn their phone flashlights on to signal to the late-arriving students that there was still space. It was as if they were holding up a light to say, "Please come sit with me; we saved a seat just for you."

I conclude with a hymn that to me feels like the very voice of the Lord calling us home:

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling—

Calling for you and for me.

Patiently Jesus is waiting and watching—

Watching for you and for me!

Come home! Come home! Ye who are weary, come home!

Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling—

Calling, O sinner, come home!

I witness that Christ is our Redeemer. When we fall short, He repairs the breaches in our lives. The Savior loves all of us and is tenderly calling for you and for me to come home. Come home. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



All Who Have Endured Valiantly

[\(Doctrine and Covenants 121:29\)](#)

By Elder David A. Bednar

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The scriptural phrase "endure to the end" is a repeated reminder of the mighty spiritual change in our hearts that should be ongoing throughout our lives.

I have participated in competitive athletics since I was a young boy, and running has been an essential element of my physical conditioning. Over the years, I developed a lifelong love-hate relationship with running. I love the physical benefits and mental exhilaration provided by regular workouts. But I hate the sore muscles,

aching lungs, and exhaustion. As I have come to the end of many of my long-distance runs, I have exhorted myself to push on, hang on, and endure to the end.

In relation to physical exercise, the word *endure* suggests maintaining intense physical and mental effort over an extended period of time. Many of us also may associate the word *endure* with the unpleasant drudgery of routine work and responsibilities. But in a spiritual context, enduring is far more than merely persevering tenaciously to complete demanding duties or challenges.

The scriptures highlight instructive uses of the word *endure*. For example, the Lord declared to the Nephites, "Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life."

And the Savior revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith that "if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God."

I pray for the assistance of the Holy Ghost as we consider a higher and holier understanding of what it means to endure to the end as lifelong disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Becoming New Creatures in Christ

The Savior's restored gospel invites us to be spiritually transformed—not merely to improve our behavior. As we align our character, desires, actions, and what we truly love more closely with God's will, the Savior can bring about a comprehensive and complete change in us.

As we strive to put off the natural man and become Saints through the Savior's Atonement, we are to "come unto [Him]," be "born again," bind ourselves to the Father and the Son through sacred covenants and ordinances, pledge our willingness to take upon us the Savior's name, "receive a fulness of the Holy Ghost," experience a "mighty change [of] heart," and serve the Lord with all our "heart, mind, and strength." We are to become new creatures in Christ.

This mighty spiritual change is possible only "through the merits, ... mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah." As mortal beings, we are in absolute and never-ending need of Heavenly Father's and the Savior's help to realize our eternal destiny.

The Role and Importance of Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual gifts are blessings and capacities given by God to His children through the power of the Holy Ghost. All individuals who receive the gift of the Holy Ghost by proper priesthood authority and the laying on of hands are eligible to receive spiritual gifts intended "to bless and benefit those who love the Lord and seek to keep His commandments." Spiritual gifts are prerequisites for and essential to our coming unto the Savior, being blessed with His

attributes, and ultimately becoming more like Him.

The very name “spiritual gifts” teaches a vital lesson. All such gifts are given by God according to His will and timing; they are not results we earn solely through focused effort and personal discipline.

The Spiritual Gift of Charity and Enduring to the End

Mormon testified that “charity is the pure love of Christ” and “the greatest of all” spiritual gifts. Significantly, the word *endure* is used in the scriptures to define and describe charity.

For example, “charity ... *endureth* forever,” “*suffereth long*, ... seeketh not her own, ... *beareth all things*, ... *endureth* all things.” And, as you sisters know well, “charity never faileth.”

Mormon also taught that “whoso is found possessed of [the spiritual gift of charity] at the last day, it shall be well with him.” Note the double meaning of the word *of* in this verse. We can possess charity, but ultimately charity should possess us.

As we are blessed to receive this supernal gift, a transformation occurs in our spiritual nature and character. Being “possessed” of the spiritual gift of charity refers in part to the spiritual development and progress that are the overarching purposes of the Savior’s gospel.

Higher and Holier

For disciples of the Savior, charity encompasses both what we do and what we can become as this spiritual gift ultimately possesses us. At a fundamental level, charity certainly includes acts of compassion, kindness, and generosity directed toward others. But at a higher and even holier level, charity is the very essence of the “end” toward which we are enduring—becoming new creatures in Christ.

Please consider how these two overarching dimensions of charity are described in the thirteenth article of faith. The first half of the statement emphasizes charitable and gracious acts: “We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men.”

The second half of the statement emphasizes the ongoing nature of our spiritual transformation: “We believe all things, we hope all things, we have *endured* many things, and hope to be able to *endure* all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.”

This concluding article of faith is an admonition for us to do good, to be good, and to endure to the end in coming unto and following the Savior and receiving the heavenly gift to love as He loves.

The Savior’s divine nature and sublime character were the wellsprings of perfect

compassion during His mortal ministry. The Redeemer of the world turned outward in love and service when He faced spiritual adversity or physical pain—in contrast to the natural man in each of us that turns inward in self-interest, self-centeredness, and selfishness. As we live as He invites us to live and with His help, our nature and character over time increasingly become more like His.

As we follow, love, and serve the Savior, we gradually focus less on our own desires and interests and more on understanding and addressing the needs of others. We do not merely perform benevolent deeds; rather, our state of being is changed and becomes increasingly Christlike. Charity, then, ultimately possesses us.

“Wherefore, ... pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, ... that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”

Grace for Grace

The prospect of being blessed in mortality with even a small portion of the character and attributes of Jesus may seem utterly impossible to us. But the Redeemer “marked the path and led the way.” The power of His doctrine, covenants and ordinances, and example can bless us in every aspect of our lives.

The pattern of spiritual development evident in the Savior’s mortal life also applies to each of us. Jesus Christ was “in the beginning with the Father.” So were we.

He “came and dwelt in the flesh,” and “he received not of the fulness at first, but [received and] continued ... grace to grace, until he received a fulness.” As children of God, we also can receive of His fulness “in due time,” following the same “grace for grace” pattern as did the Savior.

Scriptural Examples

I am now going to read three scriptures that contain the phrase “endure to the end.” I will insert the phrase “is possessed of the pure love of Christ” in each verse so we can learn a vital and eternal lesson.

1. The Savior taught His ancient Apostles: “He that *endureth to the end [or is possessed of the pure love of Christ]* shall be saved.”
2. Nephi testified: “I heard a voice from the Father, saying: Yea, the words of my Beloved are true and faithful. He that *endureth to the end [or is possessed of the pure love of Christ]*, the same shall be saved.”
3. Alma declared: “He that findeth mercy and *endureth to the end [or is possessed of the pure love of Christ]* the same shall be saved.”

Enduring to the end is linked inextricably to the spiritual gift of charity. Enduring to the end is

not merely a relentless determination to grit our teeth, hold on to the limits of our physical strength and mental capacity, and push through the challenges and adversities of mortal life; it is so much more than that.

Enduring to the end is the joyous quest of a lifetime—a pressing forward with faith in Jesus Christ in a gradual process of trusting in and receiving help from our Savior to become more like Him. As our love for Him grows ever stronger and deeper, we can be blessed to receive spiritual perspective, the Lord’s empowering grace, and exceedingly great and indescribable joy.

Promise and Testimony

The scriptural phrase “come unto me” is the Savior’s introductory invitation to learn and act in His doctrine and begin a process of spiritual rebirth.

The scriptural phrase “endure to the end” is a repeated reminder of the mighty spiritual change in our hearts that should be ongoing throughout our lives; it also is His promise of what we may become if we truly are possessed of the pure love of Christ.

The Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, “All thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, shall be revealed and set forth upon all who have *endured valiantly* for the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

I joyfully witness that each of us, with the Lord’s grace and mercy, can believe all things, hope all things, and *endure* valiantly all things. I so testify in the sacred name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.



Follow the Prophet; He Knows the Way

By Elder Michael John U. Teh

Of the Seventy

When we follow the teachings and examples of prophets, seers, and revelators, we are following our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Follow the Prophet

To the rich young man, Jesus said, “Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.” The young man did not know that the path he was asked to tread would lead him to “treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt.”

I am grateful for teachings received over the years that have helped me better follow the

Savior. For my purpose today, I simply would like to focus on one. As the Primary song goes, "Follow the prophet; he knows the way."

In October 2024, President Dallin H. Oaks gave the following counsel: "Following Christ is not a casual or occasional practice. It is a continuous commitment and way of life that should guide us at all times and in all places. His teachings and His example define the path for every disciple of Jesus Christ. And all are invited to this path."

Gospel Culture

My parents were born in the Philippines, but both of them had Chinese ancestry. Like almost everyone else in the Philippines, they embraced the predominant faith of my native country. So, our family enjoyed a healthy mix of different family, ethnic, and religious practices and traditions that influenced our daily lives.

When my parents joined the Church, little did they know that they were embracing yet another set of values and traditions—even the gospel culture, based on the plan of salvation, God's commandments, and the words of living prophets. Over time, as our family strived to fully embrace the gospel, my parents discovered that some of our well-loved traditions were not consistent with gospel culture. It became apparent to them that they needed to make a choice.

And so began the difficult undertaking of weeding our family of traditions and cultural practices that were contrary to gospel culture. You could just imagine the immense pressure they received from family and friends to hold on to certain traditions even though they were contrary to the gospel.

I am so grateful that my parents exercised faith and chose to keep their covenants. It was a long and difficult process. Even when I left to live on my own, they were still working on it. Although our family was still not perfect, we had come a long way. This experience taught me that embracing gospel culture simply meant keeping our covenants.

President Oaks taught:

"The gospel of Jesus Christ challenges us to change. 'Repent' is its most frequent message, and repenting means giving up all of our practices—personal, family, ethnic, and national—that are contrary to the commandments of God. The purpose of the gospel is to transform common creatures into celestial citizens, and that requires change. ...

"The traditions or culture or way of life of a people inevitably include some practices that must be changed by those who wish to qualify for God's choicest blessings."

The Strengthening and Enabling Power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ

A few weeks ago a stake president in Japan felt that we should visit a man diagnosed with cancer. Despite his going through treatment,

the cancer continued to spread. In these situations, I struggle to find the words to say. So, for days I pleaded for the Lord's help. I pictured the man to be downtrodden and devastated. I anticipated that he would ask why the Lord gave him this trial. I imagined that he would be hopeless and perhaps even a little angry. The day of the visit arrived, and I was still at a loss. When we finally met, I was completely astonished. What stood before me was not at all the man I had imagined. His countenance was bright and happy. There was no bitterness, and he never asked why.

Just recently, I had very similar experiences with members living in Korea. My intention was to minister to others. However, at the end of my visits, it felt like I was the one being ministered to.

Jesus Christ strengthened each of these individuals to endure their trials. As President Oaks has taught: "Our Savior experienced and suffered the fulness of all mortal challenges. ... He therefore knows our struggles, our heartaches, our temptations, and our suffering, for He willingly experienced them all as an essential part of His Atonement. And because of this, His Atonement empowers Him to succor us—to give us the strength to bear it all."

Ye Are the Light of the World

Two years ago we were asked to live in Hong Kong, known for its tall buildings. Our apartment building was dwarfed by much taller buildings around it. So, I was prepared to live in the shadows. Imagine my delight to wake up and see the rays of the morning sun shining through our windows. This simple experience filled my soul with immense joy and gratitude.

When I finally got my bearings, I was so confused. Our windows were not facing east. How did we ever get the morning sun? Upon further investigation, I learned that the sun's rays were being reflected into our apartment by the tall building in front of us. I was reminded that when we strive to follow the Savior, He will use us to bless others. Through our example and service to others, they will feel the Savior's love for them.

From President Oaks: "During his ministry Jesus taught, 'Behold I am the light; I have set an example for you.' Later, he told his Apostles, 'Hold up your light that it may shine unto the world,' adding, 'Behold, I am the light which ye shall hold up—that which ye have seen me do.'"

It is interesting to me that some people would think that God's prophets live in the past and are not attuned to the times. Everything I know of prophets is the opposite. They actually see into the future as watchmen on a tower.

As we learn in the book of Mosiah, "A seer can know of things which are past, and also of things which are to come, and by them shall all things be revealed, or, rather, shall secret things be made manifest, and hidden things

shall come to light, and things which are not known shall be made known by them, and also things shall be made known by them which otherwise could not be known."

I testify that we are led today by a living prophet, President Dallin H. Oaks. He, along with the counselors in the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, are indeed prophets, seers, and revelators. I am grateful to have participated in the solemn assembly this morning. My dear brothers and sisters, especially you, my dear young friends, when we follow their teachings and examples, we are following our Savior, Jesus Christ. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Tithing—Putting God First

By Elder Jorge T. Becerra

Of the Seventy

I am certain that the payment of tithes and offerings will enhance our spiritual capacity as we put God first.

The prophet Alma asked several penetrating questions to help the Church members in Zarahemla have "a mighty change" of heart as disciples of Jesus Christ ([Alma 5:12](#)). Shortly thereafter, he taught the people of Gideon. Something he taught caught my attention as I read, "I have come having great hopes ... that ye had humbled yourselves before God, and that ... ye were not in the *awful dilemma* that our brethren were in at Zarahemla" ([Alma 7:3](#); emphasis added).

Later in the same sermon, he repeated, "I had much desire that ye were not in the *state of dilemma* like your brethren" ([Alma 7:18](#); emphasis added). What was this awful dilemma? The footnote in [verse 18](#) leads us to a possible answer. The Apostle James taught us what this dilemma could be: "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" ([James 1:8](#)).

A double-minded person is one who is wavering, indecisive, or conflicted, someone who lacks commitment to a single purpose or belief. One way to overcome double-mindedness is to learn to put God *first* in our lives. Jesus Christ taught, "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" ([Matthew 6:33](#); emphasis added).

From the beginning of time, God has taught His children to put Him *first* in their lives. For example, the Lord gave Adam and Eve "commandments, that they should worship the

Lord their God, and should offer the *firstlings* of their flocks, for an offering unto the Lord. And Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord.

"And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying: Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me.

"And then the angel spake, saying: This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth" ([Moses 5:5-7](#); emphasis added).

Please notice that the Lord commanded Adam and Eve to offer the *firstlings* of their flocks. In other words, He commanded them to put God *first* to avoid the spiritual dilemma of double-mindedness.

I recall a powerful experience I had many years ago that taught me how to put God *first* in my life. As a young married father, I was called to serve in a branch presidency. Elder Clinton L. Cutler of the Seventy came to speak to our branch. After the meeting, I had an opportunity to talk with him.

Sensing that I had something on my mind, he asked, "Is there something bothering you?"

"Yes," I replied, "I am having financial difficulties in my business. I have fallen behind in my payment of tithes and offerings."

He then asked, "Do you have anything of value?"

I don't recall what else he said. I pondered his question for many days. The only thing I had of value was a car that I needed in my efforts to grow my business. However, I concluded that I should at least make an effort to sell my car, so I cleaned and polished it and placed an ad to sell it.

I want to be clear that Elder Cutler did not ask me to sell my car. This came to me after pondering and desiring to put God *first*.

A few days later, a man came to the house to see the car. He seemed interested; he drove it and came back to discuss the details. He gave me his business card, and I realized he represented a car dealership. I was nervous about what would surely happen next—the haggling back and forth over the price.

He asked me, "How much do you want for the car?"

I told him I needed a precise amount. I had calculated what I needed to pay off the loan on the car and pay my tithing.

He then said very calmly, "OK, I will come back in a few days with a check."

He thanked me and left. I could not believe it. No arguing, no haggling, no negotiating.

A few days later, he came back with a check for the amount I had requested. I was surprised

and amazed as he drove off with the car. I deposited the check and paid my tithing.

As I contemplated what had occurred, I realized that I did not have a car to continue with my business. While I was thinking about what to do, a friend called me and said, "Jorge, you like my car, don't you?" At that point I would have liked any car! He reminded me that his wife was having twins and that he needed to buy a larger vehicle and wondered if I would be willing to take over his car payments. It was a miracle!

As I reflect upon my experience, I wonder what gave me the confidence to sell my car and pay my tithing. I recall one home evening when my mother bore powerful testimony of the law of tithing. My parents immigrated to the United States through a job offer that allowed us to receive legal residency. However, we experienced financial setbacks, as many immigrants do as they become acclimated to a new country and economy.

With a gaze of her certain witness, she said, "All we need to see is the very hand of Jehovah Himself to have any greater assurance that He is blessing us by our payment of tithing."

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught: "I know that the people are in difficult circumstances. I know that many of them are unemployed. I know that many of them work for very meager wages. I know that they live in simple and inadequate little houses, the only thing they can afford. I believe they will not walk out of poverty unless they pay their tithing. ... Now is the season in which to establish strength in the gospel, and that involves the payment of tithing. ... It is obedience to the commandment of the Lord that really matters" (General Authority training meeting, Oct. 2, 2001).

I know this statement applies to our temporal lives but also to our spiritual lives. I am certain that the payment of tithes and offerings will enhance our spiritual capacity as we put God *first* and offer our "firstlings of [the] flock" ([Moses 5:5](#)).

I witness that a spiritual power and direction, heretofore unknown, will come into our lives as we keep the law of obedience and sacrifice. Evidence of this truth is found in the simple statement of the Lord *after* Adam had offered sacrifice: "And in that day the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam" ([Moses 5:9](#)).

Elder David A. Bednar observed: "The imagery of the 'windows' of heaven used by Malachi is most instructive [see [Malachi 3:10](#)]. Windows allow natural light to enter into a building. In like manner, spiritual illumination and perspective are poured out through the windows of heaven and into our lives as we honor the law of tithing" ("[The Windows of Heaven](#)," *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 18).

I witness that Jesus Christ is the perfect example of how to put God first in our lives. I witness that He laid down His life as a symbol of complete submission to His Father's will. He

is the Christ, the Redeemer and Savior of us all. Dallin H. Oaks is His prophet. I bear solemn witness that He lives, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Prayers for Peace

By President Henry B. Eyring

First Counselor in the First Presidency

As we pray continually, no matter the circumstances of life, the Lord will offer us His peace and abiding support.

My dear brothers and sisters, I am grateful to be with you at this time when we can remember again the Savior's comfort to His Apostles, as He knew that He would have to leave them alone, without Him to lead, protect, and succor them in their perils.

It was at that Last Supper that He gave those faithful disciples a promise, which continues to comfort and encourage His faithful disciples today in whatever difficulties we face in our own lives. He said: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

The world today seems to be in commotion. There are wars and rumors of wars. The economies of whole continents seem to be faltering. Prophesied wickedness seems to be accelerating as the Savior's return draws nearer.

Yet despite turmoil and difficulty, faithful Latter-day Saints in hardship across the world have flooded heaven with prayers. In public and in private, they are petitioning the Lord for help, for comfort, for direction, and for personal peace for those they love.

You may have seen in your congregations and in your homes that prayers have not only been more numerous but more heartfelt.

Turning to Heavenly Father in fervent prayer when the world seems chaotic is as old as mankind. In times of fear, tragedy, danger, trouble, or illness, people often turn to God in prayer. His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray, lives, knows us, watches over us, and cares for us. You may remember the consoling words of King David from the book of Psalms:

"The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

"And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee."

In moments of pain, loneliness, or confusion, we know that our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son are aware of our circumstances and that They yearn to bless us. The Savior's words are clear:

"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

"For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

Opening the windows of heaven through fervent prayer does not require the use of many words or flowery language. Rather, the diligence in prayer which Heavenly Father requires of us is to "pour out [our] souls" in private places and have our hearts "drawn out in prayer unto him continually."

During His Sermon on the Mount, the Savior taught:

"When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

"But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking."

"Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."

The Lord has also provided us touching evidence of the power of nonverbal prayers offered within our hearts. In the Book of Mormon, we read of the people of Alma the Elder, who would have been destroyed had they prayed openly:

"And Alma and his people did not raise their voices to the Lord their God, but did pour out their hearts to him; and he did know the thoughts of their hearts."

"And it came to pass that the voice of the Lord came to them in their afflictions, saying: Lift up your heads and be of good comfort, for I ... will also ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot feel them upon your backs, even while you are in bondage. ...

"And now it came to pass that the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brethren were made light; yea, the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord."

I testify that the Lord hears and answers the prayers of our hearts, just as He did for Alma and his people. We can follow His commandment to "pray always" by having a continual prayer in our hearts. As prophets have taught many times in the past, you may not feel like praying or you may not know what

to say, but God hears the secret prayers of your heart. The feelings of your heart and the love for our Heavenly Father and for His Beloved Son can be so constant that your prayers will ascend always.

