



SCRIPTURES—MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD AND SWEETER THAN HONEY

Sister Susan W. Tanner

Young Women General President

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Thank you to the wonderful choir. The music was beautiful, and it invited the Spirit. I also appreciated the opening prayer. I noticed particularly that the prayer asked that each of us would feel the Spirit tonight and that we would be inspired in the ways that we particularly need it. That certainly is my prayer. I'm so grateful for the opportunity to be with you tonight. But if I could have my wish, I would wish that this devotional could be a real old-fashioned fireside where I could pull you into my family room and we could have a heart-to-heart conversation—just as I would do if you were my own children, who are your age. I would probably begin by telling you about my missionary daughter. Isn't that what most missionary moms do? I told her in a recent letter that I was going to talk tonight about my love for the scriptures. This is how she responded:

"I'm excited that Mom is talking about scripture study! I feel like one of the ways I've changed the most is the way I study my scriptures. I *love* studying the scriptures now. I get so excited every time I have a chance to study. I can hardly explain it, except that it's just like Alma 32:28, where the word becomes delicious. I love it! I think I used to like the scriptures, and now I *love* them! My companion says she always knows when we're teaching and I'm about to turn to a scripture because my eyes light up and then I start flipping through pages. I just love answering people's questions through the scriptures."

I hope my daughter has a chance to listen to this message in Australia and that she'll be even more motivated, if that's possible, in her scripture studies. Likewise, I hope that the word will become delicious for you too, as it is for her and for me because the scriptures truly are "more to be desired . . . than gold . . . : sweeter also than honey" (Psalm 19:10).

Sweetness of Scriptures

Do you remember Tevye, the poor milkman with five daughters in the musical *Fiddler on the Roof* who

dreamed of being rich? What would you hope for if you were rich? Probably for some of the same things that he did. He wanted to be prominent, have a big house, not have to work so hard, and so on. But these were not his deepest desires. His fondest dream, if he were to strike it rich, may seem unusual to us. Remember, he sang:

If I were rich I'd have the time that I lack

To sit in the synagogue and pray

And maybe have a seat by the eastern wall.

*And I'd discuss the holy books with the learned men
Seven hours ev'ry day.*

That would be the sweetest thing of all.

(Lyrics by Sheldon Harnick, "If I Were a Rich Man," *Fiddler on the Roof* [1965].)

If you were rich, would you spend your free time studying the "holy books," or the scriptures, for several hours a day? If you were rich, would the sweetest joy that you could imagine be to have more time for intensive scripture study?

To study holy books is regarded by Orthodox Jews as a sweet blessing and a great privilege. In fact, in some Jewish traditions, when the child was to start his education in the Torah, a taste of honey was given to the student so that he would associate the study of the holy books with sweetness. This was intended to reinforce what it says in Psalms: "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm 119:103).

Similarly, Psalm 19 compares the scriptures to gold and honey. The Psalmist beautifully exults in the word of the Lord, as follows:

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

"The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

“The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

“More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

“Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward” (Psalm 19:7–11).

All of these terms in this scripture—*law, testimony, statutes, commandments, fear* (or *reverence*), and *judgments*—are synonyms for the word of the Lord, or scriptures. They are “more to be desired . . . than gold, yea, than much fine gold: [and] sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.”

I sometimes think that we should feel more like Tevye and my missionary daughter. Are the scriptures delicious to us—as precious as gold and sweeter than honey? Do we feast on them, delight in them, and ponder them as Nephi taught? (See 2 Nephi 4:15–16.) Do we liken them unto ourselves as Jacob counseled? (See 2 Nephi 6:5.) Do we search them for the Lord’s specific words to us—bringing conversion, wisdom, enlightenment, revelation, comfort, and rejoicing? Do we recognize them as one of the sweetest, most sublime blessings we have?

Hungering for Scriptures

Perhaps if we were hungrier for the scriptures, they would be even sweeter and more precious to us. A few months ago I traveled to Africa, where the Saints were often hungry for food but, interestingly, even hungrier to feast on the word of the Lord. In each of the four countries I visited, I felt the powerful spirits and the great faith of the people. They had so little temporally, but they were rich spiritually. They had the glad tidings of the gospel—the plain and precious truths from the scriptures. Their well-worn scriptures accompanied them at every meeting. They taught from them, read from them, knew them, and loved them.

