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Face the Future with Faith

Truth, covenants, and ordinances enable us to overcome fear and face the future with faith!

My beloved brethren and sisters, thank you for your sustaining influence, not only by your uplifted hand but also by your uplifting service at home, in the Church, and in your communities. We love to be with you and see you among your families and friends. Wherever you live, we observe your efforts to make this world a better place. We sustain you! We love you! As you pray for us, so we pray for you!

We envision your families gathered around the television or online to watch the proceedings of general conference at home. An alert mother and father sent me a copy of a picture they took at conference time. They observed the reaction of their then-18-month-old son, who recognized the features and voice of the speaker. The child started to throw kisses toward the TV. He wanted to come closer. So his thoughtful older sister quickly hoisted her little brother on her shoulders and brought him closer. Here is that photograph.

Yes, the image on the TV is mine, and those children are our grandchildren. In a few years this boy will be an elder endowed in the temple

and ready for his mission. Later he will be sealed to an eternal companion of his choice. Can you see him one day as a husband and father, with children of his own? And one day he will say farewell to his grandfathers, with a sure knowledge that death is part of life.

It is true. We live to die, and we die to live again. From an eternal perspective, the only death that is truly premature is the death of one who is not prepared to meet God.

As apostles and prophets, we are concerned not only for our children and grandchildren but for yours as well—and for each of God's children. All that the future holds in store for each sacred child of God will be shaped by his or her parents, family, friends, and teachers. Thus, our faith *now* becomes part of our posterity's faith *later*.

Each individual will make his or her way in a constantly changing world—a world of competing ideologies. The forces of evil will ever be in opposition to the forces of good. Satan constantly strives to influence us to follow his ways and make us miserable, even as he is.¹ And the normal

risks of life, such as illness, injury, and accident, will ever be present.

We live in a time of turmoil. Earthquakes and tsunamis wreak devastation, governments collapse, economic stresses are severe, the family is under attack, and divorce rates are rising. We have great cause for concern. But we do not need to let our fears displace our faith. We can combat those fears by strengthening our faith.

Start with your children. You parents bear the primary responsibility to strengthen their faith. Let them feel your faith, even when sore trials come upon you. Let your faith be focused on our loving Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Teach that faith with deep conviction. Teach each precious boy or girl that he or she is a child of God, created in His image, with a sacred purpose and potential. Each is born with challenges to overcome and faith to be developed.²

Teach of faith in God's plan of salvation. Teach that our sojourn in mortality is a period of probation, a time of trial and testing to see if we will do whatever the Lord commands us to do.³

Teach of faith to keep *all* the commandments of God, knowing that they are given to bless His children and bring them joy.⁴ Warn them that they will encounter people who pick which commandments they will keep and ignore others that they choose to break. I call this the cafeteria approach to obedience. This practice of picking and choosing will not work. It will lead to misery. To prepare to meet God, one keeps *all* of His commandments. It takes faith to obey them, and keeping His commandments will strengthen that faith.

Obedience allows God's blessings to flow without constraint. He will



bless His obedient children with freedom from bondage and misery. And He will bless them with more light. For example, one keeps the Word of Wisdom knowing that obedience will not only bring freedom from addiction, but it will also add blessings of wisdom and treasures of knowledge.⁵

Teach of faith to know that obedience to the commandments of God will provide physical and spiritual protection. And remember, God's holy angels are ever on call to help us. The Lord so declared: "I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up."⁶ What a promise! When we are faithful, He and His angels will help us.

Unfailing faith is fortified through prayer. Your heartfelt pleadings are important to Him. Think of the intense and impassioned prayers

of the Prophet Joseph Smith during his dreadful days of incarceration in Liberty Jail. The Lord responded by changing the Prophet's perspective. He said, "Know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good."⁷

If we pray with an eternal perspective, we need not wonder if our most tearful and heartfelt pleadings are heard. This promise from the Lord is recorded in section 98 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

"Your prayers have entered into the ears of the Lord . . . and are recorded with this seal and testament—the Lord hath sworn and decreed that they shall be granted.