As we pray continually, no matter the circumstances of life, the Lord will offer us His peace and abiding support. I am reminded of the example of the sons of Mosiah, who had success in preaching the gospel and were made spiritually strong because they *prayed constantly*. We read in the book of Alma, "They had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation."

It is significant that their spiritual strength *came from continued prayer* rather than waiting to pray until a moment of crisis when they desperately needed divine help. Consistent prayer during joyous times and also during seasons of distress and grief will surely be rewarded according to His will and perfect timing.

I know that God the Father lives. He loves us. He hears our prayers, and many times He will answer with feelings of peace. Again from the Book of Mormon: "And now, may the peace of God rest upon you, and upon your houses and lands, and upon your flocks and herds, and all that you possess, your women and your children, according to your faith and good works, from this time forth and forever. And thus I have spoken."

Brothers and sisters, I bear my testimony that the Savior's promise is true and that a humble prayer for peace in your heart will be honored. I felt it at the funeral of my wife of 61 years. I was surprised at the feeling of peace and almost joy. The people at the funeral must have wondered why I was smiling. It was because the Lord had answered my prayer for peace with an assurance from the Holy Ghost, which allowed me to envision the happy reunion ahead with her. The Lord gave me the peace and hope that He had promised His disciples.

He said: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled."

I testify that I know that Jesus Christ lives. He loves us and blesses us. He continues to offer us peace in our lives through sincere and fervent prayer. Of these things I humbly testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Sustaining of General Authorities, Area Seventies, and General Officers

Presented by President D. Todd Christofferson

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

Brothers and sisters, in addition to the sustaining of the new First Presidency and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the solemn assembly that took place this



morning, President Oaks has asked that I now present the other General Authorities, Area Seventies, and General Officers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for your sustaining vote.

We ask that you please express your support in the usual way. If there are those who oppose any of the proposals, we ask that you contact your stake president.

According to established policy followed for many years, General Authority Seventies are released and granted emeritus status in the year a General Authority Seventy turns 70. Therefore, the following General Authority Seventies will be released from their assignments and given emeritus status, effective on August 1, 2026: Elders Craig C. Christensen, Eduardo Gavarret, Brook P. Hales, William K. Jackson, Erich W. Kopischke, Peter F. Meurs, and S. Mark Palmer, who will also be released as a member of the Presidency of the Seventy.

Those who wish to express gratitude to these brethren and to their wives and families for their years of dedicated service throughout the Church may do so by the uplifted hand.

We note with gratitude the 75 Area Seventies who will complete their service and whose names can be found on the Church's website.

Those who wish to join in expressing appreciation to these brethren and to their families for their years of selfless service may manifest it.

We extend, with sincere gratitude, releases to the Primary General Presidency, effective on August 1, 2026, as follows: Susan H. Porter as President, Amy A. Wright as First Counselor, and Tracy Y. Browning as Second Counselor.

All who wish to join in expressing gratitude to these sisters and their families for their devoted service may manifest it.

Elder Benjamin M. Z. Tai has been called to serve as a member of the Presidency of the Seventy, effective on August 1.

Those in favor, please manifest it.

Those opposed, if any, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain the following as new General Authority Seventies: Elders Christian C. Chigbundu, Matthew J. Eyring, Hutch U. Fale, James O. Fantone, Kevin J. Hathaway, Thabo Lebethoa, Jeremiah J. Morgan, and Paul H. Sinclair.

All in favor, please manifest it.

Those opposed, by the same sign.

We note that 91 new Area Seventies were sustained during the general conference leadership meetings on Thursday, April 2, and then announced on the Church's website. We invite you to sustain these brethren in their new assignments.

Those in favor, please manifest it.

Those opposed may indicate by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain the following as the new Primary General Presidency, to be effective on August 1, 2026: Rosemary K. Chibota as President, Nina M. Garfield as First Counselor, and Theresa A. Collins as Second Counselor.

Those in favor may manifest it.

Any opposed may so signify.

It is proposed that we sustain the other General Authorities, Area Seventies, and General Officers of the Church as presently constituted.

All in favor may do so by the uplifted hand.

Those opposed, if any.

We again thank you for your sustaining vote on behalf of the leadership of the Church.

Changes to Area Seventies

The following Area Seventies were sustained during a leadership meeting held as part of general conference:

Demetrio P. Agudo III, Rafael Alcántara, J. Gerardo Álvarez, Paulo M. Araujo, Troy A. Bair, Brett V. Benson, Felix O. Bentayen Jr., Christopher B. Bingham, Peter Bushi, Nuno A. Campos, Jorge R. Cardozo, Lenin Cerón, Brandon J. Child, Juan Pablo Cortez, Victor Cortez Padilla, Andrew E. Dadson, Alirio B. Díaz, Samuel E. Eghan, Brandon C. Ellison, J. Joel Fernandes, Nathan R. Fernley, Jerome G. Galotera, Matthew R. Hall, Paul E. Higueros, Rhett R. Hintze, Hikombo Hitoto, Miguel A. Honores, Fredrick N. Igweh, M. Franck Ilunga, Marcus F. Johnson, Josue G. Jundos, Anani Kouegan, Orson S. Lemos, Kleber A. Litardo, R. Wade Litchfield, Sawman Machakaire, Hans A. Martineau, Osvaldo E. Martinez Carreño, Philip J. Mathemera, Patrick O. Mawongo, John L. Merrill, Cesar A. Morales, Andres D. Moreno, Jason T. Morris, Ngqabutho F. Moyo, Harri J. Myllylä, Scott M. Naatjes, Lincoln D. Nadauld, Nadmid B. Namgur, Thelmo P. Navarra Jr., Reid L. Neilson, Stephen F. Notarte, D. Dan Nuñez, Dennis K. Ocansey, Odgerel Ochirjav, Jimmy C. Okot, M. Shayne Olsen, Sylvain G. Onagnelin, Víctor Orozco, Sunday F. Oyedeji, Daniel W. Packard, Marcelo J. Paz, Joshua K. Perkes, Thinh Phúc Phan, N. Benjamin Poóu, Wilfredo E. Rellora Jr., Jon P. Reyes, Gary M. Riding, Ryan A. Robinson, Carlos J. Rodriguez, Luis D. Santana, Kurt F. Scherer, B. Brandon Shaheen, Nathan Y. Sharp, Luis H. Silva, Graham F. Smith, Craig R. Spangler, Christopher Stephenson, Michael J. Stone,

Martin R. Tello Sotil, Christopher L. Thomas, Paul J. Thomas, Kevin C. Thompson, Paula S. Tonga, Jose J. Trovato, Manea Tuahu, Edgar D. Valdez, Juan F. Vásquez, Andres Villegas, Brian J. Willey, Ritch N. Wood.

The following Area Seventies will be released on or before August 1, 2026:

Daniel P. Amato, Rodney A. Ames, Marcelo Andrezzo, Samuel Annan-Simons, Eduardo M. Argana, Lauriano P. Bailemwa, Erik Bernskov, Mark E. Bonham, K. Bruce Boucher, Jonathon W. Bunker, Jonathan G. Cannon, Juan P. Casco, Fernando R. Castro, Ranulfo Cervantes Soler, Thomas K. Checketts, Ross A. Chiles, Stephen K. Christensen, Benjamin Cinco, David C. Clark, Félix Conde, Jorge A. Contreras, Corbin E. Coombs, Moroni Costa, Nathan A. Craig, Leandro J. Curaba, Ernesto A. Deyro Jr., Hutch U. Fale, Tomás Familia, James O. Fantone, Claude R. Gamiette, John Gutty, Tommy D. Haws, Hal C. Hunsaker, Yuichi Imai, B. Helaman Ixcot, Dong Hwan Jeong, Frederick M. Kamyá, David S. Kinard, Julio E. Lee, Odair Lira, Enrique M. Loo, R. Darío Lorenzana, Hernán D. Lucero, Bartolome L. Madriaga, Douglas P. Maxfield, Enrique Mayorga, Héctor Méndez, Steven C. Merrell, Quinn S. Millington, Siegfried A. Naumann, Ricardo J. Nieves, Lorenzo Norambuena, Enefiok Ntem, Charles O. Oide, Juan L. Orquera, Roberto C. Pacheco, Damon Page, Franck A. Poznanski, T. Michael Price, Alexandre Ret, Frédéric T. Riemer, Russell A. Robinson, Leonardo S. Rojas, Douglas A. Rozza, Tonga J. Sai, Lee M. Shumway, Vance K. Smith, Martiniano S. Soquila Jr., Victor H. Suazo, Raul Tapia, Carlos Torres, Iotua B. Tune, Bruno E. Vásquez, M. Travis Wolsey, Richard G. Youngblood.



Church Auditing Department Report, 2025

Presented by Jared B. Larson

Managing Director, Church Auditing Department

To the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Dear Brethren: Directed by revelation, as recorded in [section 120 of the Doctrine and Covenants](#), the Council on the Disposition of the Tithes—composed of the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and the Presiding Bishopric—authorizes the expenditure of Church funds. Church entities disburse funds in accordance with approved budgets, policies, and procedures.

Church Auditing, which consists of credentialed professionals and is independent of all other Church departments and entities, has responsibility to perform audits for the purpose of providing reasonable assurance regarding contributions received, expenditures made, and safeguarding of Church assets.

Based upon audits performed, Church Auditing is of the opinion that, in all material respects, contributions received, expenditures made, and assets of the Church for the year 2025 have been recorded and administered in accordance with Church-approved budgets, accounting practices, and policies. The Church follows the practices taught to its members of living within a budget, avoiding debt, and saving against a time of need.

Respectfully submitted,

Church Auditing Department

Jared B. Larson

Managing Director



Lost Luggage, Redeemed Souls

By Elder Gary E. Stevenson

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we rise with renewed determination to succor and care for those with whom we come in contact.

Forgotten, Neglected, or Lost

Have you ever stood at an empty airport luggage return carousel, as it circles endlessly, wondering if your bag somehow was diverted to Kathmandu? Have you ever been told the last known location of your checked bag was somewhere between “It is sure to turn up somewhere” and “You should consider buying everything new”? Have you ever been ghosted by a suitcase that contained essential materials? If so, this message might interest you.

Today I will talk about lost luggage.

An estimated 33 million bags were mishandled at airports in 2024. Although this happens to only a small percentage of travelers, no matter how infrequent, the thought of losing important belongings is a universal worry.

Recently, while traveling for a weekend assignment, I realized my carry-on bag wouldn't fit in the overhead space. I needed that bag. It contained important, essential material. Almost before I had a chance to react,

an attendant took my bag, wrapped a tag around its handle, handed me a luggage claim ticket, and whisked my precious possession away.

Throughout that flight, I had an anxious feeling. I hoped someone was taking care of the bag and its contents. I hoped it would not be forgotten, neglected, or lost. I clutched my claim ticket, hoping for a successful reunion.

My story had a happy ending; my bag and I were reunited. But the experience got me thinking.

You may have heard a report from Osaka, Japan, about the Kansai International Airport's world record—something almost unbelievable. After 30 years of operation and processing hundreds of millions of pieces of cargo, carry-ons, and cases, this airport has not lost one item of luggage.

Not one single piece!

How is such a thing possible?

Tsuyoshi Habuta, the airport chief of baggage operations, believes losing luggage should never happen "because luggage is precious to passengers." That attitude permeates through his entire staff. The airport's success, he says, is all part of a commitment to "thoroughness and an attention to detail."

The Japanese people have developed a reputation for such attention to detail. They have a principle, *kaizen*, that encapsulates a mindset of constantly searching for and implementing minor improvements. This practice requires a quiet discipline of always looking for small ways to make processes better. They take pride in the fact that these improvements almost always come from those doing the everyday work.

Over the years, the staff at Kansai Airport has developed a process that makes the goal of not losing passengers' bags a reality. They train employees rigorously and constantly ensure that every bag is counted, tracked, and cared for. They make meticulous and multiple manual checks that complement a sophisticated automated system.

Fragile items such as musical instruments are often hand-delivered to passengers. Staff members do small things such as placing bags on conveyor belts with handles facing outward for easier retrieval by passengers.

When you hand off your luggage at Kansai Airport, you get a sense that they are saying to you, "We have your precious belongings. We are responsible for them now. We will return them to you."

Our Heavenly Father's Love

As I reflect on these experiences, I find myself contemplating a moment of trust far more sacred than checking a bag.

In a reverent way, I wonder what it is like for a loving Heavenly Father to send His most

precious belongings, His children, away from their heavenly home, knowing they must pass through the challenges of mortality. I suppose His great comfort is knowing that they do not travel alone. Parents, family, leaders, friends, ministering brothers and sisters, you and I serve as stewards of His most precious possessions.

How beloved and precious His children are to Him.

And how beloved and blessed are those who care for and nurture others.

And yet, the feeling is recognizable: entrusting what is precious into the care of others—and longing for its safe return. This evokes memories of familiar scenes: a mother—father—at a curb or platform, bidding farewell to their student, soldier, or missionary. Years of teaching, preparation, and prayer culminate in a moment of placing their cherished possession into the care of others—trusting conscientious stewards to care for their son or daughter through the duration of their journey until they are reunited.

In a much holier way, our Heavenly Father also places a claim upon us, not as a label on a handle but as a divine truth written on the heart: "You are mine. I know you. You are not alone. I have not forgotten you. I intend to bring you home."

This is more than logistics.

This is redemption.

May I offer two cases where I feel the Lord would be deeply pleased with those who magnify their role as thoughtful and intentional handlers of His precious cargo, His children?

Our Sacred Call to Minister

The first is in our role as assigned ministering brothers and sisters—adults and youth.

Please know you represent the Lord, scripturally aligned, serving those who are "numbered among the people of the church of Christ," whose "names [are] taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way." We "are to 'watch over' Church members and 'be with and strengthen them' ([Doctrine and Covenants 20:53](#))."

The greatest success in missionary work comes as we act in normal and natural ways; the same is true in ministering.

I invite you to contemplate how you can:

- Provide Christlike love, caring, and service.
- Offer help and comfort in times of spiritual or temporal need.
- Prayerfully seek the guidance of the Spirit.

- Help prepare families to make and keep sacred covenants with God as they receive ordinances.

Consider your ministering assignment as "Christlike caring" of the Lord's most treasured possessions, who at the end of their mortal journey can be claimed and redeemed by Him. I invite you to implement small acts of kindness and care into your ministering, becoming better ministers of Jesus Christ.

Ministering to the Rising Generation

The second is the universal charge to strengthen and nurture the rising generation, to bring up children "in light and truth."

In the perilous times in which we live, the rising generation needs a defense and refuge from the storm. We can contribute to this effort by investing time and teaching. There is no greater need and no greater return on this investment than when it is made with Primary children, young men, young women, and young adults.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf has promised that as we do our part in teaching, nurturing, and then trusting in God to work His miracles, "the result will be more beautiful and more stunning and more joyful than anything you could accomplish just by yourself."

How do we do this?

By motivating, teaching, and encouraging our young people to receive the holy name of Jesus Christ in their hearts and minds, to joyfully take up the cross of Christ, and to walk in holiness as His disciples and emissaries.

We teach this, "that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins," even Jesus Christ.

Inspire them to "sincerely and persistently do the spiritual work needed to develop the crucial, spiritual skill of learning how to hear the whisperings of the Holy Ghost, [giving them] *all* the direction [they] will ever need in [their lives]."

These precious souls are beings of potential beyond measure whose destiny it is to walk through eternity in halls of celestial glory.

Teach the rising generation to know, love, and emulate their Savior, Jesus Christ. "He is the strength of youth."

They will respond.

A Safe Return

Unlike pieces of luggage, each of us is ultimately responsible for our decisions, beliefs, and actions, assisted by heavenly and earthly ministering angels. Therefore, as disciples of Jesus Christ, we rise with renewed determination to succor and care for those with whom we come in contact.

In the end, we are all one family.

We all need help along the way.

We each possess a tag that marks us as a child of a loving Heavenly Father. Printed upon that tag is a spiritual promise and sacred proclamation that testifies, “This precious soul has great worth to one day be redeemed by its holder,” never to be forgotten, neglected, or lost.

I rejoice in that redemption and celebrate the great privilege we have to participate in that work until that day when we safely return to the one who created and loves us with a perfect love.

That we may fulfill that mission for ourselves and diligently care for others as they seek to return to His heavenly embrace is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Christ—Author and Finisher of Our Faith

By Elder Eduardo F. Ortega

Of the Seventy

Becoming a lifelong disciple of Christ is a process, the sum of multiple small, daily, personal and spiritual events.

Some may think that faith is inherited. True discipleship, however, always begins with a personal decision.

When I arrived in the United States last year, one of the things that had the biggest impact on me was seeing the spiritual strength of many faithful Saints—multigenerational gospel families of pioneer descendants who continue to walk the covenant path. Most inspiring is that their faithfulness depends not only on their spiritual heritage but on their personal decision to follow the Savior.

Our family heritage is a great blessing, but it is not a substitute for our diligent and intentional search for a personal testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ and the truths of His restored gospel.

Our family legacy and traditions are very helpful, but in and of themselves they are not enough for us to build upon the rock of our Savior.

The Lord taught this principle when He said to Peter, “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”

A personal testimony comes in response to our sincere and dedicated quest to want to know for ourselves and then to act upon the impressions and the knowledge received. This

pattern is repeated within many faithful member families in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints around the world.

My family is not the exception. My grandmother Mercedes was the pioneer in our family. She joined the Church in August 1957 in Mendoza, Argentina, 32 years after South America was dedicated for the preaching of the gospel. My father, who is here with us today, was only six years old.

I am deeply grateful for my grandmother’s faith and courage in following the Savior’s example, even though her circumstances were not perfect or ideal. Her decision brought blessings not only to her but also to many of us.

I grew up in a home where we actively lived the teachings of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and participated in Church meetings and programs. But that was not enough—I needed to know for myself. It was not until I was serving as a young missionary in Colombia that I gained my own personal and undeniable testimony of Jesus Christ, “even to an experiment upon [His] words” while striving to “invite [and help] others to come unto Christ.”

Over the years I have seen the Lord’s hand and His gospel work in me to perfect and refine me as I have trusted in Him and strived to “press forward with a steadfastness.”

Now I would like to address those who have recently joined the Church. We are so happy and we rejoice in your decision to follow the Savior. We want you to feel welcome to this great family as brothers and sisters and children of a loving Heavenly Father. The fact that you are here is a testimony of the promise that you have come “by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save.”

As I think of you, I remember my grandmother Mercedes. You may feel that your circumstances are not perfect or ideal, just as they were not for her. But there is hope in Christ and in His restored gospel. You may become to your families and descendants what she was to us.

In addition to the changes you may have already experienced in your lives and hearts, there is a road ahead for you to “press forward with a steadfastness in Christ” as you endure on the covenant path. In doing so, perhaps you will experience the same as I have; sometimes I need the perspective that time gives to see the refining and perfecting hand of our Savior, Jesus Christ, in my life and in my family’s life.

The invitation to seek, to come to know and to do, and then to endure on the covenant path is the same for *all* of us, regardless of whether the gospel has been in our families for generations or we were baptized just last week. And it is received individually as we seek diligently and are “nourished by the good word of God, to keep [us] in the right way, to keep [us] continually watchful unto prayer, relying alone

upon the merits of Christ, who [is] the author and the finisher of [our] faith.”

The prophet Nephi taught: “Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.”

Becoming a lifelong disciple of Christ is a process, the sum of multiple small, daily, personal and spiritual events. President Dallin H. Oaks taught: “We need to be patient ... , even with ourselves. Overcoming doubt ... can be a lengthy process, as with building faith.”

The path of discipleship often resembles climbing a mountain. The shortest path to the top is not always the most appropriate and often not the safest either. Thus, we must choose the firm and safe path, even if it is sometimes the longest and most demanding one. Jesus Christ and His restored gospel constitute that safe path that leads us to the true summit.

I testify of the healing, refining,



“I Will Give Away All My Sins to Know Thee”

By Elder Wan-Liang Wu

Of the Seventy

We can come to know the true God the Father and gain eternal life through His Son, Jesus Christ, for the power is in us.

I was born into a non-Christian family. As a boy, I would accompany my mother to Chinese temples to worship different gods. We would bring special cakes as an offering and burn incense to ask for the blessings we needed. If we needed work, we asked the god of riches; if we needed health, we asked the god of healing. I loved going with my mother because when the rituals were over, I got to eat all those delicious cakes.

Nevertheless, the great miracle came when I was 10 years old and we moved to Bolivia. I met the missionaries. They taught me about a God I had never heard of before.