In fact, in one sacrament meeting a youth speaker went to the pulpit with nothing but his scriptures. He had a lot of the same mannerisms that youth speakers often have, where they kind of duck their head and shuffle their feet, but his message was powerful. He taught about sacrifice, beginning with scriptures from the Old Testament about blood

sacrifice. Then he moved very comfortably to 3 Nephi in the Book of Mormon and told that old things were done away with the coming of the Savior, who now required the sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. He used no notes, just his knowledge of the doctrine. It was exemplary of the way each of us should teach from the scriptures.

I thought again of Psalm 19 in relation to these Saints. The law of the Lord had been their means of conversion. The testimony of the Lord made these simple, intelligent people wise. They had light in their eyes and rejoicing in their hearts because they had the law, the testimony, the statutes, and the commandments of the Lord. In one place I visited, the people had walked for as many as four hours to come to a meeting. They had no means of transportation, sometimes no shoes, and very little to eat. They are subsistence farmers who have been in a severe drought for several years. But still they feasted on the words of God. This was “more to be desired . . . than gold . . . : [and] sweeter . . . than honey.”

In another African country I found more people hungry to be taught the word of the Lord. The day we arrived there was a government crackdown on transportation because there was no fuel. The stake president was sure that the 700 members who had planned on attending our fireside would have no way to get there. We assured him we would teach as many or as few as could come. When we walked into the arranged room 20 minutes prior to the beginning of the meeting and saw more than 300 reverent Saints assembled, quietly listening to hymns being played on a recorder, I was overcome by the Spirit. During the course of the meeting, somehow, by some miracle, 300 more people arrived. They were hungry for the words of the Lord. They all had their scriptures and followed along eagerly as we taught them from the standard works. Because of their examples I saw with new eyes my own need for improvement. Perhaps many of us set our hearts too much upon worldly treasures. I wonder if we have grown casual or complacent in studying the word and living the doctrine.

The Old Testament prophet Amos talked about a famine for hearing the word—or, in other words, a spiritual hunger. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a

famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord” (Amos 8:11). In Africa I met Saints who were not only hungry for bread and water but were hungry to hear the words of the Lord. Because they have known spiritual hunger, they have learned, as Nephi taught, how to “feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:3).

Imagine the spiritual hunger we might feel if we had no scriptures on which to feast. Through the ages many people have been without a record of the law. Think of Lehi’s family when they first fled into the wilderness, for example, or the Mulekites, who “had brought no records with them” (Omni 1:17), or the times in the Old Testament when the people either did not have the book of the law or had forgotten it, as when Ezra and Nehemiah had to reeducate the Jews returning from captivity in Babylon in the book of the law (see Nehemiah 8:1–13).

Learn in Your Youth to Love the Scriptures

My favorite example from the Old Testament is Josiah, the boy-king who took the throne at the age of eight. His story illustrates the impact of a young person who found the scriptures to be more precious than gold and sweeter than honey. All of the kings before Josiah and after him were wicked. Either they did not have the law or they chose not to read it and heed it. But during Josiah’s reign, Hilkiyah the high priest found the lost book of the law in the house of the Lord (see 2 Kings 22:8). It was read to Josiah. Josiah’s heart was tender, and he repented and wept before the Lord (see 2 Kings 22:19). Then he gathered all of his people to the temple and read the words to them, and together they covenanted to keep God’s commandments:

“And he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord.

“And the king [and his people] stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant” (2 Kings 23:2–3).

What an inspiring story that is. I often wonder why Josiah was such a valiant spirit who responded to

the teachings in the book of the law. Why was his response different than that of kings both before and after him? Is there an application in this to you at your young age about prizing the scriptures by reading them, heeding them, covenanting to keep the commandments in them, and then standing by the covenant?

