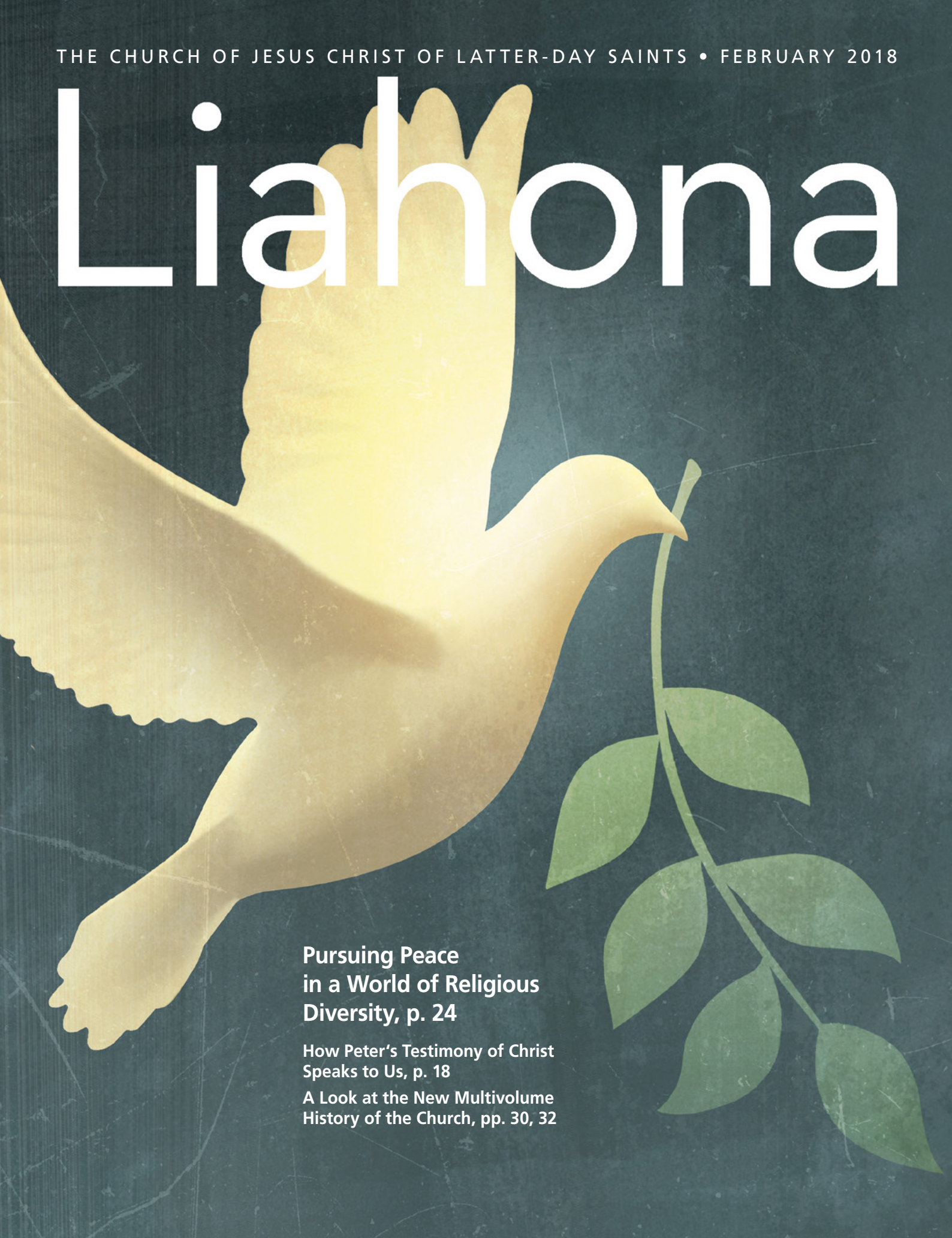


THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • FEBRUARY 2018


Liahona



**Pursuing Peace
in a World of Religious
Diversity, p. 24**

**How Peter's Testimony of Christ
Speaks to Us, p. 18**

**A Look at the New Multivolume
History of the Church, pp. 30, 32**



“NO MATTER
HOW WELL YOU KEEP
YOUR PROMISE TO
ALWAYS REMEMBER HIM,
**HE ALWAYS
REMEMBERS YOU.”**

PRESIDENT HENRY B. EYRING

From the First Presidency Message, page 4.



32 *Saints: The Story of the Church—Chapter 1: Ask in Faith*
Unusual circumstances brought the Smith family to Palmyra; unsettled feelings led Joseph to pray.

DEPARTMENTS

8 **October 2017 Conference Notebook**

11 **Serving in the Church: A Release Is a Beginning, Not an End**
By Richard M. Romney

12 **Teaching in the Savior's Way: What Can I Do to Teach More Like the Savior?**
By Tad R. Callister

16 **At the Pulpit: God Has Revealed It unto Me**
By Rachel H. Leatham

38 **Portraits of Faith: Feinga Fanguna**

40 **Latter-day Saint Voices**

80 **Until We Meet Again: The Gospel Encompasses All Truth**
By President Dieter F. Uchtdorf

MESSAGES

4 **First Presidency Message: Always Remember Him**
By President Henry B. Eyring

7 **Visiting Teaching Principles: Get to Know Her and Her Family**

FEATURE ARTICLES

18 **"Whom Say Ye That I Am?": Peter's Witness of Christ**
By Terry B. Ball
As we come to love and understand Peter, we will be more ready and able to accept his special witness of Christ.

24 **Religious Freedom: Cornerstone of Peace**
By Elder D. Todd Christofferson
In a world of competing philosophies, we can unite in our pursuit of peace by embracing religious diversity and upholding religious freedom.

30 ***Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days***
By Elder Steven E. Snow
Learn more about the new multi-volume history of the Church.



ON THE COVER
Illustration by Joshua Dennis.



44

44 "He Would Deliver Us"

By Reid Tateoka

In the wake of a devastating earthquake in Japan, the missionaries felt the Lord's protecting and guiding hand keeping them safe.

48 My Mission among My Family

By Andrea Gómez Lagunes

I thought that my mission would be over after my surgery, but somehow I was allowed to stay. Now I just had to find out why.



See if you can find the Liahona hidden in this issue. Hint: What talents can you share with others?

50 Jesus Christ: Our Source of Peace

By Elder M. Russell Ballard

The world might bring temporary happiness, but Jesus Christ offers everlasting peace.

54 Peace in the World vs. Peace in Christ

By Sarah Hanson

How can you recognize the world's counterfeits for peace?

56 You Cannot Freeze What's in My Heart

By Blossom Larynoh

When going to an LDS Church became illegal in Ghana, I knew that my testimony needed to be strong.

58 How I Deepen My Relationship with God

By Elder Massimo De Feo

The Lord reaches out to each of us personally. Decide now to develop a stronger relationship with Him.

60 Giving My Worries to God

By Ninoska Nawrath

When my friend was taken to the hospital for severe depression, I was overwhelmed with worry. What could I do to help?

62 Poster: Life Eternal

63 Line upon Line: 1 Nephi 3:7

64 Questions and Answers

How can I ask my friends not to talk unkindly or inappropriately about others?



74

66 Standing Up for Church

By Tracie Carter and Maryssa Dennis
Easton and his new friend Gian-Marco wanted to teach their class about the Church!

68 Shine Your Light: Sharing Gifts

By Marissa Widdison

70 The Plan of Happiness

This coloring booklet will help you learn about Heavenly Father's plan!

72 Apostles Testify of Christ

By Elder Dallin H. Oaks

73 Keep Trying!

By Elder Peter F. Meurs

Even when it is scary, sharing your talents and testimony can help make others happy.

74 Conference Quote Cards

75 Our Page

76 Scripture Stories: Adam and Eve

By Kim Webb Reid

79 Coloring Page



56

International magazine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The First Presidency: Thomas S. Monson,
Henry B. Eyring, Dieter F. Uchtdorf

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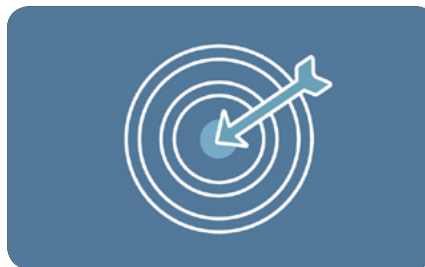
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TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE

Numbers represent the first page of the article.

Adam and Eve, 76

Adversity, 44, 48, 54, 56,
60

Baptism, 75

Book of Mormon, 75

Charity, 7

Church callings, 11, 12, 58

Church history, 30, 32

Depression, 54, 60

Family, 48, 75

Family history, 43, 48

Friendship, 7, 41, 60, 64,
66

General conference, 8, 74

Heavenly Father, 58, 62,
70

Home teaching, 40

Humility, 12

Jesus Christ, 4, 12, 18, 50,
54, 58, 62, 70, 72

Joseph Smith, 32

Language, 64

Missionary work, 44, 48,
56, 66

Obedience, 16, 63, 79

Patriarchal blessings, 38

Peace, 24, 50, 54, 60

Plan of salvation, 70

Religious freedom, 24

Repentance, 4, 50

Sacrament, 4, 58

Scripture study, 43

Service, 7, 11, 42, 68

Talents, 38, 68, 73

Teaching, 12

Temples, 75

Testimony, 16, 18, 56,
66, 73

Truth, 80



By President
Henry B. Eyring

First Counselor in
the First Presidency

ALWAYS REMEMBER HIM

Can you picture with me the prophet Moroni inscribing the final words of the Book of Mormon on the golden plates? He was alone. He had seen his nation, his people, and his family fall. The land was “one continual round” of war (Mormon 8:8). Yet he had hope, for he had seen our day! And of all the things he could have written, he invited us to *remember* (see Moroni 10:3).

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) was fond of teaching that the most important word in the dictionary could be *remember*. Because we have made covenants with God, he said, “our greatest need is to remember” them.¹

You can find the word *remember* throughout the scriptures. When Nephi admonished his brothers, often he invited them to remember the Lord’s words and to remember how God had saved their forefathers (see 1 Nephi 15:11, 25; 17:40).

In his great farewell address, King Benjamin used the word *remember* seven times. He hoped that his people would remember “the greatness of God . . . and his goodness and long-suffering” toward them (Mosiah 4:11; see also 2:41; 4:28, 30; 5:11–12).

When the Savior instituted the sacrament, He invited His disciples to partake of the emblems “in remembrance” of His sacrifice (Luke 22:19). In every sacrament prayer you and I hear, the word *always* precedes the word *remember* (see D&C 20:77, 79).

My message is an invitation, even a plea, to remember. Here are three suggestions about what you could remember each week when you partake of the sacred emblems of the sacrament. I hope they are helpful to you, as they have been to me.

Remember Jesus Christ

First, remember the Savior. Remember who He was while on earth, how He spoke to others, and how He showed kindness in His acts. Remember whom He spent time with and what He taught. The Savior “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38). He visited the sick. He was committed to doing His Father’s will.

Most of all, we can remember the great price He paid, out of His love for us, to remove the stain of our sins. As we remember Him, our desire to follow Him will grow. We will want to be a little kinder, more forgiving, and more willing to seek the will of God and do it.

Remember What You Need to Do Better

It’s hard to think of the Savior—His purity and perfection—without also thinking of how flawed and imperfect we are in comparison. We have made covenants to obey His commandments, yet we frequently fall short of this high standard. But the Savior knew this would happen, which is why He gave us the ordinance of the sacrament.

The sacrament has its roots in the Old Testament practice of offering sacrifices, which included a confession of sin (see Leviticus 5:5). We don’t sacrifice animals anymore, but we can still give up our sins. The scriptures call this a sacrifice of “a broken heart and a contrite spirit” (3 Nephi 9:20). Come to the sacrament with a repentant heart (see D&C 59:12; Moroni 6:2). As you do so, you will obtain forgiveness of sins and you will not stray from the path leading back to God.



Remember the Progress You Are Making

As you examine your life during the ordinance of the sacrament, I hope your thoughts center not only on things you have done wrong but also on things you have done right—moments when you have felt that Heavenly Father and the Savior were pleased with you. You may even take a moment during the sacrament to ask

God to help you see these things. If you do, I promise you will feel something. You will feel hope.

When I have done this, the Spirit has reassured me that while I'm still far from perfect, I'm better today than I was yesterday. And this gives me confidence that, because of the Savior, I can be even better tomorrow.

Always is a long time, and it implies a lot of focused effort. You know from

experience how hard it is to think consciously of one thing all the time. But no matter how well you keep your promise to always remember Him, He always remembers you.

The Savior knows your challenges. He knows what it is like to have the cares of life press upon you. He knows how urgently you need the blessing that comes from always remembering Him and obeying Him—“that [you] may *always* have his Spirit to be with [you]” (D&C 20:77; emphasis added).

So He welcomes you back to the sacrament table each week, once again offering you the chance to witness before Him that you will always remember Him. ■

NOTE

1. Spencer W. Kimball, “Circles of Exaltation” (address to Church Educational System religious educators, June 28, 1968), 5.

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

Life can get hectic and make it difficult for us to always remember our Savior Jesus Christ. The sacrament, however, provides a special time each week when we can reflect on His life and teachings. With those you home teach, consider how you use those quiet moments now, and discuss how you can increase your focus on the Savior. How can you use those moments to reflect on the things you can personally improve? What is the value of remembering the progress you make each week?



"Remember how merciful
the Lord hath been"
(Moroni 10:3).

YOUTH

Three Things to Remember

The word *remember* appears many times in the Book of Mormon. Nephi encouraged his brothers to remember how God had saved their forefathers. King Benjamin asked his people to remember the greatness of God. And Moroni instructed his readers to remember how merciful the Lord is.

Remembering the Savior is essential—we even covenant to remember Him each time we partake of the sacrament. President Eyring invites us to remember these three things during the sacrament:

1. **Remember Jesus Christ:** Read scriptures about how the Savior served and showed love toward others. How do you feel His love? How can you serve and show love toward others like the Savior did?
2. **Remember what you need to do better:** Reflect on your past week with a repentant heart. Choose one thing you can change, and write down how you'll make that improvement. Put your goal somewhere you'll see it often.
3. **Remember the progress you are making:** Ask God to help you see the good progress you're making. Record how you feel.

We aren't perfect, but the Savior knows that. That's why He asks us to remember Him. Remembering Him gives us hope and helps us want to improve. Even at times when we fail to remember Him, President Eyring says, "He always remembers you."

CHILDREN

Remembering Jesus

The scriptures teach that we should always remember Jesus Christ. That means we should think about Him a lot and follow His example!

You can trace and color this picture of Jesus to help you always remember Him. Place it somewhere you will see it often.

"And if ye
do always
remember me
ye shall have
my Spirit to
be with you"
(3 Nephi 18:7).



Get to Know Her and Her Family

Visiting teaching is about sincerely coming to know and love each sister so that we can help strengthen her faith and give service.

Rita Jeppeson and her visiting teacher have become good friends as they meet and share gospel conversations. But their visits also include playing word games together, which helps Rita's mind stay sharp. Because her visiting teacher has learned what Rita needs and enjoys, they both look forward to each visit. Rita knows that they are friends and that the visit is not just an obligation. There are so many things sisters can do during a visit, such as taking a walk together or helping a sister with her chores.

Lucy Mack Smith, mother of the Prophet Joseph Smith, expressed her feelings in 1842 about how Latter-day Saint sisters in the newly established Relief Society should feel about one another. She said, "We must cherish one another, watch over one another, comfort one

another and gain instruction, that we may all sit down in heaven together."¹ This is still true today.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, "See yourselves as emissaries of the Lord to His children. . . . We would hope . . . that you will establish an era of genuine, gospel-oriented concern for the members, watching over and caring for each other, addressing spiritual and temporal needs in any way that helps."²

The Lord through Moses commanded the children of Israel that "the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love [her] as thyself" (Leviticus 19:34). The sisters we visit may be "strangers" as we begin our service, but as we get

to know her and her family, our desire will increase to "bear one another's burdens, that they may be light" and have our "hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another" (Mosiah 18:8, 21).

NOTES

1. Lucy Mack Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 25.
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Emissaries to the Church," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 62.



Faith, Family, Relief



Consider This

Within the families of the sisters you visit, what upcoming events should you be aware of and remember?

Ministering

Rather than provide a specific message, this page will feature a different principle each month to help us minister more effectively to each other. As you pray and seek inspiration, you will know the spiritual message and service each sister needs.

OCTOBER 2017 CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken; . . . whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38).

As you review the October 2017 general conference, you can use these pages (and Conference Notebooks in past and future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.



DOCTRINAL HIGHLIGHT

The Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood

A Melchizedek Priesthood holder covenants to fulfill the responsibilities associated with the Aaronic Priesthood and to magnify his calling in the Melchizedek Priesthood. . . .

“In return, God promises that a Melchizedek Priesthood holder will receive keys to understand the mysteries of God. He will become perfect

so that he can stand in the presence of God. He will be able to fulfill his role in the work of salvation. Jesus Christ will prepare the way before the priesthood holder and will be with him. The Holy Ghost will be in the priesthood holder’s heart, and angels will bear him up. His body will be strengthened and renewed. He will become heir to the

blessings of Abraham and, along with his wife, joint-heir with Jesus Christ to Heavenly Father’s kingdom. These are ‘exceeding great and precious promises’ [2 Peter 1:4]. No greater promises can be imagined.”

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Priesthood and the Savior’s Atoning Power,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 65–66.

PROPHETIC PROMISE



FAITH DEFEATS FEAR

"As much as we have already built faith and courage in our hearts, the Lord expects more

from us—and from the generations after us. They will need to be stronger and braver because they will do even greater and harder things than we have done. And they will face increasing opposition from the enemy of our souls. . . .

"I testify that the Lord goes before your face whenever you are on His errand. Sometimes you will be the angel the Lord sends to bear others up. Sometimes you will be the one surrounded by angels who bear you up. But always you will have His Spirit to be in your heart, as you have been promised in every sacrament service. You have only to keep His commandments.

"The best days are ahead for the kingdom of God on the earth. Opposition will strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ, as it has since the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Faith always defeats fear. Standing together produces unity. And your prayers for those in need are heard and answered by a loving God. He neither slumbers nor does He sleep."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "Fear Not to Do Good," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 103.