They taught me that He is a living God, with a glorified body of flesh and bones; that He is my Heavenly Father, that He loves me, and that I am literally His child; that He sent Jesus Christ to earth to help me return to His presence and attain eternal life.

I was so amazed when they told me the story of Joseph Smith, who saw God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Even though I didn't speak Spanish and couldn't understand all the words, I felt peace in my heart, and somehow I knew that what I was learning was good. Before they invited me to be baptized, I said to my two older sisters, who were already members of the Church, "I've already made up my mind. I'm getting baptized!"

The gospel of Jesus Christ changed my life for the better. It gave me an eternal purpose—to prepare to return to God's presence with my family.

In the Book of Mormon, we read the story of an old king who, like me, did not know God. He had met a missionary, and he was so surprised by what that missionary said that he insisted on being taught.

Then Aaron began "reading the scriptures unto the king—how God created man after his own image, and that God gave him commandments, and that because of transgression, man had fallen. ...

"... And also the plan of redemption, which was prepared from the foundation of the world, through Christ, for all whosoever would believe on his name ... through faith and repentance. ...

"... [Then] the king said: What shall I do that I may have this eternal life of which thou hast spoken? ... Behold, ... I will give up all that I possess, yea, I will forsake my kingdom, that I may receive this great joy.

"But Aaron said unto him: If thou desirest this thing, if thou wilt bow down before God, yea, if thou wilt repent of all thy sins, and will bow down before God, and call on his name in faith, believing that ye shall receive, then shalt thou receive the hope which thou desirest.

"And it came to pass that when Aaron had said these words, the king did bow down before the Lord, upon his knees; yea, even he did prostrate himself upon the earth, and cried mightily, saying:

"O God, Aaron hath told me that there is a God; and if there is a God, and if thou art God, wilt thou make thyself known unto me, and I will give away all my sins to know thee."

The story concludes not only with the king's conversion but with the conversion of his entire household and several cities in his kingdom.

If we have a sincere desire, being meek and lowly in heart, we can come to know the true God the Father and gain eternal life through His Son, Jesus Christ, for the power is in us—in choosing to believe and deciding to act accordingly.

The Savior declared, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

How can we come to know the only true God and obtain eternal life? The Savior responds, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

The only way we can come to know our Heavenly Father and gain eternal life is by coming unto Christ and following Him. Coming unto Christ is much more than just learning of Christ. It includes faith and works; it means to be converted to Him and to His restored gospel. As we do so, we "will have greater happiness, hope, peace, and purpose" in this life.

The king did not remain stuck in his state of astonishment; he chose to believe and to act. He was willing to forsake all his sins that he might know God. What are we willing to give up or change to truly know God and be saved at the last day?

President Dallin H. Oaks taught: "The gospel of Jesus Christ challenges us to change. 'Repent' is its most frequent message, and repenting means giving up all of our practices—personal, family, ethnic, and national—that are contrary to the commandments of God. The purpose of the gospel is to transform common creatures into celestial citizens, and that requires change."

We cannot know God without a sincere desire and real intent. We need to have faith in Jesus Christ, continuously repent, and strive to obey the commandments. The Savior loves us more than we can comprehend, and He pleads with us again and again, "Come, follow me." He gave His life for us, paid the price for our sins, and rose from the dead. Because of Him, we have "hope for a future existence with Heavenly Father."

Whether you are a child or a king, and regardless of your background or your status, I invite you to choose to have faith in Jesus Christ and to decide to follow Him. For "there is none other name given under heaven save it be this Jesus Christ ... whereby man can be saved."

I testify that Jesus Christ is risen. He lives! This is what He wants us to do to prepare for eternal life. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Jesus Christ Is Not Our Burden; He Is Our Relief

By Brother David J. Wunderli

First Counselor in the Young Men General Presidency

May we together continue to walk with Jesus Christ, even in our most difficult moments.

Years ago our son came home from Primary with a small picture of Jesus Christ. His Primary teacher had given it to him, and he cherished that picture. He slept with it, protected it, and carried it with him to school.

One Saturday morning we decided to take a family hike up a nearby canyon. Our six-year-old son carefully placed his picture of Jesus Christ into his backpack. That was it—he packed nothing else. When we stopped for lunch along the trail, he got busy finding small, unique rocks, and soon he had a large pile of them.

He asked me if he could take all these rocks home, and I said, "Sure, but you'll have to carry them out yourself."

He agreed and began filling his pack. Then he carefully placed his picture of Jesus Christ back on top and zipped it up. I lifted the heavy pack, put it on his back, and watched as he took one step forward and five steps backward until he fell to the ground. Undaunted, he opened his pack and removed three small rocks. One more try, one more fail.

Now, thinking there might be a lesson to be taught, I lightheartedly suggested that maybe he should remove his picture of Jesus. "That should lighten your load," I said.

I will never forget the hurt look on his face. It seemed to say, "Dad, you really want me to take Jesus out of my pack and leave Him behind?" And then his look changed to "Dad, you're not as smart as I thought you were."

Jesus Christ Is Your Relief—He Has Overcome the World

The Lord promised Enoch, "Mountains shall flee before you, and the rivers shall turn from their course; and thou shalt abide in me, and I in you; therefore walk with me."

Like Enoch, many of our youth today are choosing to abide with Jesus Christ. They are choosing to keep Him in their lives. They are walking with Him. They are gathering in record numbers to temples throughout the world. They wake before sunrise to participate in seminary. More are serving missions, resulting in more of God's children being baptized than ever before. Today's rising generation has been gifted with talents to gather and attributes of empathy and understanding. More are committed to becoming lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ.

In a recent visit to West Africa, Diane and I sat in the home of two young brothers who had recently joined the Church and were being raised by a single mother in humble circumstances. When asked what the gospel of Jesus Christ has done for their family, 16-year-old Joshua simply said, "Relief."

Dear amazing young men and young women: As you continue your journey from baptism forward, through your teenage years and on to

adulthood, committed to becoming lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ, know that rocks found along the way will begin to collect in your backpack—some by choice and some by the very nature of your journey in this life. As the weight increases, please remember that taking Jesus Christ out of your life is not the answer. Removing Him will not lighten your load.

The enemy of happiness wants to separate you from Jesus Christ. He will tempt you to remove the Savior from your life, enticing you to think that the road would be easier without Him, that the weight of His commandments is too great, that the path back is too long, that repentance is too hard. Know this: Satan is a liar. Jesus Christ is not the weight; He is the relief.

To His disciples, the Lord affirmed, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

He *has* overcome the world. He *has* taken “upon him the pains and [sickness] of his people.” He *has* suffered “afflictions and temptations of every kind; ... that he may know ... how to succor [us].” His pleading, loving, powerful invitation is to abide *with* Him. It is to stay with Him.

Abide with Him; Walk with Him

Each morning as you begin your daily walk, please make sure that Jesus Christ is with you. Then, as you face opposing forces aimed at separating you from Him, your confidence and resolve will be anchored to His truth, to His wisdom, to Him who is all-knowing. Your capacity to understand and forgive will be deeper. Your ability to love others, and even love yourself, will be an extension of His love—His infinite love—and you will have hope, real hope, because it will be in and “through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal.”

Keeping Jesus Christ with you requires intentional, daily worship.

You keep Him with you as you reverently, with real intent, kneel and pray to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ.

You keep Him with you as you study the scriptures daily, especially the Book of Mormon, and reflect on the witness of Jesus Christ that it bears. As you do, He will guide you through your mists of darkness.

You keep Jesus Christ with you as you exercise faith in Him, trust Him, and turn to Him in sincere, daily repentance.

You keep Jesus Christ with you as you are willing to live your covenants every day and renew them every week.

My young brothers and sisters, it is that simple.

Abiding with Him eases your burdens. Walking with Him shapes your character and helps you become even as He is. It brings you real and lasting joy.

In his first interview as the prophet of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, President Dallin H. Oaks was asked, “If there was one phrase, or one scripture, or one image that you would want members of the Church to carry with them right now as you begin this prophetic ministry, what would it be?”

To which our prophet responded, “Jesus Christ is the way.”

My dear young friends, may we together continue to walk with Jesus Christ, even in our most difficult moments—when we question our worth, doubt our capabilities, or question our faith. When we feel that we are alone, when the weight of life’s challenges sends us backward, may we hold strong to our resolve to *keep Him with us*.

Let us allow the Savior to ease our burdens—allow Him to help remove the rocks of addiction and the weight of our sorrows. Let Him contend with those who would contend with us. Let Him cleanse us from our sins again and again and, yes, even again. Let Him move the mountains before us and change the course of the powerful rivers in our lives that carry us away from Him.

Jesus Christ is not the weight; He is our relief; He is our strength; He is the way. May we all walk with Him. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Love All; Love Each

By Elder Gérard Caussé

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

May we follow the Lord’s perfect example and learn to love all and to love each, just as He does.

Some time ago, a journalist asked me this simple yet profound question: “What do you know now, after being ordained as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles?” My response came instantly: “I have learned that I can love even more.”

Over the past few months, my wife, Valérie, and I have been deeply moved by the outpouring of love and prayers from Saints around the world. Through you, my dear brothers and sisters, we have felt the love of God more intensely than ever before in our lives. And in response, our own ability to love has grown in ways we never expected.

Christlike love grows and multiplies as it is shared. When we show others the pure love of Christ, they come to recognize more fully how

deeply the Lord cares for them—and, in turn, their own capacity to love is enlarged and strengthened.

Years ago, while spending peaceful time in the beautiful countryside, I stepped outside after sunset to rest on a lounge chair. The night was so dark that I could hardly see anything. Instinctively, I looked up and noticed a tiny flickering point of light, then another. As my eyes adjusted to the darkness, the sky filled with stars.

I thought, “This is like our relationship with God.” Some think He is distant, and life feels heavy as a result. But if they pause to reflect on His presence in their lives, they will find that He is near—quietly present, far closer than they imagine.

As I pondered this idea, a question from one of David’s psalms came to mind:

“When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars ... ;

“What is man, that thou art mindful of him?”

The answer that follows is deeply comforting: “Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.”

This is the miracle of God’s relationship with us: The universe is vast beyond comprehension, yet every soul carries infinite worth in the eyes of our Creator. Though we may seem small in a physical sense, each of us is personally known, remembered, and loved by our Eternal Father and by His Son, Jesus Christ.

In 1905, after a conversation with a friend who had long endured serious health challenges, Civilla D. Martin found inspiration for the beloved hymn “His Eye Is on the Sparrow.” When Civilla asked her friend how she avoided discouragement, she replied, “How can I be discouraged when my Father watches the sparrows, and I know He loves and cares for me?”

Her words echoed the Savior’s teaching that no sparrow falls without the Father’s notice—and that even “the very hairs of [our] head are all numbered.” Elder Neal A. Maxwell added that the God who governs galaxies also guides our personal lives. “God is in the details!” he said. “... He knows and loves *each* and *all* of mankind!”

I bear witness of this truth: God and His Son, Jesus Christ, love *all*—and They love *each*.

While studying scriptures in English, I noticed dozens of verses in which the words *all* and *each* (or *every*) appear together. For example, we learn in Mosiah: “He [speaking of the Lord] remembereth *every* creature of [His] creating, [and He] will make [Himself] manifest unto *all*.”

The word *all* speaks to the universal reach of God’s love. The word *each* (or *every*) testifies of His power to care for each individual soul.

This dual reality is most clearly manifested in Jesus Christ's Atonement. *All* sons and daughters of God, without exception, will receive a full opportunity to access its supernal blessings. Yet it is a remarkably intimate gift, tailored to *each* individual's needs and applied to one person at a time.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we bear witness of Him whenever we share His love with *all* around us—and help it take root in *each* person we meet.

To love *all* and to love *each* are not two different kinds of love but the same divine love expressed on two scales—one expansive enough to embrace the whole world and the other personal enough to notice a single individual with unique needs, circumstances, and life story.

First, loving *all*.

Are we selective, or exclusive, in determining who deserves our love, or do we extend Christlike love to *all* with whom we associate?

The Lord asked, "If ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?" To Him, all people upon this earth are our neighbors—there are no strangers or outcasts, only brothers and sisters.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that "a man filled with the love of God, is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world, anxious to bless the whole human race."

Discipleship was never meant to be a comfortable circle of familiar friends focused on their own interests. Rather, our congregations are a beautiful mosaic—enriched by diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences—yet united in devotion to Christ.

Service in the Church expands our circle of love and widens our associations. We meet people from all walks of life—new friends, brothers and sisters in need, recent converts, and missionary or ministering companions. We don't serve only those we already love; rather, we come to love people as we serve them.

Second, loving *each*.

Do we interact superficially with others, or do we genuinely seek to know and care for each person we meet?

Though He was often surrounded by multitudes, the Savior always gave His full attention to the one—one sheep, one leper, one Samaritan woman, one little child, one soul at a time. In His love, no one was ever lost in the crowd.

Likewise, in the Church of Jesus Christ, there should be no anonymity. As we enter the fold of Christ through sacred covenants, we are known, accounted for, and cared for—one person at a time.

Through my service, both in and out of the Church, I have learned that even those people

who at first seemed insignificant have become some of the most remarkable and uplifting individuals I know. There is wonderful depth—so much to love—in every soul.

I have always enjoyed the tale of *Beauty and the Beast*—not only because it is set in France or because I can easily relate to Lumière's lovely accent but because of the beautiful truth it illustrates.

Belle is taken prisoner in a haunted castle by a fearsome and repulsive beast—who is, in fact, a young prince trapped by a spell in the body of a terrifying monster. Rather than judging him by his appearance, Belle learns to see beyond it. She comes to understand that the Beast's bitterness, rude manners, and sudden anger are only a facade, hiding a wounded soul yearning to love and be loved.

Through Belle's patience, personal kindness, and loving care, an astonishing transformation begins—one that starts deep within the Beast's soul and ultimately changes even his outward appearance. The spell is broken, and the young prince is restored, bringing great joy to all who gather to celebrate their new king and queen.

In a similar way, as we extend Christlike love to *each* person we serve, our eyes are opened to their divine potential. We begin to see them as the Lord sees them—mortal souls with the capacity to become exalted beings through the Savior's restoring power and grace.

As we care for *each* soul, we help connect them to the Savior, inviting them to be healed and transformed through His atoning blood. In return, our own lives are blessed—we become more like the Savior and are filled with great joy.

My dear brothers and sisters, as one of His special witnesses, I testify that our Savior, Jesus Christ, loves us more than we can ever imagine. In the words of the hymn, "For His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me."

May we follow the Lord's perfect example and learn to love *all* and to love *each*, just as He does. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Jesus Christ Is the Way

By Elder Brian J. Holmes

Of the Seventy

As we bind ourselves to Him through covenant and follow His living prophet, we walk the one path that leads us safely home.

Last year, my wife, Maggie, and I ran the Jungfrau-Marathon in Switzerland. Set in the heart of the Swiss Alps, it is considered one of the most difficult marathons in the world. From start to finish, the course climbs over 6,400 feet, or 1,900 meters, as it winds through beautiful alpine villages and rugged, high-mountain terrain. The views carry you through the early miles, but the final stretch turns steep and narrow, forcing runners to hike the rocky path in single file. The last ascent demands careful attention to every step. In this race you are not just crossing a finish line; you are conquering a mountain.

So imagine our surprise when we learned that one of the runners who finished this race was blind. This courageous man ran tethered to a guide. For most of the race, they ran side by side, but as the course turned steeper and more demanding, the guide moved ahead, calling out every obstacle and directing each step. Because he was bound to a guide, the blind runner accomplished what would otherwise be impossible alone.

Like that marathon, our journey through life has moments of beauty and joy but is no walk in the park. We all want to cross the heavenly finish line and gain eternal life. Yet the course is often steep and difficult to navigate. We all face trials. Without a power greater than our own, no one successfully finishes this race.

At some point, we are all like the blind runner. We all need a guide.

Our Father in Heaven, in His perfect love, has provided us with many helps to guide our journey. As President Dallin H. Oaks taught, the strongest help God has given us is a Savior, Jesus Christ.

Through His Atonement, Jesus Christ "has done everything that is essential for our journey through mortality toward the destiny outlined in the plan of our Heavenly Father." Because He lived a perfect life, because He bore every sin and every sorrow, because He broke the bands of death, Jesus Christ alone can stand before the world and declare, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

In that simple declaration, the Savior taught that He is not only our guide; He is the path. His way is the only path that leads to eternal life.

Our Savior invites us to walk with Him. His way is the covenant path, the one path that leads to our celestial finish line. We choose to walk the covenant path by exercising faith in Jesus Christ unto repentance, receiving the ordinances of His gospel, and enduring to the end. These ordinances are essential. As Jesus taught Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Just as the band tethered the blind runner to his guide, covenants bind us to our guide—Jesus Christ. Elder David A. Bednar

taught, “The covenant connection we have with our Heavenly Father and His resurrected and living Son is the supernal source of perspective, hope, power, peace, and enduring joy.”

Once we bind ourselves to our Savior through covenant, only we can sever the tie. Jesus never will. As we remain tightly bound to Him, He is bound to us. We can expect His power to bless us with strength and joy even when we are experiencing a steep stretch of life. But if we turn away, we have no such promise. Covenant blessings flow from ongoing faithfulness, not merely from past participation.

When our path gets hard—and it will—we can remember the Apostle Peter. When the road of discipleship became steep and many “walked no more” with Jesus, He turned to the Twelve and asked, “Will ye also go away?” It was a searching question, one that reaches through time to each of us.

Peter answered:

“Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

“And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”

When we have doubts, when discipleship feels demanding, when others turn back, that is the moment to stay bound to Christ just as Peter did. There is nowhere else to go; only Christ has the words of eternal life.

As we walk with our Savior along the covenant path, we come to know an essential truth: To walk with Jesus is to follow His prophet. The Savior Himself calls prophets, speaks through them, and governs His Church by them.

Think about it: None of us could know the true and living Christ without prophetic witness. From Adam to Noah, Moses to Peter, and Joseph Smith to our day, God has chosen to reveal His Son to His children through a prophet.

Some say, “I don’t need a prophet or a church to follow Jesus.”

But Jesus Himself said to His chosen Apostles, “He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me.”

To knowingly reject His prophets is, by His own definition, to reject Him.

The Lord warned of a time when “every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god.” Without apostles and prophets, our perception of Christ gradually becomes whatever we want Him to be. Our understanding of doctrine shifts. Our commitment to standards erodes. Unity dissolves.

That is why Paul taught that the Church is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” Not so that we would be controlled but so that we would be established,

“that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.”

Our Savior promised, “If my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, ... they shall not be moved out of their place.”

Brothers and sisters, our Father in Heaven desires all His children to come home. His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, is the only way back. I testify that because Jesus Christ climbed the steepest mountain of all as He bore the weight of our salvation, we never have to face our mountains alone. As we bind ourselves to Him through covenant and follow His living prophet, we walk the one path that leads us safely home. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.



He Knows You by Name

By Elder Clement M. Matswagothata

Of the Seventy

The most eternity-shaping name we can receive is the sacred name of Jesus Christ.

Years ago, as I nervously walked up to speak at a stake conference, my daughter, trying to calm my nerves, said, “Dad, don’t worry about making a mistake. No one here will remember our long surname anyway.”

My surname, Matswagothata, is from Botswana. In my home language, it means “getting out of a difficult situation” or “someone who can do hard things.” And while I haven’t always felt like I can do hard things, my surname is a reminder to me that the Savior can and will guide us through every season of life—especially through difficult times.

We all need reminders like that throughout our mortal journey. Perhaps this is why our loving Father in Heaven gives us the opportunity every week to make a covenant with Him as part of the ordinance of the sacrament. He invites us to take upon ourselves the name of His Son, always remember Him, and keep His commandments. He gives us power to rise above mortality’s challenges.

Remember Who You Are

As much as my surname has brought hope and resilience to my family, I rejoice even more in the name of Jesus Christ, for in and through His name all who come unto Him can be saved. Even as Jesus Christ invites us to always remember Him and take upon ourselves His

name, He also remembers us and knows each of us by name.

In the Old Testament, the Lord taught Moses this assuring truth: “I know thee by name.”

In Eden’s garden, He called Adam.

At the empty tomb, He called Mary.

On the road to Damascus, He called Saul.

And in the Sacred Grove, He called Joseph.

All by name.

And He knows you and calls you by name too—from crowded cities to quiet villages, in whatever language you speak. He hears, sees, and knows you.

He knows your joys, and He rejoices with you. He knows your sorrows, and He can succor and lift you. Because of His Atonement, He knows your burdens, pain, and silent tears. The prophet Alma taught that through His Atonement, Jesus Christ would “take upon him the sins of his people.”