Maybe the scriptures struck an immortal chord in Josiah or jogged some remembrance of a premortal teaching. Elder Neal A. Maxwell said at a CES symposium at BYU in 1991: “Perhaps the special, evocative powers of scriptures are bound up with our flashes of memory from the premortal world or at least call forth our predispositions nurtured for so long there” (“Teaching by the Spirit—‘The Language of Inspiration,’” in *Old Testament Symposium Speeches, 1991* [1991], 1).

Perhaps that is why so often in the scriptures we see the injunction to “remember, remember” (Mosiah 2:41; Alma 37:13; Helaman 5:9, 12; 14:30). Not only are we remembering miracles and mercies in this life but also tender teachings from our premortal life. Elder Maxwell taught that we can learn much from our studying and pondering, thus awakening glimpses into previous lessons learned from our Heavenly Father.

On a visit he made to a mission president and his family in Russia, Elder Maxwell sat down with the five young daughters in the family one morning to converse. The first thing he asked them was what scripture they had been pondering that day. The question took the girls by surprise. But think about it. Elder Maxwell just assumed that the scriptures were as precious as gold and sweeter than honey to them as they were to him. If we did as he suggested and always had a scripture in mind, scripture study would be happening as we walked between classes, drove to appointments, or cleaned our houses. It would begin early in our lives and be ongoing and constant. We would be continually feasting, averting personal famine and spiritual hunger. The words of God would be “written . . . not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of [our] heart[s]” (2 Corinthians 3:3).

Even Elder Maxwell’s young grandchildren knew him for his emphasis on the scriptures. Many of you will probably remember that in his final general conference message he told about a time he visited

his grandchildren late one evening. His grandson Robbie had already gone to bed. When Elder Maxwell arrived, his mother said, “Robbie, Grandpa Neal is here!” He heard a tired little voice from the bedroom saying, “Shall I bring my scriptures?” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2004, 48; or *Ensign*, May 2004, 46). Like Josiah the boy-king and little grandson Robbie, we should learn early in our lives to love the scriptures, to feast upon them, and to learn from them.

Our own little grandchildren are also learning at this point in their lives to love the scriptures. We are so delighted in their responses. For instance, three-year-old Joshua, who loves heroes in all stories, used to blurt out at the climax of each scripture story: “And then, who saves the day? Jesus saves the day!” Joshua was learning an important lesson: that Jesus really is our Savior. Even His name means “save.” Now in his prayers he prays about the characters that he has met on a daily basis. Once he prayed that Peter would not sink again, and then he prayed that the swine would not drown when they ran into the sea. Another time he prayed that Laman and Lemuel would be nice to Nephi. And we’ve even heard him pray for Jesus’s daddy, who is Heavenly Father. Joshua recently received his own real copy of the Book of Mormon from his nursery leader in Primary. He no longer wants his mommy to read from the Book of Mormon reader. He told her he likes the real words the best.

Another grandson, Tanner, who is six, took swimming lessons this summer. At first he was really quite fearful of the water. On the day they were finally supposed to jump into the deep end all on their own, the family apparently had not read scriptures at breakfast time as they usually do. Although he was nervous, Tanner made the jump into the deep water. But when he got out, he made sure that his mother knew that he was upset. He said, “If we had remembered to read scriptures this morning, I wouldn’t have been so scared to jump in.” Our daughter felt reprimanded but also pleased that her little son placed such value on the Spirit and the strength that the scriptures bring into his life. Scripture study can give us strength to jump into the deep water that we too are sometimes called to swim in (see D&C 127:2).

Doctrine Can Change Our Lives

The Apostle Paul praised Timothy for learning early in his life to know and love the scriptures; in so doing, he described the great blessings of scriptures in our lives as well:

“From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

“That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:15–17).

What wonderful blessings come from studying the holy scriptures. They can make us “wise unto salvation.” They can increase our faith in Jesus Christ and His plan. They can teach us of our weaknesses and of our need for repentance. They can teach us doctrine.

President Boyd K. Packer has said many times: “True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior. The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2004, 80; or *Ensign*, May 2004, 79). Through the scriptures we can learn true doctrine right from the source, which in turn will help us become perfect, or complete, as Paul says. It is never too late to begin seriously feasting on the doctrine contained in the scriptures. In fact, even tonight would be a great time for all of us to get started.