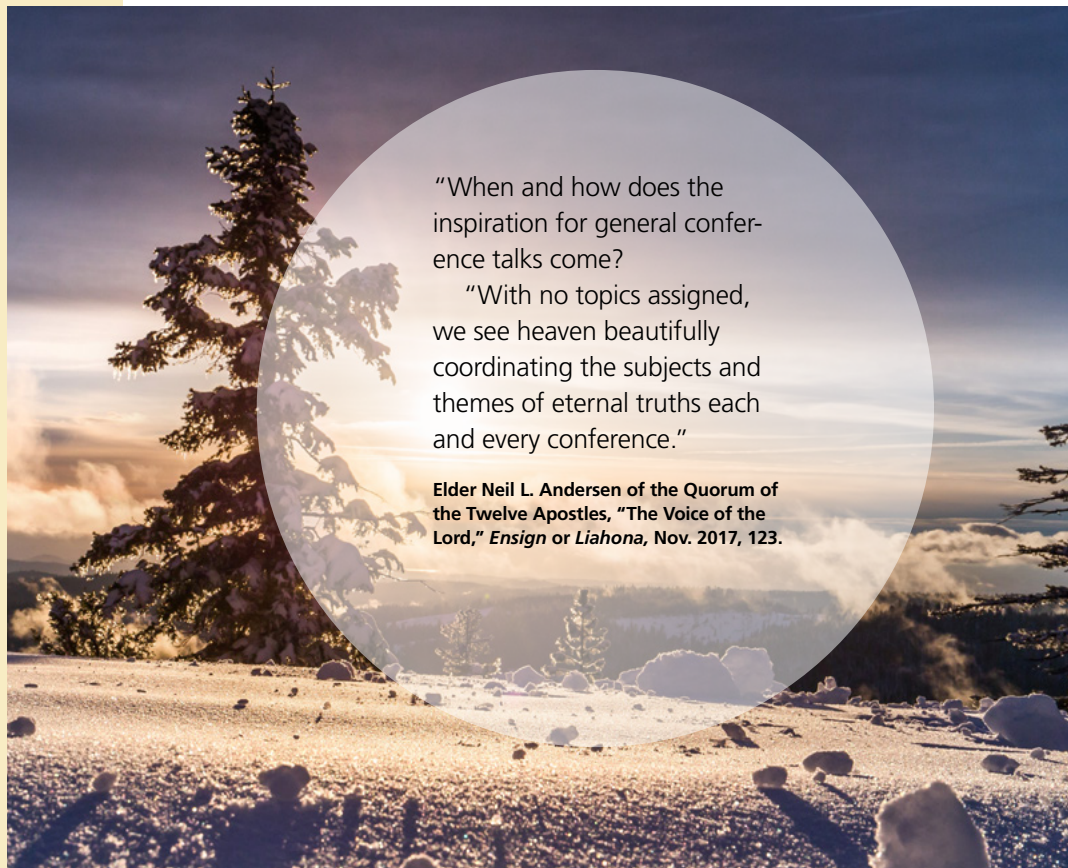
SERVING THOSE AROUND US

"I believe that most members consider service to be at the heart of their covenants and discipleship. But I also think that sometimes it's easy to miss some of the great-

est opportunities to serve others because we are distracted or because we are looking for ambitious ways to change the world and we don't see that some of the significant needs we can meet are within our own families, among our friends, in our wards, and in our communities. We are touched when we see the suffering and great needs of those halfway around the world, but we may fail to see there is a person who needs our friendship sitting next to us in class. . . .

". . . Heavenly Father may have placed those who need us closest to us, knowing that we are best suited to meet their needs."

Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women General President, "The Needs before Us," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 25–26.



"When and how does the inspiration for general conference talks come?

"With no topics assigned, we see heaven beautifully coordinating the subjects and themes of eternal truths each and every conference."

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Voice of the Lord," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 123.



PERFECTION: A GIFT OF GRACE

"I believe in [God's] perfection, and I know we are His spiritual sons and daughters with divine potential to become as He is. I also know that, as children of God, we should not demean or vilify ourselves, as if beating up on ourselves is somehow going to make us the person God wants us to become. No! With a willingness to repent and a desire for increased righteousness always in our hearts, I would hope we could pursue personal improvement in a way that doesn't include getting ulcers or anorexia, feeling depressed or demolishing our self-esteem. . . .

" 'Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him . . . ,' Moroni pleads. 'Love God with all your might, mind and strength, then . . . *by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ*' [Moroni 10:32; emphasis added]. Our only hope for true perfection is in receiving it as a gift from heaven. We can't 'earn' it. Thus, the grace of Christ offers us not only salvation from sorrow and sin and death but also salvation from our own persistent self-criticism."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Be Ye Therefore Perfect—Eventually," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 40, 41.

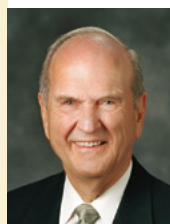


ANSWERS FOR YOU

How Can We Bring the Savior into Our Lives?

"Partaking of the [sacrament] means to put out of our lives anything inconsistent with a Christlike character and to make His attributes our own. This is the larger meaning of repentance: not only a turning away from past sin but also 'a turning of the heart and will to God' [Bible Dictionary, "Repentance"] going forward."

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Living Bread Which Came Down from Heaven," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 39.



APRIL 2017 BOOK OF MORMON CHALLENGE

"Since President Monson's challenge [to study and ponder the Book of Mormon], I have tried to follow his counsel. Among other things, I've made lists of what the Book of Mormon *is*, what it *affirms*, what it *refutes*, what it *fulfills*, what it *clarifies*, and what it *reveals*. Looking at the Book of Mormon through these lenses has been an insightful and inspiring exercise! I recommend it to each of you. [See the end of President Nelson's talk for the lists he compiled.] . . .

"[Consider these questions:] First, what would your life be like *without* the Book of Mormon? Second, what would you *not know*? And third, what would you *not have*? . . .

"I know that President Thomas S. Monson is the prophet of God on the earth today. I love him and sustain him with all of my heart."

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Book of Mormon: What Would Your Life Be Like without It?" *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 61, 63.



A RELEASE IS A BEGINNING, NOT AN END

By Richard M. Romney

Church Magazines

We do not step up or down in the Church. We move forward together.

A friend of mine was recently released as the bishop of his ward. A few days later, knowing I had also served as a bishop, he asked to speak to me.

“Is it normal to feel what I’m feeling?” he asked.

“What are you feeling?”

“Disconnected, I guess. I have been involved in so many people’s lives, and now all of a sudden, it’s over. Will I ever feel so involved again?”

His question took me back to the time of my own release. I remembered having similar feelings. I missed being deeply involved in helping people draw nearer to the Savior and to their Father in Heaven. I missed encouraging them to seek and follow the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Serving as a bishop had been a wonderful blessing, and now it was gone.

But was it really? As a little time passed, I realized that the blessing of giving service never disappears. It is an abiding opportunity. As disciples of Jesus Christ, aren’t we *always* to remember Him? (see D&C 20:77, 79). Aren’t we *always* to help others draw

nearer to the Savior and to their Father in Heaven? Aren’t we *always* to help others, especially our spouses and families, seek and follow the inspiration of the Holy Ghost?

These words from Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles came to mind: “We do not ‘step down’ when we are released, and we do not ‘step up’ when we are called. There is no ‘up or down’ in the service of the Lord. There is only ‘forward or backward,’ and that difference depends on how we accept and act upon our releases and our callings. I once presided at the release of a young stake president who had

given fine service for nine years and was now rejoicing in his release and in the new calling he and his wife had just received. They were called to be the nursery leaders in their ward. Only in this Church would that be seen as equally honorable!”¹

As my friend and I talked, we both realized that service doesn’t end when we are released from a calling, whatever that calling may be. For the followers of Christ, service never ends. Soon we receive a new calling, and we begin again as we all move forward together. ■

NOTE

1. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 49.





By Tad R. Callister
Sunday School
General President

WHAT CAN I DO TO TEACH MORE LIKE THE SAVIOR?

While I was serving as a mission president in Toronto, Canada, one of my assistants approached me and said, “President, how can I be a better missionary?” My first response was, “You are doing great.” And in truth, he was. But he persisted in his question, so I thought for a moment and then offered a suggestion. With a smile, he responded positively.

I shared this simple experience with our other missionaries. Soon other elders and sisters came to their interviews and asked, “President, how can I be a better missionary?” That simple question from one missionary caused a spirit of improvement throughout our entire mission.

In like manner, teachers will receive constructive counsel if they will sincerely ask this simple question of the Lord and their leaders: “What can I do to teach more like the Savior?” The Lord promised, “Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers” (D&C 112:10).

Caring Like Blazes

J. B. Priestley, an English novelist, was once asked how he became such an accomplished writer since none of his gifted peers had so excelled. He responded, “The difference between us was not in ability, but in the fact that while . . . they . . . merely toyed with the fascinating idea of [writing], I cared like blazes!”¹

As teachers, we might ask, “Are we content with our current teaching abilities, or do we care like blazes about teaching like the Savior?” If so, are we willing to put aside all pride and not only wait for instruction but also actively seek it?

Humility Is the Key

We have many excellent teachers in this Church, but the truth is, no matter how many years of experience we have, or how many degrees we hold, or how well we are loved by class members, we can all improve and become more like the Master Teacher, provided that we are humble. Perhaps the defining quality of a Christlike

teacher is being teachable. Humility is a quality that both invites the Spirit and nurtures our appetite to improve.

On occasion, I meet Sunday School presidents who are disappointed because one or more of the teachers in their ward or branch feel they are so experienced or accomplished that they do not need further instruction or to attend teacher council meetings. This saddens me because I have never yet met a teacher who could not improve in some way.

I know that if even the most experienced teacher will come to teacher council meetings with a humble heart and a blazing desire to learn, such a teacher *will* receive divine insights and impressions as to how he or she can improve. I have been to dozens of teacher council meetings and I always leave with some new insight or a desire to improve upon a skill or attribute that needs refining and perfecting.

The Need to Develop Teaching Skills

Some may occasionally think of teaching skills or techniques as simply

mechanical or secular tools. When developed, however, these skills allow the Spirit to choose from a variety of options that can best meet the needs of individual learners. Who is more productive, the man who attempts to cut down a tree with his pocketknife, or the same man who utilizes a chain saw? In both cases, the same man has the same strength and character, but the latter is so much more productive because he has a more effective tool at his disposal. Teaching skills become divine tools in the hands of the Spirit.

Training and practice, role-playing,

study, and observation can help a teacher of any skill level to develop skills that the Spirit can draw on—helping us teach more like the Master. Many of these skills can be developed in teacher council meetings.

The Lord Can Mold and Shape Us

Some may feel that they just can't teach like the Savior—that such a quest is beyond their capabilities. Peter may have thought he was nothing more than a simple fisherman; Matthew, but a despised tax collector. Yet with the help of the Savior, each

became a powerful leader and teacher of the gospel.

This ability of the Lord to mold and shape us is not unlike the experience Michelangelo had in sculpting what is considered by many the finest work ever fashioned by the hand of man—*David*.

Before Michelangelo took on the project, two other sculptors, Agostino di Duccio and Antonio Rossellino, had been commissioned to complete the statues. Both ran into the same problem: the column was the right height and width, but the marble was severely flawed. Di Duccio



PAINTING BY JUSTIN KUNZ

and then Rossellino had tried their artistic touch on this column, but to no avail. There were just too many imperfections.² Finally, each gave up. Michelangelo saw these same imperfections, but he also saw beyond them. He saw a living, breathing, majestic form of David that today often causes onlookers to gasp in awe at first sight.

In a similar manner, God declared that the fulness of His gospel will “be proclaimed by the weak and the simple unto the ends of the world” (D&C 1:23). God sees our imperfections and shortcomings, but He also sees beyond them. He has the ability not only to help us overcome our weaknesses but also to convert those weaknesses into strengths (see Ether 12:26–27). He can help refine and

perfect our teaching skills and attributes so that we can teach more like the Savior.

Ways We Can Teach More Like the Savior

Following are some of the core elements for which we might all be striving in order to teach more like the Savior:

- **Teach by the Spirit**, knowing that it is the Spirit who gives life and breath and substance to our lessons (see D&C 43:15).
- **Focus on the doctrine**, recognizing that the doctrine as taught in the scriptures and by the living prophets has the inherent power to change lives (see Alma 31:5).
- **Become an avid learner**, knowing that the ideal teacher is

also an ideal learner (see D&C 88:118).

- **Seek revelation**, knowing that with every call to teach comes the right to receive revelation to magnify one’s calling (see D&C 42:61).
- **Demonstrate love** by learning each class member’s name, praying for him or her individually, taking a personal interest in each (particularly those with special needs), and reaching out in a meaningful way to those who don’t attend (see Moroni 7:47–48).

A Personal Evaluation

The Apostle Paul gave this counsel: “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith” (2 Corinthians 13:5). This might be paraphrased for teachers to read, “Examine yourselves, whether you are teaching in the Savior’s way or your way.” The beginning of the year is an appropriate time to conduct such an examination. Accordingly, you are invited to answer the personal evaluation questions accompanying this article. As you do so, the Spirit will help you know what your focus should be in order to become a more Christlike teacher, and how you can acquire and develop the necessary attributes and skills to do so. ■

NOTES

1. J. B. Priestley, *Rain Upon Godshill* (1939), 176.
2. See “Michelangelo’s David,” accademia.org/explore-museum/artworks/michelangelos-david.



Improving as a Christlike Teacher: A Personal Evaluation

Consider the principles of effective teaching below. In areas where you feel you can grow, use the space provided to write what you feel prompted to do.

1. I attend teacher council meetings with a humble desire to learn and participate (see D&C 112:10).	
2. I regularly record impressions of the Spirit to help me as a learner and teacher (see D&C 76:28).	
3. I commence preparation of my lessons at least a week in advance (see D&C 88:118–119).	
4. I have an appropriate balance of teacher instruction and class discussion (see D&C 88:122).	
5. I fervently plead for the Spirit so I can be an instrument in God's hands (see D&C 42:14).	
6. I take time to ponder the scripture block before reading the lesson or outside material so I can enhance the revelation I might receive (see D&C 42:61).	
7. I help my class members, especially youth, not only learn the gospel but also become effective teachers so they can become better missionaries, leaders, teachers, and parents (see D&C 88:77).	
8. I pray by name for those in my class (see Luke 22:32).	
9. I reach out to those in my class who don't attend? (see Luke 15:1–7).	
10. What is my biggest challenge to becoming a Christlike teacher, and how can I overcome that challenge?	

For a more in-depth evaluation, see the personal evaluation on page 37 of *Teaching in the Savior's Way*.

GOD HAS REVEALED IT UNTO ME

By Rachel H. Leatham

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.

I think that I am one of the happiest girls in all the world, and it is the gospel that makes me feel this way, for I do know that the gospel is true. I do know that God our Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ, came down and brought the gospel and established it and spoke to the Prophet Joseph Smith. . . .

I feel that if I could live forever, I could never thank my Heavenly Father enough for the blessings that have come into my life, for the privilege of going out into the world and bearing this testimony, telling them of the gospel being restored, of the authority Christ has given to His servants, and of the blessings that are in store for those who listen to and obey the words of truth, life, and salvation. . . .

I sometimes think that we young folks at home do not fully realize the responsibilities that rest upon us. We do not always remember that those who stand at our head are aged, and that when our fathers and mothers are gone, it will devolve upon us to

assume their work; that we are the future responsible people of Zion. Are we doing our part, and are we preparing ourselves so that we will be able to do the work that our fathers have done?

. . . Are we able to tell what the promises are that God has made us, if we will keep His commandments? Are we familiar with the ancient record of the inhabitants of this continent, the Book of Mormon? And are we familiar with the great truths that are taught therein and with those books that teach us the beauties of the work in which we are engaged today? I am afraid we are not sufficiently conversant with the principles of the gospel and that we are not as diligent as we should be.¹

Where much is given, much is required; and you know, every one of you, how much has been given to us, and how much will be required at our hands [see Luke 12:48; D&C 82:3]. Are we preparing ourselves so that we will not fall short? Let us live by every word that proceeds out of the



ABOUT SISTER LEATHAM

Rachel Hannah Leatham (1884–1979) became the second

woman to be included in the Church's official conference report when she spoke at an outdoor overflow meeting of general conference on April 5, 1908.

She was among the first generation of unmarried women to serve a proselyting mission for the Church. When she was 22, she was assigned to serve in the Colorado Mission in September 1906.

Upon her return to Salt Lake City in 1908, Sister Leatham volunteered as a guide at the Temple Square Bureau of Information. The bureau had opened in 1902 to provide accurate information and distribute Church literature to those who visited Temple Square.

During this era, general conference was held in the Tabernacle on Temple Square. When the Tabernacle was full, attendees were directed to overflow meetings in the nearby Assembly Hall. When the Assembly Hall was full, people congregated on the lawn near the Bureau of Information Building, where services for the overflow meeting of conference were conducted.

This message is an excerpt of the talk Sister Leatham gave at the general conference overflow meeting on April 5, 1908. Punctuation and capitalization standardized.

mouth of God [see Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4; D&C 84:44]. Let us live so that He will ever be willing to own us, and bless us, and love us.

. . . I want to say again that I know the gospel is true. Not because my father knows it, not because my

mother has always taught it to me, but I know that the gospel is true because God has revealed it unto me. His Spirit has borne witness unto my spirit [see Romans 8:16], and that testimony is God's most precious gift to me.

May God bless us all, I ask in the name of Jesus, amen. ■

NOTE

1. Sister Leatham's monthly letters to her mission president reveal her diligence. On February 25, 1907, she wrote, "I have endeavored to do my duty and found great satisfaction in my labors" (Colorado Denver South Mission General Minutes, 166).





“Whom Say Ye That I Am?”

PETER’S WITNESS OF CHRIST

By Terry B. Ball

Professor of religious education, Brigham Young University

The Apostle Peter is beloved by believers—perhaps because he seems so authentic and approachable to us. We can empathize with him. We admire his courage as he forsook all, “straightway” leaving his nets as the Master beckoned, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:18–20). We understand his confusion over the meaning and message of parables (see Matthew 15:15–16). We feel the desperation in his cry, “Lord, save me,” as his feet and faith faltered on the turbulent waters that night on the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 14:22–33). We appreciate his awe at the Transfiguration (see Matthew 17:1–13). We weep with him for the shame of his thrice-made denial (see Matthew 26:69–75), grieve with him at Gethsemane (see Matthew 26:36–46), and join in his joy and wonder at the empty tomb (see John 20:1–10).

Perhaps the Gospel writers wanted us to make this personal connection with Peter. In their accounts they appear to purposely preserve more of his experiences and conversations with Jesus than with any of the other original Twelve.¹ Many of us assume that so much attention is given to Peter in the Gospels because he became the spokesman and chief among the Apostles. But perhaps Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John also speak so often and intimately of Peter’s association with Christ because they hoped that as we come to love and understand Peter, we will be more ready and able to accept his special witness of Christ—a testimony that he seems to have been carefully prepared to bear.



As we come to love and understand the Apostle Peter, we will be more ready and able to accept his special witness of Christ.

Peter's Preparation

As Peter accompanied Jesus through His mortal ministry, the Apostle's witness and testimony that the Master was the Messiah seems to have been acquired through the intellectual, practical, and revelatory experiences afforded him. That is to say, his testimony, like ours today, came through his head, his hands, and his heart.