Alma also taught, “He shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and ... he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people ... , that he may know ... how to succor his people according to their infirmities.”

Others Will Be Placed in Your Way

Brothers and sisters, many carry quiet burdens—grief, illness, loneliness, anxiety, or prayers that seem unanswered. Others face conflict or isolation that few of us fully understand.

When life feels unfair and confusing, in those dark moments when you are tempted to ask, “O God, where art thou?” please remember this powerful truth: He knows you. He who “descended below all things” knows how to heal your broken heart and make you whole again. Trust His promise that the sun will rise again for you and tomorrow will be better than today.

I learned this more deeply during a difficult season of my life. Early in my service as a young stake president, as my wife, Busi, and I were raising our family, it felt as though one challenge followed another. We had just buried my mother. Two weeks later, we stood again at a graveside—this time with my counselor, mourning his teenage son. Work pressures felt overwhelming, and I began to wonder if I was measuring up—at home, at work, and before the Lord.

My prayers were best expressed in the Primary song: “Heavenly Father, are you really there? And do you hear and answer ev’ry child’s prayer?”

My answer came in an unexpected way.

One Sunday, while driving to a ward conference, I poured my heart out to the Lord. When I arrived at the meetinghouse, a

bright-eyed Primary boy stopped me and said, "We need to talk." With a very serious look on his face, he asked—almost in a scolding voice—"When are you going to stop being a naughty boy?" I knew I was in some kind of trouble. Before I could respond, he added, "Every morning and every night, my parents ask us to pray for you."

I will never be able to fully describe what I felt as I stood there. I felt seen. I felt loved. I felt known. I felt that I was not alone. And as I looked into that child's eyes, I felt the warmth of the Savior's love.

To the Savior, we are never lost in the crowd. He knows how to reach us—through a hymn, a smile, a kind word, and sometimes through people we least expect. Just as that family prayed for me, there is someone praying for you.

Please remember: Your pain is not a sign that God does not love you. He truly does. So, as President D. Todd Christofferson taught, "In the midst of [the] refiner's fire, rather than get angry with God, get close to God."

We Are Invited to Walk with Him

You see, not only does the Savior know *you*, but He also wants *you* to come to know *Him* and His Father. In His great Intercessory Prayer, He declared, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

He is the Good Shepherd, who leads us to green pastures and still waters. He is the Light of the World, who lights our path so that we need not walk in darkness.

The question should never be "Will the Savior walk with me?" He will. The real question is "Will I walk with Him?"

As we choose to walk with Jesus Christ, everything begins to change. He is no longer a casual acquaintance but a trusted heavenly friend. May I invite you to choose to remember Him and follow Him—not casually or occasionally but deliberately and always. May we become the kind of disciples who notice, reach out, and lift as the Savior did.

I bear witness that as we listen to His voice in the scriptures, follow the teachings of living prophets and apostles, repent daily, and heed His invitation to "Come, follow me," we will find peace in this ever-tumultuous world.

We will feel of His Spirit and experience joy even in our most trying moments. We will find strength to trust in Him and His promises of a better tomorrow.

"Getting out of a difficult situation" is more than a family name to me. It is a witness of an eternal reality: that through faith in Jesus Christ and by taking upon us His name through the covenants made at baptism, during the sacrament, and in His holy house, we gain access to His enabling power—power that can and will change our lives. I know that in His

time and in His way, there is always a way forward. Because He not only knows the way; He is the way.

Whether your name represents the first generation in the Church or a multigenerational heritage of faith, the most eternity-shaping name we can receive is the sacred name of Jesus Christ. We honor those who came before us, but above all we honor Him, for in His name we are bound through covenant identity.

I testify that Jesus Christ restored His Church, *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. It bears His name and contains the fulness of His gospel, with ordinances and covenants that bind us to Him. I testify that Jesus is the Christ, the Prince of Peace. He will renew our strength and bring us joy, for He comes "with healing in his wings." He reaches for us again and again because He desires to lead us home—one by one, by name. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Jesus Christ—the True Vine

By Elder Ulisses Soares

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

In a world of many voices, remaining connected to the True Vine is not merely desirable; it is essential to our spiritual survival.

My dear brothers and sisters, in this sacred Easter season, our hearts turn with deep gratitude and reverent devotion to our Savior, Jesus Christ, and remember His merciful mortal ministry, His perfect love, and His marvelous gift of the Atonement. Throughout His ministry, the Savior spoke on several occasions the sacred words "I am," using sublime metaphors to bear witness of who He eternally is—the great Jehovah of the Old Testament, the Son of God, the promised Messiah. Among these declarations is one of the most solemn and tender teachings of His ministry, spoken on the night preceding His suffering and death: "I am the true vine. ... Ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

Through this beautiful and moving metaphor, the Savior teaches that He is the true, trusted, and essential source of spiritual nourishment for our souls. Through Him, we receive strength beyond our own not only to survive the challenges of life but to grow and thrive. Through Him, life becomes more hopeful and more joyful and the fruits of the Spirit are manifested in us. Therefore, just as the

branches cannot bear fruit of themselves unless they remain connected to the vine, neither can we reach our full spiritual measure unless we abide in Him and His gospel.

Abiding in Christ is not an occasional or casual act; it is a constant, conscious, and sacred choice. It is allowing His holy teachings to abide in us, elevating our thoughts and governing our words in every setting—including the digital spaces where we so often interact—and purifying and consecrating our actions unto Him. It is letting our daily choices be guided by the covenants we have made with Him and allowing our lives to be directed by His loving and constant influence through the Holy Ghost. It is choosing to listen to His voice and the voice of His servants and following what they teach, above all the enticing voices of the world.

Abiding in Christ does not remove the burdens of life, but through His grace they are made lighter, and our hearts are strengthened by the comfort and peace He promises. As we place ourselves in His loving care and take upon us His yoke, we receive the spiritual power to endure and overcome the trials, weaknesses, and sorrows of mortality—burdens often too heavy to bear without His redeeming help and healing influence. In his first epistle to the Saints, the Apostle John taught that he who "abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." The Apostle Paul likewise testified, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

Returning to John's account, we read that the Savior declared: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." It is within this context—of abiding in Him and allowing Him to abide in us—that the Savior's declaration that He Himself is the True Vine takes on even deeper meaning. The word *true* suggests that there are, in the world, other vines that present themselves as legitimate, even appearing to represent the loving voice and word of the Savior, the True Vine, and His gospel, while subtly and deviously leading minds and hearts elsewhere.

We live in a world filled with many voices—voices that relentlessly seek our attention and offer persuasive messages and invitations. Some speak with eloquence and influence and are well intentioned in their desire to promote goodness. Others are attractive in appearance but lack substance. Still others are misleading and may even appear to be connected to Christ and His gospel.

Over time, many of these voices grow into tangled vines, rooted in popular philosophies and spread through various forms of media. They promise security, happiness, or authenticity, yet they cannot satisfy the soul. Often, they quietly introduce doubt and division—first in the mind and then in the heart—leading to spiritual loss and sorrow. Although becoming entangled in such voices

may feel exciting at first, it ultimately draws us toward fleeting worldly pursuits and weakens our connection to the True and Living Vine, Jesus Christ. As the Apostle Paul warned, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

My beloved brothers and sisters, true wisdom in our technological day is found in using modern tools with spiritual discernment—through the Holy Ghost—without allowing them to replace the rightful voice of the True Vine. Only our Redeemer can truly redeem us. He is the way, the truth, and the life of the world. "His way is the path that leads to happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come." In his first message to the world as our prophet, President Dallin H. Oaks declared with clarity and conviction: "Jesus Christ is the way. ... 'There shall be no other name given, nor any other way nor means, whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent' ([Mosiah 3:17](#))."

The True Vine offers something far greater and eternal than visibility or acclaim—the promise to "dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness." With patience and perfect love, He continues to invite us to come unto Him through His words and the words of those whom He has called and ordained to represent Him, to speak in His name, and to testify of Him. If we desire to bring forth good fruit, as the Savior taught, we need to receive our spiritual nourishment directly from the True Vine, for He is the source of all light and truth. Only then do the precious fruits of the gospel grow in our souls, and only then do we find the true light, life, and hope that flow from Him.

After His Resurrection, Jesus walked with two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Luke records that when they reached their destination, "[the Savior] made as though he would have gone further. But [the two disciples] constrained him, saying, Abide with us." Those disciples invited the resurrected Savior to abide with them. Without first the desire and then the invitation, their hearts would not have been transformed, their eyes would not have been opened to recognize Him, and they would not have returned to Jerusalem to bear witness of the living Christ—the True Vine.

My beloved brothers and sisters, in a world of many voices, remaining connected to the True Vine is not merely desirable; it is essential to our spiritual survival. Those who abide in Jesus Christ come to recognize and trust His voice, especially as it is spoken through those He has called to represent Him. I will forever treasure the moment when Elder Jeffrey R. Holland called me over the phone to welcome me to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, just a few minutes after I received this invitation to serve as a special witness of the Savior to the world. In that sacred moment, I felt the Savior ministering in love to me through the voice of

one of His anointed servants. I felt the peace and comforting assurance flowing from the True Vine. Elder Holland's life and mighty ministry testify that as we hear the Savior's voice through His servants and abide in Him—the True Vine—we bring forth much fruit, "for without [Him we] can do nothing."

In this sacred Easter season, I solemnly testify that Jesus Christ is the True Vine. He lives. He rose from the dead, and His redeeming power is real. I bear witness that His voice is the voice of truth and life. With perfect love, He invites all to abide in Him and to continue in His love that we may recognize His power in our lives, that God's love may be perfected in us, and that we may know that we are in Him. I bear my solemn witness of these eternal truths in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, amen.



Encounter at the Empty Tomb

By President Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

We must encounter the empty tomb, experience the reality of what it means, and, in turn, share that witness with others.

"They ... Came to the Tomb"

Nearly 2,000 years ago, a small group of women rose while it was still dark and made their way toward the tomb where the body of their beloved Lord, Jesus Christ, had been laid to rest.

I have tried to imagine the depth of their grief.

I can't.

I have tried to imagine their heartache, helplessness, and hopelessness.

I can't.

Perhaps the question they all asked was "How could this happen?"

How could the man who had cast out demons, healed the crippled, cured the sick, walked on water, conversed with angels, taught the blessed hope and infinite glory of the gospel, fed multitudes, and raised the dead—how could He Himself have died?

Today we understand better why the Savior had to die.

We know His "dying ... brought new birth through resurrection's miracle." But did His disciples know this at the time? Or did they wonder if God had entirely abandoned them?

Despite the heaviness of their hearts and the unanswered questions in their minds, Mary and her companions made their way to the tomb.

They didn't come expecting a miracle.

They didn't come anticipating their questions would be answered.

They certainly didn't come because they had a complete understanding of what was happening.

They came because of their immeasurable love and reverence for Jesus Christ. They came desiring to provide a loving act of service as a measure of their devotion and love for the man they honored and followed as the promised Messiah.

They came because they knew when the world is dark, the best place to go is toward "the light [that] shines in ... darkness."

What Mary and those with her discovered on that Sunday morning changed the world forever. "They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel ... [and] said to them, 'Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.'"

This encounter at the empty tomb changed them forever.

It changed the world.

He Lives!

Many might picture Jesus as a carpenter from Nazareth or a traveling preacher from Galilee. They might note the significant influence He had on the world's religious history. But the bold message of the empty tomb is that Jesus Christ is not merely a historical figure.

We do not seek Him among the dead. He is risen!

We understand He is not confined to the pages of a book any more than He was confined to that grave of stone. The scriptures teach us not only who Jesus was but who He is.

Because of what happened on that Sunday morning, we can speak of Jesus Christ in the present tense.

He lives!

Today.

At this moment.

He lives and is an active, ongoing influence in His Church and in the personal lives of those who follow Him. He guides, comforts, listens, calms our fears, and wipes away our tears.

The message of the risen Christ is that, with His strength, all obstacles can be overcome. Because Jesus Christ conquered death, surely He can conquer any danger, confusion, or doubt we face.

The First Witnesses

Heavenly messengers at the empty tomb gave Mary and her companions two invitations.

First, “*Come, [and] see the place where the Lord lay.*”

Second, “*Go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead.*”

In time, the Savior echoed a similar invitation to all: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”

Those early believers did just that. And soon, the good news of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ spread throughout “all nations.” That glorious work continues today as we proclaim His way in word and deed throughout more than 150 countries.

An Invitation

But it's worth remembering how it started—early on that Sunday morning with Mary and a small group of friends who, despite grief, fear, and unanswered questions, encountered the empty tomb and learned for themselves the glorious truth of His Resurrection. It began on that Easter morning when these few women became the world's first witnesses of the single greatest event in the history of this world.

We must all do the same.

We must encounter the empty tomb, experience the reality of what it means, and, in turn, share that witness with others.

Even though centuries separate us from that holy day, we are among those who Jesus referred to when He said, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

The Savior has entrusted each of us personally with sacred spiritual experiences and knowledge. Because of those experiences, we can see for ourselves the meaning of the empty tomb: that Jesus Christ lives and is actively blessing all who seek Him.

We too can rise to Jesus's challenge and spread the glorious news of the empty tomb.

We can serve full-time missions, which will bring lifelong blessings not only now but for generations to come.

We can feel a renewed determination and embrace the challenge of becoming lifelong missionaries and disciples of Christ through courageous and humble acts of discipleship in our daily lives.

We can walk in “the way” of Christ and “serve God with all diligence day and night.”

Living the message of the risen Christ testifies of our devotion and love for our Savior. It may well be that our consistent, courageous, and humble acts of service and love for God and His children will speak far more eloquently and powerfully than we ever could through words alone.

Some might hesitate to commit fully because of unresolved questions relating to life circumstances, the gospel, or the Church.

But, like Mary and those with her that morning, even when things seem dark, we step forward in faith, with courage and humility, and walk toward the Savior's light. As we do so, eventually the dawn of understanding will surely reward our faith.

Like the warmth and light of the morning sun, we will feel the love and healing of the Son of God.

Darkness will give way to eternal light.

A Disciple's Journey

My dear brothers and sisters, each morning let the daily rising sun remind us that Jesus Christ is the light that leads us through this life, through any valley of sorrow, over beautiful mountains of joy, and across any ocean of uncertainty or temptation, safely back to our loving and merciful Father in Heaven.

Brothers and sisters, as we desire to encounter Christ, we must eventually make our way to the empty tomb.

We must come to know for ourselves the blessed words “Be not afraid, for Jesus, who was crucified, is not here. He is risen!”

Those words will change us. They will inspire us to take upon ourselves the name of Christ. And from that moment on, the Light of Christ will begin to bloom within us. It will, in time, bring about a mighty change in our hearts and bless us with a disposition to do good continually. Jesus Christ and His restored gospel are our strength. Jesus Christ is our *guide for making choices* and will bring joy and happiness in this life and extend into the eternities.

No, we were not with Mary on that blessed Easter morning. We did not see what she and the other women saw. But we can ask ourselves: What *have* we seen, felt, or experienced?

Shall we not, therefore, *become* witnesses of Jesus Christ? Shall we not share our love for Him with others?

My dear friends, on this holy Easter morning, I offer my witness: He is risen.

I have stood at the entrance to the empty tomb and seen with spiritual eyes the eternal truth that Jesus Christ is not found among the dead but among the living.

He lives!

That testimony has made all the difference in my life.

That encounter at the tomb will do the same for all who earnestly seek Him. It will make a difference to you.

My dear friends, let us walk in His way as joyful and constant disciples of our beloved Savior,

the Risen One, is my prayer and my blessing in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Best Days and Worst Days

By President Emily Belle Freeman

Young Women General President

Because of Jesus Christ, no matter how bad things are right now, your best days are ahead.

Several weeks ago we began planning our daughter's wedding. With great joy, we dreamed and brainstormed as we considered all the options. And then my husband, Greg, received a phone call he couldn't ignore. It was the oncologist confirming what we hoped wasn't true. Greg's cancer had returned.

Isn't it amazing how you can go from best day to worst day in a matter of minutes?

This is mortality. A proving ground. A place designed for growth. I have learned that God allows mortality to do its work in us—and that includes both best days and worst days.

How do we get through those days? The story of Peter teaches us that strength comes as we walk with Christ and hold fast to His eternal truths.

Eternal Truths

“When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ... whom say ye that I am?”

They had seen empty nets filled, storms at sea calmed, loaves multiplied, and the dead raised. When Peter answered, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Jesus responded, “Blessed art thou, Simon ... : ... flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”

That day must have felt like a best day. The Spirit confirmed an eternal truth, and Peter courageously bore testimony of it.

But only three verses later, a shift occurred. As Jesus began to speak of His coming death, Peter rebuked Him, saying, “This shall not be.”

“Get thee behind me, Satan,” was the Savior's immediate response.

Peter had good intentions—he didn't want the Savior to die—but he misunderstood God's plan for His Son. Peter's story went from best day to worst day in a matter of three verses.

From Peter's story we learn that our understanding of eternal truth is not forged in a

single moment—testimony is built over time, day after day, both best days and worst.

Those eternal truths are often proven through invitation.

Invitations

In [Matthew 14](#), Peter and the other disciples were caught in a storm when Jesus approached the ship. Peter cried out, “Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.” And Jesus answered with an invitation: “Come.” So Peter stepped out of the boat. “He walked on the water, to go to Jesus.”

Best day.

But in the very next verse, we read that Peter saw the wind, became afraid, and began to sink.

Worst day in a matter of moments.

Have you ever accepted an invitation from the Lord and then felt unequal to the task? We all know what it is to doubt, to experience sinking moments. But notice where Jesus was when Peter accepted the invitation that seemed too big. He wasn’t shouting instructions from the shore or offering advice from the safety of the boat. He was in the water—with Peter. Within reaching distance.

As you accept the Lord’s invitations, on both your best days and your worst, the same will be true for you.

Promised Blessings

Now let’s consider one final story. This time, let’s begin with the worst day.

On the night Christ was arrested, Peter denied knowing Him three times, and then the rooster crowed. Luke writes, “The Lord turned, and looked upon Peter.”

I often think about that look.

Jesus knew the worst wasn’t over. He knew there were very hard experiences ahead. When Peter saw that look, Luke tells us he remembered the warning from Jesus about the cock crowing. I can’t help but wonder if Jesus was remembering the encouraging words He had spoken to Peter earlier that day: “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”

Perhaps that look was not a look of failure but instead a look of enabling strength meant to carry Peter through the worst moments ahead: The trial. The cross. The tomb.

After those hard days had passed, and after a long night of fishing, Peter and Jesus stood on the shore of Galilee. On that day the Savior extended another invitation: “Feed my sheep.” Peter’s faith hadn’t failed, and because of his deep love for Jesus Christ, there was still a great work in store for him. Peter was to be more than just a fisherman; he would now become a shepherd.

Sometimes we may wonder if the Lord’s promises will truly be fulfilled in us—especially when all seems lost. Especially on our worst days.

Peter’s story reminds us that they will.

For the Strength of Youth

History could suggest that Peter was a man who tried to stand in the way of the Father’s plan, who nearly drowned because of lack of faith, and who denied knowing the Savior three times—and that would be true. But it is also true that Peter walked on water, he was the first Apostle to bear witness that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and he was given priesthood keys to preside over the Lord’s Church. And maybe it took both the worst days and the best days for Peter to become who the Lord needed him to become.

I don’t know what your story looks like right now, if today is a best day or a worst day. But here is my advice for you. On that worst day with Greg several weeks ago, I opened my *For the Strength of Youth* guide, wondering if the eternal truths, invitations, and promised blessings from the guide could really help Greg and me find strength in Christ.

Here is what I read. Maybe these words will help you.

“God’s plan is for you. ... He has all power and knows all things. You can trust Him, even when life is hard.”

“God wants to communicate with you.” He knows you. He knows your name. “Pour out your heart to Him. ... Be still and listen for His answers.”

“Jesus Christ will help you. ... When you are worried, afraid, or [struggle] in any way, He will comfort you.”

“Walk in God’s light. ... You make better choices when you can see things clearly.”

“Temple ordinances and covenants give you greater access to God’s blessings,” help you navigate your life with divine guidance, increase your companionship with the Spirit and with angels, and enable you to live up to your privileges and draw upon the power of God.

Finally, **“Jesus Christ brings joy.** ... You might have a bad day, a bad week, or a bad year. [Just remember,] joy is not the absence of sorrow in your life; [it is] the presence of [Jesus] Christ in your life.”

