



APOSTLES SPEAK TO US



THE REASON FOR OUR HOPE

“Those who will repent and forsake sin will find that His merciful arm is outstretched still. Those who listen to and heed His words and the words of His chosen servants will find peace and understanding even in the midst of great heartache and sorrow. The result of His sacrifice is to free us from the effects of sin, that all may have guilt erased and feel hope. . . .

“The mercy and grace of Jesus Christ are not limited to those who commit sins either of commission or omission, but they encompass the promise of everlasting peace to all who will accept and follow Him and His teachings. His mercy is the mighty healer, even to the wounded innocent. . . .

“If we are not aware of what the Savior’s sacrifice can do for us, we may go through life carrying regrets that we have done something that was not right or offended someone. The guilt that accompanies mistakes can be washed away. If we seek to understand His Atonement, we will come to a deep reverence for the Lord Jesus Christ, His earthly ministry, and His divine mission as our Savior. . . .

“... No matter how large the organization of the Church becomes or how many millions of members join our ranks, ... the true success of the gospel of Jesus Christ will be measured by the spiritual strength of its individual members. We need the strength of conviction that is found in the heart of every loyal disciple of Christ.”

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



FINDING LASTING PEACE AND BUILDING ETERNAL FAMILIES

“Our journey through life has periods of both good times and bad. Each presents different challenges. How we learn to adjust to the changes which come along depends on the foundation on which we build. The gospel of our Lord and Savior provides a sure and solid foundation. It is constructed piece by piece as we gain knowledge of the Lord’s eternal plan for His children. The Savior is the Master Teacher. We follow Him. . . .

“Many in our worried society understand that the disintegration of the family will bring only sorrow and hopelessness into a troubled world. As members of the Church, we have the responsibility to preserve and protect the family as the basic unit of society and eternity. The prophets have warned and forewarned about the inevitable and destructive consequence of a deterioration of family values.

“As the world continues to watch us, let us be certain that our example will sustain and support the plan the Lord has designed for His children here in mortality. The greatest teaching of all must be done by righteous example. Our homes must be holy places in order to stand against the pressures of the world. Remember that the greatest of all the blessings of the Lord come through and are given to righteous families.”

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



"I especially liked Elder Oaks's talk when he talked about not compromising our values. Recently I have been struggling with how the world's view on the family and marriage has been falling apart and how it seems to be that I am the only one who's supporting the values of the family. Having this talk addressing these problems in my life has calmed my fears and given me peace for the future."

Katelyn B., 16, Utah, USA



SUSTAINING THE PROPHETS

"My dear brothers and sisters, if the Restoration did anything, it shattered the age-old myth that God had stopped talking to His children. Nothing could be further from the truth. A prophet has stood at the head of God's Church in all dispensations, from Adam to the present day. Prophets testify of Jesus Christ—of His divinity and of His earthly mission and ministry. We honor the Prophet Joseph Smith as the prophet of this last dispensation. And we honor each man who has succeeded him as President of the Church....

"... All leaders in the Lord's Church are called by proper authority. No prophet or any other leader in this Church, for that matter, has ever called himself or herself. No prophet has ever been elected. The Lord made that clear when He said, 'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you' [John 15:16]. You and I do not 'vote' on Church leaders at any level. We do, though, have the privilege of sustaining them.

"... Man's ways remove people from office or business when they grow old or become disabled. But man's ways are not and never will be the Lord's ways. Our sustaining of prophets is a personal commitment that we will do our utmost to uphold their prophetic priorities. Our sustaining is an oath-like indication that we recognize their calling as a prophet to be legitimate and binding upon us."

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



LOVING OTHERS AND LIVING WITH DIFFERENCES

"Even as we seek to be meek and to avoid contention, we must not compromise or dilute our commitment to the truths we understand. We must not surrender our positions or our values.

The gospel of Jesus Christ and the covenants we have made inevitably cast us as combatants in the eternal contest between truth and error. There is no middle ground in that contest.

"... Loving-kindness is required, but a follower of Christ—just like the Master—will be firm in the truth....

"... Followers of Christ should be examples of civility. We should love all people, be good listeners, and show concern for their sincere beliefs. Though we may disagree, we should not be disagreeable. Our stands and communications on controversial topics should not be contentious. We should be wise in explaining and pursuing our positions and in exercising our influence. In doing so, we ask that others not be offended by our sincere religious beliefs and the free exercise of our religion....

"When our positions do not prevail, we should accept unfavorable results graciously and practice civility with our adversaries. In any event, we should be persons of goodwill toward all, rejecting persecution of any kind, including persecution based on race, ethnicity, religious belief or nonbelief, and differences in sexual orientation."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



STAY IN THE BOAT AND HOLD ON!

"At the beginning of [a river rafting] trip, one of the experienced river guides reviewed important safety instructions, emphasizing three rules that would ensure the group's safe travel through the rapids. 'Rule number one: stay in the boat! Rule number two: always wear a life jacket! Rule number three: always hold on with both hands!' ...

"... How do we stay on the Old Ship Zion?

"... We need to experience a continuing conversion by increasing our faith in Jesus Christ and our faithfulness to His gospel throughout our lives—not just once but regularly. ...

"... Remember rules two and three: always wear a life jacket, and hold on with both hands. The words of the Lord are found in the scriptures and the teachings of the apostles and prophets. They provide us counsel and direction that, when followed, will act like a spiritual life jacket and will help us know how to hold on with both hands. ...

"Sometimes faithful Latter-day Saints and sincere investigators begin to focus on the 'appendages' instead of on the fundamental principles. That is, Satan tempts us to become distracted from the simple and clear message of the restored gospel. ...