Peter knew that Jesus of Nazareth was more than a mere man, for he saw Him give sight to the blind, cleanse the leper, cause the lame to walk, and raise the dead (see Matthew 11:4–5; see also John 2:11; 10:25; 20:30–31). His logical affirmation that Jesus was the Christ was bolstered by what he learned as he acted upon the Master's directions. He cast his net as the Savior directed and gathered a great multitude of fishes (see Luke 5:1–9; John 21:5–7). When the Savior bid him “come,” he walked on water (see Matthew 14:22–33). And as he passed the meager loaves and fishes to the multitude as the Savior instructed, the miracle of multiplication happened under his very hands (see John 6:1–14).

Those witnesses to his head and his hands would have significantly supplemented the most powerful witness provided Peter—the witness revealed to his heart. As Jesus asked His disciples, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” they rehearsed the common conclusions of their contemporaries. The Savior then personalized

the question, asking, “But whom say ye that I am?” (see Matthew 16:13–15). Without hesitation, Peter said:

“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

“And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 16:16–17).

Peter's preparation to be a special witness of Christ included several somewhat private experiences with Jesus.² Such personalized counsel and direction often came when he approached the Savior with questions or whenever Christ perceived he needed further training.³

Peter was also perhaps the most reprimanded of all Christ's disciples.⁴ Remarkably, Peter chose not to be offended but rather continued following the Master, daily adding to his witness and learning of Him.⁵

The Galilean fisherman's preparation culminated in what he witnessed following the Crucifixion. Upon hearing of the empty tomb, Peter rushed to see for himself and left “wondering in himself at that which was come to pass” (Luke 24:1–12; see also John 20:1–9). Luke records that sometime that same day, the resurrected Savior appeared privately to Peter, though we know little of that event (see Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:3–7). Later that evening, the risen Lord appeared to the Apostles and some other disciples, inviting them to feel the wounds in His



Peter knew that Jesus of Nazareth was more than a mere man, for he saw Him give sight to the blind, cleanse the leper, cause the lame to walk, and raise the dead.

body. He then opened their understanding of how His Resurrection fulfilled the prophecies written in the law of Moses and the scriptures, declaring, “Ye are witnesses of these things” (see Luke 24:36–48; see also Mark 16:14; John 20:19–23). The 11 disciples later traveled to Galilee, as the Savior had instructed them, and there on “a mountain where Jesus had appointed them,” He assured them,

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (see Matthew 28:7, 10, 16–20).

Through it all, Peter’s head, hands, and heart were further tutored to be a witness of the resurrected Christ, for he saw the risen Lord with his eyes, heard Him with his ears, felt Him with his hands, and surely felt again the Spirit’s confirmation in his heart.

Peter’s Commission

Just as it took time, teaching, and experience for Peter to fully understand the atoning mission of the Messiah, comprehending his own mission as a special witness of Christ was a gradual process.

It seems the full realization of what was to be required of him came to Peter as the Lord taught him on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Having twice felt the wounds of Crucifixion on the resurrected body of the Master but apparently still wondering what to do with himself, Peter announced, “I go a fishing” (John 21:3). Now that Jesus was no longer with them, Peter seemed resigned to returning to his old life and livelihood. His brethren followed.

Toiling through the night, they caught nothing. Nearing the shore, likely exhausted and discouraged, they saw someone standing there whom they did not recognize, bidding them to cast their nets again. Perhaps recalling an earlier occasion when obeying similar advice had yielded a great catch, they complied, this time without protest or question (see Luke 5:1–9; John 21:3–6). As they drew in their nets teeming once again with a multitude of fish, John exclaimed to Peter, “It is the Lord” (John 21:7). Too anxious to wait for the boat to reach the shore, Peter “cast himself into the sea” to reach the Master sooner (John 21:7). When the others arrived, they found a meal of fish and bread awaiting them (see John 21:9).

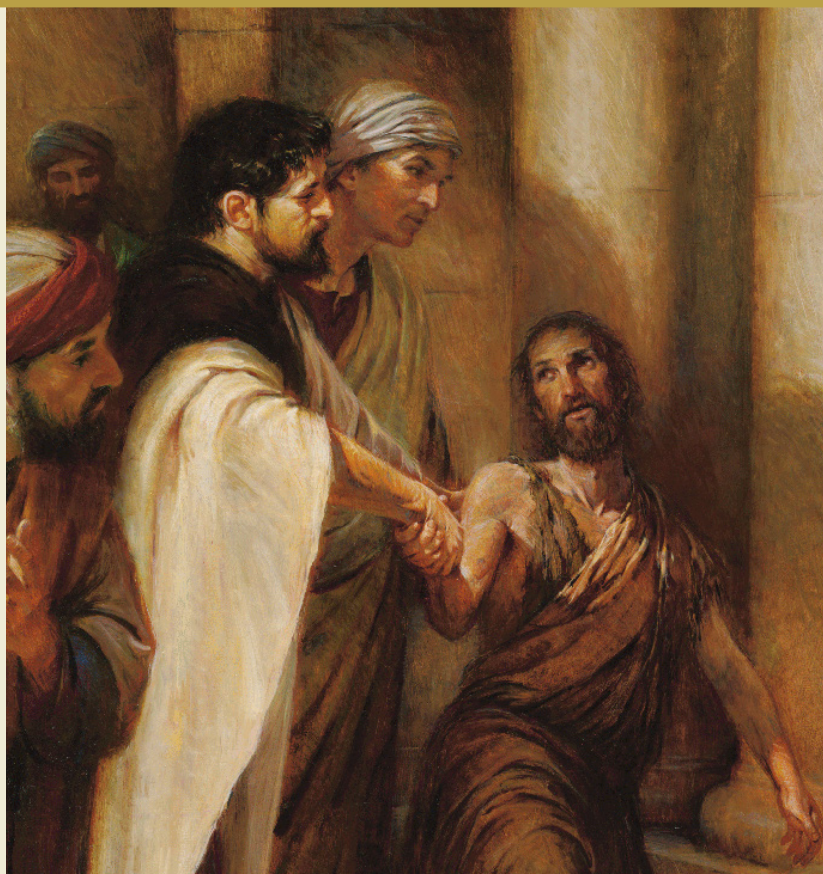
Following the meal, Jesus turned to Peter and, most likely pointing to the very fish Peter had

“Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?”

chosen to pursue, asked of His Apostle, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?” (John 21:15). Surely Peter thought this question strange. Of course he loved the Savior more than fish—or fishing. Perhaps there was a touch of incredulity in his answer, “Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee,” to which Christ responded, “Feed my lambs” (John 21:15). Again the Savior put the question to Peter, and Peter again avowed his love for Christ, and Christ again commanded, “Feed my sheep” (John 21:16). Peter was grieved as Jesus asked a third time for the disciple to affirm his love. We can feel the pathos and passion in Peter’s third witness, “Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee” (John 21:17). Once again Jesus commanded, “Feed my sheep” (John 21:17).⁶ If he truly loved the Lord, then Peter was no longer to be a fisherman, but rather a shepherd, caring for the Master’s flock.⁷ Peter’s actions and ministry from that time forward affirm that he at last understood his commission and mission to be a special servant and witness of Christ.

Peter’s Witness

Following that day in Galilee, Peter went forth to fulfill his commission from Christ with remarkable faith, courage, and rigor. As a leading Apostle, he stepped forward in his calling to preside over the Church. While being occupied with the many duties of this office, Peter did not neglect his responsibility to always be a witness of Christ, including to the multitudes gathered at the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost (see Acts 2:1–41), at the temple on Solomon’s porch following a miraculous healing (see Acts 3:6–7, 19–26), when he was arrested and brought before the Jewish leaders (see Acts 4:1–31; see also Acts 5:18–20), in his preaching to the Saints (see Acts 15:6–11), and in his epistles.



Peter fulfilled his commission from Christ with remarkable faith, including telling a lame man at the temple, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.”

In his epistles he reflects on his personal witness of Christ’s sufferings and expresses his hope to be “a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed” (1 Peter 5:1). Towards the end he resolutely acknowledges that he too must “shortly . . . put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me” (2 Peter 1:14).

In making this solemn observation, perhaps Peter was reflecting on the words Jesus spoke to him so many years earlier on the shores of Galilee. There, after commanding Peter to feed His sheep, the Savior declared, “When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not” (John 21:18). As John explained, “This spake [Jesus], signifying by what death [Peter] should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto [Peter], Follow

me” (John 21:19). Surely in his old age as he contemplated death, Peter could find peace and joy in knowing that he had indeed followed Christ in life and was ready to follow Him in death.

We wish more of Peter’s activities and writings were preserved in the New Testament. What has been preserved is a treasure and endears us to this faithful fisherman. The record, small as it is, shows us how Peter was carefully and personally prepared by Christ to be a special witness of Him. As we read the account, we can discover our faith and understanding of Christ growing along with Peter’s. That growth can give us hope and perspective in our personal journeys to faith. As we watch what Christ expected of Peter become clear to him and then see the courage and dedication with which he labored to fulfill his commission from the Savior, we are led to ponder “What does Christ expect of me?” and “Am I doing enough?” As we study Peter’s witness of Christ, we find ourselves anxious to echo his words, “We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6:69). ■

NOTES

1. While the witness, experiences, and teachings of the Apostle Paul are more thoroughly chronicled in the New Testament than those of Peter, Paul was not one of the original Twelve and not mentioned in the four Gospels.
2. See Matthew 17:1–13; 26:36–46, 58; Mark 13:1–37; Luke 8:49–56; 9:28–36.
3. See Matthew 17:24–27; 18:2–35; 19:27–20:28; Luke 12:31–49; John 13:6–19.
4. See Matthew 14:31; 15:15–16; 26:33–34, 40; Mark 8:32–33; John 18:10–11.
5. Of Peter and the frequent reproofs he received from Christ, President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) observed, “He reproofed Peter at times because he loved him, and Peter, being a great man, was able to grow from this reproof. There is a wonderful verse in the book of Proverbs all of us need to remember: ‘The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise. He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.’ (Proverbs 15:31–32.) It is a wise leader or a wise follower who can cope with the ‘reproof of life.’ Peter could do this because he knew that Jesus loved him, and thus Jesus was able to groom Peter for a very high place or responsibility in the kingdom” (“Jesus: The Perfect Leader,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1979, 5).
6. Some observe that by thrice allowing Peter to affirm his love for Him, Christ was giving Peter a chance to amend for his thrice-made denial that desperate night of the trial. See, for example, James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. (1916), 693; Jeffrey R. Holland, “The First Great Commandment,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 83–84. For a discussion of the denial and lessons to be learned from it, see Gordon B. Hinckley, “And Peter Went Out and Wept Bitterly,” *Ensign*, May 1979, 65–67; Neal A. Maxwell, “A Brother Offended,” *Ensign*, May 1982, 37–38. Other commentators, noting the subtle differences in the Greek of the text, suggest that the three questions were each asked to teach Peter different aspects and duties of his calling. Accordingly, the Savior twice asked Peter “lovest thou me?” using the Greek *agapao* for love, meaning a social or moral kind of love, often thought of as godly or unconditional love and elsewhere translated as “charity” (e.g., 1 Corinthians 13:1–4; 2 Peter 1:7; Revelation 2:19). The third time Jesus asked Peter, “lovest thou me?” He used the term *phileo* for love, meaning friendship, affection, or brotherly love. Interestingly, in answer to each of the three questions, Peter affirmed his love using *phileo*. To the first affirmation of Peter’s love, Christ commanded him to “feed” from the Greek *bosko*, meaning to pasture, graze, or nourish, His “lambs,” from the Greek *arnion*, meaning a young or baby sheep. To the second affirmation of Peter’s love, Christ commanded him to “feed,” from the Greek *poimaino*, meaning to tend or shepherd, His “sheep,” from the Greek *probaton*, meaning an adult sheep. In response to Peter’s third affirmation of love for Christ, he was to *bosko* His *probaton*. Thus by asking the question three times in three ways the Savior asked the disciple if he had both charity and brotherly love for Him, and in His subsequent commandments, the Savior taught Peter that he was to not only nourish but also shepherd both the young and old of His flock.
7. For more discussion on this event and the principles that can be learned from it, see Robert D. Hales, “When Thou Art Converted, Strengthen Thy Brethren,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 80–83.

Peter could find peace and joy in knowing that he had indeed followed Christ in life and was ready to follow Him in death.







By Elder D. Todd Christofferson

Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

Religious Freedom: Cornerstone of Peace

*May we pursue peace by working together to
preserve and protect the freedom of all people to hold and
manifest a religion or belief of their choice.*

Elder Christofferson delivered these remarks during an interfaith conference held in São Paulo, Brazil, on April 29, 2015.

I greatly appreciate the invitation to be with you this evening in this interfaith gathering, where Muslims, Sikhs, Catholics, Adventists, Jews, Evangelicals, Mormons, native spiritualists, people of no faith, and many others all stand shoulder to shoulder with leaders of government and business, joined to discuss and celebrate religious freedom. Indeed, the very act of our meeting together in this unique setting is a powerful symbol in its own right.

I am particularly pleased to be here in Brazil, a nation rich with diverse culture and people. By embracing its diversity, including its religious diversity, Brazil has prospered and will continue to prosper. Brazil was recently recognized as the country with the lowest government restrictions on religion.¹ I congratulate Brazil for this significant distinction. Brazil now has a responsibility to lead the global movement to promote this freedom. As Jesus Christ stated in the New Testament:

“Ye are the light of the world. A city [or in this case, a nation] that is set on an hill cannot be hid. . . .

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14, 16).

Esteemed colleagues, the world needs Brazil's light to shine long and bright. Tonight we celebrate what can become of that vision.

Background and Basic Principles

Religious freedom is the cornerstone of peace in a world with many competing philosophies. It gives us all space to determine for ourselves what we think and believe—to follow the truth that God speaks to our hearts. It allows diverse beliefs to coexist, protects the vulnerable, and helps us negotiate our conflicts. Thus, as the European Court of Human Rights has wisely concluded in multiple cases, religious freedom is vital to people of faith and “is also a precious asset for atheists, agnostics, sceptics and the unconcerned.” This is because “the pluralism indissociable from a democratic society, which has been dearly won over the centuries, depends on it.”²

A robust freedom is not merely what political philosophers have referred to as the “negative” freedom to be left alone, however important that may be. Rather, it is a much richer “positive” freedom—the freedom to live one’s religion or belief in a legal, political, and social environment that is tolerant, respectful, and accommodating of diverse beliefs.

We use our freedom of religion and belief to establish our core convictions, without which all other human rights would be meaningless. How can we claim the freedom of speech without being able to say what we truly believe? How can we claim the freedom of assembly unless we can gather with others who share our ideals? How can we enjoy freedom of the press unless we can publicly print or post who we really are?

The good news is that there has been remarkable progress in the spread of religious freedom. I have seen this progress in my own lifetime. As one example, in 1948, when I was just three years old, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which called for “everyone [to have] the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.”³

When I was 21, a treaty was negotiated to make the

United Nations declaration binding. That treaty—known as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights—reinforced the idea that each person should have “freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.”⁴ The treaty entered into force 10 years later, in 1976.

As of 2017, 169 countries were parties to the treaty—virtually every developed country in the world.⁵ The American Convention on Human Rights (the Pact of San José, Costa Rica), which was adopted in 1969 and has been in force since 1978, protects religious freedom in almost identical language.⁶

Strong reasons undergird the progress made and should motivate us to do even more. Religious freedom strongly correlates with a host of positive economic, public health, and civic benefits.⁷ In general, religious individuals have better family lives, stronger marriages, less substance abuse and crime, higher educational levels, a greater willingness to volunteer and donate to charities, better work habits, longer lives, better health, greater income, and higher levels of well-being and happiness.⁸ Clearly, religious freedom and the practice of religion strengthen society.

The Need for Vigilance and Cooperation

Unfortunately, protections afforded to freedom of religion and belief are often weak, unheeded, and attacked. Powerful pressures attempt to restrain religious freedom even as it grows—including in countries that historically protected it most vigorously. These pressures have the upper hand or are gaining ground in many countries. Vast swaths of the world would find unthinkable the kind of celebration we enjoy here in Brazil.

Remarkably, in 2013, roughly 5.5 billion people—77 percent of the world’s population—lived in countries with high or very high restrictions on religious liberty, up from 68 percent just six years earlier.⁹

Virtually all Western democracies claim to believe in



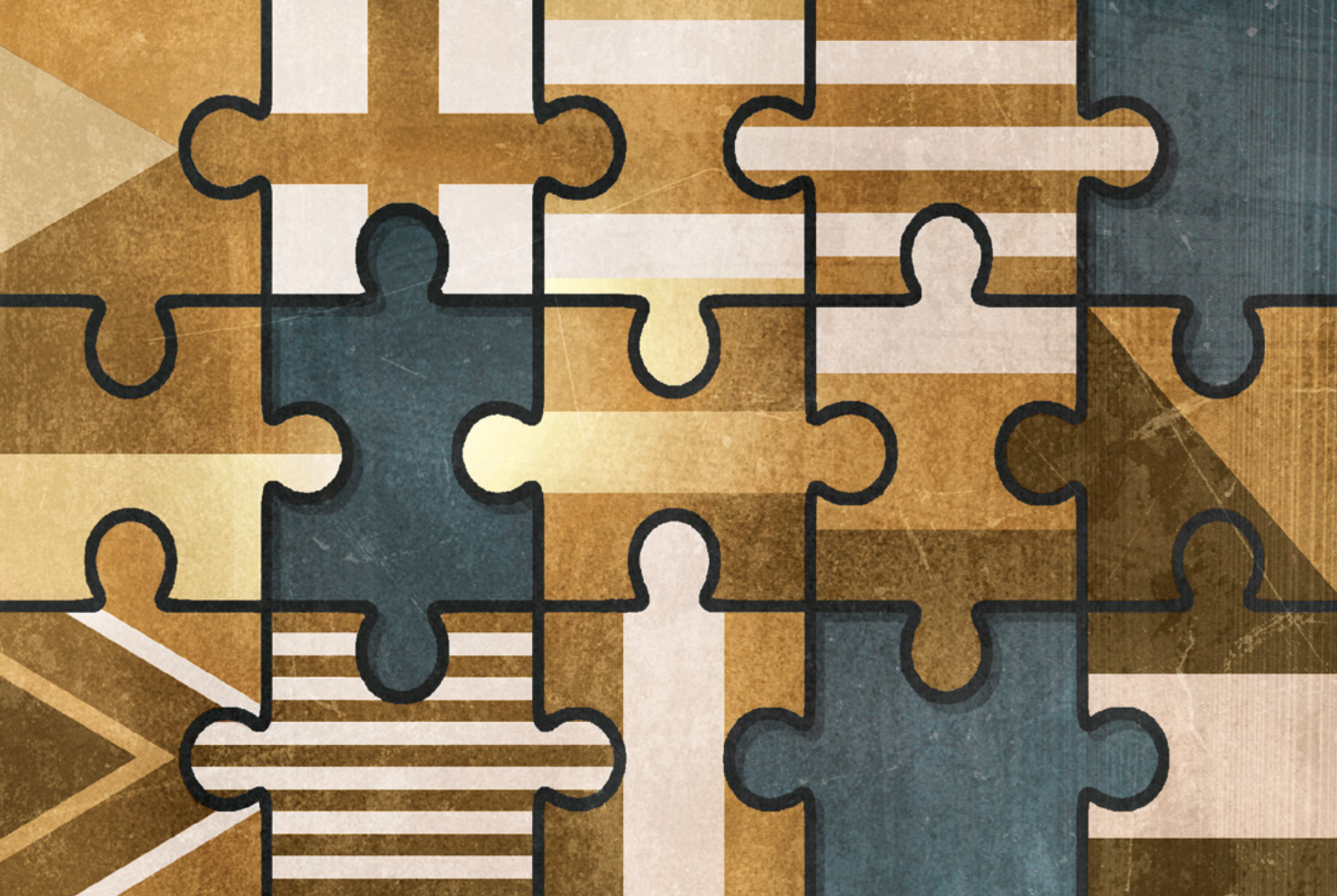
the principle of religious freedom. It is the application of the principle that can create controversy. Threats to religious freedom typically arise when religious people and institutions seek to say or do something (or refuse to say or do something) that runs counter to the philosophy or goals of those in power, including political majorities. Religion is often countercultural and thus unpopular. For this reason, religious freedom, even where it is generally supported in principle, is often vigorously opposed in practice.