As you spend time in this guide, you will begin to realize that this is not just a guide for standards; this is a guide for strength.

Because Jesus Christ knows all about best days and worst days: suffering so great that an angel was sent to strengthen Him, the betrayal of a good friend, the cross on Calvary.

But His story also has a garden, a stone rolled away, and an empty tomb.

Because of Him, no matter how bad things are right now, your best days are ahead.

Jesus Christ is our strength. This I know. Of this I bear witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



I Feel My Savior’s Love

By Elder Pedro X. Larreal

Of the Seventy

It is my prayer that each of us will feel our Savior’s love as we partake of the sacrament.

My dear brothers and sisters, do you know how much the Savior loves you? If you do not know or have never thought about it before, I hope by the end of this message you will know how to find the answer to this question.

A few weeks ago, at a devotional for students at Brigham Young University, our prophet, President Dallin H. Oaks, began his talk by sharing this thought: “I feel to emphasize the warning President Russell M. Nelson issued us: that ‘in coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost.’ One of the many reasons you will need the constant influence of the Holy Ghost is that you live in a season in which the adversary has become so effective at disguising truth that if you don’t have the Holy Ghost, you will be deceived.”

We can renew that influence of the Holy Ghost each week by personally preparing to partake of the sacrament.

The resurrected Lord emphasized the importance of the sacrament when He visited the Americas and instituted this ordinance among the faithful Nephites and Lamanites. He blessed the emblems of the sacrament. He gave them to His disciples and then the multitude, and at the same time, He commanded them, saying: “And this shall ye always do to those who repent and are baptized in my name; and ye shall do it in remembrance of my blood, which I have shed for you, that ye may witness unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you.”

The sacrament is the ordinance that replaces the sacrifices of blood and burnt offerings of the Mosaic law. As we partake of this ordinance, we can receive the promise given by the Savior. In [3 Nephi 9:20](#) we read, “And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a

contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost."

As we partake of this ordinance with a broken heart, the Lord promises us the blessing of having the companionship and constant guidance of the Holy Ghost.

The sacrament represents the Atonement of Jesus Christ. During that sacred moment, when we give our full attention to Him and focus on His atoning sacrifice, how can we not feel His great love for us? How can we not feel important when we remember that He willingly volunteered to be the Advocate between us and the Father?

In [Luke 22:19-20](#) we read:

"And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: [do this] in remembrance of me.

"Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

When Christ spoke these words found in Luke, He was focused on us; the sacrament was given for our benefit. Notice again what He says: "This is my body which is given for *you*." And in the following verse, He says, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for *you*."

Dear brothers and sisters, the Lord uses the pronoun *you* again and again to emphasize and remind us that the sacrament is for us—for you and for me!

The ordinance of the sacrament makes sacrament meeting the most sacred and important meeting in the Church. During the sacrament, we should strive to remove every worldly thought from our minds. This is time to be prayerful and reverent, not a time for reading secular books or magazines, nor is it a time for checking our cell phones. This sacred time is to feel His love for us and remember Him, to know that we are never alone and that His Spirit will be with us to help us during trials and challenges.

President Dallin H. Oaks taught, "By participating weekly and appropriately in the ordinance of the sacrament, we qualify for the promise that we will 'always have his Spirit to be with [us]' ([D&C 20:77](#))."

The gift of the Holy Ghost is the compass that leads us to make correct choices and sanctifies us from all sin.

On this Easter Sunday, as we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, I want to invite you, with all my strength and with all my love, to leave today determined to elevate your spiritual preparation and reverence as you partake of the sacrament. It is vital. As President Nelson said, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the companionship of the Holy Ghost in these latter days.

I know that Jesus Christ lives and He knows us. His arms are always outstretched and ready to help us. He loves us beyond what we can comprehend. It is my prayer that each of us will feel our Savior's love as we partake of the sacrament and have the influence of the Holy Ghost in these days when the adversary does not rest.

I testify of the sacred mantle of our prophet, President Dallin H. Oaks, as a prophet, seer, and revelator. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Choose Jesus Christ as Your Guide

By Elder Edward B. Rowe

Of the Seventy

I need Jesus Christ to be my guide through life's journey amid its spiritual land mines. All of us do.

When I listened to President Freeman talk about good days and bad days, I had the thought come to me, "Ed, you're about to find out which of the two this is."

This sacred Easter morning, I'd like to share an experience that helped me understand how much we need Jesus Christ to guide us in our lives. I pray that the Holy Ghost will bear witness to you of the resurrected Christ and that our desire to follow Him will grow.

Several years ago, as a young lawyer, I was involved in resolving a border dispute between countries that had been at war. The work required me to travel on foot through remote areas that were part of the recent war zone. Thousands of land mines had been laid during the war. Expert deminers were there, working to deactivate the mines; however, to my surprise, not all locations of the mines were known. Consequently, on occasion people would accidentally step on them and be injured or killed.

To help me complete my work, I'd been provided a special guide named Winta. Winta was well known in the area. He was from a border town that had been attacked. He escaped and then volunteered to stay in the region throughout the war to observe the activities of the opposing army. He knew the terrain and what occurred during the war.

Because it was possible that some places I would travel had undetected mines, I was given the following instructions: *Carefully follow your guide. Winta knows this border area from*

personal experience. Walk in his footsteps a few paces behind him. Where he goes, you go. Where he steps, you step. I was literally to follow in Winta's footsteps.

For several days I followed Winta through many areas in the border region. At first I felt uncertain and apprehensive, hiking at times in abandoned trenches, destroyed villages, and other areas where the armies had been. The more we walked together and I remained safe, the more my confidence grew. Thanks to Winta, I completed my work without harm and safely returned home. As I followed in his footsteps, walking with my guide, I developed great trust and gratitude for him.

Jesus Christ Is Our Perfect and Personal Guide

Brothers and sisters, as much as I needed Winta to be my guide then, I've learned, more importantly, that I need Jesus Christ to be my guide through life's journey amid its spiritual land mines. All of us do.

Christ's invitation is constant and consistent: "Come, follow me." "Walk with me." "Return unto me." His invitation is to *all*—whoever we are, wherever we are. For "he inviteth ... *all* to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth *none* that come unto him." Jesus Christ denieth *none*! No one need walk alone!

"The Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning" invites us—we who "labour and are heavy laden" with our weaknesses and imperfections—to walk with Him as our guide.

Jesus Christ was completely obedient to the Father and declared: "I have set an example for you." "That which ye have seen me do even that shall ye do." As we strive to follow His perfect example, He *will* strengthen us and protect us from Satan's spiritual land mines.

While the Savior's Atonement is *infinite*, His invitation is *individual*. He invites you and me to accept Him as our *personal* guide. He suffered not just for *humanity*—He suffered for each of us *individually*. As President Russell M. Nelson taught, "Jesus Christ took upon Himself *your* sins, *your* pains, *your* heartaches, and *your* infirmities." In short, He knows you *personally* and thus how to guide you based on your distinct strengths, weaknesses, and circumstances.

Though our paths in life are unique, each is to be within the covenant path. For that is Christ's path. We enter that path and connect ourselves to Jesus Christ as our guide through exercising faith in Him, repenting, and making sacred promises, or covenants, with Him.

We follow in His footsteps within the covenant path by being in holy places, like the temple, and by having sacred experiences through partaking of the sacrament, praying, studying the scriptures, and ministering to others. The more time we spend with our guide in this way—and strive to follow His example—the

more we will develop a deep bond and special relationship with Him and our Heavenly Father.

We will feel the Savior's love, be blessed with His strength, and have greater trust in Him. Even our very natures will change to become more like Him. We will feel more joy. And our love and gratitude for Him will grow.

Christ Has the Power Not Only to Guide but to Heal

While the Savior is our *perfect* guide, we are *imperfect* followers. Indeed, "*all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Our loving Heavenly Father knew this would be so. He therefore provided a Savior for us; and because Christ answered the ends of the law through His Atonement, the Father gave Him *all* power to heal us completely when we walk imperfectly.

I know this to be true. When injured by spiritual land mines, I have experienced Christ's redeeming and healing power by exercising faith in Him and repenting with real intent. I have been spiritually healed by Jesus Christ. I promise you can be too!

Please accept His invitation: "Will [you] not *now* return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you? ... [My] arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come, him will I receive."

Jesus Christ is thus not only a perfect and personal guide—He is also the resurrected Redeemer and Master Healer! No matter how injured you are or how imperfect and inadequate you feel at following Him, He loves you. His merciful hand is extended to you *even now*. Please take it!

Conclusion

This Easter morning, may we *all* accept Christ's invitation to be our guide and walk with Him. And when we struggle or stray, let us return unto Him that He may heal us—that He may heal *you*. As President Dallin H. Oaks declared, "Jesus Christ is the way!" He lives! He is our Savior and Redeemer, the resurrected Christ, whom I love. Of Him I bear witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



He Is Risen

By Elder Ronald A. Rasband

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

With His Resurrection, Jesus Christ secured salvation from physical death for us, all of God's children throughout the ages.

This Easter Sunday, all Christians, brothers and sisters in the Lord, honor and celebrate the Resurrection of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. His Resurrection and His Atonement are the most powerful, far-reaching, and sacred events in all human history.

Jesus Christ and His Resurrection are at the very core of the doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Prophet Joseph Smith, the first prophet of the Restoration, who saw and spoke with God the Father and His Beloved Son, taught, "The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven." As an Apostle called of Jesus Christ, I bear my testimony to all the world of that truth.

Jesus Christ is "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob," "the Almighty God" of the Old Testament, "the light of the world" of the New Testament, "the Messiah" and "Savior of the world" of the Book of Mormon and other latter-day revelation. He came, was crucified, and rose again.

After three days in a borrowed tomb, Jesus Christ broke the bands of death imposed by the Fall. With His Resurrection, He secured salvation from physical death for us, all of God's children throughout the ages. That includes the just, who herald Him as the Son of God, and the unjust, who will someday recognize Him as "the King of kings," for it is prophesied, "Every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess" that Jesus is the Christ.

When Mary and other faithful women approached the Garden Tomb to care for the body of their Lord, they found two angels, who announced, "He is not here, but is risen."

Those glorious words, "He is risen," have sparked religious ceremony, gratitude, faith in Jesus Christ and His promises for centuries. President Dallin H. Oaks has testified: "The resurrection is a pillar of our faith. It adds meaning to our doctrine, motivation to our behavior, and hope for our future."

Jesus Christ is more than a mortal first laid in a manger, more than a friend, teacher, rabbi, minister, or prophet. He is the Only Begotten Son of the Father. And by divine design, His Resurrection by His own godly power reunited His body and His spirit. What a majestic and monumental event in Father in Heaven's eternal plan.

The resurrected Jesus Christ first appeared to Mary and with tenderness spoke her name. He appeared to His Apostles, saying, "Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." He walked with two of His disciples, on the road to Emmaus, who pleaded, "Abide with us." The risen Lord, "Endless and Eternal," appeared to hundreds in the Holy Land.

Accounts in the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ also bear witness of Him resurrected. A gathering at a temple in the New World, in the land Bountiful, heard a voice from the heavens saying, "Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him."

Then they beheld "a Man descending out of heaven; and he was clothed in a white robe; and he came down and stood in the midst of them." And "he stretched forth his hand." I love the image of Him stretching forth His hand. He said, "Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world."

That outstretched hand was well known in His earthly ministry. His hand rescued Peter as he began to sink in the choppy waves of the Sea of Galilee. His hand motioned for the crippled man at the Pool of Bethesda to "rise ... and walk." His hands washed the feet of His disciples, and His hands "took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it," initiating the sacrament "in remembrance of" Him. He promised the prophet Isaiah, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: ... for I am thy God: ... I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." That promise is for all of us.

He stood before them resurrected and said, "Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world."

The multitude of 2,500 souls "went forth, ... and did see with their eyes and did feel with their hands, and did know of a surety and did bear record, that it was he."

He invited "their little children" to be brought to Him and took them "one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them."

This scene of Him resurrected, reaching out with hands once nailed to a cross, touches me deeply.

Some years ago at a general conference, I spoke of our grandson Paxton, who was born with a very rare chromosomal deletion. His parents would have carried him to the Savior when He called for all "afflicted in any manner" to come that He might heal them.

Paxton lived three treasured years. He could not speak, crawl, walk, or run after his brothers. But little Paxton's hands reached out to ours and to our Savior with love and affection.

I remember the first time Paxton's father and I gave him a priesthood blessing that, as it says in the scriptures, "the works of God should be made manifest in him." They were. He brought immense joy to our family. Families with such a precious member know what a privilege it is to be blessed with one with special needs. Associating with Paxton, our whole family gained an increased, deep, and abiding trust in

the Lord. Then God reached out and took him home.

The words of the psalmist say it all: “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”

That joy is, as the Savior said, “Because I live, ye shall live also.”

I know Paxton’s tender “spirit and [his] body shall be reunited again in ... perfect form.” By the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, his joy will be in not only a resurrected body but one that is resurrected whole and perfect. All who live or ever have lived who come unto Christ and live His gospel will feel joy beyond any earthly expression as we reunite, resurrected, with our Father in Heaven and Jesus Christ and with our parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, and ancestors.

May we be at peace, brothers and sisters, for the Lord has promised, “Where I am, there ye may be also.” May we believe the Lord’s words in Isaiah: “I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.” May we testify of Him by the way we live and what we love. May we feel to our very souls these stirring words: “He is risen! He is risen! Tell it out with joyful voice” and “let the whole wide earth rejoice.”

As a special witness of the name of Jesus Christ—the King of glory, the Messiah triumphant, the Bright and Morning Star, and on this Easter morn, the Resurrection and the Life—I bear my witness of Him in reverence and in gratitude in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Because of Jesus Christ

By Elder Dale G. Renlund

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Focusing on the Savior, His infinite Atonement, and what He has done for us will bring joy and clarity into our lives.

Years ago our family had a little black dog, a toy poodle named Lady. Lady was smart, energetic, and great at fetching a ball. She was willing to retrieve a ball anytime, anyplace, and for as long as anyone was willing to throw one.

One day, after repeatedly throwing a ball for her to fetch, I decided to throw two balls at the same time, one blue and one yellow. Lady chased after the blue ball, picked it up, began running back to me, and then saw the yellow ball. She dropped the blue ball, dashed to the yellow ball, picked it up, and started back to

me. Then she seemed to think of the blue ball, dropped the yellow ball, turned around, ran back to the blue ball, picked it up, and began returning. As she was passing the yellow ball, she stopped, dropped the blue ball, picked up the yellow ball, and resumed running back. Then she dropped the yellow ball, turned around, scampered back to the blue ball, picked it up, and began running to me. As Lady passed the yellow ball again, she came to a screeching halt. She dropped the blue ball, looked back and forth from the blue ball to the yellow ball. Then she gave up, walked to her basket, and lay down. For Lady, two balls were too many. She became confused, overwhelmed, and discouraged.

In our lives, we need to deal not just with blue and yellow concerns but also with red and green, orange and purple, polka dots and stripes, and every possible combination. We may feel like Lady—overwhelmed and discouraged—and just want to crawl back into bed.

I cannot add more time to your days or eliminate the many concerns modern life brings. But I can offer this counsel: Not all matters are of equal value, and maintaining an eternal perspective helps us prioritize the things that are of greatest value. On this Easter Sunday, let us consider why focusing on Jesus Christ and the “infinite virtue of His great atoning sacrifice” is of greatest value and helps us no matter how many other concerns we must manage. His life, His mission, and the fruits of His Atonement bless us infinitely and daily.

Jesus lived and died to do His Father’s will. His infinite Atonement—the series of events He experienced from Gethsemane through His death on the cross and on to His glorious Resurrection—is central to Heavenly Father’s plan for our salvation. The plan depended on Jesus Christ; there was no alternative. He completed the Atonement and thereby received “all power ... in heaven and in earth.”

Because of the merits, mercy, and grace of Jesus Christ, we can return home to our Heavenly Father and live in His presence. This is only possible through Jesus Christ. The Savior Himself said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” Jesus, who leads us to salvation, has the power to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves because He completed His Atonement.

Reflect on these reasons we celebrate Easter. First, Jesus Christ conquered death; He literally rose from the tomb. Because of Him, resurrection is a universal and unconditional gift for everyone who comes to earth. Death is not the end because the spirit and the body will be reunited, never again to be divided.

Second, Jesus Christ has both the power and the desire to save us from our sins. Because of Jesus Christ, when we repent and follow Him, “immediately [will] the great plan of redemption

be brought about unto [us].” The Redeemer suffered the punishment for everyone’s sins, transgressions, and mistakes. He can and will declare guiltless all who believe on His name, repent, follow the covenant path, and strive to endure to the end. “All mankind may be saved” because of Him and His atoning sacrifice. *All* means *everyone*. If everyone, then anyone. If anyone, then even one. And if even one, then even you.

Jesus Christ has infinite capacity to forgive, promising that “as often as my people repent will I forgive them their trespasses against me.” Because of Jesus Christ, sins for which we have sincerely repented leave no spiritual scar, track, or trace. There is no scarlet letter to wear, now or in the eternities. When we repent with real intent, the entirety of our sin, not just a part, is figuratively nailed to the cross and we no longer bear its spiritual consequences. After we have repented, we owe no more to justice because Jesus has paid the debt; He pardons us from deserved punishment. We are forgiven, our hearts and hands are made clean, and the Lord remembers our sins no more. The Lord our God “is mighty; he will save, [and] he will rejoice over [us].”

Third, Jesus Christ understands our challenges, having taken on not only our sins but also our griefs, sicknesses, and frailties. Because He endured and completed the infinite atoning sacrifice, He empathizes perfectly with us. He can “calm [our] anguish” and offers “gentle ... peace ... for [our] beseeching.” He, and only He, can consider every factor that shapes who we are: our genetics, intellectual abilities, traditions, experiences, mental and emotional conditions, and every other circumstance that affects who we are. He, and only He, will eventually judge us “according to [our] works, according to the desire of [our] hearts.”

Because of Jesus Christ, all that is unfair in life can and will be made right. He will consecrate our afflictions for our gain. He will sanctify to us our deepest distress. He will fill with sweet a bitter cup. He will dependably and consistently make us whole. If we let Him, we will “suffer no manner of afflictions, save it [is] swallowed up in the joy of Christ.”

Focusing on the Savior, His infinite Atonement, and what He has done for us will bring joy and clarity into our lives, no matter how many other concerns we have. *This* is why ancient and modern prophets have and always will direct us to Christ. You may remember that President Russell M. Nelson taught, “Whatever questions or problems you have, the answer is always found in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.” And President Dallin H. Oaks, the Lord’s living prophet today, simply declared, “Jesus Christ is the way.”

You need not be like our little dog, Lady—confused, discouraged, and overwhelmed—when facing too many balls; you do not need to crawl back to bed and

cower. Instead, keep your eye on the ball. Focus on the Savior. Seek for the "precious gifts His Atonement can impart." Then you can joyfully and confidently sing with the children:

I will trust in Jesus. I will hear His call.

He will never leave me, even when I fall.

Jesus gives me power, lifts and comforts me,

Helping me to live and grow eternally.

Because Jesus Christ completed the Atonement, He has the power to help you along your earthly journey and to redeem you from death, both physical and spiritual. Celebrate the joyous message of Easter every day by reflecting every day on the blessings you receive because of Him. "Open wide your broken heart and let your Savior in!"

On this Easter morning, I add my witness of "the great and wonderful love made manifest by the Father and the Son in the coming of the Redeemer into the world." Jesus Christ is the Resurrection and the Life, the Only Begotten of the Father, the Worthy Lamb who was slain, our Redeemer, our Savior, our Advocate, and most assuredly the Risen Lord. "He lives, who once was dead." In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



The Joy of a Covenant Relationship with God

By Elder Thierry K. Mutombo

Of the Seventy

Wherever you are now or whatever you are going through in your life, you can feel God's infinite love manifested through His Son, Jesus Christ.

My beloved brothers and sisters, I'm humbled by the privilege to speak to you on this Easter Sunday. I pray that the Spirit of the Lord will be with you and with me at this sacred moment and will continue to teach and inspire us as we gather as disciples of Jesus Christ to worship Him.

In some parts of the world, people use a unique and special way of exchanging greetings on Easter morning. The paschal greeting, also known as the Easter acclamation or Easter Day greeting, is a custom among many Christians.

The greeter says, "Christ is risen."

The other person responds, "Truly, He is risen."

