Ponder the Path of Thy Feet

As we look to Jesus as our Exemplar and as we follow in His footsteps, we can return safely to our Heavenly Father.

...
His public ministry. The children of Israel had rejected the safety of the protecting wing which He had offered them. As He looked out over the city soon to be abandoned to destruction, He was overcome by emotions of deep sorrow. In anguish He cried out, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!”

Jesus walked the path of temptation. Lucifer, that evil one, amassing his greatest strength, his most inviting sophistry, tempted Him who had fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. Jesus did not succumb; rather, He resisted each temptation. His parting words: “Get thee hence, Satan.”

Jesus walked the path of pain. Consider Gethsemane, where He was “in an agony... and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” And none can forget His suffering on the cruel cross.

Each of us will walk the path of disappointment, perhaps because of an opportunity lost, a power misused, a loved one’s choices, or a choice we ourselves make. The path of temptation too will be the path of each. We read in the 29th section of the Doctrine and Covenants: “And it must needs be that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves.”

Likewise shall we walk the path of pain. We, as servants, can expect no more than the Master, who left mortality only after great pain and suffering. While we will find on our path bitter sorrow, we can also find great happiness.

We, with Jesus, can walk the path of obedience. It will not always be easy, but let our watchword be the heritage bequeathed us by Samuel: “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” Let us remember that the end result of disobedience is captivity and death, while the reward for obedience is liberty and eternal life.

We, like Jesus, can walk the path of service. As a glowing searchlight of goodness is the life of Jesus as He ministered among men. He brought strength to the limbs of the cripple, sight to the eyes of the blind, hearing to the ears of the deaf.

Jesus walked the path of prayer. He taught us how to pray by giving us the beautiful prayer we know as the Lord’s Prayer. And who can forget His prayer in Gethsemane, “Not my will, but thine, be done?”

Other instructions given to us by the Savior are at our fingertips, found in the holy scriptures. In His Sermon on the Mount, He tells us to be merciful, to be humble, to be righteous, to be pure in heart, to be peacemakers. He instructs us to stand up bravely for our beliefs, even when we are ridiculed and persecuted. He asks us to let our lights shine so that others may see them and may desire to glorify our Father in Heaven. He teaches us to be morally clean in both our thoughts and our actions. He tells us it is far more important to lay up treasures in heaven than on earth.

His parables teach with power and authority. With the account of the good Samaritan, He teaches us to love and to serve our neighbors. In His parable of the talents, He teaches us to improve ourselves and to strive for
perfection. With the parable of the lost sheep, He instructs us to go to the rescue of those who have left the path and have lost their way.

As we strive to place Christ at the center of our lives by learning His words, by following His teachings, and by walking in His path, He has promised to share with us the eternal life that He died to gain. There is no higher end than this, that we should choose to accept His discipline and become His disciples and do His work throughout our lives. Nothing else, no other choice we make, can make of us what He can.

As I think of those who have truly tried to follow the example of the Savior and who have walked in His path, there comes readily to my mind the names of Gustav and Margarete Wacker—two of the most Christlike individuals I have ever known. They were native Germans who had immigrated to eastern Canada, and I met them when I served as a mission president there. Brother Wacker earned his living as a barber. Though their means were limited, they shared all they had. They were not blessed with children, but they nurtured all who entered their home. Men and women of learning and sophistication sought out these humble, unlettered servants of God and counted themselves fortunate if they could spend an hour in their presence.

Their appearance was ordinary, their English halting and somewhat difficult to understand, their home unpretentious. They didn’t own a car or a television, nor did they do any of the things to which the world usually pays attention. Yet the faithful beat a path to their door in order to partake of the spirit that was there. Their home was a heaven on earth, and the spirit they radiated was of pure peace and goodness.

We too can have that spirit and can share it with the world as we walk the path of our Savior and follow His perfect example.

We read in Proverbs the admonition, "Ponder the path of thy feet." As we do, we will have the faith, even the desire, to walk the path which Jesus walked. We will have no doubt that we are on a path which our Father would have us follow. The Savior’s example provides a framework for everything that we do, and His words provide an unfailing guide. His path will take us safely home. May this be our blessing, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, whom I love, whom I serve, and of whom I testify, amen.

NOTES
3. 3 Nephi 27:21.
4. 3 Nephi 27:27.
6. 2 Nephi 51:16.
13. 1 Samuel 15:22.