In Europe and North America, controversies have arisen over issues such as whether churches can decide whom to hire (or not hire) as their ministers, whether individuals can wear religious clothes or symbols on the job or at school, whether employers must pay for employees' contraceptives and abortions, whether individuals can be compelled

to provide services that offend their beliefs, whether professional or university accreditation can be denied or revoked because of moral standards or beliefs, and whether religious student organizations can be required to accept students with contrary beliefs.

Brazil, with its religious diversity, also grapples with similar issues, such as businesses closing on Sunday, the wearing of religious clothing, and the protections afforded to Afro-Brazilian traditions. We are grateful that many of these matters have been resolved in favor of religious freedom. The prompt and proper resolution of issues involving the free exercise of religious beliefs will be invaluable to Brazil's ongoing respect of its diversity. By allowing religious people and organizations to live their faith publicly and without recrimination, Brazil will continue to be a bright and hopeful example of religious freedom to the world.

In 1948 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which called for "everyone [to have] the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion." When I was 21, a treaty was negotiated to make the United Nations declaration binding. As of 2017, 169 countries were parties to the treaty.



The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is pleased to stand with you and others in this vital effort. Although we are optimistic that our efforts will make a difference, we must make these efforts collectively, since none of us can win this fight alone.

I encourage you to hold fast to the freedoms you have forged at home and to lead courageously in promoting religious freedom on the world stage. The need to protect and preserve religious liberty—in a fair and balanced way that also protects others' fundamental rights—is acute.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is pleased to stand with you and others in this vital effort. Although we are optimistic that our efforts will make a difference, we must make these efforts collectively, since none of us can win this fight alone. I echo what my colleague Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles recently stated in a forum similar to this one:

“It is imperative that those of us who believe in God and in the reality of right and wrong unite more effectively to protect our religious freedom to preach and practice our faith in God and the principles of right

and wrong He has established. . . . All that is necessary for unity and a broad coalition along the lines I am suggesting is a common belief that there is a right and wrong in human behavior that has been established by a Supreme Being. All who believe in that fundamental [principle] should unite more effectively to preserve and strengthen the freedom to advocate and practice our religious beliefs, whatever they are. We must walk together for a ways on the same path in order to secure our freedom to pursue our separate ways when that is necessary according to our own beliefs.”¹⁰

Our task will be difficult and require constant vigilance, but it is of utmost importance.

I close with a passage from the Doctrine and Covenants. This passage was revealed in 1835, at a time when, despite constitutional protections, my forefathers were being driven

from their homes for embracing what to others seemed like new and different beliefs. So it is a sobering reminder for our time, especially when many of today's restrictions on religious freedom also come in countries that espouse the principle but sometimes fail to apply it in practice.

Our scripture says, "No government can exist in peace, except such laws are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience." Governments may "restrain crime, but never control conscience; [they] should punish guilt, but never suppress the freedom of the soul" (D&C 134:2, 4).

May we pursue peace by working together to preserve and protect the freedom of all people to hold and manifest a religion or belief of their choice, whether individually or in community with others, at home or abroad, in public or private, and in worship, observance, practice, and teaching. ■

For the full text of this address, go to mormonnewsroom.org.

NOTES

1. See "Brazil Has Lowest Government Restrictions on Religion among 25 Most Populous Countries," July 22, 2013, theweeklynumber.com/weekly-number-blog; "Restrictions and Hostilities in the Most Populous Countries," Feb. 26, 2015, pewforum.org.
2. Kokkinakis v. Greece, 3/1992/348/421 (May 25, 1993), para. 31; Nolan and K. v. Russia, 2512/04 (Feb. 12, 2009), para. 61; see also Serif v. Greece, 38178/97 (Dec. 14, 1999), para. 49; European Convention on Human Rights, Article 9.
3. United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18, Dec. 10, 1948, un.org/en/documents/udhr.
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6. See American Convention on Human Rights "Pact of San José, Costa Rica," Nov. 22, 1969 (Inter-American Specialized Conference on Human Rights), oas.org; see also Juan G. Navarro Floria and Octavio Lo Prete, "Proselitismo y Libertad Religiosa: Una Visión desde América Latina," in *Anuario de Derecho Eclesiástico del Estado*, no. 27 (2011), 59–96.
7. See Brian J. Grim, Greg Clark, and Robert Edward Snyder, "Is Religious Freedom Good for Business?: A Conceptual and Empirical Analysis," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion*, vol. 10 (2014), 4–6; Paul A. Marshall, "The Range of Religious Freedom," in Paul A. Marshall, ed., *Religious Freedom in the World* (2008), 1–11.
8. See Patrick F. Fagan, "Why Religion Matters Even More: The Impact of Religious Practice on Social Stability," *Backgrounders*, no. 1992 (Dec. 18, 2006), 1–19; Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* (2010), 443–92.
9. See "Latest Trends in Religious Restrictions and Hostilities," Feb. 26, 2015, pewforum.org.
10. Dallin H. Oaks, "Preserving Religious Freedom" (lecture at Chapman University School of Law, Feb. 4, 2011), mormonnewsroom.org.

FAMILY HOME EVENING IDEA

Discuss the importance of religious freedom with your family, including how the citizens of your country first obtained the freedom to worship. What events led to religious freedom in your country? This may include legislation, protests, even war. You might create trivia questions to ask your family to help them learn about this topic in a more engaging way. In addition, consider discussing the following questions: How is religious freedom a blessing in our lives? How would our lives be different if we were not free to practice our religion? How can we help promote religious freedom for ourselves and others?





**By Elder
Steven E. Snow**
General Authority
Seventy and
Church Historian
and Recorder

Saints:

THE STORY OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE LATTER DAYS

In 1861, President Brigham Young (1801–77) urged Church historians to change their approach. “Write in a narrative style,” he advised, and “write only about one tenth part as much.”¹

The story on the next pages follows that counsel. I am pleased to introduce a new four-volume series called *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*. Chapter 1 is included in this issue, and subsequent chapters will be published in this magazine over the next several months. The first book will be available later this year, and the other volumes will follow.

Saints was prepared in response to the Lord’s commandment to “keep the church record and history continually” (D&C 47:3). Unlike past histories of the Church, it is a narrative history written in an engaging style that will be accessible to both youth and adults.

Saints, however, is not historical fiction. It is a true story based on the records of people from the past. Every detail and every line of dialogue is supported by historical sources. Notes at the end of each chapter refer to the records and additional sources. Those who want to read the actual records, better understand related topics, and discover even more stories will find links in the back of the books and online at saints.lds.org.

The Rich Tapestry of the Restoration

These books are not scripture, but like the scriptures, they include both divine truth and stories of imperfect people trying to become Saints through the Atonement of Jesus Christ (see Mosiah 3:19). Taken together, the four volumes tell the story of the Lord’s Church striving

This art of Nauvoo will be featured on the cover of Saints volume 1.



to fulfill its mandate to perfect the Saints (see Ephesians 4:11–13).

Saints has a very different format, style, and intended audience than the two multivolume histories the Church has published in the past. The first history was begun by Joseph Smith in the 1830s and published beginning in 1842.² The second was published in 1930 by assistant Church historian B. H. Roberts.³ The global reach of the restored gospel since then and the Lord's command to keep the history continually "for the good of the church, and for the rising generations" (D&C 69:8) signal that it is time to include more Latter-day Saints in the story.

Saints tells the stories of ordinary men and women from the earliest days of the Church until now. It also provides new detail and insight into better-known people and events from Church history. Each story will help you understand and appreciate the Saints who came before you to make the Church what it is today. Like you, they sacrificed to establish Zion, and they had challenges and successes as they sought to understand and implement divine direction. Woven together, their stories—and yours—create the rich tapestry of the Restoration.

Our Sacred Past

The Book of Mormon record keepers kept both large and small plates. In the large plates they recorded political and military history. They used the small plates for "the things of God" that were "most precious," including "preaching which was sacred, or revelation which was great, or prophesying" (1 Nephi 6:3; Jacob 1:2, 4). The small plates were recorded "for Christ's sake, and for the sake of our people" (Jacob 1:4). *Saints* aims to be a "small plates" history, one that focuses on our sacred past. It thus includes only a small sample of all the stories that could be told to show how the Lord works in the lives of the Latter-day Saints.

Saints is not just about imperfect people in the past who became better with the help of the Lord. It is also for imperfect people now who want to always remember Him. It will help you remember how merciful the Savior has been to His people, how He has made weak people strong, and how Saints around the globe have joined together to further God's work. ■

NOTES

1. Brigham Young, in Wilford Woodruff, Journal, Oct. 20, 1861, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
2. See *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts (1902–12 [vols. 1–6], 1932 [vol. 7]).
3. See B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Century I*, 6 vols. (1930).

WHAT FORMATS WILL *SAINTS* BE AVAILABLE IN?

The four volumes will be published in 14 languages in book form (available at store.lds.org), online at saints.lds.org, and in the Gospel Library app. They will also be available in e-book and audiobook formats in select languages.

WHAT WILL BE FOUND IN EACH VOLUME?

- Volume 1—available later this year—tells the story of the Restoration, from Joseph Smith's childhood to the Saints receiving ordinances in the Nauvoo Temple in 1846.
- Volume 2 will cover the Saints' challenges in gathering

to the western United States and will finish with the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple in 1893.

- Volume 3 will narrate the global growth of the Church, ending with the dedication of the temple in Bern, Switzerland, in 1955.
- Volume 4 will bring the reader to the recent past, when temples dot the earth.

Additional in-depth material on selected topics will be published online to support each volume.





CHAPTER 1

Ask in Faith

This is chapter 1 of the new four-volume narrative history of the Church titled Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days. The book will be available in 14 languages in print, in the Church History section of the Gospel Library app, and at saints.lds.org. The next several chapters will be published in upcoming issues until volume 1 is released later this year. Those chapters will be available in 47 languages in the Gospel Library app and at saints.lds.org.

In 1815, the Indonesian island of Sumbawa was lush and green with recent rain. Families were preparing for the dry season ahead, as they had every year for generations, cultivating rice paddies in the shadow of a volcano called Tambora.

On April 5, after decades of slumber, the mountain roared awake, coughing up ash and fire. Hundreds of miles away, witnesses heard what sounded like cannon fire. Small eruptions continued for days. Then, on the evening of April 10, the whole mountain exploded. Three fiery plumes shot skyward, merging into one massive blast. Liquid fire flowed down the mountainside, enveloping the village at its base. Whirlwinds raged through the region, pulling up trees and sweeping away homes.¹

The chaos continued all that night and into the next. Ash blanketed miles of land and sea, piling two feet high in places. Midday felt like midnight. Rough seas heaved over shorelines, spoiling crops and drowning villages. For weeks, Tambora rained cinders, stone, and fire.²

Over the next few months, the blast's effects rippled across the globe. Spectacular sunsets awed people around the world. But the vibrant colors masked the deadly effects

of the volcano's ash as it circled the earth. In the coming year, the weather turned unpredictable and devastating.³

The eruption caused temperatures in India to drop, and cholera killed thousands, destroying families. In fertile Chinese valleys, summer snowstorms replaced a normally mild climate and flooding rains destroyed crops. In Europe, food supplies dwindled, leading to starvation and panic.⁴

Everywhere, people sought explanations for the suffering and death the strange weather caused. Prayers and chants from holy men echoed through Hindu temples in India. Chinese poets grappled with questions of pain and loss. In France and Britain, citizens fell to their knees, fearful the terrible calamities foretold in the Bible were upon them. In North America, ministers preached that God was punishing wayward Christians, and they sounded warnings to stoke religious feelings.

Across the land, people flocked to churches and revival meetings, anxious to know how they could be saved from the coming destruction.⁵

The eruption of Tambora affected weather in North America through the following year. Spring gave way to snowfall and killing frosts, and 1816 passed into memory as the year without a summer.⁶ In Vermont, in the northeast corner of the United States, rocky hills had frustrated a farmer named Joseph Smith Sr. for years. But that season, as he and his wife, Lucy Mack Smith, watched their crops shrivel under the relentless frosts, they knew they faced financial ruin and

an uncertain future if they stayed where they were.

At 45, Joseph Sr. was no longer a young man, and the prospect of starting over on new land was daunting. He knew his oldest sons, 18-year-old Alvin and 16-year-old Hyrum, could help him clear the land, build a house, and plant and harvest crops. His 13-year-old daughter, Sophronia, was old enough to help Lucy with her work in the house and around the farm. His younger sons, 8-year-old Samuel and 5-year-old William, were becoming more helpful, and 3-year-old Katharine and newborn Don Carlos would one day be old enough to contribute.

But his middle son, 10-year-old Joseph Jr., was a different matter. Four years earlier, Joseph Jr. had undergone an operation to remove an infection in his leg. Since then he had walked with a crutch. Although his leg was starting to feel sturdy again, Joseph Jr. had a painful limp, and Joseph Sr. did not know if he would grow up to be as strong as Alvin and Hyrum.⁷

Certain they could rely on each other, the Smiths resolved to abandon their home in Vermont for better land.⁸ Like others in the area, Joseph Sr. decided to travel to the state of New York, where he hoped to find a good farm they could buy on credit. He would then send for Lucy and the children, and the family could start over.

As Joseph Sr. set out for New York, Alvin and Hyrum walked him down the road before saying goodbye. Joseph Sr. loved his wife and children dearly, but he had not been able to provide them much stability in life. Bad luck and unsuccessful investments had kept the family poor and rootless. Maybe New York would be different.⁹

The following winter, Joseph Jr. hobbled through the snow with his mother, brothers, and sisters. They were on their way west to a New York village named Palmyra, near where Joseph Sr. had found good land and was waiting for his family.

Since her husband could not help with the move, Lucy

had hired a man named Mr. Howard to drive their wagon. On the road, Mr. Howard handled their belongings roughly and gambled and drank away the money they paid him. And after they joined up with another family traveling west, Mr. Howard kicked Joseph out of the wagon so the other family's daughters could sit with him as he drove the team.

Knowing how much it hurt Joseph to walk, Alvin and Hyrum tried to stand up to Mr. Howard a few times. But each time he knocked them down with the butt of his whip.¹⁰

If he had been bigger, Joseph probably would have tried to stand up to Mr. Howard himself. His hurt leg had kept him from work and play, but his strong will made up for his

weak body. Before the doctors had cut into his leg and chipped away infected pieces of bone, they had wanted to tie him down or give him brandy to dull the pain. But Joseph had asked only that his father hold him.

He had stayed awake and alert the whole time, his face pale and dripping with sweat. His mother, who was usually so strong, had nearly fallen apart when she heard his screams. After that,

she probably felt that she could bear anything.¹¹

As Joseph limped along beside the wagon, he could see his mother was certainly bearing with Mr. Howard. They had already traveled two hundred miles (322 km), and so far she had been more than patient with the driver's bad behavior.

About a hundred miles from Palmyra, Lucy was preparing for another day on the road when she saw Alvin running toward her. Mr. Howard had thrown their goods and luggage onto the street and was about to leave with their horses and wagon.

Lucy found the man in a bar. "As there is a God in heaven," she declared, "that wagon and those horses as well as the goods accompanying them are mine."

She looked around the bar. It was filled with men and women, most of them travelers like her. "This man," she said, meeting their gaze, "is determined to take away from

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*When Joseph was 12,
religious debates swept
Palmyra. He listened to
preachers, hoping to learn
more about his immortal
soul, but their sermons often
left him unsettled.*
|||||



This visitors' center in Sharon, Vermont, marks the spot where Joseph Smith was born on December 23, 1805. The stone obelisk in the background rises 38 and a half feet (11.7 m) from the base, one foot for each year of his life.

me every means of proceeding on my journey, leaving me with eight little children utterly destitute.”

Mr. Howard said that he had already spent the money she paid him to drive the wagon, and he could go no farther.

“I have no use for you,” Lucy said. “I shall take charge of the team myself.”

She left Mr. Howard in the bar and vowed to reunite her children with their father, come what may.¹²

The road ahead was muddy and cold, but Lucy led her family safely to Palmyra. As she watched the children cling to their father and kiss his face, she felt rewarded for all they had suffered to get there.

The family soon rented a small house in town and discussed how to get their own farm.¹³ The best plan, they decided, was to work until they had enough money for a down payment on land in the nearby woods. Joseph Sr. and the older sons dug wells, split fence rails, and harvested hay for cash, while Lucy and the daughters made and sold pies, root beer, and decorative cloths to provide food for the family.¹⁴

As Joseph Jr. got older, his leg grew stronger and he could easily walk through Palmyra. In town, he came in contact with people from all over the region, and many of them were turning to religion to satisfy spiritual yearnings and explain the hardships of life. Joseph and his family did not belong to a church, but many of their neighbors worshipped in one of

the tall Presbyterian chapels, the Baptists' meetinghouse, the Quaker hall, or the campground where traveling Methodist preachers held revival meetings from time to time.¹⁵

When Joseph was 12, religious debates swept Palmyra. Although he read little, he liked to think deeply about ideas. He listened to preachers, hoping to learn more about his immortal soul, but their sermons often left him unsettled. They told him he was a sinner in a sinful world, helpless without the saving grace of Jesus Christ. And while Joseph believed the message and felt bad about his sins, he was not sure how to find forgiveness.¹⁶

He thought going to church could help him, but he could not settle on a place to worship. The different churches argued endlessly about how people could be free of sin. After listening to these arguments for a while, Joseph was distressed to see people reading the same Bible but coming to different conclusions about its meaning. He believed God's truth was out there—somewhere—but he did not know how to find it.¹⁷

His parents were not sure either. Lucy and Joseph Sr. both came from Christian families and believed in the Bible and Jesus Christ. Lucy attended church meetings and often brought her children with her. She had been seeking the true church of Jesus Christ since the death of her sister many years earlier.