This is more than just a simple greeting or declaration. It is a celebration of the divine gift offered by Heavenly Father to us. The

understanding of what Jesus Christ offers through His Atonement and Resurrection brings comfort, peace, and reassurance to all of us. Without Jesus Christ's infinite Atonement, no one would have hope to return to our Heavenly Father. And without His Resurrection, death would be the end.

The Savior Jesus Christ confirmed the divine purpose of His Atonement, saying: "If ye will come unto me ye shall have eternal life. Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come, him will I receive; and blessed are those who come unto me."

"Come unto me" is a divine invitation which means wherever you are now or whatever you are going through in your life, you can feel God's infinite love manifested through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Indeed, our Heavenly Father has a special love for each person who makes the covenant with Him in the waters of baptism. That divine love deepens as additional covenants are made in the house of the Lord and are faithfully kept.

Nathalie and I experienced this divine love during a very difficult time in our lives as husband and wife and eternal companions. We have been blessed with 10 children. When I mention this, many younger people ask, "How?" And I respond, "This is simply how it is."

We experienced the death of four of our children at the beginning of our marriage. After the passing of three of our children, Nathalie and I wondered and asked ourselves so many questions, like the Prophet Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail: "Heavenly Father, where art Thou? Do You hear our cries and prayers?"

We soon learned that this was not the end of our trials when Allan Mutombo, our nine-month-old baby, passed away. I found him in his crib. Holding his body in my arms, I cried that day, begging for a miracle. However, as you know, God's plan for us is perfect, and that day He decided to take Allan back to Him. My prayers did not change His mind and will.

To add to this challenge, after the funeral, our extended families gathered and decided, without consulting us, that tradition required Nathalie and me to separate, and they asked me to take my wife's belongings outside the house because we had lost many children.

I went into the house and prayed, asking for strength to face this adversity. The words of the wonderful hymn, written by Emma Lou Thayne, came to my mind: "Where can I turn for peace?"

I also remembered the words of our temple sealing and the promises we made to God and to each other. I felt great peace and reassurance that Nathalie and I are a daughter and a son of a loving and caring Heavenly Father.

I felt the Savior's love and His hand lifting me up.

I came out with empty hands and told the people who were there, "I'm sorry, but Nathalie is my eternal companion. We are striving together to build an eternal family, and the Savior is helping us achieve it."

They opposed my decision, but exercising my faith in Jesus Christ made me stronger.

Teaching about our discipleship and covenant relationship with our Heavenly Father and our Savior Jesus Christ, our prophet, President Dallin H. Oaks, said: "Following Christ is not a casual or occasional practice. It is a continuous commitment and way of life that should guide us at all times and in all places. His teachings and His example define the path for every disciple of Jesus Christ."

Keeping covenants "would require [the Savior's] followers to leave what He called 'that which is highly esteemed among men' ([Luke 16:15](#)) and 'the tradition of men' ([Mark 7:8](#))."

The miracle Nathalie and I prayed for happened after we stood for the truth and the light that is in Jesus the Christ. We received a strong confirmation that Christ works miracles according to our faith in Him. Sometimes things do not work out in mortality as we hope, and sometimes we need the faith in Jesus Christ that all will work out in the end.

Now, you may say, "I'm not facing the same challenge—how does this apply to me?" During this mortal life, each of us will face our own dark days, times when things are not going as hoped. When you face this darkness of sorrow, please remember that dark day when Jesus Christ was humiliated, bruised, abused, reviled, and lifted on the cross for you and me.

That day was filled with devastating, consuming sorrow that gnawed at the souls of those who loved and honored Jesus Christ. But the doom of that day did not last forever. The despair did not linger because, on Sunday, the resurrected Savior overcame the bonds of death. So no matter how dark your days are, please remember that Sunday will come if you faithfully keep the covenants that you made with the Lord.

Our Heavenly Father's plan for us is happiness now and joy forever in His presence. He gives us laws and commandments and makes covenants with us to bless us. His desire, purpose, and glory are to have us return to Him pure, having proven ourselves worthy of an eternity of joy in His presence.

We know the adversary's goal. He seeks for all to "be miserable like unto himself." He would have us break our covenants to bring sorrow upon us. He is committed to our destruction. Satan's program is often described as "play now and pay later." He also tries to teach that there are never any consequences or accountability for our actions.

President Ezra Taft Benson taught:

"The great test of life is obedience to God. ...

"The great task of life is to learn the will of the Lord and then do it.

"The great commandment of life is to love the Lord."

We can grow in humility and strengthen our covenantal relationship with our Heavenly Father and our Savior Jesus Christ if we change our nature to become like a child, building our life on the rock, who is the Savior Jesus Christ, yielding in faith in Him, responding to the Holy Ghost's direction to faithfully keep the covenants made with the Lord at our baptism and in the house of the Lord.

I know that God lives and testify that Jesus is the Christ. I testify that President Dallin H. Oaks is the prophet of God on the earth.

Christ is risen. Truly, He is risen. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



A Peculiar Treasure

By Elder Alan R. Walker

Of the Seventy

The Lord declared that His people would be a peculiar treasure unto Him if they would obey His voice and keep His covenant.

As a young boy I had great interest in anything that had to do with treasures. I often found myself absorbed in stories and movies about hidden treasures, secret maps, and brave explorers searching for lost riches. When my brothers and I visited our grandparents who lived at the base of the Andes Mountains in Mendoza, Argentina, we would spend hours searching through the fields for shiny rocks. We would eagerly break the rocks open in the hope of discovering something very precious inside—only to find more glittering minerals but never any real treasure.

As we study the scriptures, we encounter the word *treasure* dozens of times—most often as a warning not to set our hearts upon riches or upon the fleeting things of the world. Yet among all those warnings about earthly treasure, there is one passage that reveals something astonishing: the Lord Himself speaks of *us* as His treasure. I speak of the moment when the Lord addressed the prophet Moses upon Mount Sinai and declared that His people would be a *peculiar treasure* unto Him if they would obey His voice and keep His covenant.

Our Heavenly Father's greatest desire is for us to live with Him again and enjoy eternal life by His side. His work and glory are "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." In order to make this possible, He designed the plan of salvation. He sent His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to break the bands of death and atone for the sins of the world. This sacrifice is the greatest expression of our Father's infinite love for all His children. Above all loves, the love of our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, stands supreme—"greater love" has no man. As a part of our Savior's love, He invites us to come unto Him, to choose Him. The risen Lord is the same who spoke upon Mount Sinai. The living Christ still calls a covenant people today.

In His benevolent teaching to Moses, the Lord established a pattern of application not only to the ancient children of Israel but to all those who desire to become His treasure—the Lord's covenant people. That pattern includes two simple but powerful conditions: to obey His voice and to keep our covenants with Him. Then we will be a peculiar, or special, treasure; and as such we will be blessed, strengthened, and favored through the Savior's atoning sacrifice.

President Russell M. Nelson taught: "Once you and I have made a covenant with God, our relationship with Him becomes much closer than before our covenant. Now we are bound together. Because of our covenant with God, He will never tire in His efforts to help us, and we will never exhaust His merciful patience with us. Each of us has a special place in God's heart. He has high hopes for us." The same God who called the children of Israel calls us now—to become His covenant people, to rise above the ways of the world, and to receive blessings that only He can bestow.

Covenant faithfulness does more than identify us as God's people—it empowers us to rise above the limitations of this fallen world.

President Dallin H. Oaks has taught that obedience to God's commandments is essential to rise above life's challenges. Referring to the sacred covenants that bind us to our Heavenly Father and to His Son, Jesus Christ, he declared, "As we honor those covenants by keeping Their commandments and following Their plan of redemption, Their promised blessings enable us to soar to celestial heights."

In modern revelation, the Lord provides a beautiful description of how we can know we are accepted of Him. He said, "Verily I say unto you, all among them who know their hearts are honest, and are broken, and their spirits contrite, and are willing to observe their covenants by sacrifice—yea, every sacrifice which I, the Lord, shall command—they are accepted of me." The Lord does not ask for perfection all at once; rather, He asks for honest and broken hearts, humble spirits, and a willing readiness to keep our covenants—even when it requires sacrifice.

Just as the treasures my brothers and I searched for were never found on the surface, becoming the Lord's treasure and receiving His divine acceptance are not something casual or accidental. They require patient effort, faithful persistence, and sacrifice. We must be willing to lay aside lesser things—habits, ambitions, or comforts that distance our hearts from Him—so that we may offer ourselves wholly and without reservation. As we choose to follow prophetic counsel, even when it stretches us or feels inconvenient, we demonstrate our love for the Lord and show that we cherish Him above all worldly desires.

President D. Todd Christofferson taught that as we walk in faithful obedience to our covenants, there flows into our lives a "continual [stream] of blessings" from God—divine power that enables us to endure trials and even "convert tribulation into triumph."

He explained that when we honor our covenants, three sacred blessings follow: *"the promised fruits of obedience become evident, ... the Spirit communicates God's pleasure, [and] we can face life with hope ... , knowing ... we will succeed in the end because we have God's promise to us."* This is part of what it means to be the Lord's peculiar treasure. He not only claims us as His covenant people—He strengthens us, sustains us, and surrounds us with covenant power every step of the way.

I testify that as we obey the Savior's voice and keep our covenants—even by small and quiet sacrifices each day—we will feel His love more deeply and receive His guidance more clearly. And because He lives, we can have the assurance that one day we will stand before Him and hear the words that matter most: that we are accepted of Him. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Alive in Christ

By President Dallin H. Oaks

President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Let us follow Christ by forgoing contention and by using the language and methods of peacemakers.

I.

On this glorious Easter Sunday, I have chosen to speak first about the Resurrection, which is a pillar of our faith.

The literal Resurrection of Jesus is the subject of so many scriptures that it is settled doctrine for believers of the Bible and Book of Mormon. For us, the *universal* Resurrection is equally certain. As the Book of Mormon teaches:

"The spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form. ...

"Now, this restoration shall come to all, both old and young, both bond and free, both male and female, both the wicked and the righteous" ([Alma 11:43-44](#)).

I wonder if we fully appreciate the enormous significance of this belief in a literal, universal resurrection. The conviction that death is not the conclusion of our identity changes the whole perspective of our mortal life. It affects how we look on the physical challenges of mortality. It gives us the strength and perspective to endure the mortal challenges faced by each of us and by those we love. It signifies that mortal deficiencies are only temporary! It also gives us the courage to face our own death or that of loved ones—even deaths we might call premature.

Our belief in the Resurrection also encourages us to fulfill our family responsibilities in mortality. It helps us live together in love in this life in anticipation of joyful reunions and associations in the next. All of these truths have been preached in this conference session with great clarity.

II.

Living worthy to meet Christ is no easy task. Many current writers characterize the time in which we live as toxic, a time of contempt or hostility toward adversaries. This hostility affects many different relationships in society, involving many whose Christian beliefs should orient them otherwise.

Our Savior, Jesus Christ, taught us how to relate to one another. The great commandments in the law, He taught, were to love—God and neighbor (see [Matthew 22:37-39](#)).

Asked, "Who is my neighbour?" Jesus answered with a parable that praised the merciful action of a Samaritan, who belonged to a group the Jews isolated and held in contempt (see [Luke 10:29-37](#)). But Jesus's teachings about the circle of love went far beyond Samaritans. In the Sermon on the Mount, He declared:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" ([Matthew 5:43-44](#)).

What a revolutionary teaching for personal relationships! Love even your enemies! But who are our enemies? The full meaning of *enemies* in the sources from which King James's translators chose the

word *enemies* includes military foes but even extends to any who actively oppose one another. Today we might say that we are commanded to *love our adversaries*. All mortals are beloved children of God. As President David O. McKay taught, "There is no better way to manifest love for God than to show an unselfish love for one's fellowmen."

I witnessed this uncommon loving of an adversary at a stake conference many years ago. As I looked over the audience before the meeting began, I had an unusual impression to call on a particular woman in a yellow dress. I asked the stake president if he believed this woman would give a suitable talk if called on. He said he thought so. At my request, he later called her out of the audience to give a short talk.

As she came forward, I was apprehensive about what she might say. She introduced herself as a nurse employed to watch over patients in a maximum care facility. Her patients included one she described as "the most repulsive man" she had ever met. (Where was this heading? I asked myself.) From his bedridden position, he did everything he could do to make life miserable for the nurses who were caring for him—including foul language, spitting on the floor, and constantly insulting them in other repulsive ways. She despised him.

One evening she heard a loud crash from this man's room. Responding, she ran to his room and was shocked to find him fallen out of bed and thrashing about in a pool of broken glass, liquid, and blood. In that moment, a profound change came over her. She felt an almost electric current of love from our Heavenly Father to this man. She saw him as a child of God.

As she knelt and held him in her arms and tried to give him comfort, he said, "I want to go home. I just want to go home." In a short time, he was dead. She testified that being brought to see a despised enemy like this as a child of God was one of the great spiritual experiences of her life. For me, this was a lesson I needed to learn about our Heavenly Father's love for all His children. That lesson can transform all of us to see each other as children of God who belong to each other.

Years later, President Howard W. Hunter described this same love of God toward His children: "The world in which we live would benefit greatly if men and women everywhere would exercise the pure love of Christ, which is kind, meek, and lowly. ... It has no place for bigotry, hatred, or violence. ... It encourages diverse people to live together in Christian love regardless of religious belief, race, nationality, financial standing, education, or culture."

III.

Each of us can strive to follow our Savior in His teachings about how to relate to one another. This does not mean surrendering our values.

The covenants we have made inevitably position us as devoted participants in the eternal contest between truth and error. We balance our various responsibilities.

This balancing is not easy. When we seek to keep all the commandments in our personal lives, we are sometimes accused of having no love for those who don't. When we show personal love and support loving causes, we are sometimes misunderstood as implying support for results that contradict our other religious duties. But as followers of Christ, we should seek to live peaceably and lovingly with other children of God who do not share our values and do not have the covenant obligations we have assumed. In a democratic government we should seek fairness for all. In countless circumstances, strangers' suspicions or even hostility gradually gives way to friendship when personal contacts produce mutual respect.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that we should "pour forth love" to all people. Speaking of our Savior, the Apostle John wrote, "We love him, because he first loved us" ([1 John 4:19](#)). We can follow the example of Jesus Christ, who is our role model, by choosing to love others—even if they show little or no love toward us. He declared, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" ([Matthew 5:9](#); see also [3 Nephi 12:9](#)).

Peacemakers! How it would change the world if followers of Christ would forgo harsh and hurtful words in all their communications.

In general conference, President Russell M. Nelson challenged us "to *choose* to be a peacemaker, now and always."

How can one person be a peacemaker?

A bishop who seeks to heal a troubled marriage or resolve a personal controversy is working for peace.

Young men and women are peacemakers when they forgo the temporary pleasure of self-gratifying activities and involve themselves in service projects and other acts of kindness.

Persons who seek to reduce human suffering and persons who work to promote understanding among different peoples are also important workers for peace. So are faithful mothers and fathers who lovingly care for their own children or shelter foster children and raise them in righteousness rather than leave them to be scarred and twisted by the sins of others.

Our missionaries seek to be peacemakers. They preach repentance from personal corruption, greed, and oppression because only by individual reformation can an entire society eventually rise above such evils. By inviting all to repent and come unto Christ, our missionaries are working for peace by helping individual men and women come unto Christ

and experience “a mighty change” of heart and behavior ([Mosiah 5:2](#)).

My brothers and sisters, as followers of Christ, let us follow Him by forgoing contention and by using the language and methods of peacemakers. In our families and other personal relationships, let us avoid what is harsh and hateful. Let us seek to be holy, like our Savior, in whose holy name, the name of Jesus Christ, I testify, amen.



The Character of Christ

By President D. Todd Christofferson

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

If we are to succeed in developing a Christlike character, we must possess His motivations—His thoughts, desires, and intents of the heart.

The Apostle Peter reminds us that in the latter days, there will be doubters who question the Second Coming of Jesus Christ: “There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?”

Peter reminds us that the “Lord is not slack” and that if there is any seeming delay in His return, it is because of His long-suffering mercy in giving us more time to repent before “the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” “But the day of the Lord will come,” Peter forcefully declares, “... in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

Since we know that the Lord will come and establish a new earth where righteousness prevails, Peter asks, “What manner of persons ought ye to be?” He counsels that we should be preparing diligently now so that when the Lord comes, He will find us “in peace, without spot, and blameless,” leading lives of holiness.

As I have pondered Peter’s question, “What manner of persons ought ye to be?” I have decided to speak today about the character of Jesus Christ. It is in emulating the character of Christ that we become the “manner of persons” we ought to be. Acquiring the character of Christ is one of the most important ways we take His name upon us.

When we consider the character of the Savior, we tend to focus immediately on His attributes, such as virtue, integrity, humility, compassion, and courage, but we should also consider, What is it in Jesus that gives rise to such character traits? I believe they are the natural fruit of the thoughts, desires, and intents of His heart. Christlike character grows out of a Christlike heart. Thus, if we are to succeed in developing a Christlike character, we must possess His motivations—His thoughts, desires, and intents of the heart. For us, it will require what the scriptures call a mighty change of heart.

Following King Benjamin’s inspired, prophetic discourse, his people testified, “The Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent ... has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually.” King Benjamin responded, “Ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name.”

In the case of King Benjamin’s people, and some others, this spiritual rebirth with a changed heart was almost instantaneous. For most of us, our mighty change of heart occurs incrementally over time. In either case, the outcome is the same and equally valid. And in all cases, it requires faith in Christ, repentance, a baptismal covenant of obedience, and the grace of Jesus Christ through the Holy Ghost.

Yes, it requires a consistent and sustained effort on our part, but remember, it is not simply a matter of our striving. The good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ is that we, each of us, can call on the grace of Jesus Christ to help us. With our baptism and confirmation, He promises us the companionship of the Holy Ghost, the messenger of His grace. Through the Holy Spirit, we receive His influence and spiritual gifts, “the power of godliness” in our lives. This transformative power produces a mighty change of heart and the character qualities that accompany it.

Christlike Motivations

What are the desires of Christ’s heart that we want to carry in our own heart? I will mention three.

1. The Pure Love of Christ

Foremost among the motives that form Christ’s character is charity, “the pure love of Christ.” It was pure love that, before the Creation, led Him to offer Himself as our Redeemer. His Atonement was and is the supreme act of love. As He Himself said, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

The love of Christ yields character traits such as compassion, patience, a willingness to correct “when moved upon by the Holy Ghost,” and certainly a willingness to forgive.

Elder David A. Bednar recalls a woman in his stake some years ago calling to request that he visit two young women who were being taken to the hospital following a horrific automobile accident. At that very moment, this sister received on another phone the terrible news that her own daughter had died from injuries sustained in the same accident. In a calm, deliberate voice, she said: “President Bednar, we must get in contact with the two other mothers. We must let them know as much as we can about the condition of their daughters and that they will soon be in the hospital.” Elder Bednar recalls that “there was no self-pity; ... there was no turning inward. The Christlike character of this devoted woman was manifested in her immediate and almost instinctive turning outward to attend to the needs of other suffering mothers.”

Elder Bednar observes, “Character is revealed ... in the power to discern the suffering of other people when we ourselves are suffering; in the ability to detect the hunger of others when we are hungry; and in the power to reach out and extend compassion for the spiritual agony of others when we are in the midst of our own spiritual distress.”

I think of Jesus in agony and near death on the cross remembering his mother, Mary, and placing her in the care of His beloved Apostle John.

2. Lifting and Ministering to Others

A second motivation that underlies the Savior’s character is His passion to foster the happiness and advancement of others. After all, His entire object, in harmony with the Father, is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of God’s children. As He taught His Apostles:

“Whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: ...

“For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Character qualities that grow out of devotion to the well-being and success of others include humility, meekness, selflessness, and courage. In his recent address at Brigham Young University, President Dallin H. Oaks counseled, “Look to the needs of others, and humility follows.” Jesus taught, “Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.” The meek are models of self-control, using or withholding their considerable powers and gifts as is best in every situation.

As to selflessness, what better example do we have than missionaries, the tens of thousands of our missionaries who devote months and years of their lives exclusively to serving others (often strangers) and offering, in the name of Christ, His matchless gifts of repentance and forgiveness?

3. Devotion to the Will of God

A third motivating force essential to the character of Christ is His desire to glorify the Father and to fulfill the Father's will in every particular. He declared, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

A Christlike desire to glorify God and do His will leads to the character qualities of honor, integrity, and virtue. Jesus, the paradigm of integrity, "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." We can strive toward this ideal. Elder Kim B. Clark once called it pursuing a "life of moral excellence" with the Lord's help.