"Therefore, he giveth this promise unto you, with an immutable covenant that they shall be fulfilled; and all things wherewith you have been afflicted shall work together for your good, and to my name's glory, saith the Lord."⁸

The Lord chose His strongest words to reassure us! *Seal! Testament! Sworn! Decreed! Immutable covenant!* Brothers and sisters, believe Him! God will heed your sincere and heartfelt prayers, and your faith will be strengthened.

To develop enduring faith, an enduring commitment to be a full-tithe payer is essential. Initially it takes faith to tithe. Then the tithe payer develops more faith to the point that tithing becomes a precious privilege. Tithing is an ancient law from God.⁹ He made a promise to His children that He would open "the windows of heaven, and pour . . . out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."¹⁰ Not only that, tithing will keep your name enrolled among the people of God and protect you in "the day of vengeance and burning."¹¹

Why do we need such resilient faith? Because difficult days are ahead. Rarely in the future will it be easy



or popular to be a faithful Latter-day Saint. Each of us will be tested. The Apostle Paul warned that in the latter days, those who diligently follow the Lord “shall suffer persecution.”¹² That very persecution can either crush you into silent weakness or motivate you to be more exemplary and courageous in your daily lives.

How you deal with life’s trials is part of the development of your faith. Strength comes when you remember that you have a divine nature, an inheritance of infinite worth. The Lord has reminded you, your children, and your grandchildren that you are lawful heirs, that you have been reserved in heaven for your specific time and place to be born, to grow and become His standard bearers and covenant people. As you walk in the Lord’s path of righteousness, you will be blessed to continue in His goodness and be a light and a savior unto His people.¹³

Available to each of you brethren and sisters are blessings obtained through the power of the holy Melchizedek Priesthood. These blessings can change the circumstances of your lives, in matters such as health, companionship of the Holy Ghost, personal relationships,

and opportunities for the future. The power and authority of this priesthood holds the keys to all spiritual blessings of the Church.¹⁴ And most remarkably, the Lord has declared that He will sustain those blessings, according to His will.¹⁵

The greatest of all the blessings of the priesthood are bestowed in holy temples of the Lord. Fidelity to covenants made there will qualify you and your family for the blessings of eternal life.¹⁶

Your rewards come not only hereafter. Many blessings will be yours in this life, among your children and grandchildren. You faithful Saints do not have to fight life’s battles alone. Think of that! The Lord declared, “I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.”¹⁷ Later came this promise to His faithful people: “I, the Lord, would fight their battles, and their children’s battles, and their children’s children’s, . . . to the third and fourth generation.”¹⁸

Our beloved President Thomas S. Monson has given us his prophetic witness. He said: “I testify to you that our promised blessings are beyond measure. Though the storm clouds may gather, though the rains may pour

down upon us, our knowledge of the gospel and our love of our Heavenly Father and of our Savior will comfort and sustain us and bring joy to our hearts as we walk uprightly and keep the commandments.”

President Monson continued: “My beloved brothers and sisters, fear not. Be of good cheer. The future is as bright as your faith.”¹⁹

To President Monson’s powerful declaration I add my own. I testify that God is our Father. Jesus is the Christ. His Church has been restored to the earth. His truth, covenants, and ordinances enable us to overcome fear and face the future with faith! I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. See 2 Nephi 2:27.
2. Peter taught this concept when he expressed the hope that “ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world” (2 Peter 1:4).
3. See Abraham 3:25.
4. See 2 Nephi 2:25.
5. See Doctrine and Covenants 89:19; see also Isaiah 45:3.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 84:88.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 122:7. Another example of change of perspective is recorded in Psalms: “Preserve my soul; . . . my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee. Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily. . . . I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore” (Psalm 86:2–3, 12).
8. Doctrine and Covenants 98:2–3.
9. Tithing is mentioned in eight books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, 2 Chronicles, Nehemiah, Amos, and Malachi.
10. Malachi 3:10.
11. Doctrine and Covenants 85:3.
12. 2 Timothy 3:12.
13. See Doctrine and Covenants 86:8–11.
14. See Doctrine and Covenants 107:18.
15. See Doctrine and Covenants 132:47, 59.
16. See Abraham 2:11.
17. Isaiah 49:25; see also Doctrine and Covenants 105:14.
18. Doctrine and Covenants 98:37.
19. Thomas S. Monson, “Be of Good Cheer,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2009, 92.