Once, after falling gravely ill sometime before Joseph's

birth, she had feared that she would die before finding the truth. She sensed a dark and lonely chasm between her and the Savior, and she knew she was unprepared for the next life.

Lying awake all night, she prayed to God, promising Him that if He let her live, she would find the Church of Jesus Christ. As she prayed, the voice of the Lord spoke to her, assuring her that if she would seek, she would find. She had visited more churches since then, but she had still not found the right one. Yet even when it felt like the Savior's Church was no longer on the earth, she kept searching, trusting that going to church was better than not.¹⁸

Like his wife, Joseph Sr. hungered for the truth. But he felt that attending no church at all was preferable to the wrong one. Following the counsel of his father, Joseph Sr. searched the scriptures, prayed earnestly, and believed that Jesus Christ had come to save the world.¹⁹ Yet he could not reconcile what he felt to be true with the confusion and discord he saw

in the churches around him. One night he had dreamed that contending preachers were like cattle, bellowing as they dug at the earth with their horns, which deepened his concern that they knew little about God's kingdom.²⁰

Seeing his parents' dissatisfaction with local churches only confused Joseph Jr. more.²¹ His soul was at stake, but no one could give him satisfying answers.

After saving their money for more than a year, the Smiths had enough to make a payment on a hundred acres of forest in Manchester, just south of Palmyra. There, between jobs as hired hands, they tapped maple trees for their sugary sap, planted an orchard, and cleared fields to grow crops.²²

As he worked the land, young Joseph continued to worry about his sins and the welfare of his soul. The religious revival in Palmyra had quieted down, but preachers continued to compete for converts there and throughout the region.²³ Day and night, Joseph watched the sun,

This log home, located near Palmyra, New York, is a replica of the home the Smiths built there after moving from Vermont. The Sacred Grove is in the background.



PHOTOGRAPH BY D. BRENT WALTON

moon, and stars roll through the heavens in order and majesty and admired the beauty of the earth teeming with life. He also looked at the people around him and marveled at their strength and intelligence. Everything seemed to testify that God existed and had created humankind in His own image. But how could Joseph reach Him?²⁴

In the summer of 1819, when Joseph was 13, Methodist preachers gathered for a conference a few miles from the Smith farm and spread out across the countryside to spur families like Joseph's toward conversion. The success of these preachers worried other ministers in the area, and soon competition for converts was intense.

Joseph attended meetings, listened to soul-stirring preaching, and witnessed converts shout for joy. He wanted to shout with them, but he often felt like he was in the middle of a war of words and opinions. "Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together?" he asked himself. "If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?" He knew he needed Christ's grace and mercy, but with so many people and churches clashing over religion, he did not know where to find it.²⁵

Hope that he could find answers—and peace for his soul—seemed to slip away from him. He wondered how anyone could find truth amid so much noise.²⁶

While attending a sermon, Joseph heard a minister quote from the first chapter of James in the New Testament. "If any of you lack wisdom," he said, "let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not."²⁷

Joseph went home and read the verse in the Bible. "Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine," he later remembered. "It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God, I did." He had searched the Bible before as if it held all the answers. But now the Bible was telling him he could go directly to God for personal answers to his questions.

Joseph decided to pray. He had never prayed out loud before, but he trusted the Bible's promise. "Ask in faith,

nothing wavering," it taught.²⁸ God would hear his questions—even if they came out awkwardly. ■

A complete list of works cited is available in English at saints.lds.org.

The word *Topic* in the notes indicates additional information online at saints.lds.org.

NOTES

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2. Raffles, "Narrative of the Effects of the Eruption," 5, 7–8, 11.
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15. Cook, *Palmyra and Vicinity*, 247–61. **Topics:** Palmyra and Manchester; Christian Churches in Joseph Smith's Day
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17. Joseph Smith—History 1:5–6; Joseph Smith History, 1838–56, volume A-1, [1]–2, in *JSP*, H1:208–10 (draft 2). **Topic:** Religious Beliefs in Joseph Smith's Day
18. Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–45, book 2, [1]–[6]; "Records of the Session of the Presbyterian Church in Palmyra," Mar. 10, 1830.
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PORTRAITS OF FAITH

As a wood-carver, Feinga supports his wife, their three children, and three others in their care. It hasn't always been easy, but by putting God first, they have always had enough.

CHRISTINA SMITH, PHOTOGRAPHER

Feinga Fanguna

Tongatapu, Tonga

When my wife, 'Anau, and I were first married, I would carve small items and go to the market to sell them. Some days I would come back with money, other days I would sell nothing.

In my patriarchal blessing, I am promised that God will bless the work I do with my hands and that I will use my talent to help people. These promises are being fulfilled.

We are blessed in many ways. Our relatives think we're rich. We're not, but we have everything we need because we put God first.

DISCOVER MORE

See more about Feinga's journey of faith at liahona.lds.org.

Find more stories of faith in the Media Library on LDS.org. Learn how you can become more self-reliant through the Church's self-reliance initiative at srs.lds.org.



I told him that what had just happened was no accident because I had received a prompting.

I FOLLOWED THE FIRST IMPRESSION

One Sunday after returning home from church, I fell asleep for most of the afternoon.

It was dark when I woke up. I started my weekly planning with a prayer to ask how I could best serve the Lord. I felt impressed to go home teaching. It was already 8:00 p.m., so I told myself that I would go the following Tuesday, but the impression to go that night became stronger.

I was reminded of the counsel I heard Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles give at the missionary training center in Lima, Peru, while I was a teacher there: “Follow the first impression.” I immediately called my home teaching

companion, but he did not answer. I decided to go anyway.

I left the house and noticed a young priest in my ward walking down the street. I approached him and asked if he would accompany me. He agreed. At the first home, the brother opened the door. I told him I felt I needed to see him. He smiled and told us he was having an operation the next day and would appreciate a blessing. I gave him a blessing, and we left for our next visit.

It was 8:40 p.m. when we arrived at the next family’s house. They were surprised to see us because it was so late. We entered their home and noticed that the father was sick. I offered to give him a blessing.

As we returned home, I shared Moroni 7:13 with my young companion: “Every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God.”

I told him that what had just happened was no accident because I had received a prompting. He said he believed it because before I approached him, he had prayed to know how to recognize the Spirit.

I don’t know if the impression to go home teaching was more for my families or for this young priest, but I am grateful I listened. I know great blessings come as we follow the first impression of the Spirit. ■

Kenny Quispitupac, Lima, Peru

EVERYONE NEEDS A FRIEND

I approached the doors to the church with one clear thought in my mind: “If I don’t find a friend at church today, I’m never coming back.” I had attended church with a friend a few times before, but this was the first time I attended as an investigator by myself and *for* myself. I felt I needed to join the Church, but I had several fears and concerns.

When I entered the church, I was greeted by a young adult with a big smile and a hearty handshake. He introduced himself as Dane McCartney. I had seen Dane before, when he had tried out for the college football team I played for. My anxiety vanished when he invited me to sit with him during the Church meetings. He also invited me to his parents’ home for dinner afterward. I never had a chance to feel alone that day. Dane and his family reached out to me and helped answer many of my questions. I joined the Church a few weeks later.

Had Dane just been friendly to me that day, I probably would have left church after sacrament meeting and given up, thinking that I had given it a shot but that church just wasn’t for me. While it’s certainly important to be friendly, being a *friend* involves more than just being nice. The McCartneys’ love and support was important to my conversion.

That was 14 years ago. Since then I have served a full-time mission, been married in the temple, and been

blessed with five wonderful children. I have also served as a bishop and a stake president. I have counseled with members who stopped coming to church because they felt alone and didn’t have any friends at church. My heart breaks for them. I wish someone would have reached out to them like

the McCartneys did to me.

I thank my Heavenly Father that Dane befriended me that day. I hope we will all take courage to be friends to those who are investigating the Church, are new to it, or are returning to it. ■

Tim Overton, Arizona, USA

Dane showed me that being a friend involves more than just being nice.



A BLESSING OF CONSOLATION

When it became apparent that my father's cancer was terminal, my mother said in discouragement, "I guess we're not going to get our miracle." In that moment, I felt that our family would receive miracles, even if the preservation of my father's life was not among them.

One miracle came one morning when my friend Beth asked me what my plans were for the day. I told her I had planned to spend the afternoon with my father at the hospital, but my arrangement for child care fell through. Beth generously offered to watch my children so I could spend time with my father. She also offered to take supper to my family. I was very grateful.

When I arrived at the hospital, my father did not have the energy to open his eyes or eat any food. But shortly afterward he experienced a dramatic increase in energy. For over three hours he was wide awake, and we talked and even walked around the

hospital ward a few times. No other visitors came during this time. I was blessed to have this time with him to myself.

We laughed and we cried together that day. My father shared with me his feelings about leaving this earth life and what mattered most to him:

his testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. That afternoon is one of the most cherished memories of my life. Three days later he passed away.

It was not until a week after his funeral that I realized the last time I spoke with my father was the afternoon that Beth watched my children.

I was touched that God had prompted Beth to be the blessing she prayed I would receive.



ILLUSTRATION BY ALLEN GARNIS

With tears streaming down my face, I sent Beth an email thanking her for her service and explaining how much it meant to me.

Beth replied, “I have a testimony that God wants to extend us blessings of consolation and grace—especially when we are going through something difficult. I have been praying for consolation for you and your family during this time.”

I was touched that God prompted Beth to be the blessing she prayed I would receive. I know that God provides us with blessings of consolation during difficult times in our lives. ■

Sarah Bieber, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

WHERE IS MY TREASURE?

After getting my children off to school, I began thinking about the rest of the day. I had many things to do, but I had to work the night shift at the hospital, so I had limited time. I could work in the yard, work on a quilt for my nephew’s birthday, or exercise. Then I remembered a quote from President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994):

“When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives” (“The Great Commandment—Love the Lord,” *Ensign*, May 1988, 4).

“Scriptures it is!” I thought. I sat at my desk and continued my scripture study from the day before:

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

“But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . .

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:19–21).

“Where is my treasure?” I thought. Next to my scriptures were four names from my husband’s family that I had recently taken to the temple. My husband’s parents were the first in their families to join the Church. I had spent the past two years working on my late father-in-law’s line. I decided to go to

FamilySearch to see if the ordinances were recorded as complete.

I looked at the temple icons along his line. To my surprise, several names I had prepared for sealing ordinances had not been recorded as complete. I must have misplaced the cards, and the sealings had not yet been done! As soon as I reprinted the names, a distinct thought came to my mind, “Now you can go about your day.”

I felt peace knowing I had put the Lord first. He helped me prioritize what was most important. Enjoying my family in the eternities is definitely what I treasure most. I know that if I put God first, all other things will work out for my spiritual benefit and for the benefit of others. ■

Ashlee Cornell, Oklahoma, USA



Next to my scriptures were four names that I had recently taken to the temple.

“He Would Deliver Us”

By Reid Tateoka

The earthquake that struck Japan in March of 2011 measured 9.0 on the Richter scale—it was one of the most powerful earthquakes in recorded history. At the time, I was serving as president of the Japan Sendai Mission, the part of Japan nearest the quake’s epicenter. More than 16,000 people died and hundreds of thousands of homes and buildings collapsed in the quake and the ensuing tsunami.

Despite the widespread devastation, we did not lose a single missionary. In the days and weeks that followed, I saw miracles in the lives of the missionaries we served with. Both before and after the quake, a loving Father put into place a series of events that would save His missionaries.

Led to Protected Places

Leadership meetings for the Koriyama Zone of our mission almost always took place on Thursday. This

time, however, the meeting was scheduled for Friday, March 11, 2011—the day of the quake. Leadership meetings typically included only zone and district leaders. In this instance, all the missionaries in the zone were invited to leadership meeting. This meant that on the day of the earthquake, the Japan Sendai missionaries who lived closest to the nuclear reactors damaged by the quake and tsunami were far away from their apartments, safely attending leadership meeting in the Koriyama chapel. The Lord had moved them to safe ground.

The missionaries in our leadership meeting were not the only ones who had been led to safety before the quake hit. Missionaries learn early to rely on the Lord and on the promptings of the Spirit. When the earthquake hit, there was no time to call leaders for directions. The other missionaries survived because they had already followed the Spirit, which led them to

Amid terrible devastation, the Lord watched over His missionaries.

protected places that Heavenly Father had prepared for them.

After the quake, many missionaries made their way to evacuation centers. Some zones instinctively moved to the chapels, which sustained comparatively little damage and where they felt more strongly the peace from the Holy Ghost. A fortunate few could remain in their apartments, without heat, water, electricity, or food. But all were safe.





Guided by Roadblocks

Initially, not knowing of the damage to the nuclear power plants, I tried to send the missionaries at our leadership meeting back to their apartments immediately after the quake. But the Lord hedged up the way. There were no buses or trains running. So Heavenly Father continued to keep the missionaries safe in Koriyama.

I thought I would be needed in the mission home near the epicenter of the quake. But after eight hours of driving on damaged and congested roads, we found that our way too was blocked. It turned out that by remaining in Koriyama, we were better able to help with the evacuation of our other missionaries, a process that provided further evidence that the Lord was watching over us.

Following the earthquake there was a run on gasoline. The fuel trucks that could maneuver over broken roads traveled very slowly, resulting in three-hour waits for gasoline, if any was available at all. But the Lord provided for us in miraculous ways. For example, while evacuating sisters and elders to safety in Niigata on the other side of the island, we realized we had driven 18 hours on a single tank, with a gas gauge that always registered “full.” As we neared Niigata, the gas gauge immediately dropped to “empty.”

Perilous Journey

Fortunately, our loving Father continued to direct an orderly evacuation amid severe devastation. Long-distance travel was dangerous. There were continuing aftershocks. Public

transportation was shut down. Water and electrical supplies were interrupted, and it was nearly impossible to buy gas or food. Sister Tateoka and I understood very well that we were the only ones able to reach two elders in a mountainous area and two other elders over the mountain on the other side of the island. Freeways were closed, so this last trip would require a five- or six-hour drive one-way north up the mountain on back roads, another two to three hours over the mountains and down to Tsuruoka, and four more hours back to safety.

We left early on the morning of March 16 and arrived at Elder Ohsugi’s and Elder Yuasa’s apartment around 5:00 p.m. To pick up the last two elders, we needed to travel back

south, over a mountain summit, and down to the city of Tsuruoka. With less than half a tank of gas, we knew that we could not turn back. As we began traveling to pick up the last two elders, snow began to fall. Soon, we found ourselves in a blinding snowstorm, traveling at less than 15 miles (24 km) per hour. I could not see the lines on the highway.

At 7:30 p.m., as we finally reached the summit, we were stopped by the police. An officer informed me that an avalanche had blocked the road and closed the mountain pass. He told me that we could go no farther; we had to turn around and take an alternate route to the other side of the island around the avalanche. Without enough gas to go around the avalanche, it appeared we had no way to reach Elder Lay and Elder Ruefenacht in Tsuruoka.

Miraculous Journey

Dejectedly, we turned back as directed by the police. I asked the elders in the van to call every member of the Yamagata Ward to see if we could find someone who could give us some gasoline. We stopped and prayed earnestly, drawing upon all of the power of heaven we could. We prayed for another miracle and again turned to the Lord.

The missionaries called every active member. But no one had gasoline. Gas stations had run out of supplies and were closed. Then the elders were

impressed to call an less-active friend, Brother Tsuchihashi. Our Heavenly Father had once again directed our path. Brother Tsuchihashi could give us 20 liters (5 gallons) of gas. But to meet this good brother, we had to travel another hour north, the opposite direction of where we wanted to go. The quantity of gas would be helpful but not sufficient to allow us to travel around the avalanche.

Having faith, we traveled north, still not knowing how we would pick up the other two elders. We made it to Shinjo City, where we received the 20 liters of gas. Soon thereafter, I received a call from President Yoshida, my counselor, who by now was very worried that we had not yet returned. He asked where we were, and when I told him Shinjo, he was shocked that we were so far out of our way. It was beyond his ability to reach us and help us return.

Then he looked on his map, and in a broken voice stammered, "There is a little-known mountain pass that will take you from Shinjo to the elders in Tsuruoka." The Lord had prepared a way for us to be precisely where we needed to be to drive around the avalanche. The gasoline we were given was exactly the amount necessary to make the trip safely around the avalanche to pick up the elders.

When I contacted each missionary after the earthquake and learned how they had all been directed to safe ground just prior to the earthquake



THE SPIRIT WILL LEAD US

"As part of God's divine plan, we are blessed with the gift of the Holy Ghost. . . . As we navigate the seas of life, following the impressions of the Holy Ghost is essential. The Spirit will help us avoid temptations and dangers, and comfort and lead us through challenges."

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Shipshape and Bristol Fashion: Be Temple Worthy—in Good Times and Bad Times," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 42.

and tsunami, I felt so grateful. Two missionaries, who had been protected from the tsunami by climbing to an evacuation center's fourth floor, expressed their gratitude for being kept safe in a time of great peril.

They felt that the words of Helaman described their situation: "The Lord our God did visit us with assurances that he would deliver us; yea, insomuch that he did speak peace to our souls, and did grant unto us great faith, and did cause us that we should hope for our deliverance in him" (Alma 58:11). ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

My Mission among My Family

By Andrea Gómez Lagunes

When I opened my mission call, I was surprised to see that I had been assigned to the Mexico Veracruz Mission. My family had lived in Veracruz when I was born, and most of my extended family lives there. We are the only members of the Church in our family, so I was excited at the thought of having the opportunity to share the gospel with my relatives.

However, once there, I never served in an area near my relatives. I gave their addresses to my companions so they could visit them.

Fifteen months into my mission, I began having knee problems. My knee hurt a lot and at times the pain was unbearable. When I went to the doctor, his diagnosis was that surgery was the only solution. That meant that I would be returning home early. I couldn't believe that this was happening; I had only three months left on my mission.

I decided to turn to the Lord to ask for comfort and, if possible, a miracle. In answer to my prayer, I felt deep relief in my heart. My mission president's wife encouraged me with sincere motherly love to return home to recover, and I wrote my family to notify them that I would be coming home in two weeks.

After that, I had an interview with my mission president. He told me that my mother had contacted him and given him an option: She could come to Veracruz to care for me in the home of an aunt and uncle of mine during my recovery, since I would have to cease missionary activities for a while. My president told me that it might be a feasible option but that he would have to ask for permission.

When I found out later that permission had been granted, I felt my heart leap with excitement—I could stay and finish my mission! I said a prayer of thanksgiving.

On the day of the surgery, my

My mission president's question stayed with me—why had the Lord allowed me to stay and finish my mission?

mission president told me, "Sister Gómez, you need to find out why the Lord allowed you to stay in Veracruz." From that moment on, I was set on finding out the reason.