A "life of moral excellence" is a life of virtue. "Virtue is a pattern of thought and behavior based on high moral standards. It is fidelity to God and others. ... [It] is striving to be clean and pure spiritually and physically." It entails a search for and devotion to truth, to right thinking and right action. In his final address to us as President of the Church a year ago, President Russell M. Nelson pleaded: "Our thoughts, words, and actions need to be unfailingly virtuous and filled with the pure love of Jesus Christ towards all men. The great opportunity before us is to become the people God needs us to be."

In summary, Jesus thinks and acts out of pure love; He yearns to bless and lift others; and He delights to do the will of God. With faith in Christ, we can pray that the Holy Spirit will effect a mighty change in us to instill these same divine motivations in our heart and help us practice the attributes of a Christlike character. We can keep repenting to improve as we strive to follow the Lord's example, "which faith and repentance bringeth a change of heart." We can "become the people God needs us to be."

I return to the matter of Jesus Christ's Second Coming. Adopting the character of Christ is not only a question of our personal preparation but a primary element of preparing the world for the Lord's return and His glorious millennial reign. We tend to underestimate the influence of Christlike individuals in the world, but working one by one has always been Jesus's approach to changing society and establishing His kingdom. It is the aggregation of individual choices over time that forms and changes societies for good or ill. No one of us alone can change the world, but each of us can have an influence in the world.

On this joyful Easter Sunday, I bear testimony of the resurrected, living Jesus Christ. He is the head of this, His Church. President Dallin H. Oaks is called by Him to preside over the Church on the earth and to be the Lord's prophetic spokesman to the world. With faith in Christ, may our character come to mirror His so that "when he shall appear we shall be like him ... ; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure," I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Remember, Remember

By Elder Chi Hong (Sam) Wong

Of the Seventy

Every promise of redemption, every hope of resurrection, and every assurance of eternal life flows through Jesus Christ.

Easter Sunday is the ultimate celebration of Jesus Christ's redeeming mission, especially His Resurrection. The Easter season invites disciples of Jesus Christ not only to rejoice but to remember our Savior.

What would God want us to remember? How would He let us know? Where would we find His reminders? About 10 years ago, as I pondered these questions, a clear thought came to my mind: He would put His reminders in the Book of Mormon. He would remind us to "remember, remember," just like our parents would. There are five "remember, remember" verses in the Book of Mormon.

1. "Remember, Remember" ([Mosiah 2:41](#))

"And moreover, I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness. O remember, remember that these things are true; for the Lord God hath spoken it."

Keeping God's commandments is a blessing, both temporal and spiritual. If we can endure to the end, we will dwell with Him in a state of never-ending happiness. Isn't that amazingly wonderful! However, have you ever thought about what will happen if we do not keep His commandments?

2. "Remember, Remember" ([Alma 37:13](#))

"O remember, remember, my son Helaman, how strict are the commandments of God. And he said: If ye will keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land—but if ye keep not his commandments ye shall be cut off from his presence."

God reminds us that His commandments are firm and that obedience to them brings promised blessings.

President Dallin H. Oaks shared how the commandments of God guide and steady our lives. He said: "Our experiences in mortality are like the little boy and his father flying a kite on a windy day. As the kite rose higher, the winds caused it to tug on the connecting string in the

little boy's hand. Inexperienced with the force of mortal winds, he proposed to cut the string so the kite could rise higher. His wise father counseled no, explaining that the string is what holds the kite in place against mortal winds. If we lose our hold on the string, the kite will not rise higher. It will be carried about by these winds and inevitably crash to the earth."

We need to return to our Heavenly Father through coming unto Jesus Christ. That was the plan that we agreed to and caused us to "[shout] for joy" ([Job 38:7](#)).

3. "Remember, Remember" ([Helaman 5:9](#))

"O remember, remember, my sons, the words which king Benjamin spake unto his people; yea, remember that there is no other way nor means whereby man can be saved, only through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, who shall come; yea, remember that he cometh to redeem the world."

Jesus Christ stands at the very heart of God's plan of salvation and exaltation. Every promise of redemption, every hope of resurrection, and every assurance of eternal life flows through Him. Without Jesus Christ, there is no salvation, no victory over sin and death, and no path back to our Heavenly Father. He is the very foundation of the whole plan of salvation and exaltation.

4. "Remember, Remember" ([Helaman 5:12](#))

"And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall."

Elder David A. Bednar taught how we can secure that foundation in our lives: "The sacred covenants and ordinances of the Savior's restored gospel can be compared to the anchor pins and steel rods used to connect a building to bedrock. Every time we faithfully receive, review, remember, and renew sacred covenants, our spiritual anchors are secured ever more firmly and steadfastly to the 'rock' of Jesus Christ."

5. "Remember, Remember" ([Helaman 14:30](#))

"And now remember, remember, my brethren, that whosoever perisheth, perisheth unto himself; and whosoever doeth iniquity, doeth it unto himself; for behold, ye are free; ye are permitted to act for yourselves; for behold, God hath given unto you a knowledge and he hath made you free."

The Book of Mormon was written for our day and for our future. As we study its pages, we come to know the truth. As we understand its

teachings, they begin to shape our hearts. As we internalize its messages and immerse ourselves in its words, we will be guided to discern right from wrong and empowered to use our God-given agency wisely.

Do you still remember the five sets of “remember, remember” verses in the Book of Mormon?

They are:

1. We can dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness if we keep His commandments.
2. We will be cut off from God's presence if we do not keep His commandments.
3. We can be saved only through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ.
4. We will not fall if we build our foundation upon Jesus Christ.
5. We were given knowledge and agency to choose and act wisely.

Let us remember, remember our Savior, especially in this Easter season. He is resurrected. He wants us to come unto Him. Let us pray unitedly that we will keep His commandments, use our moral agency wisely every day, and prepare for His glorious return in His resurrected body. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



I Glory in My Jesus

By Elder Aaron T. Hall

Of the Seventy

Nephi and Ammon inspire me to deepen my relationship with Jesus Christ and to rejoice in the many ways we can glory in Him.

Brothers and sisters, happy Easter! He is risen!

As the Book of Mormon prophet Nephi concludes his teaching, he bears this powerful witness: “I glory in plainness; I glory in truth; I glory in my Jesus, for he hath redeemed my soul from hell.”

That short phrase, “I glory in my Jesus,” beautifully captures Nephi’s loving relationship with the Son of God, the Messiah, the Redeemer. In the books of 1 and 2 Nephi, there are over 60 different names for Jesus Christ. Each name reveals something of His majesty, His character, and His mission as the Savior of the world. Yet in this expression of love, Nephi

refers to Him in a familiar and endearing way: “my Jesus.”

To Nephi, Jesus Christ was not someone distant or merely known by name. No, to Nephi, the name of Jesus was his salvation.

As Nephi experienced trials and the joy of deliverance, the name of Jesus Christ became even more personal to him.

Nephi came to know that “there is none other way nor name given under heaven whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God.” The name of Jesus Christ was Nephi’s redemption, and he gloried in it.

Reflecting on his afflictions, temptations, and weakness, Nephi shares why he glories in Jesus Christ. He writes:

- “My God hath been my support.”
- “He hath led me through mine afflictions.”
- “He hath preserved me.”
- “He hath filled me with his love.”

We then read Nephi’s firm declaration: “Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever.”

In every circumstance—the bitter and the sweet—Nephi trusted in the One “who is mighty to save.”

Nephi was not alone in his desire to glory in the Lord. The mighty Book of Mormon missionary Ammon, who had once walked a path of rebellion and sin, also experienced the joy of the redemptive power of Jesus Christ.

Reflecting on the Lord’s mercy, he joyfully declared: “Therefore, let us glory, yea, we will glory in the Lord; yea, we will rejoice, for our joy is full; yea, we will praise our God forever. Behold, who can glory too much in the Lord? Yea, who can say too much of his great power, and of his mercy, and of his long-suffering towards the children of men? Behold, I say unto you, I cannot say the smallest part which I feel.”

I too can scarcely express the smallest part of that which I feel for my Jesus: our Savior, our King of kings, and our Prince of Peace.

Nephi’s and Ammon’s rejoicing fills my soul with gratitude. They inspire me to deepen my relationship with Jesus Christ and to rejoice in the many ways we can glory in Him.

Today I glory in our Redeemer. His arms of mercy are extended toward us. He sends an invitation to all, saying, “Repent, and I will receive you.” We are engraved upon the palms of His hands. I rejoice in the gift of repentance and the promise of forgiveness.

I glory in our Good Shepherd. He calls to us, gathers us, rescues us, and fills us with His love. I rejoice that we are His sheep and that He relentlessly works to bring us safely home.

I glory in our Healer. He can heal all who feel the sting of death, loneliness, physical and emotional pain, the burden of sin, and every broken heart. He has perfect empathy. He weeps with us, and He invites us to be still. I rejoice that the Son of God heals us one by one and encircles us in the arms of His love.

I glory in our Advocate. He lovingly pleads our cause before the Father, saying, “Father, spare these my brethren that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life.” I rejoice that Jesus Christ’s atoning sacrifice satisfied the demands of justice and that He has claimed the rights of mercy for us all.

I glory in our Lawgiver. His commandments guide and protect us. His covenants bind us to Him—so He can “transform, save, and exalt” all who choose Him. I rejoice that He stands at the head of His restored, true, and living Church and that His laws help us experience heaven on earth.

I glory in our Deliverer. He has overcome the monsters of physical and spiritual death. No challenge in mortality lies beyond His matchless power. I rejoice that He can deliver us from pains, afflictions, and temptations of every kind.

Brothers and sisters, what names of Jesus Christ help you glory in Him? Perhaps Master, Counselor, or Friend?

When life feels infuriatingly unfair and finding the strength to glory in the Lord seems difficult, reflect on the meaning of His divine names and let Him restore peace to your soul.

With perfect understanding of our mortal experience, Jesus Christ lovingly extends this promise: “Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me.” To help us draw near to Him, He invites us to learn of Him, listen to His words, and walk with Him. To help us find Him, He invites us into a covenant relationship where we can receive direct access to His power and “an extra measure of [His] love and mercy.”

In moments of joy and in our trials, let us be faithful, obey His commandments, honor our covenants, and patiently wait on the Lord.

Our beloved prophet, President Dallin H. Oaks, beautifully testified why we can all glory in Jesus Christ. He taught: “As part of the Father’s plan, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ overcame death to assure each of us immortality. Jesus Christ’s atoning sacrifice gives each of us the opportunity to repent of our sins and return clean to our heavenly home. ... And our Savior willingly experienced all mortal pains and infirmities that He would know how to strengthen us in our afflictions. Jesus Christ did all of this because He loves all of the children of God.”

Brothers and sisters, “Who can glory too much in the Lord?” I joyfully testify that God is our loving Heavenly Father and that Jesus is the

resurrected and living Christ. On this Easter Sunday and always, I invite us to glory in Jesus Christ. He is *my Jesus* and *yours*. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.



"Here Am I, Send Me"

By President Susan H. Porter

Primary General President

Children all over the world are offering what they have to bring God's love to their families, church, friends, and communities.

I am grateful today to speak to Heavenly Father's young children. Heavenly Father's older children may also choose to listen.

Children, do you love to answer the question, "How old are you?" Are you 5, 8, or 11? That is how long you have lived on earth, but did you know that your spirit is much, much older? Although you don't remember, you spent a long time in the spirit world learning and growing. On the day you were born, your body was new, but you had lived as a spirit for many years. You were born with gifts. You have a purpose. And you have the ability to make a difference for good.

Heavenly Father loves His children so much that He wants each of us to receive all the blessings He enjoys. Before we came to earth, He shared with us His plan of happiness. As part of His plan, we would need to come to earth, gain a body, and choose to live His loving commandments. Then we could return to live with Him and our families in joy and peace.

Heavenly Father knew that when we came to earth, we would make mistakes and would need help to return home to Him. Do you know who Heavenly Father chose to help us? Yes, Jesus! Jesus Christ had so much love for Heavenly Father and for us, He said, "Here am I, send me."

Heavenly Father sent Jesus to earth. He showed us how to live to be happy. He taught us how to love God and love others. In Gethsemane, Jesus Christ suffered the pain of all our sins and challenges. He died on the cross and then, in the greatest miracle of all, He was resurrected! That is what we celebrate today on Easter! Jesus, our Lord and Savior, won the battle over everything that is hard and unfair in our lives.

Jesus Christ knows you, He understands you, and He loves you. Jesus has done everything to help you. Stay close to Him. Learn all you can about Him. As you try to keep the most important commandments to love God and love

others, He will help you grow into the magnificent person you are meant to be! He will help you be happier, learn faster, feel comfort, make friends, and have more opportunities.

Wake up each day with purpose and confidence, knowing that Jesus will walk with you. Follow His example and say in prayer to Heavenly Father, "Here am I, send me." Then listen for thoughts and ideas. What will He send you to do? Through His Spirit, He may send you to comfort someone who is lonely, help your family, learn important lessons at school, or teach someone to pray. He can help *you* stand for truth so you can bring His light to others.

Do you remember learning about Jesus feeding more than 5,000 people? Jesus had been teaching people all day, and they were hungry. Somewhere in this large group there was a young boy who had five loaves of bread and two small fishes. He knew that this food could not feed very many people, but he decided to give Jesus what he had. Jesus took the food and thanked Heavenly Father for it. That food fed thousands of people!

Just as the young boy did not have to figure out how a small amount of bread and fish could feed so many people, you do not need to worry about fixing all the problems around you. Heavenly Father can provide miracles when you simply offer what you have. When you say, "Here am I, send me," Heavenly Father can take something small and simple and make it great!

I have seen children all over the world who are offering what they have to bring God's love to their families, church, friends, and communities. In the Caribbean, a mother told me that the Spirit lifted her heavy heart when her young son asked her to read the Book of Mormon with him. In Ghana, Primary children told me they share their lunch at school with others who don't have any. In Cambodia, I saw sick children in a local hospital light up when they were given activity kits made by Primary children who cared about them.

A few months ago, Chloe and Eli, both 10, stood before a group of business leaders and spoke confidently about how their faith affects their everyday life. They shared that they think about the gospel every day. They pray for others and look for ways to help. Chloe and Eli taught adults what it means to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

Recently, during a fast and testimony meeting, I saw a Primary boy walk to the stand and ask, "Would everyone who loves Jesus please raise your hands?" At that moment, every person looked up, smiled, and raised their hands. All thoughts were on our Savior, Jesus Christ. It was a sacred moment of joy!

When I was young, my mother often made a special dessert for Sunday. After dinner she'd ask, "Do you want dessert now or later?" We

children knew my dad would always answer with a big smile, "I want some now *and* later!"

When you strive to bring yourself and others closer to Jesus, you will receive blessings now *and* later. Today you can make choices that will help you change and grow now and prepare you for blessings of love and joy forever.

I invite you to pray to Heavenly Father and say, like Jesus did, "Here am I, send me." And then move forward, walking with Him to bring yourself and others to Christ. "[You] are cov'nant children with a gift to give."

I bear my witness that God, our Heavenly Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ, love you. Because of Heavenly Father's plan and Jesus Christ's Atonement, all of us can receive the blessing of living joyfully forever with our families in Their presence. I love Them and I love you. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Eternal Marriage Is an Eternal Journey

By Elder Neil L. Andersen

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

We believe in eternal marriage, we teach of eternal marriage, and we seek an eternal marriage.

Following the Savior's incomparable love and sacrifice offered in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross, His lifeless body was securely sealed in a borrowed tomb. But the tomb could not contain the divine Son of God. "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" the angels declared. "He is not here, but is risen."

Because of our Savior's victory over death and sin, we will praise His name forever.

Jesus Christ brought other immeasurable blessings. He said to His Apostle Peter, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." The sacred sealing power has been restored to the earth and is found today in His dedicated temples. President Gordon B. Hinckley said, "If nothing else came out of all of the sorrow and travail and pain of the restoration than the sealing power of the holy priesthood to bind together families forever, it would have been worth all that it has cost."

Kneeling at the Altar

In my 74 years, there are only a few experiences where nearly every emotion and feeling are solidly cemented in my conscious

mind. One of the most poignant is as I knelt across the altar from Kathy in a holy temple of God. The hopes, the dreams, the love we shared all burst in a kaleidoscope of anticipation as we heard those unforgettable words: "for time and for all eternity."

To you in this vast worldwide congregation who lovingly remember that day in your life, I speak especially to you.

At that moment, kneeling across the altar, we have a growing realization of the depth of our commitment to God and to each other. The sacred ordinance binds us together with our eternal companion and with God. We solemnly vow to keep the covenants, and the Lord promises us, as we are faithful, unspeakable blessings in mortality and beyond, including thrones, powers, and dominions in the eternal world.

Refining Our Nature

Our even greater hope, however, is a desire to refine our very nature, to become more like our Savior, allowing us one day to live with Him. Within our sacred marriage, bound to God and to each other, we find ourselves in a crucible of spiritual development where vital qualities—sacrifice, charity, patience, and being a peacemaker, as President Dallin H. Oaks spoke of this morning, the very character of Christ, as President D. Todd Christofferson said—can become a greater part of us.

As we increase our love for the Savior, our love for each other grows. Like our own discipleship, our eternal marriage is not a short-term experiment but a journey, an eternal journey of becoming who God desires us to become.

In much of the world, confidence in the lasting nature of marriage is eroding. In the gospel of Jesus Christ, we proclaim that "marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God." We believe in eternal marriage, we teach of eternal marriage, and we seek an eternal marriage.

Preparing for the Covenants

We anticipate our marriage with faith and confidence because we conscientiously prepare for the covenants we make in the house of the Lord. In our youth, we strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ and keep His commandments, including the law of chastity, a law so many in the world have set aside. We take upon us the name of Jesus Christ.

But even with our preparation, we of course each have weaknesses, and we realize that our lives will require more unselfishness, more repentance, and more forgiveness. Kathy and I had engraved on the paper napkins for our wedding reception these words of William Shakespeare: "Love is not love [that] alters when it alteration finds." In those first months as she got to know me better, I kept the leftover napkins all around our apartment.

While embracing the happiness and sorrows of life's experiences, we etch our covenants indelibly upon our souls, and we keep our eyes focused heavenward, toward the glorious destination awaiting us. We know the divine attributes we seek will not all be perfected in this life. Eternal marriage is an eternal journey.

Relying on the Holy Ghost

We profoundly need the gift of the Holy Ghost in our personal lives and in our marriage. As has already been quoted in this conference, President Dallin H. Oaks recently said: "The adversary has become so effective at disguising truth that if you don't have the Holy Ghost, you will be deceived. Many obstacles lie ahead. The distractions will be many."

One of the deceptions of the world is to discount the sacred importance and the actual power of the sealing ordinance. Keep your hope in each other and in Jesus Christ. His promises can see us through the obstacles and distractions.

There are times in our marriage that require a stellar dose of patience.

On our 25th wedding anniversary, Kathy and I were in Philadelphia speaking to missionaries. I received a call from President Boyd K. Packer of the Twelve. At the end of our conversation, I commented, "President Packer, today is our 25th wedding anniversary. Don't you think that is a great accomplishment?" Without pausing, he responded, "It is for Kathy!" With your hope and faith in Christ, allow the Lord to expand your spiritual gifts of understanding and patience.

In speaking about eternal marriage, let me mention two other issues.

First, every true disciple of Jesus Christ, if it is his or her desire, will be eternally sealed to a righteous companion of his or her choosing throughout eternity, whether in this life or the next.

Second, the question is asked, "Are there situations where divorce should be considered?" The answer is yes, there are, but the cautions are significant. I will include prophetic teachings on this subject in the published version of my message.

Caring for Each Other

Fifty years ago, Kathy and I met an impressive couple who had also been recently married in the house of the Lord. Life was promising. They had children. She was talented and full of faith. His work prospered. They kept their covenants.

Unexpectedly, the young woman developed serious health issues.

Their son recently shared these reflections with me:

"In my younger years, my sweet mom went through crushing periods of severe depression, bringing extended periods of difficulty in taking care of even her own needs. It was a new

reality for both of my parents. Life would be different than they had anticipated.

"My dad had never experienced mental illness and sought the help of his Heavenly Father. I can't count the number of times I walked in on him while on his knees, or the number of Sundays he was quietly fasting again. He served my mother—and served us—with incredible love, patience, and humility. He sought the influence of the Holy Ghost, hoping to love, act, and react as the Savior would.

"My mother was the love of his life. These seasons would be but a small moment. They were bound to one another forever. As they remained faithful, they would spend eternity together in health and happiness. That promise gave him a perfect brightness of hope.

"While many times my mother felt that her challenges created a burden for my dad, he saw it differently. He loved serving this incredible, precious daughter of God.

