

PREPARE THY HEART

By Leone O. Jacobs



This new series highlights the lives of devoted women and their messages, excerpted from the book *At the Pulpit: 185 Years of Discourses by Latter-day Saint Women* (2017). Selected chapters are available at churchhistorianspress.org/at-the-pulpit.

One of the most glorious principles of life is that we can always rise above our present level. How discouraging life would be if once we found ourselves involved in unworthy conduct we could not lift ourselves up and out and on to better ways, but we do not have to remain as we are. Each day offers a fresh beginning. . . .

Lives can be changed, can they not? The course of our lives can be rerouted, but how? Let us call it preparing our hearts.

Well, what does preparing one's heart mean? It means checking up on oneself, scrutinizing one's daily life to see what is there, to see what is there of value and what should be thrown out. It means humbling oneself before the Lord. It means ridding oneself of bitterness and selfishness. It means complete forgiveness of all wrongs inflicted upon us, real or imagined.

It means opening wide one's heart to righteousness, putting oneself in an attitude to receive good. It means clothing one's life differently.

Picture in your mind a field, plowed and harrowed from end to end, leveled near perfectly; weeds burned down along the fence line; everything possible done that is conducive to the growth of good seed. We can put our hearts in that very same condition, in an attitude of receptiveness to good. We can plow under the old useless habits and smooth down the rough places of error, but we hear someone say: "I wish I could enjoy working in the church like Mrs. So-and-so does. I wish I could enjoy living the gospel like she does."

They can. It is all in the set of the heart. It is all in preparing one's heart to want that sort of living. We hear other people say: "But I don't see how

ABOUT SISTER JACOBS

Before her service on the Relief Society general board, Leone Openshaw Jacobs (1903–90) and her husband, Joseph, served missions in Palestine and Syria. Joseph began his service as mission president in July 1937. Leone and their children, 11-year-old Geraldine and 7-year-old Lamont, could not join him until December 1938, after Leone had recovered from major surgery.

Sister Jacobs's mission work included fellowshipping members, learning Turkish, hosting a Christmas party for Church members, and preparing meals for mission guests and missionaries. She also supported Relief Society and youth activities and played the organ for meetings. At the start of World War II, in 1939, the Jacobs family was called home to the United States, leaving behind 79 members to maintain the Church in Asia Minor.

At the war's end, Sister Jacobs was called to serve on the Relief Society general board, which she did from 1945 to 1956, when heart disease forced her to resign.

This article is an excerpt of a talk Sister Jacobs gave at the Relief Society general conference on September 29, 1949.

you ever get the time for it all.” . . .

. . . If we are too busy to serve the Lord, we are too busy doing other things that are not worthwhile.

In the Old Testament we read this: “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it” [Ezra 7:10]. . . .

What a lovely ideal for us to work to. . . .

. . . I fully believe that as far as

living the gospel is concerned, we can do what we want to do, if we want to enough. . . .

We know that living the gospel means sharing it with others, and visiting teaching is indeed a challenge in sharing the gospel. True, it takes great preparation, great thought and tact and wisdom, and I am quite sure that visiting teaching has not as yet reached its full possibility. . . .

Remember, if you are too busy to serve the Lord, you are too busy. Prepare your heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it, and in every way possible help others to prepare their hearts for righteousness. I pray to our Heavenly Father that he will help us to plan the course of our lives in the straight and narrow path, and that we may diligently pursue that course. ■



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