That same day, my mother, who had arrived in Veracruz, told me, "Your Mamá Lita (my paternal grandmother) is coming to the hospital to see you. This would be a good opportunity to ask her about your ancestors."



"What a great idea!" I thought. I couldn't wait to ask my relatives about my ancestors. Mamá Lita asked me about what it meant to be a missionary. I taught her about the Restoration and then talked to her about the plan of salvation, since my grandfather—her husband—had died a few years back. Then came a question I'd been hoping she would ask: "Will I be able to see my sweetheart again?"

Her question filled me with joy, and I answered, "Of course you will!" Her eyes glistened. It was wonderful to share that eternal truth with her. More questions came, all of them focused on the plan of salvation. In turn, I asked her the questions I had about my family so I could fill out my family tree. I felt how the Spirit enabled her to gain an understanding of the plan of salvation.

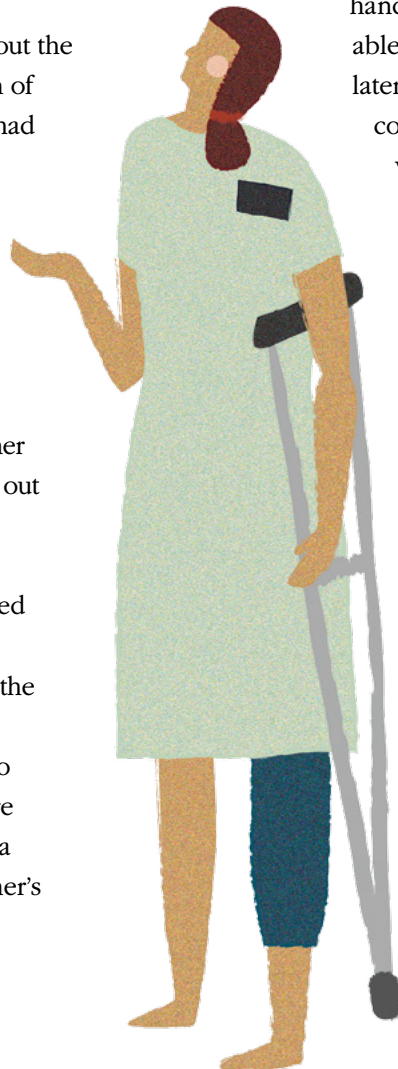
Later, as I visited the rest of my relatives, I talked with my maternal grandmother, who helped me find more family names. I was also able to share the gospel with all those we visited.

I realized why God had allowed me to first go to Veracruz on my mission and then to stay there after my surgery. I returned to my mission with a deep love for family history. Thanks to my mother's tender care, I was able to finish my mission.

My paternal grandmother died a year later, which made me very sad. On the other hand, I felt grateful and excited to be able to do her temple work one year later. When I was baptized for her, I couldn't hold back my tears of joy. She would finally be able to be with her sweetheart, to whom she had been married for more than 60 years.

I have no doubt that the Lord knows our hearts. He allowed me to stay in Veracruz to teach my family and proclaim the good tidings brought by our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. I know that one day I will be able to see my grandparents again. It is our responsibility to do our ancestors' work so that someday God will tell us, "Come unto me, ye blessed, there is a place prepared for you in the mansions of my Father" (Enos 1:27). ■

The author lives in Chihuahua, Mexico.







**By Elder
M. Russell Ballard**

Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

JESUS CHRIST

Our Source of Peace

Peace for our troubled hearts comes to us only as we follow the Light of Christ.

At the end of a full day of teaching and instruction, the Lord suggested to His disciples that they cross to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

While they were sailing that night, “there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

“And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

“And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm” (Mark 4:37–39).

Can you imagine what the Apostles must have been thinking as they watched the very elements—the wind, the rain, and the sea—obey their Master’s calm command? Although they had only recently been called to the holy apostleship, they knew Him and they loved Him and believed in Him. They had left their work and their families to follow Him. In a relatively short period of time, they had

man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” (Mark 4:40–41).

In turbulent and sometimes frightening times, the Savior’s promise of infinite and eternal peace resonates with special power to us, just as His ability to calm the crashing waves must have profoundly affected those who were with Him on the Sea of Galilee that stormy night so long ago.

Finding Inner Peace

Like those who were alive at the time of His mortal ministry, there are some among us who look for physical

peace and prosperity as signs of the Savior’s wondrous power. We sometimes fail to understand that the everlasting peace Jesus promises is an inner peace, born in faith, anchored by testimony, nurtured

with love, and expressed through continual obedience and repentance. It is a peace of spirit that echoes through the heart and the soul. If one truly knows and experiences this inner peace, there is no fear from worldly disharmony or discord. One knows deep down inside that all is well as far as the things that really matter are concerned.



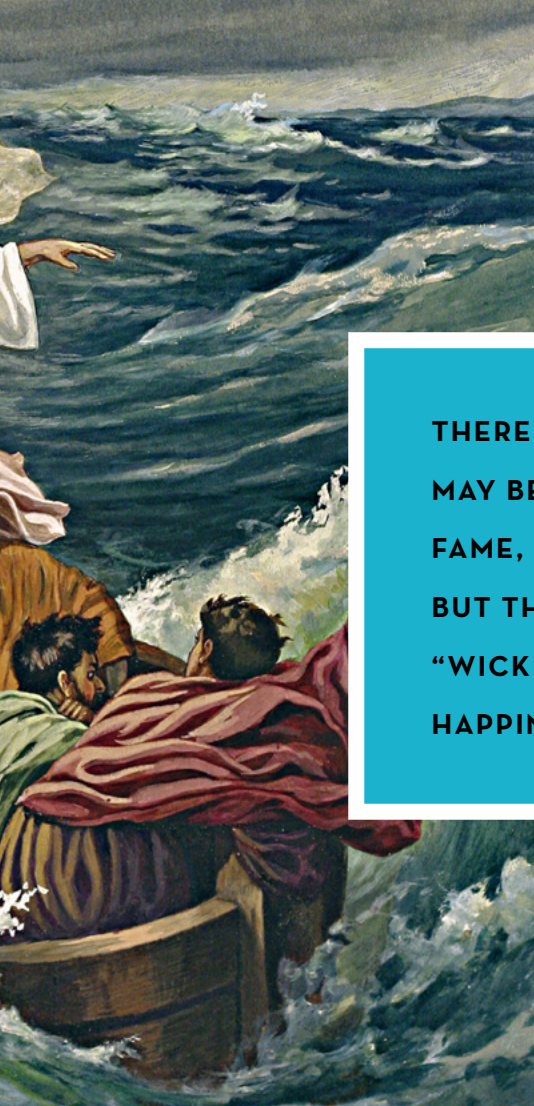
There is no peace in sin. There may be ease, popularity, fame, and even prosperity, but there is no peace. “Wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10). One cannot be at peace if one is living a life out of harmony with revealed truth. There is no peace in being mean-spirited or contentious. There is no peace in vulgarity, promiscuity, or permissiveness. There is no peace in addiction to drugs, alcohol, or pornography. There is no peace in being abusive to others in any way, whether it be emotionally, physically, or sexually, for those who are abusive will remain in mental and spiritual turmoil until they come to Christ in all

THE EVERLASTING PEACE JESUS PROMISES IS AN INNER PEACE, BORN IN FAITH, ANCHORED BY TESTIMONY, NURTURED WITH LOVE.

heard Him teach incredible things, and they had seen Him perform mighty miracles. But this was beyond their comprehension, and the looks on their faces must have shown it.

“And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

“And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of



THERE IS NO PEACE IN SIN. THERE MAY BE EASE, POPULARITY, FAME, AND EVEN PROSPERITY, BUT THERE IS NO PEACE. “WICKEDNESS NEVER WAS HAPPINESS” (ALMA 41:10).

I have overcome the world” (John 16:33; emphasis added).

Peace—real peace, whole-souled to the very core of your being—comes only in and through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. When that precious truth is discovered and gospel principles are understood and applied, great peace can distill in the hearts and souls of our Heavenly Father’s children. Said the Savior through Joseph Smith, “Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me” (D&C 19:23).

I am grateful that I can witness to you that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. By following Him, in faith and trust, all may find the sweet inner peace the gospel offers to us. ■

From an April 2002 general conference address.

humility and seek forgiveness through complete repentance.

At one time or another, I believe everyone yearns for the “peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Philippians 4:7). That peace for our troubled hearts only comes to us as we follow the Light of Christ, which is “given to every man, that he may know good from evil” (Moroni 7:16), as it leads us to repent of sins and seek forgiveness.

“Peace I Leave With You”

Just hours before He was to begin that glorious yet awful process of the Atonement, the Lord Jesus Christ

made this significant promise to His Apostles: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you” (John 14:27).

Was He promising His beloved associates the kind of peace the world recognizes—safety, security, with the absence of contention or tribulation? Certainly the historical record would suggest otherwise. Those original Apostles knew much of trial and persecution throughout the remainder of their lives, which is probably why the Lord added this insight to His promise: “Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in *me* ye might have peace,” He continued. “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer;

AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER, I BELIEVE EVERYONE YEARNS FOR THE “PEACE OF GOD, WHICH PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING” (PHILIPPIANS 4:7).

Peace in the World vs.

PEACE IN CHRIST

Jesus Christ can give us lasting peace, even during hardships and trials.

By Sarah Hanson

In a world of social, political, and religious turmoil, what do you need in order to have peace? Good friends? A loving family? Safety and security? Sometimes we think our lives have to meet requirements like these so we can truly feel at peace. But life will never be 100 percent perfect and

easy. So how do we deal with trials and feel peace at the same time?

The world tells us that peace can be felt only when there isn't any conflict. But that isn't true! Through His gospel, Jesus Christ provides us with an inner peace that surpasses the peace the world offers. If we look to

Him with faith, we can feel peace in any circumstance.

The Savior taught, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: *not as the world giveth, give I unto you*" (John 14:27; emphasis added). Here are some ways the world's peace differs from Jesus Christ's peace.

Peace in the World

1. Peace should come instantly—we shouldn't have to wait for it!

2. You can't find peace during difficulties.

3. Peace is the absence of war.

4. Peace comes through living however you want to live.

5. Admitting your faults and weaknesses does not bring peace.

6. Peace comes from only focusing on your needs.

7. Peace comes from seeking others' approval.

8. We should try to provide our own peace.



Peace in Christ

1. Sometimes we have to wait for peace—but “don’t you quit. . . . Trust God and believe in good things to come.”¹

2. Peace can come even in the midst of trials.

3. Peace can be found in any circumstance.

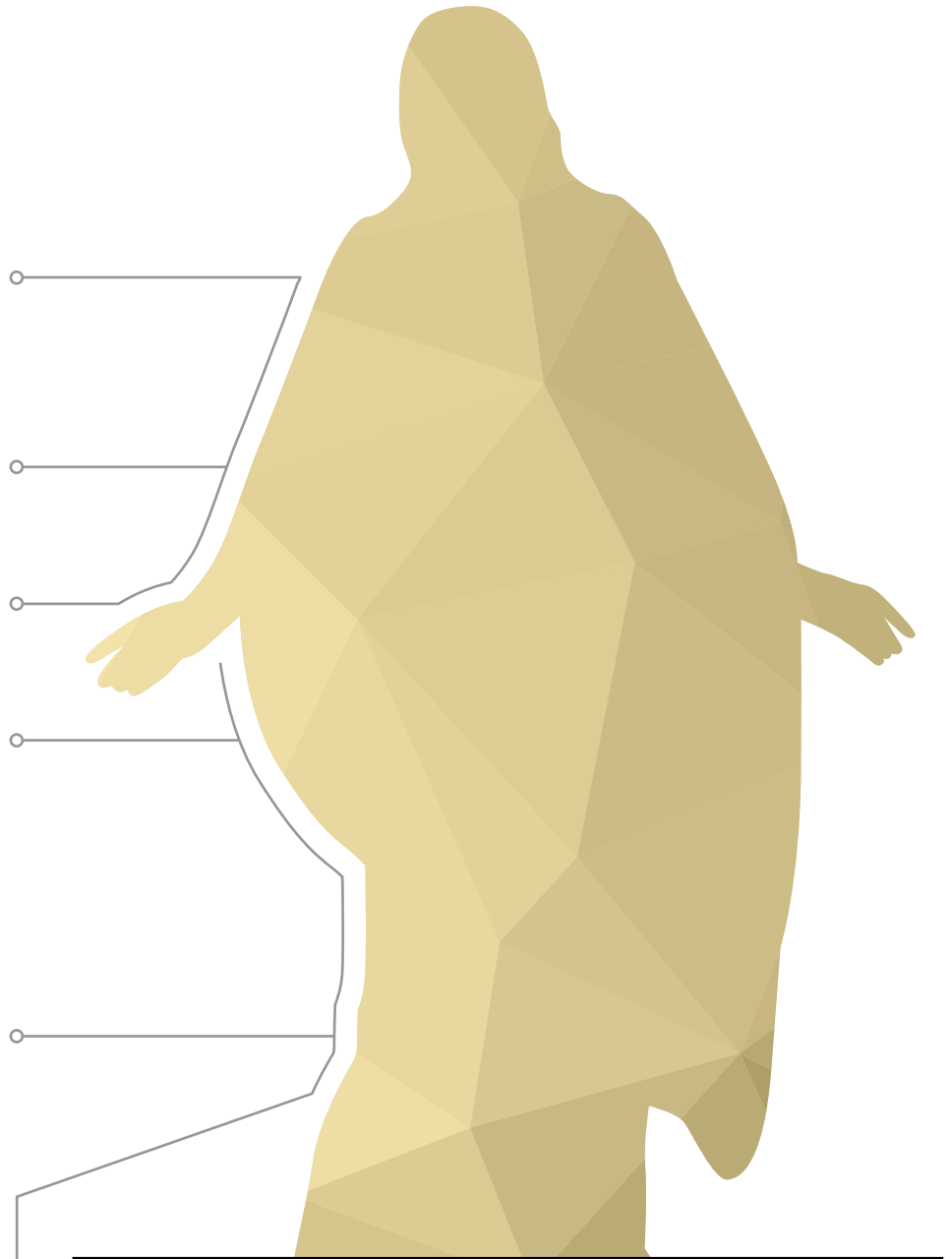
4. Peace comes through living the gospel and obeying the commandments.

5. Sincere repentance brings peace. “The very beauty of the word *repentance* is the promise of escaping old problems and old habits and old sorrows and old sins. It is among the most hopeful and encouraging—and yes, most peaceful—words in the gospel vocabulary.”²

6. Peace comes from serving and being a peacemaker for others.

7. Peace comes as we seek to be better disciples of Jesus Christ.

8. “The kind of peace that is the . . . reward of righteousness . . . is a promised gift of the Savior’s mission and atoning sacrifice.”³



If we make Jesus Christ the focus of our lives, we really will feel Him “speak peace to our souls” (Alma 58:11). In this world we will experience hard times, but we are blessed to know that we have someone we can turn to in any challenging circumstance. The Savior said, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye

shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Because of the Savior’s Atonement, peace is possible today and forever. ■

NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, “An High Priest of Good Things to Come,” *Liahona*, Jan. 2000, 45.
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Peaceable Things of the Kingdom,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 83.
3. Quentin L. Cook, “Personal Peace: The Reward of Righteousness,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 33.

YOU CANNOT FREEZE WHAT'S IN MY HEART

By Blossom Larynoh



When the Church first came to Ghana in 1978, the government didn't really understand it and its practices. That led to a lot of rumors. As the Church grew over the next 10 years, so did the rumors. I remember hearing people say that the United States was sending men to spy on our government. That, combined with all the anti-Mormon literature being circulated, made the government very suspicious.

The Freeze

On June 14, 1989, the government closed our Church buildings, sent the missionaries home, and outlawed all official Church activities. We call this time "the freeze." But as an 18-year-old girl, all I knew was that one day it was announced that we couldn't go to church anymore. There were even soldiers guarding the buildings to make sure we stayed away.

Since we could no longer meet in our chapels, we got permission from Church leaders to have sacrament meetings in our homes. If you didn't have a priesthood holder in your home, you were encouraged to go to a home that did have one. It was a confusing time but also a

very special one. We shared our testimonies, and it brought us closer together.

How Can You Call Yourself a Mormon?

At one time during the freeze, I had to leave my home to go to a boarding school. When I got there, one of the teachers heard that I was a Latter-day Saint. He singled me out to talk negatively about the Church to me. He had so many harsh words to say. I often wondered, "Why are you picking on me and saying these things? I believe in the teachings of the gospel, but I'm still a person."

One day he asked me how I could call myself a Mormon anymore. Didn't I know about the freeze? Now, in our culture, we don't talk back to adults. So the fact that he was a teacher meant that I couldn't challenge him. But in that moment, I realized that I really had a testimony. I don't know how these words came out of my mouth, but the Spirit came to me, and I stood up and said, "The Church is in my heart. And nobody can freeze what's in my heart."

And after that he left me alone.

In November 1990 the government ended the freeze and said our Church members were free to



THE FREEZE IN GHANA

On June 14, 1989, the Ghanaian government banned The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. All Church buildings were closed, but the 6,000 members were permitted to hold services in their homes. On November 29, 1990, the government lifted the ban and permitted the Church to resume all activities. Today there are over 72,000 members, a missionary training center, and a temple in Ghana.

Blossom was a young woman in Ghana when the government banned LDS Church meetings.



worship again. We didn't have radios or televisions on school campus, so I only found out because that teacher heard and immediately sent someone to get me. When he saw me, my teacher said, "The ban on your Church has been lifted! You can go to church again."

He was happy for me.

They Cannot Freeze What's in Your Heart

Those who stayed in the Church and worshipped together during the freeze created stronger bonds. We became real brothers and sisters. Even now, when we have all traveled separate ways, if something happens to someone else, we all hear about it. We feel like we are pioneers.

I like to tell people that if you know your beliefs are true and you have a testimony of them, you can have trials but your faith doesn't have to be shaken. If you know something is true and you believe in it, nobody can take that away from you. They cannot freeze what's in your heart. ■

The author lives in California, USA.

MORE ON THE GHANA FREEZE

To learn more about the ban and how Ghanaian Saints continued to worship, you can watch the video "Our Homes Became the Sacrament Hall: Sabbath Day Worship During the Freeze" on [LDS.org](https://www.LDS.org).



By Elder Massimo
De Feo
Of the Seventy

HOW I DEEPEN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

When I turned 12, I started to really think about how I could be involved in the gospel.

I was living in my hometown of Taranto, Italy. It had been only a few years since my brother and I had met the missionaries and become members of the Church, but I started feeling eager to participate more. I began to feel a desire to pass the sacrament. I remember walking to church each Sunday with a prayer in my heart that I would be called to pass the sacrament.

One Sunday morning, my branch president called me into his office. He said, “Massimo, the Lord wants you to receive the priesthood and be ordained a deacon.”