"As my mom bravely—and miraculously—overcame many of her health struggles, they experienced light and joy together: as a couple and as parents and grandparents.

"Later, in her 60s, she faced an entirely different set of trials, including breast cancer and neurological issues that impacted her ability to walk. Once again, she and my dad doubled down on their commitment to each other and their covenants with the Lord.

"They did it together through the final day of her mortal journey."

Eternal marriage is an eternal journey.

Receiving the Strength

Who gives you the strength to hold tightly to each other and complete the mortal part of this eternal journey?

"The everlasting God, ... the Creator of the ends of the earth," He who rose on the third day, "[He] fainteth not, neither is [He] weary. ...

"*He* giveth power [when you are] faint; and [when you] have no might [*He*] increaseth [your] strength. ...

"[And together, as you] wait upon the Lord ... [you] shall mount up with wings as eagles; [together, you] shall run, and not be weary; and ... walk, and not faint."

I solemnly testify of this sacred promise in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Keys, Covenants, and Easter

By Elder Quentin L. Cook

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The keys committed by ancient prophets to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple are an essential part of the restored gospel.

It has been a special blessing to have the Sunday session of general conference coincide with the actual day we celebrate Easter. Our emphasis at Easter encompasses the eternity-shaping events that occurred in the Garden of Gethsemane, on the cross at Calvary, and in the Garden Tomb where Jesus Christ was resurrected.

It is my witness that His Atonement accomplished His Father's plan of salvation and provides the way for everyone who has ever lived to be free of death unconditionally and free of sin on condition of repentance. Therefore, the seminal doctrines of the Resurrection and the Atonement have been accomplished by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

This Easter Sunday also coincides with the magnificent vision of the Savior that occurred in the Kirtland Temple on Easter Sunday of 1836—190 years ago—just one week after the Kirtland Temple was dedicated. That day, like today, was one of those times when Easter and the Passover season overlap.

The appearance of the Savior to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and the keys committed by Moses, Elias, and Elijah are central to the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the latter days. The role of Elijah in restoring the priesthood keys of the sealing power is crucial in our journey of returning to our Father as a covenant people.

A little Church history will help put these events in perspective.

During the night of September 21, 1823, the angel Moroni appeared to 17-year-old Joseph Smith in a small log cabin near Palmyra, New York. The angel Moroni visited three times during that night and again in the morning. He taught and retaught critical information related to the unfolding of future events in the Restoration of Christ's gospel.

He told Joseph of gold plates hidden in the hillside nearby. In addition, he quoted prophecies from the Old Testament. The second section of the Doctrine and Covenants contains Moroni's words to Joseph Smith relating to Elijah:

"Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

"And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers.

"If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming."

If I were a 17-year-old and had access only to the Bible, I would have been very confused. Who was this prophet Elijah? And what priesthood would he reveal? Why would the whole earth be wasted if the children did not turn their hearts to their fathers and remember the promises made to them?

Elijah was a remarkable prophet who held sacred priesthood keys and through whom mighty miracles were performed. Christians, Muslims, and Jews the world over accept Elijah as a prophet. Muslims believe that Elijah was a prophet sent by God (Allah) to call people away from idol worship—especially the worship of Baal—and back to the worship of the one true God.

The Jews have been waiting for Elijah's return for over 2,900 years as a forerunner to the coming of the Messiah.

Prior to Jesus Christ's mortal ministry, the prophet Elijah exercised the sealing power of the Melchizedek Priesthood.

It is noteworthy to me that Elijah also appeared, with Moses, at the time of the transfiguration of Christ. Elijah conferred priesthood keys of the sealing power upon Peter, James, and John.

It is also significant that when Christ visited the people on the American continent, He specifically recited to them the Old Testament account in Malachi concerning Elijah and his role in uniting families eternally prior to the Second Coming of Christ.

Because of the Restoration, we understand the important and pivotal role Elijah has played in the salvation of mankind. Elijah committed to Joseph Smith the priesthood keys pertaining to the sealing power to bind sacred ordinances and covenants on earth and in heaven. This includes the vicarious ordinances of salvation and exaltation that must be performed here on earth in the temples of the Lord. The sealing ordinances are effective after this life and in the eternities—to seal husbands and wives, parents and children. Without these keys, there are no eternal families, and "the whole earth would be utterly wasted."

One of the many special spiritual experiences I had with my dear friend and beloved missionary companion—and later my Quorum President—President Jeffrey R. Holland, related to the prophet Elijah.

Starting in 2009, Elder Holland and I had the privilege of escorting various groups of people—including Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox Rabbi leaders, as well as secular Jewish leaders—through open-house tours in temples here in Utah.

At the baptismal font, I had the opportunity to explain to them the doctrine of baptism for our deceased ancestors. This relates directly to Malachi's promises of turning the hearts of

children to their deceased fathers. I read to them from 1 Kings 7:25, where Solomon's temple is described. The baptismal font sits on top of the hinder parts of twelve oxen representing the twelve tribes of Israel. This brought both recognition and tears to some. They realized that they were essentially looking at certain aspects of Solomon's temple, which has sacred significance to both Jews and Muslims.

When we entered the sealing room, Elder Holland was overcome with emotion and, with tears in his eyes, explained to them that he did not want to offend them but felt compelled to share something. Then, in a very spiritually powerful way, he explained that Elijah indeed had come and restored the sacred keys that allow the eternal sealing of husbands and wives and their families. He explained that the sealing room, where we were assembled, is a place where the restored keys are exercised. Our Jewish friends appreciated the fact that Old Testament scriptural accounts of prophets are featured so prominently in our temples and doctrine.

A few years later, Jewish leaders requested that we celebrate the 175th anniversary of Orson Hyde's historic dedication of the Holy Land in Jerusalem. Elder Holland and I were blessed to represent the Church at that celebration.

BYU Jerusalem Center

Two additional experiences following that event were particularly significant to me. First, I came to understand Elder Holland's history with Jerusalem. He was in his 30s when, on behalf of President Spencer W. Kimball and other Church leaders, Elder Holland spearheaded the effort to establish the Jerusalem Center on the Mount of Olives. He worked for almost 15 years with many others to accomplish most of what the Church built in Jerusalem. Elder Holland worked tirelessly with both Palestinian and Jewish leaders.

Elder Holland loved being in the places where the Savior performed miracles and accomplished the Atonement.

Elder Holland and Elder Cook at the Garden Tomb

Second, during the visit to Jerusalem, there was time for Elder Holland and me, along with our wives, Pat and Mary, to be together next to the Garden Tomb and read the precious verses from each of the four Gospels that recount the last few days of the Savior's earthly ministry, culminating in His atoning sacrifice and glorious Resurrection.

Can you imagine how it felt for two former missionary companions, then serving as Apostles, and our sweet wives, having the opportunity to walk where Jesus walked, to read from sacred scriptures of the last days of His mortal ministry, and to feel the spirit of these miraculous events?

Let me assure you that you do not need to physically visit Jerusalem to feel the same things that we felt that day and have many times since.

You can have that knowledge and confirmation by the Spirit when you study the life of our Savior, the restoration of the priesthood, and the return of the sealing keys by Elijah that unite our families for eternity. You can feel by the surety of spiritual confirmation that our Savior accomplished the Father's plan. He atoned for our sins and broke the bands of death so that we might return to the Father and the Son in the celestial kingdom.

I promise to you on this Easter Day that as you adhere to His ordinances, covenants, and commandments, you will grow closer in your relationship with our Savior as well as your appreciation and gratitude for the sealing keys that have been restored in this dispensation.

I testify that the keys committed by ancient prophets to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple are an essential part of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

As an Apostle, I bear my sure and certain witness of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, who leads His Church. I testify of His Atonement and Resurrection and rejoice with you on this special Easter Sunday for all that the Savior has accomplished that we might have eternal life. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Come unto Christ—Together

By Elder Taniela B. Wakolo

Of the Seventy

I invite you to make a commitment and choose to come unto Christ—together. Eternity shall be your reward.

My dear brothers and sisters, I rejoice with you in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

When our daughter, Jasmin, was 14 years old, she described general conference as a gathering where “prophets, seers, and revelators testify of Jesus Christ and teach His doctrine so simply that it cannot be misunderstood.”

Even simple messages can be made clearer. Take, for example, road signs that we might see when driving a car. When seeing a sign like this one, we should know to stop.

However, in the beautiful Philippines, they made the message much more direct: “Full stop.”

And in Missouri, they went one step further: “Really you gotta stop.”

How grateful we are for living prophets and apostles who speak with simplicity and clarity—whose collective voices invite us to “come unto Christ.”

In the book of Moses, we read of a sacred experience. Moses beheld the earth and many lands—“yea, even all of it.” He saw its inhabitants, “and their numbers were great, even numberless as the sand upon the sea shore.”

Overwhelmed by this vision, Moses asked two profound questions to God: Why? And by what means? In other words, he wanted to understand the purpose.

The Lord answered, “For mine own purpose have I made these things ... to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.” The prophet Nephi later testified, “For ... he denieth none that come unto him ... ; and all are alike unto God.” How is this purpose fulfilled? Because of Jesus Christ, all can receive the gift of eternal life—which includes living in God's presence eternally as families.

Six months ago, our prophet, President Dallin H. Oaks, taught:

“The doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints centers on the family. Essential to our doctrine on the family is the temple. The ordinances received there enable us to return as eternal families to the presence of our Heavenly Father. ...

“... The gospel plan ... is implemented through our mortal families, and its intended destiny is to exalt the children of God in eternal families.”

The Lord has also declared that “marriage is ordained of God ... that the earth might answer the end of its creation,” and without the sealing authority needed to enter these eternal covenants that unite families forever, “the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.”

The temple stands as a symbol of hope, not pressure. The gospel of Jesus Christ is not a wedge to divide families but a bridge to unite them eternally. We must ensure that our discipleship reflects the Savior's patience, His gentleness, and His perfect love. Temple sealings invite us into the divine order of God. Is it any wonder that the temple sealing is often described as the crowning ordinance?

My dear brothers and sisters, many of you are from families yet to be sealed in the temple. Some of you who are listening are not members of the Church. Others of you who are members of the Church may have spouses not of our faith. Today I say to each of you: You are essential to God's plan.

May I share a few sacred stories of patience, agency, and the quiet, persistent invitation to come unto Christ—together?

In New Zealand, Denny and Alex were childhood friends who attended different churches. Friendship blossomed into courtship, and courtship into marriage. Religion had never been discussed during their dating years, but after they were married, Denny and Alex faced a dilemma: Which church should they attend?

At one point, Denny, who was a member of the Church, felt he could not continue living in a way that felt divided. His father gave him simple counsel: “Keep going to church. They are your family.” He listened. Two years later, his wife chose to be baptized. In time, they were sealed in the house of the Lord. What began with tension ended in unity. They chose to come unto Christ—together.

In Brisbane, Australia, a seven-year-old boy pleaded with his father to join the Church so his father could baptize him. While his father had attended church for several years and had good experiences there, he had not taken the step to be baptized. When I met with them, I extended a bold invitation to the dad to accept his son's loving request. He gently declined. And yet the love remains. The invitation remains. The agency remains. Sometimes the seed is planted long before it breaks the soil.

In Farmington, Utah, there lived a good man named Bob Hasenyager, who was not yet a member of the Church. His wife, Marlene, was devoted to the gospel. She honored her covenants quietly and patiently, never pressuring—only loving. Bob was serving and helping in the local ward. One day the stake president asked Bob, “Are you aware that your wife longs to attend the temple but still waits, not wanting to hurt you?”

Bob wept when he was told this. Then he gave his full support. Marlene received her endowment and began attending the temple regularly. Bob noticed something different: not pressure, not argument, but peace. Then one day a young missionary simply suggested Bob be baptized on a specific date. In Bob's words: “I felt the Holy Ghost. I felt warmth and joy and peace. I finally had my answer.” Bob was baptized. He was later diagnosed with terminal cancer. He and Marlene were sealed four months before he passed away.

Brothers and sisters, the Lord honors patient faith. And it is never too late for miracles.

In Fiji, I know of a faithful wife who waited eight long years for her husband to join the Church. Eight years of attending church alone while her husband remained uninterested and hesitant. Yet she did not withdraw. She did not resent. She served.

When the wife received her patriarchal blessing, she was promised that if she remained true and faithful, a day would come when her husband would take her to the temple to be sealed for time and all eternity. Over eight years and 24 missionaries later, the husband was baptized and the couple was sealed in the house of the Lord.

To be clearer, I should say my wife, Anita, and I were sealed in the house of the Lord. My only regret? I wish I had been baptized sooner. In fact, Elder Quentin L. Cook, who spoke before me today, extended the call for me to serve as stake president while he was serving as Area President.

Brothers and sisters, God keeps His promises—but in His timing. These stories are not about statistics. They are about souls.

I witness that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ know every family represented in these stories. They know the tears, the prayers, and the patience. They know the feelings of every waiting spouse, every praying heart, and every child. They know every sacred promise. These things remind us that conversion is personal. Timing is individual. Agency is sacred.

To those in part-member families—do not lose heart.

To those who are waiting—do not give up.

To those who have been endowed or sealed and need to return—come, come again to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

To those who are invited—know that the invitation is rooted in Christlike love.

To all members of the Church—let's continue to minister one by one and ensure that "no one sits alone."

The Savior never forces. He invites. He blesses. He fulfills promises according to faith and faithfulness.

This month, as we celebrate and remember the Resurrection of our Savior, I invite you to make a commitment and choose to come unto Christ—together. Eternity shall be your reward. In the name of the resurrected Lord, even Jesus Christ, amen.



'Tis Eastertide: No One Walks Alone

By Elder Gerrit W. Gong

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

As we walk by faith with the Lord, abiding in Him, and He in us, we come to know He lives.

As this Easter Sabbath general conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints draws to a close, we, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, long for our Savior to abide with us, for 'tis Eastertide.

The Gospel of Luke tells us, "Two [disciples] went that same day"—Easter day—"to a village called Emmaus, ... from Jerusalem about

threescore furlongs" (about seven miles or 12 kilometers). *Emmaus* means "hot springs," a place of healing.

Imagine we are walking to Emmaus. A stranger joins us. He sees we are sad. We tell Him, "Jesus of Nazareth, ... a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people," has been crucified. And "to day is the third day since these things were done."

As we walk, the stranger opens the scriptures and expounds all things concerning Jesus Christ. Our hearts burn within us. As we draw close to the village, we ask our new companion, "Abide with us: for it is toward evening."

Our friend eats with us. He takes bread, blesses it, breaks, and gives to us. Our eyes are opened. We know Him—the resurrected Jesus Christ. Though we did not recognize Him before, He has been walking with us all along.

The Gospel of Mark testifies Jesus appeared three times on that Easter Day but was not recognized at first.

"He appeared first to Mary Magdalene," who initially supposed Jesus to be the gardener.

Next, Jesus appeared "unto two of them, as they walked." These two disciples on the road to Emmaus ultimately knew Him in the "breaking of bread."

Third, Jesus "appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat." "Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith[,] ... Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself." To show He was not a spirit, Jesus ate "a piece of ... broiled fish, and of an honeycomb."

Jesus Christ walking with His disciples on the road to Emmaus reveals a covenant pattern. Sometimes on our dusty roads to Emmaus, we feel alone, misunderstood, burdened, unseen. But as He "talk[s] with us by the way," His words in scripture can cause our hearts to burn. As He breaks and blesses the sacramental bread, His ordinances and covenants can help us know Him. As we walk by faith with Him, abiding in Him, and He in us, we come to know He lives. His Easter promises are real.

Each Sabbath we invite all to come worship Jesus Christ in the community of His restored Church. In the sacramental ordinance, we covenant that we are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ, always remember Him, and keep His commandments. He promises we can always have His Spirit to be with us. As we witness and remember Jesus each week, we abide and walk with Him.

Just as the disciples on the road to Emmaus ask Jesus to abide with them, Jesus Christ promises to abide with us. In the Gospel of John, [chapters 14 and 15](#), Jesus teaches His disciples and us how He can remain, belong, walk with us. His faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death.

When we have a question, problem, or joy, Jesus Christ says, "I am your answer—your way, your truth, your life."

To abide with us, in [John 14](#) Jesus promises us the First and Second Comforters. The First Comforter Jesus speaks of is the Holy Ghost.

"And I will pray [unto] the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever."

"The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father [shall] send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance."

The Second Comforter Jesus speaks of is Himself. Jesus promises, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

For "he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

Indeed, "if a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

Abide and *abode*. In [John 15](#), Jesus Christ also teaches He is the vine and God our Father is the husbandman. A branch "cannot bear fruit of itself." We without the Lord can do nothing. But "he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit," and "your fruit should remain." Jesus says, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain [or abide] in you, and that your joy might be full."

We began this general conference with solemn assembly. Solemn assemblies mark significant Church milestones or events, such as the sustaining of a new Church President. Whether a solemn assembly occurs earlier or later, by sacred pattern and precedent, we symbolically demonstrate united commitment and support.

Solemn assembly dates to ancient Israel, including at King Solomon's dedication of the temple. In this dispensation a historic solemn assembly was held on March 27, 1836, after the Kirtland Temple was completed.

At this conference, in solemn assembly, we witnessed and sustained President Dallin H. Oaks as the Lord's prophet and our prophet, with President Henry B. Eyring and President D. Todd Christofferson as our First Presidency, and Elder Gérald Causse and Elder Clark G. Gilbert as members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

As we "seek ... first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," we follow Jesus Christ and the Lord's prophet willingly, obediently, joyfully. We are richly blessed as we do so.

We are grateful President Dallin H. Oaks will be our concluding speaker. When I was a new freshman at Brigham Young University and President Oaks was the new president of Brigham Young University, we spoke together on a panel for parents and prospective students. As I waited nervously for the program

to begin, President Oaks leaned over to assure me. With a warm smile, he said he was wearing a red tie because he was celebrating his 40th birthday and was feeling old. To me, as a new freshman, 40 did seem pretty old!

President Oaks then told me a story. I still remember the principle. Opening a large chest filled with coins, a grandfather invited his grandchildren to collect all the coins they could. Excited, the grandchildren gathered handfuls of the more plentiful but less valuable coins, such as pennies, nickels, and dimes. However, one granddaughter carefully chose only a few coins. Her grandfather asked why. She replied, "Grandpa, all my coins are gold pieces."

A man loved and tutored by the Lord, President Dallin H. Oaks has exemplified "good, better, best" all his life. He chooses the best spiritual part. He teaches by precept and example how to follow our Savior.

Jesus Christ's Atonement changes everything. It brings literal resurrection. It can enable our return to the presence of God and the eternal uniting of families. We can heal, reconcile, abide in covenant belonging. With Nephi of old, our souls delight in the covenants the Lord has made, "in his grace, and in his justice, and power, and mercy in the great and eternal plan of deliverance from death."

This is my Easter witness:

"Jesus Christ ... died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven."

"I know ... my Redeemer lives," and "while he lives, I'll sing[,] ... my Prophet, Priest, and King."

As we walk our dusty roads to Emmaus, He will be with us. If you see someone walking alone and sad, will you please walk with them? No one sits alone, and no one should walk their road to Emmaus alone or unseen. Let us see and walk together in His love so He can abide with and in us, and we in Him, at this Eastertide and each day, I pray in the sacred and holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Closing Remarks

By President Dallin H. Oaks

President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Truly, Jesus Christ is the way to peace in this world and eternal life in the world to come.

The Tabernacle Choir has just sung a musical prayer, "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus." What a suitable summary of the messages of these last two days. Soon, we will close the conference

with "Redeemer of Israel." Both hymns continue the focus of the two days of this conference.

The Spirit of the Lord has inspired all of us to concentrate our worship, focus our learning, and unite our testimonies on the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Father's plan for our eternal increase and joy.

Truly, Jesus Christ is the way to peace in this world and eternal life in the world to come. He knows and loves each of us perfectly and invites us to walk with Him, abide in Him, and follow His example of ministering to others one by one in charity and love. We have been reminded of the central role of marriage and families in our Heavenly Father's plan for the eternal destiny of His children. May we all demonstrate the pure love of Christ in our families, in our communities, and in all of our interactions with God's children.

As the messages from this conference are published, we invite all to study and ponder them prayerfully and to act in faith on the principles they explain. The Lord has promised, "Unto him that receiveth I will give more." As we treasure up and act upon the teachings of this conference, the Lord will continue to teach and inspire us with personal revelation and guidance.

I promise this to each of us as we follow the directions of the servants of the Lord and "look to God and live." In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.