Now is a time in your lives when you are making major and important decisions about virtually everything—schools, jobs, careers, missions, friends, dating, marriage, children, finances, living situations, faithfulness in Church service, and so on. I’ve thought and prayed long and hard about what I could say that would help each one of you individually during these important decision years. You need individual guidance. You need personal revelation that will help you through your own unique circumstances. Alma taught that “the preaching of the word had a . . . more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else, . . . therefore Alma thought it was expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God” (Alma 31:5). I know and I testify

that as we “try the virtue of the word of God,” comfort, guidance, and personal revelation will come to each of us.

How does scripture study have this powerful effect on us? The scriptures invite the Spirit. It is the Spirit that comforts and guides us. It is the Spirit that teaches us and reveals the Lord’s mind and will for us. President Spencer W. Kimball said:

“I find that when I get casual in my relationships with divinity and when it seems that no divine ear is listening and no divine voice is speaking, that I am far, far away. If I immerse myself in the scriptures the distance narrows and the spirituality returns” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 135).

Scriptures Bless Us with Comfort

In a movie portrayal about C. S. Lewis, his character made a profound statement about praying, which I think works equally well for reading scriptures. He said: “I pray because I can’t help myself. I pray because I’m helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It doesn’t change God; it changes me” (William Nicholson, *Shadowlands* [stage play and screenplay, 1994]). I feel the same way about the scriptures. I turn to them because “the need flows out of me all the time.” I know of my profound need to have the words of God feed my soul and teach me all things that I should know. They change me.

Many of you will remember and love the inspirational story of Betsie and Corrie ten Boom, Dutch sisters who became prisoners of war in Nazi Germany, and how they turned to the Bible in their great need in Ravensbrück, the notorious women’s concentration camp. Corrie told us:

“As for us, from morning until lights-out, whenever we were not in ranks for roll call, our Bible was the center of an ever-widening circle of help and hope. Like waifs clustered around a blazing fire, we gathered about it, holding out our hearts to its warmth and light. The blacker the night around us grew, the brighter and truer and more beautiful burned the word of God. ‘Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.’

“I would look about us as Betsie read, watching the light leap from face to face” (*The Hiding Place* [1971], 194–95).

The words of God fed and sustained these women. They brought warmth and light. They were more precious than gold and sweeter than honey.

Scriptures Bless Us with Revelation

Sometimes the exact words from the scriptures forcefully answer our prayers. Reading the scriptures also opens our minds and hearts to thoughts prompted by the Spirit. We are much more apt to receive such help if we go to the scriptures seeking, desiring, and asking.

Revelation came over and over again to Joseph Smith as he read the scriptures and asked inspired questions. We all know that we have that glorious First Vision as a result of this 14-year-old boy studying the scriptures and asking an important question. He needed to know which church was true, and he clung to the promise in James that the Lord would answer those who sincerely ask Him. Did you also know that section 76 came as Joseph pondered the writings of the Gospel of John about the salvation of men? The vision of the degrees of glory opened to his view. In fact, one LDS scholar has calculated that:

“Over 50 percent of the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants were received during the time period associated with the inspired revision of the Bible. . . . We have in the translation activities of Joseph Smith a living lesson in the matter of how to receive revelations; as the Prophet immersed himself in the scriptures, issues and curiosities and questions surfaced, eventuating in many cases in further light and knowledge to the Latter-day Saints in the form of contemporary revelations” (Robert L. Millet, “Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Bible and the Doctrine and Covenants,” in Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson, ed., *Studies in Scripture: Volume One, the Doctrine and Covenants* [1984], 1:139).

Other prophets’ revelations followed the same pattern. Doctrine and Covenants 138 was revealed to President Joseph F. Smith as he pondered the writings of Peter about the spirit world.

Each of us is entitled to personal revelation. The scriptures may be our most profound source for this. A professor at BYU told this story of a woman being

guided by the Spirit through her study of the scriptures. The professor said:

“One woman was guided to learn how to hear the voice of the Spirit while reading the scriptures. She was tutored to kneel in prayer, to thank her Heavenly Father for the scriptures, to request that the Spirit be with her as she read, and then to tell the Lord what she needed from the scriptures that particular day—one question she needed answered, perhaps guidance in a relationship, perhaps confirmation of a decision. She would then open her scriptures . . . and begin reading. She never had to read very far . . . before the Spirit gave her the answer she was seeking. Through these daily question-and-answer sessions with the scriptures and the Spirit, her sensitivity to the whisperings of the Spirit increased—and she fell in love with the scriptures.