When I heard those words—“the Lord wants you”—something struck me. I felt that it wasn’t a human asking me to do something, but that it really was the Lord *personally* extending a responsibility. When my branch president looked at me, I felt that the Lord was reaching out to me.

As I began to pass the sacrament every Sunday, I could feel the power of godliness in my life. I felt responsible, I felt involved, and I knew that I was doing the Lord’s work. I felt closer to Him by serving Him.

This experience of feeling the Lord’s hand both through my leaders and in my responsibilities helped me develop a deeper personal relationship with Him. I wanted to be more involved in the gospel; as I lived that way, I felt the presence of God in my life. Developing this kind of relationship with Him is one of the most important things you can do in your youth.



SEEING THE LORD IN YOUR LEADERS

As I met with my branch president, it made a deep spiritual impression on me when I felt that it was the Lord, not just my branch president, giving me a responsibility. By recognizing the Lord in my leader, I felt closer to Him, and my relationship with Him deepened.

If you understand as a youth that when you have callings extended to you or when you sit in your classes at church, you are hearing the words of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, then you will be able to see church in a different way—a spiritual way. You will *want* to participate in the Lord’s work. You will be able to have deep spiritual experiences and will feel closer to Him each Sunday.

SEEING THE LORD IN THE ORDINANCES

We can also develop a personal relationship with the Lord by recognizing His presence as we participate in the ordinances of the gospel. When we are involved in the ordinances—like the sacrament—we know that “the power of godliness is manifest” (D&C 84:20). When I passed the sacrament, even at the age of 12 or 13, I really felt that I was an instrument in His hands. I felt the presence and power of God in those ordinances and the power of godliness in my life. Having that sacred experience each week by recognizing the Lord in this ordinance helped me deepen my personal relationship with the Lord.

This is not limited to just *passing* the sacrament. We can also feel the power of godliness by *taking* the sacrament every Sunday. When we take the sacrament, we shouldn’t take it lightly or occasionally or casually. We should want, decide, and prepare to partake of the sacrament, all of which will allow us to feel the power of godliness in our lives. We should use the sacrament as a powerful spiritual tool to deepen our relationship with God and to prepare ourselves for the everyday challenges of life.



A DEEP PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

Decide now to develop a deep personal relationship with the Lord. The closer you feel to Him, the easier it will be to serve Him.

The Lord reaches out to each of us personally. When we attend church, we are hearing His words. When we take the sacrament, we are fulfilling His sacred ordinances. We need to recognize the presence and power of God in our leaders and in the ordinances so that we can deepen our personal relationship with Him. ■

GIVING MY WORRIES TO GOD

When I found out my friend was having serious struggles, I struggled to find peace.

By Ninoska Nawrath

When my friend Fernanda (not her real name) didn't show up to class one Friday, I wondered what was wrong. "Is Fer feeling sick? Is she OK?" I asked as I ran over to some friends at the end of the day. "She isn't sick," another friend answered, "she just had to go to a psychologist." When I asked why, she told me that Fernanda was suffering from depression and had been hurting herself. Shortly after I found out, Fernanda was admitted to the hospital for treatment, and we didn't see her for a few weeks.

Even though we were friends, she hadn't shared that part of her life with me. She had been hiding it from everyone because she was ashamed.



She later told me that she didn't want others to pity her or her situation. But I didn't pity her—I just felt compassion.

That first day, I lay on my bed after school, my face buried in a pillow. I was emotionally exhausted but too anxious to sleep. My world was in chaos. I felt like I was in the middle of a storm, and so many thoughts and feelings whirled in the wind. I felt confused, lonely, and, most of all, so powerless to help.

How Could I Help?

What could I do or say to help her? How could we as friends pull together and lend our support? I couldn't find any sort of solution to comfort my friends or myself. I prayed for inspiration but felt like my prayers just weren't getting answered.

But the next week I had an epiphany. I was sitting in my early-morning seminary class when my teacher reminded us of the First Vision and how Joseph Smith asked Heavenly Father directly for help with his difficulties and concerns. My teacher then said, "If we seek out the Father and ask

Him, He will answer us. We will never be alone."

I realized that in my sadness, I had closed my heart off to my Heavenly Father. Even though I was trying to pray often, it wasn't enough—I still had too much fear to find peace. I knew that He understood exactly how I felt and that He could help me. But I needed to open myself up to Him and truly trust that He could do it—I needed to exercise faith.

So I did. Over time, as I continued to pray and read my scriptures, striving to let the Savior take my burdens, I came to understand that eventually my friend's depression would end. Despite the fact that the external chaos continued, I felt calm, balanced, in harmony. My mother kept encouraging me to seek out peace, saying, "Your friend will be OK and so will you. Stay strong in the gospel, and it will all work out."

Supporting My Friend

When Fernanda finally came back to school, I was able to provide strong

support for her, but only because I had sought out and found peace through Jesus Christ myself. I tried my best to be a good listener, to be positive, and to share the gospel. I felt confident when I explained the plan of happiness and when I told her that our Father wants us to find joy, despite our challenges. It may take time, but it is possible for every one of His children.

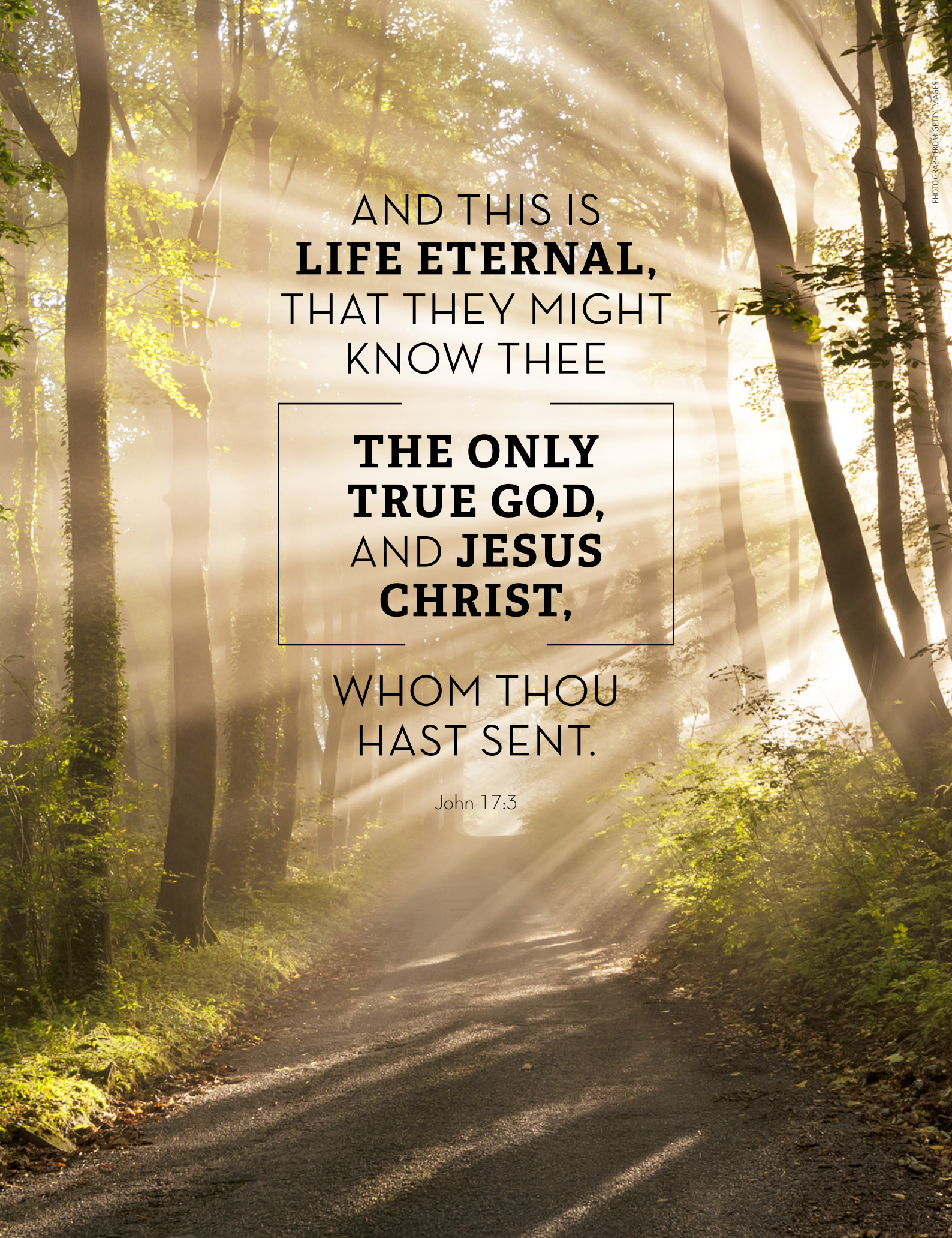
There have been many situations in my life in which I have felt anguish and sadness, but because of the gospel I always remember where I come from. I know that I am a daughter of God and that He has a plan for me—and for Fernanda. We all walk distinct paths, but each is for our good because He loves us. Each path, each trial, has a purpose. And if we can find peace in those trials, we can share the peace we gain with others. ■

The author lives in Maule, Chile.



DEPRESSION: HOW TO RESPOND

If you have a friend who suffers from depression, make a special effort to listen to and be supportive of them in their trials. They need your love. Ask your parents for advice. Make sure your friend's parents are aware (even if your friend doesn't want them to be) and ask for their advice on how you can help. If the situation is severe (like hurting themselves), and their parents are aware but doing nothing, tell a schoolteacher, school counselor, or Church leader.

A photograph of a forest path with sunlight filtering through the trees, creating a warm and serene atmosphere. The path is paved and leads into the distance, flanked by lush green foliage and tall trees. Sunbeams (crepuscular rays) are visible, streaming down from the canopy. The overall tone is peaceful and spiritual.

AND THIS IS
LIFE ETERNAL,
THAT THEY MIGHT
KNOW THEE

**THE ONLY
TRUE GOD,
AND JESUS
CHRIST,**

WHOM THOU
HAST SENT.

John 17:3

1 Nephi 3:7

The Lord commanded Nephi to go and do.



1 I WILL GO

“You show your trust in [God] when you listen with the intent to learn and repent and then you go and do whatever He asks. If you trust God enough to listen for His message in every sermon, song, and prayer in [each] conference, you will find it. And if you then go and do what He would have you do, your power to trust Him will grow, and in time you will be overwhelmed with gratitude to find that He has come to trust you.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Trust in God, Then Go and Do,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 73.

2 DO

“I made this my rule: *When the Lord commands, do it.*”

Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 160.

2

7 And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said unto my father: I^a will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no ^bcommandments unto the children of men, save he shall ^cprepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.

4

5

3

3 THE LORD HATH COMMANDED

“Every commandment of the Lord is given for our development, progress, and growth.”

Elder Robert D. Hales (1932–2017) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “If Thou Wilt Enter into Life, Keep the Commandments,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 36.

4 HE SHALL PREPARE A WAY

In the Old Testament, to prepare a way meant to establish a good, well-marked road (see Deuteronomy 19:3) or to clear a path by removing obstacles (see Isaiah 40:3).

When the Lord gives us a commandment, He will always prepare a way for us if we are willing to trust Him and obey. But like Nephi, we must first act in faith; then the way will present itself, for the Lord “worketh by power, according to the faith of the children of men” (Moroni 10:7).

5 ACCOMPLISH

“If ye have faith . . . nothing shall be impossible unto you.”

Matthew 17:20

Editors' note: This page is not meant to be a comprehensive explanation of the selected doctrinal mastery verse, only a starting point for your own study.

“How can I ask my friends not to talk unkindly or inappropriately about others?”

Gossip, unkind words, vulgarity—you’ve probably heard all of these things while walking your school hallways. Sometimes your friends are the ones participating, and you might feel uncomfortable and unsure of how to respond, but you can make a difference by being a good example.

Although it isn’t fun to stand up to others, remember that “profane, vulgar, or crude language or gestures, as well as immoral jokes, are offensive to the Lord and to others.”¹ And even when said in jest, unkind words still hurt.

If your friends say inappropriate or unkind things about others, “good-naturedly encourage them to choose other words. If they persist, politely walk away or change the subject.”² Explain that you believe that every person is a child of God and should be respected accordingly. Choose to be a supportive friend to everyone rather than an enemy who criticizes and puts others down. Your strong example will be a helpful model for your friends.

For the Strength of Youth teaches that “clean and intelligent language is evidence of a bright and wholesome mind.”³ Let your words reflect your beliefs, and the Spirit will stay with you to provide guidance in these difficult situations.

And stand assured—true friends will respect you for your decision to use clean, uplifting language that emphasizes the positive qualities of others.



Help Each Other to Stay Positive

My friends and I got bracelets, and every time one of us said

something mean about another person, we would flick the speaker’s bracelet. This was a good constant reminder to keep our thoughts and words positive.

Caroline J., age 18, Utah, USA



Ask for God’s Help

Prayer will help you get strength from God to know how to speak to others.

First, ask the Lord to know what to say to your friends. Also ask Him to help your friends understand the importance of looking at everyone as beloved children of Heavenly Father. Emphasize the importance of seeing the best in people and not saying bad things about them.

Victória Kércia M., age 19, Piauí, Brazil

Embrace Differences with Love

My friends must know that because we each have different strengths, we can benefit one another. In spite of people’s imperfections, we must always have more love for them, and we must also believe in the power to change that is found in the Savior’s atoning sacrifice.

Esther M., age 19, Mbujimayi, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Be Direct

You can just tell your friends nicely, “Hey, stop that. I don’t appreciate it,” or “Please don’t talk like that. That is rude.” After all, one of two great commandments is to “love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:39).

Clayton P., age 14, Arizona, USA

Change Their Perspective

You can simply tell them that what they are doing is not correct and that they should try to make someone happy rather than sad. You could even ask them how they would feel if they were the ones receiving unkind remarks from other people. Help them see the situation from another perspective. By helping other people be better, you will be able to feel the Spirit more often, and the Lord will bless you for your righteous actions.

Darren O., age 15, Utah, USA



Have Courage

Just like Esther, Joseph Smith, Joseph of Egypt, and many other scriptural figures, you can have the courage to stop your friends from speaking inappropriately about others. I was going through the same situation, and I had the courage to talk to my friends in a loving and understanding way. In the end, they accepted and understood how important it is to use pure and worthy language! Besides reading the scriptures and praying, fasting helps a lot

in those situations. Pray and ask with faith that our Heavenly Father will give you the courage to speak and touch the hearts of your friends.

Paola H., age 17, San Salvador, El Salvador



Be an Example

The best way to do this is by setting the example. Take the initiative to say good and positive things about whoever is being talked about. You will be amazed by how fast the conversation can change.

Elder Eads, age 24, Korea Seoul South Mission

Explain the Drawbacks

Tell your friends how many positive experiences and interactions with other people they are missing out on. Explain that saying curse words is not good because it distances you from other people and pollutes your mind. Plus, good people avoid you if you use bad language.

Elisa Ferreira S., age 16, Minas Gerais, Brazil



WORDS HAVE POWER

“Words have surprising power, both to build up and to tear down. We can all probably remember negative words that brought us low and other words spoken with love that made our spirits soar. Choosing to say only that which is positive about—and to—others lifts and strengthens those around us and helps others follow in the Savior’s way.”

Jean B. Bingham, Relief Society General President, “I Will Bring the Light of the Gospel into My Home,” Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2016, 7.

NOTES

1. *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* (2004), 128.
2. *True to the Faith*, 129.
3. *For the Strength of Youth* (booklet, 2011), 20.

UPCOMING QUESTION

“I’ve been struggling with the same temptations for a long time. It’s frustrating. How can I move past them?”

Submit your answer and, if desired, a high-resolution photograph by March 15, 2018, at liahona.lds.org (click “Submit an Article or Feedback”).

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

"I belong to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I know who I am. I know God's plan"
(Children's Songbook, 77).

Easton's first Church meeting in Germany had just ended. He thought it would be really different, but it was a lot like church where he used to live in the United

States. Only here he got to wear headphones to listen to the talks being translated into English.

Mom and Dad had started talking to the family sitting behind them. It looked like they had a boy his age!

"These are the Finottos," Mom told Easton. "GianMarco will be in your class at school."

Standing Up for Church

By Tracie Carter and
Maryssa Dennis

Based on a true story



ILLUSTRATION BY KAYELA LARSEN

“Cool!” Easton smiled at GianMarco. His name sounded kind of like “John” and “Mark” squished together—with an “o” at the end. “So where are you from?”

GianMarco smiled back. “We’re from Italy. But we just moved here from China.”

“Wow!” said Easton. “I’ve never been to China.”

The next day Easton went to his new school. He was a little nervous. But then he saw GianMarco waving at him from across the classroom. At least he had one friend already. There were kids from all over the world in his class. Maybe he would like this school.

“Good morning!” The teacher smiled at everyone. “I’m Ms. Albano. To start off, can anyone tell me what *identity* means?”

A girl raised her hand. “It means who you are. What’s most important to you.”

“Exactly!” said Ms. Albano. “So let’s get to know each other. What are some things that are part of your identity? What things make you *you*?”

“I like video games!” said a girl in the front row. Ms. Albano smiled and wrote *hobbies* on the board. “What else?”

GianMarco raised his hand. “I’m from Italy.” Ms. Albano nodded and wrote down *country*.

Easton tried to think of something to say. “I go to church,” said a boy in the back.

“That’s a good one!” Easton thought. “I should’ve said that.”

Someone laughed. And then a lot of kids were laughing. Easton looked at GianMarco, confused. GianMarco looked confused too. Why would they laugh?

When he got home, Easton told Mom what happened.

Mom frowned. “Some people don’t understand why church is important. They think it’s silly.”

“Oh,” said Easton. He didn’t think church was silly at all.

A few weeks later, Ms. Albano asked the students to do a presentation with a parent about their family’s identity.

“What should our project be?” Mom asked as they set the table for dinner.

Easton thought about how the class had laughed. “I think we should do it about the Church,” Easton said.

Mom smiled. “That’s a great idea.”

“And could GianMarco and Sister Finotto do it with us?”

“Great idea. I’ll call them after dinner.”

The next day GianMarco and Sister Finotto came over. First they all talked about what they thought was most important about the Church. Mom wrote down all their ideas in a notebook. Then they got poster boards and found pictures of Jesus and prophets and temples to glue on.

Finally it was time for the presentation. Easton stood with GianMarco and their moms at the front of the

class. He took a deep breath.

“We are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” he began. They each took turns explaining things about the Church. GianMarco talked about scriptures. Mom talked about prophets. Sister Finotto talked about family home evening. Easton talked

about baptism. It was really cool!

Easton felt pretty good when they were done. Nobody laughed—the kids actually seemed to like it! He was glad he could share something so important with his class. He smiled. He knew his identity. He was a child of God! ■

The authors live in Baden-Württemberg, Germany, and Utah, USA.

I am a child of God

I believe in Jesus Christ

I am part of a family



CHILDREN OF GOD

“How do you discover your *identity*? First, remember that you are children of God.”