“I have related her experience to others who then tried the same experiment; the results have been astonishing. Everything from financial problems to relationship concerns have been solved. And in the process, their ability to hear the voice of the Holy Ghost has increased” (Wendy L. Watson, “Let Your Spirit Take the Lead,” in *The Power of His Redemption: Talks from the 2003 BYU Women’s Conference* [2004], 326).

I too have come to love and rely on the scriptures in my life. They are more precious than gold to me. Answers do not always come easily for me, but they do come. Sometimes it is even in the form of peace and comfort while I am waiting to understand the Lord’s will or His timetable. When I was a young mother, President Spencer W. Kimball encouraged the women of the Church to “become scholars of the scriptures” (“The Role of Righteous Women,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 102). If time permitted, I could tell you of innumerable ways that following his injunction helped me in my mothering. If you looked throughout my scriptures, you could see my children’s names written out to the side of many passages that I knew by the force of revelation I needed to share with them.

Likewise, the words of the Lord have blessed me in my Church service. When I was first called to be the Young Women president, I went to the scriptures seeking. I sought comfort and guidance in my feelings of inadequacy and being overwhelmed by a responsibility that dwarfed my limited capacity. The

scripture stories of prophets and leaders who felt inadequate in their callings brought peace and taught me that the Lord magnifies those whom He calls.

One such prophet, Enoch, said: “Why is it that I have found favor in thy sight, and am but a lad, and all the people hate me; for I am slow of speech; wherefore am I thy servant?”

“And the Lord said unto Enoch: Go forth and do as I have commanded thee. . . . Open thy mouth, and it shall be filled, and I will give thee utterance” (Moses 6:31–32). Moses also felt inadequate, and the Lord promised, “I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say” (Exodus 4:12). And Jeremiah received this blessing: “Be not afraid . . . : for I am with thee to deliver thee. . . . [And] I have put my words in thy mouth” (Jeremiah 1:8–9).

As I studied, I was especially comforted by promises given to the Savior. I felt that Heavenly Father intended for me to liken those blessings to myself in my need. “The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary” (Isaiah 50:4). This scripture referred me to another one that I have clung to as my theme: “For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist” (Luke 21:15). Every single day for the past three years I have prayed for a mouth and for wisdom. It was my greatest desire (and precisely where I felt most inadequate) to know what it was the Lord wanted me to teach—to have wisdom—and then to be able to have the words to articulate that message—to have a mouth. Through the scriptures I found personal revelation that has guided me and comforted me in this calling. The words of the Lord are “more to be desired . . . than gold . . . : [and] sweeter . . . than honey” in my life (Psalm 19:10).

Scriptures Bless Us with Testimony

One of the great blessings we have as members of the Church is modern-day scripture, which gives additional witness that Jesus is the Christ and restores a fulness of the doctrines of His gospel. Each of our latter-day prophets has encouraged us to read the Book of Mormon and to live by its precepts with the promise that great blessings will come into our lives.

I think by now we all know that in August President Gordon B. Hinckley asked every member of the

Church to read or reread the Book of Mormon by the end of this celebratory year. Why do you think our prophet has asked us to do this? Why? Each of us should ask ourselves: What do I need to learn? How do I need to improve? Where do I need help? We will find personal reasons and needs for this reading of the Book of Mormon. Then President Hinckley promised us that “there will come into your lives and into your homes an added measure of the Spirit of the Lord, a strengthened resolution to walk in obedience to His commandments, and a stronger testimony of the living reality of the Son of God” (“A Testimony Vibrant and True,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2005, 6).

The Spirit of the Lord accompanies the Book of Mormon. My friends Wilford and Kathleen Andersen, who served as mission presidents in Guadalajara, Mexico, literally saw the spirit of the Book of Mormon at work. Sister Andersen felt impressed during the final year of their mission to educate her three sons at home rather than in a public school. However, she needed help in teaching them Spanish. She prayed to find a suitable tutor. She was led to Irma Encinas, who had been a teacher for 20 years and had just recently moved into this new city. Irma Encinas came twice a week to work with the boys.