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Identity, Priority, and Blessings,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2001, 11.

Olá!

My name is Alice,
and I try to SHINE MY
LIGHT by SHOWING
GRATITUDE!

Sharing Gifts

From an interview with Marissa Widdison,
Church Magazines



FAMILY STANDING IN FRONT OF THE SÃO PAULO BRAZIL TEMPLE

1. Playing Hymns

I live in Brazil with my
parents and sister and
brother. My sister Julia
and I play the piano for
sacrament meeting in
our ward.

Happy Feelings

When we show gratitude, the Lord
blesses us with happy feelings from
the Holy Ghost.



2. An Unexpected Gift

One Sunday, a man named Brother Stahlke gave us a present. He said it was a gift to thank us for the music we played on Sundays. When we opened the box, we found a special kind of flute inside! I put the flute together and started playing. I was enchanted by the sound.



4. A Special Dream

When I played for Brother Stahlke, he was very happy and emotional. He told me that he had a dream about this hymn the night before! I felt the love of God for him and for me.

3. Giving Back

Soon I started playing hymns on the flute. I wanted to do something to thank Brother Stahlke for the gift. So I practiced the hymn "How Great the Wisdom and the Love" (*Hymns*, no. 195). I asked my dad to take me to Brother Stahlke's house so I could show him that his gift helped me discover a new talent.

SEND US A STAR!

Tell us how you shine bright! Cut out a star and write on it about a time you were a good example. Ask a parent to email a picture of your star, along with their permission, to liahona@ldschurch.org.

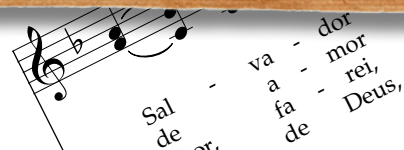


HOW CAN YOU SHINE?

Learn to sing, play, or conduct a hymn and share it in family home evening.

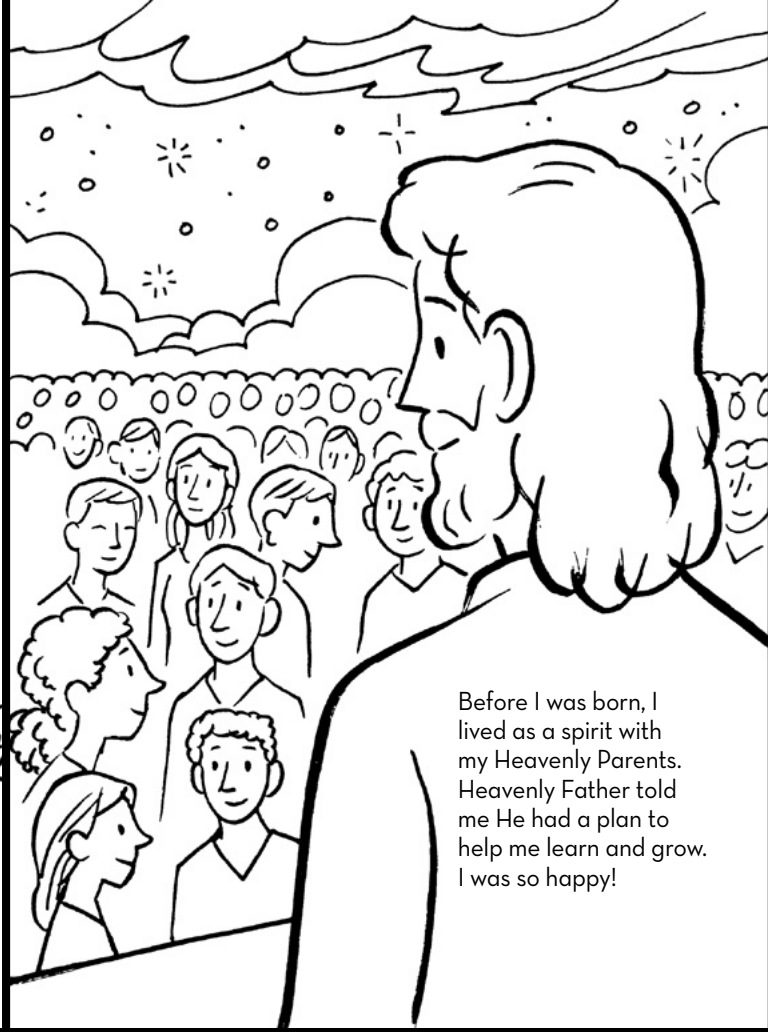
Practice a talent and share it with someone else.

My idea: _____



The Plan of Happiness

Color these pictures to learn about Heavenly Father's plan of happiness for you! You could also cut them out, glue the backs of the pictures together, and staple the edges to make a booklet.



Before I was born, I lived as a spirit with my Heavenly Parents. Heavenly Father told me He had a plan to help me learn and grow. I was so happy!

Jesus Christ volunteered to be my Savior. He came to earth and set a perfect example for me. He paid for my sins. He knows what my troubles feel like and can help me. I love Jesus!



I was born on this beautiful earth. I got a body! My spirit and body work together as I learn. Every day, I try to follow Jesus by being kind.



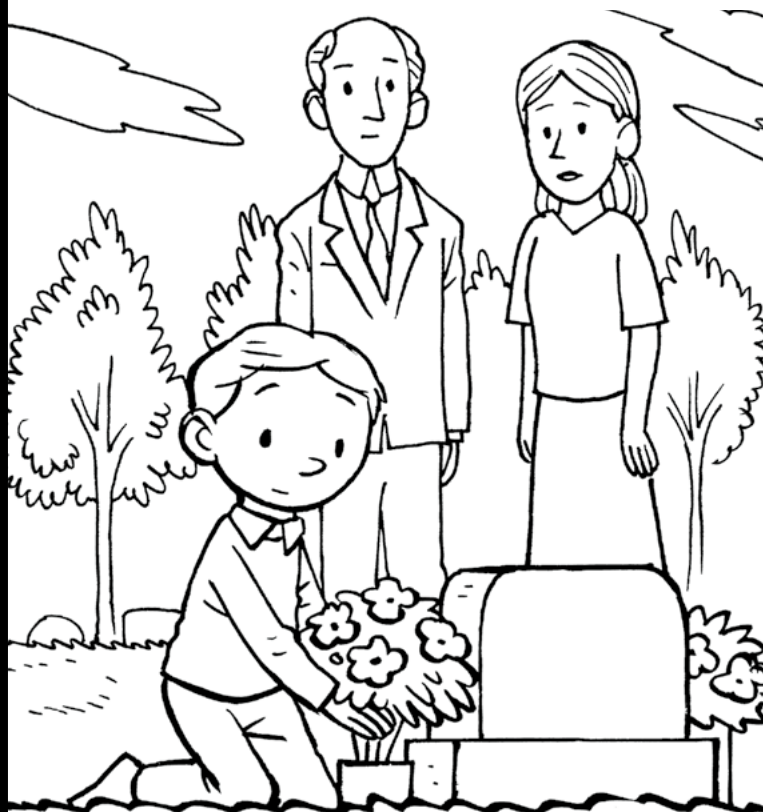
I follow Jesus by being baptized. I promise to keep the commandments. Heavenly Father promises the Holy Ghost will help me. When I make a wrong choice, I repent and try better next time. This is how I learn and grow!



Even though I'm far from my Heavenly Parents and Jesus Christ, I can still feel close to Them. I can pray to Heavenly Father any-time. I can read the scriptures. One day, I can go to the temple, where I will learn more about God's plan for me. It's a peaceful, happy place.



Death is just another part of life. When I die, my body will stay on earth and my spirit will go to the spirit world. I will be with my family and friends.



Someday my body and spirit will come back together. I will see Jesus again! I can live with my family and Heavenly Parents forever. I'm so grateful for this plan of happiness!





“Jesus Christ *is* the Beloved Only Begotten Son of God. He *is* our Creator. He *is* the Light of the World. He *is* our Savior from sin and death. This is the most important knowledge on earth, and you can know this for yourself, as I know it for myself.”

By Elder Dallin H. Oaks

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

From “Teachings of Jesus,” Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2011, 90–93.



By Elder
Peter F. Meurs
Of the Seventy

Keep Trying!

“If they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them” (Ether 12:27).

My parents joined the Church when I was young. We were in a small branch in Australia. My mother played the piano at church. But she could play only a few of the hymns. I was learning the piano too. When I was seven, the branch president asked me to play at church.

When I played the piano, I made mistakes. And when I made a mistake, I used to cry. I was very shy and nervous. But I kept practicing. I wanted to play the hymns well. Now I love to play the piano! I can play all the hymns. On my mission in New Zealand, I served in another small branch. They didn’t have anyone to play the piano. So I played the organ and the piano for a

year. Working through my fear was a blessing for me. It allowed me to bless others.

I also struggled with speaking when I was a little boy. I had a stutter. It was hard to share my testimony in front of everyone. Sometimes when I tried to speak, I just burst into tears instead. I had priesthood blessings to help me. My mum and dad were very encouraging. Eventually I was blessed to be able to speak more clearly and confidently.

I still get nervous. Walking up to the stand to speak at general conference was scary! But there was such a powerful spirit there. I felt uplifted and calm. It was amazing.

If you are shy or have a hard time speaking, keep trying. Even if you continue to struggle, we need to hear what you have to say. You can bless lots of people with the things only you can say! ■

Conference Cards

Here are some of our favorite quotes from October 2017 general conference!

Faith
always
defeats fear.



—President Henry B. Eyring,
First Counselor in the First Presidency

—Elder Ronald A. Rasband
of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The Lord
loves
to be
with us.



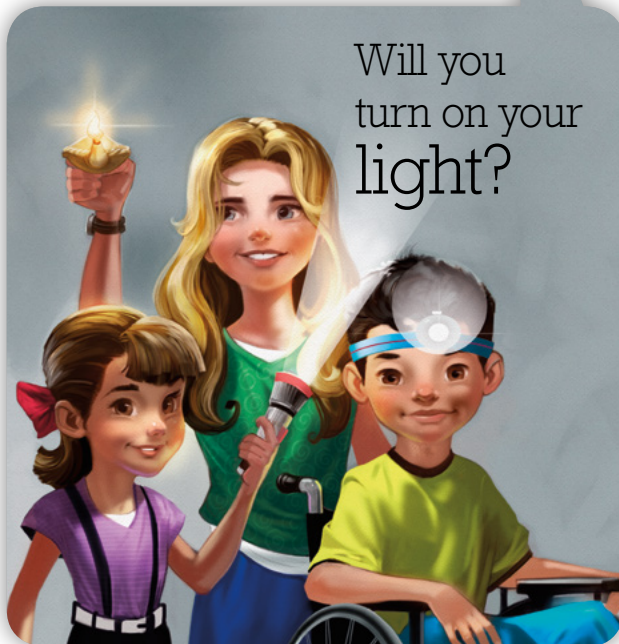
God has
important
work for
each of us.



—Elder John C. Pingree Jr.
of the Seventy

—Sharon Eubank,
First Counselor in the Relief
Society General Presidency

Will you
turn on your
light?

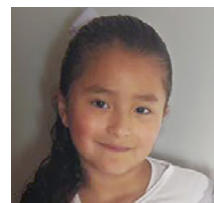


OUR PAGE



Every time I visit the temple with my family, I feel the Spirit very strongly, as if the Savior were with us. I love going to the temple.

Alana L., age 8, Brazil



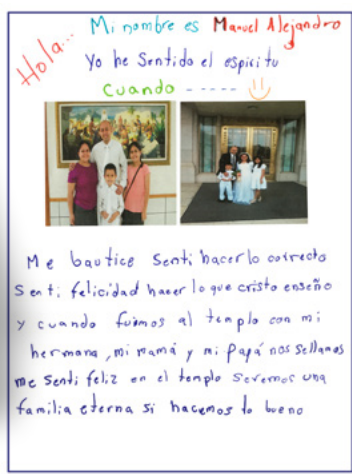
I follow Jesus when I show love for my school friends and am respectful of them.

Vianca V., age 7, Colombia



We know that the Book of Mormon can help us with our problems, just as prayer can. My little brother loves to pray.

Benjamín M., age 3, and Joaquín M., age 8, Chile



I felt the Spirit when I was baptized. It made me want to choose the right. I was happy when I did what Jesus taught. When I went to the temple with my sister, my mom, and my dad, we were sealed and I was happy. We will be an eternal family if we do what is right.

Manuel R., age 9, El Salvador

Adam and Eve

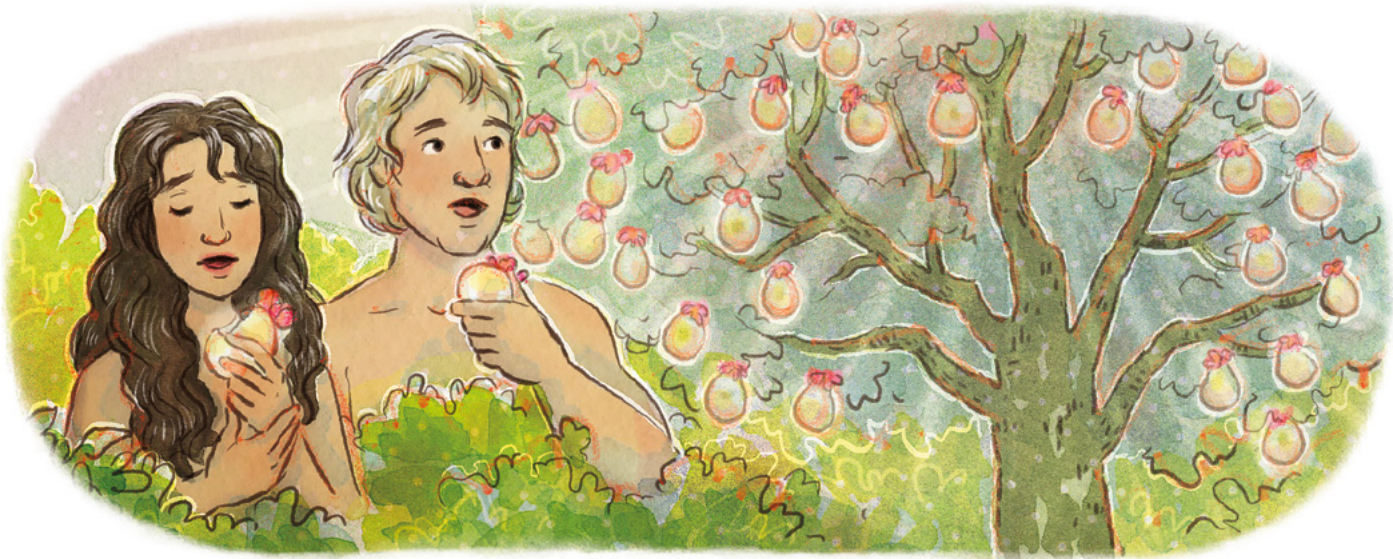
By Kim Webb Reid

Heavenly Father and Jesus
created the earth. They
made the land, sea, sun,
and stars. They made
plants and animals. Then
the earth was ready for
Heavenly Father's children.
Who would He send to
live on the earth first?



Adam and Eve!

Heavenly Father put them in the Garden of Eden. All the food they needed grew in the garden. They did not have to work. They did not get sick.



Heavenly Father told Adam and Eve that if they ate some fruit from one of the trees, they would have to leave Eden. Satan tempted Eve to eat the fruit, and she did. So did Adam.

Their choice to leave Eden was part of Heavenly Father's plan. After they left Eden, Adam and Eve learned to pray, repent, and have faith in Jesus. They became parents and taught their children the gospel. Life outside Eden was harder, but they learned important new things. They were happy.





I am like Adam and Eve. I chose to come to earth so I could learn, grow, and become more like my Heavenly Parents. ■

I Can Make Good Choices





By President
Dieter F. Uchtdorf
Second Counselor
in the First Presidency

THE GOSPEL ENCOMPASSES ALL TRUTH

The leaf we have before us is simply one microscopic snapshot—part of an infinitely vast forest of fascinating knowledge.

History is important. And keeping ourselves anchored to the lessons learned from history will enable us to emulate the best of what it means to be human.

The late novelist Michael Crichton is reported to have said, “If you don’t know history, then you don’t know anything. You are a leaf that doesn’t know it is part of a tree.” History teaches us not only about the leaves of existence; it also teaches about the twigs, branches, trunks, and roots of life. And these lessons are important.

One of the weaknesses we have as mortals is to assume that our “leaf” is all there is—that our truth is complete and universal. An old Yiddish expression [says], “To a worm in horseradish,



the world is horseradish.” I want to emphasize that the truth embraced by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints extends beyond leaves and certainly beyond horseradish. It extends beyond time and space and encompasses all truth.

The gospel of Jesus Christ encompasses not only the truth of what was and what is but also the truth of what can and will be. It is the most practical of all truths. It teaches the way of the disciple—a path that can take ordinary, flawed mortals and transform them into glorious, immortal, and limitless beings whose divine potential is beyond our meager capacity to imagine.

Now, that is practical truth. It is priceless beyond imagination. It is truth of the highest order. The pursuit, discovery, and application of truth are what we are on this earth to discover. The gospel of Jesus Christ encompasses all truth, and it also specializes in the knowledge that will be of greatest worth to us in this life and throughout the eternities to come.

Isn’t it a remarkable feeling to belong to a Church that embraces truth—no matter the source—and teaches that there is much more to come, that God “will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God” [Articles of Faith 1:9]. As a result, we are humble about the truth we have. We understand our knowledge is a work in progress, that the leaf we have before us is simply one microscopic snapshot—part of an infinitely vast forest of fascinating knowledge. ■

From “Seeing Beyond the Leaf,” Brigham Young University Church History Symposium in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, on March 7, 2014.



ADAM AND EVE,
TEXTILE ART BY CUNA INDIANS,
SAN BLAS ISLANDS, PANAMA

Tempted by the devil, Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden fruit and thus became mortal. Eve testified of the resulting blessings: "Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient" (Moses 5:1).

Also in This Issue

FOR YOUNG ADULTS

He Would Deliver Us



When a devastating earthquake rocked their mission, missionaries in Japan felt that the Lord was guiding and protecting them.

p. 44

FOR YOUTH

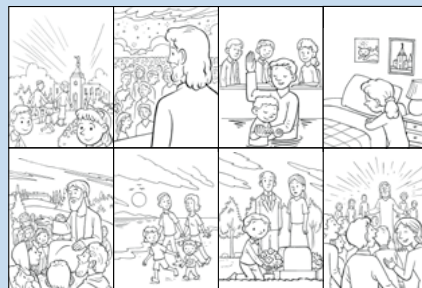
p. 50

JESUS CHRIST *Our Source of Peace*

Just as He calmed the crashing waves on the Sea of Galilee, the Savior offers the hope of everlasting inner peace to each of us.



FOR CHILDREN



Plan of Happiness

Cut out and color this booklet to learn more about Heavenly Father's plan of happiness!

p. 70