Three weeks into the school year, Sister Andersen realized that she had hired someone who might be interested in learning more about our Church. So she told her about Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. Sister Andersen then decided to have the Spanish curriculum for her boys be the Book of Mormon. The boys each read out loud in Spanish from the scriptures on every visit. Then the teacher was instructed to ask them questions about the reading, and the boys had to answer her in Spanish. While the boys were learning Spanish, Irma Encinas was learning about the Book of Mormon.

After Christmas, Irma Encinas came to Sister Andersen and started to cry. She needed to tell her what was happening. She said that every time the boys read from the Book of Mormon, she saw light around their faces. When they closed their books, the light immediately went away. She confessed that her sister who lived with her had received a copy of the Book of Mormon 11 years earlier but had not read it. This unusual experience caused them both to search their bookshelves to find that dusty book. They wanted to discover for themselves

what this light was that emanated from this book. I’m sure you can figure out the rest of the story. They started reading the Book of Mormon and desired to have missionaries teach them. Two weeks after their first missionary discussion, they were baptized.

My Testimony

President Hinckley has promised each of us that same light as we read the Book of Mormon. I have reread the Book of Mormon in the past several weeks. It has rekindled a testimony burning in my heart that Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of the world. Almost every verse testifies of Him. President Boyd K. Packer said, “Of more than 6,000 verses in the Book of Mormon, far more than half refer directly to Him” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2005, 8; or *Ensign*, May 2005, 8–9).

The Book of Mormon people looked forward to Him with hope in His Redemption, and they looked back upon His exemplary life and redeeming death with hope in His Atonement. Long before Christ was born, Jacob wrote: “Believest thou the scriptures? . . . For they truly testify of Christ. Behold, I say unto you that none of the prophets have written, nor prophesied, save they have spoken concerning this Christ” (Jacob 7:10–11). And long after Christ had come, Mormon wrote: “And the things which are upon these plates pleasing me, because of the prophecies of the coming of Christ; and my fathers knowing that many of them have been fulfilled” (Words of Mormon 1:4). What a broad and wonderful perspective to witness. As I read, I knew it was through the people’s faith in Christ and His Atonement that they endured pain and affliction and overcame sin and temptation. I know that Jesus is the living Christ. I have felt to sing the song of His redeeming love (see Alma 5:26).

Also in this rereading I started to catch a glimpse of the significance of the plates—the brass plates, the 24 gold plates, and the record of the Nephites upon large and small plates. I realized they were more precious than gold to Lehi and his descendants. Alma pulls us into his home—as I wish I could have done tonight—and lets us listen in on his teachings to his son Helaman. He recounts to him why each of these records are so important. He entrusts him with the great responsibility of not only caring for the plates and continuing to write on them but of also

teaching their truths. He said, “For just as surely as this director [the Liahona] did bring our fathers, by following its course, to the promised land, shall the words of Christ, if we follow their course, carry us beyond this vale of sorrow into a far better land of promise” (Alma 37:45).

I have received the blessings promised by President Hinckley—a greater measure of the Spirit, a desire to repent and walk in more stalwart obedience, and a testimony of the living reality of the Son of God. I pray that you will use this time in your youth to feast on the scriptures, to set a pattern to follow throughout your life, to invite personal revelation through the scriptures and learning the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

“I love the Lord, In Him my soul delights” (John Tanner, “I Love the Lord” [Jackman Music Corp., 2000], 2; see also 2 Nephi 4:15–16). I know that Heavenly Father lives and that He loves us enough to speak to us through His scriptures. I testify with Nephi, “My soul delighteth in the scriptures” (2 Nephi 4:15). The scriptures have bolstered my testimony, taught me truths, guided my path, and comforted my sorrows—as I know they will for you. “By them [I have been] warned: and in keeping . . . them [I have received] great reward” (Psalm 19:11). They are “more to be desired . . . than gold, yea, than much fine gold: [and] sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb” (Psalm 19:10). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.