"The important questions focus on what matters most—Heavenly Father's plan and the Savior's Atonement. Our search should lead us to become kind, gentle, loving, forgiving, patient, and dedicated disciples."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



MAKE THE EXERCISE OF FAITH YOUR FIRST PRIORITY

"We must take time to actively exercise our faith. Such exercise invites the positive, faith-filled power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ into our lives.

"Our Father in Heaven has given us tools to help us come unto Christ and exercise faith in His Atonement. When these tools become fundamental habits, they provide the easiest way to find peace in the challenges of mortality. ... I have chosen to discuss four of these tools. ... Consider evaluating your personal use of each tool; then seek the guidance of the Lord to determine how you could make better use of each one of them. ...

"Prayer ...

"Scripture Study ...

"Family Home Evening ...

"Temple Attendance ...

"These four tools are fundamental habits for securing your life in the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Remember our Savior is the Prince of Peace. Peace in this mortal life comes from His atoning sacrifice. When we are consistently praying morning and night, studying our scriptures daily, having weekly family home evening, and attending the temple regularly, we are actively responding to His invitation to 'come unto Him.' The more we develop these habits, the more anxious is Satan to harm us but the less is his ability to do so."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



"Elder Ballard's talk hit me hard. We jump out of the boat because it looks like fun. Staying in the boat will ensure our safety."

Chelsea N., 18, Kansas, USA



ETERNAL LIFE—TO KNOW OUR HEAVENLY FATHER AND HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST

"As a boy, I used to gaze into the starry sky and ponder and feel [God's] presence. I thrilled to explore the magnificent beauties of God's creations—from tiny insects to towering trees. As I recognized the beauty of this earth, I knew that Heavenly Father loved me. I knew that I was a literal spiritual offspring. . . .

"How did I know this? you might ask. . . .

"My own testimony grew as I learned about Heavenly Father and the Savior from the teachings and testimony of my parents, teachers, the scriptures—which I read diligently—and especially the Holy Ghost. As I exercised faith and obeyed the commandments, the Holy Ghost testified that what I was learning was true. This is how I came to know for myself. . . .

"You too can seek our Heavenly Father and 'this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have [testified]' [Ether 12:41] in the scriptures and in this general conference. As you seek a personal witness—your personal revelation—you will discover that Heavenly Father has provided a special way for you to know the truth for yourself: through the third member of the Godhead, a personage of spirit we know as the Holy Ghost. . . .

"... When we build our house upon [Jesus Christ], the rains of the latter days may descend, the floods may come, and the winds may blow, but we will not fall. We will not fail, for our home and our family will be founded upon Christ."

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



ARE WE NOT ALL BEGGARS?

"Down through history, poverty has been one of humankind's greatest and most widespread challenges. Its obvious toll is usually physical, but the spiritual and emotional damage it can bring may be even more debilitating. In any case, the great Redeemer has issued no more persistent call than for us to join Him in lifting this burden from the people. . . .

"Given the monumental challenge of addressing inequity in the world, what can one man or woman do? The Master Himself offered an answer. When, prior to His betrayal and Crucifixion, Mary anointed Jesus's head with an expensive burial ointment, Judas Iscariot protested this extravagance and 'murmured against her' [see Mark 14:3-5].

"Jesus said: 'Why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work. . . .

"*She hath done what she could*' [Mark 14:6, 8; emphasis added].

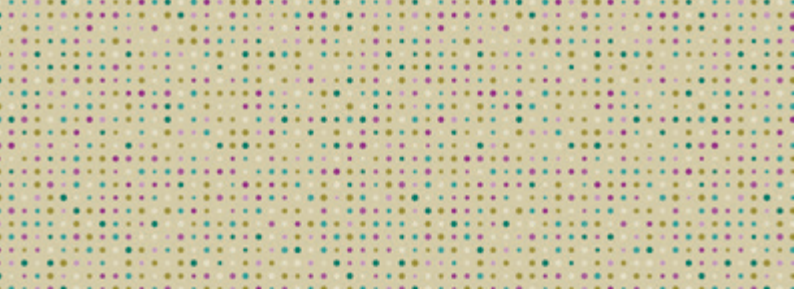
"*She hath done what she could!* What a succinct formula! 'So how might we 'do what we can'? . . .

"For one thing, we can . . . cease withholding our means because we see the poor as having brought their misery upon themselves. . . .

"... We should also pray for those in need. . . ."

"... Although I may not be my brother's keeper, I am my brother's brother, and 'because I have been given much, I too must give' [*Hymns*, no. 219]."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



"I felt that the talks were focused on my pathway to going on my mission. Every talk was focused on love and service. If we keep these two things in our life, we can feel God's love and bring other heavenly siblings back to our loving Father in Heaven."

Glenn T., 18, Idaho, USA



COME AND SEE

"My message is directed specifically to individuals who are not members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I will address a fundamental question many of you may have: 'Why are Latter-day Saints so eager to tell me about what they believe and to invite me to learn about their church?' ...

"Devoted disciples of Jesus Christ always have been and always will be valiant missionaries. A missionary is a follower of Christ who testifies of Him as the Redeemer and proclaims the truths of His gospel.

"The Church of Jesus Christ always has been and always will be a missionary church. The individual members of the Savior's Church have accepted the solemn obligation to assist in fulfilling the divine commission given by the Lord...

"...Our eagerness to declare this message is not merely the result of a sense of spiritual duty. Rather, our desire to share the restored gospel of Jesus Christ with you is a reflection of how important these truths are to us...

"The invitations we extend to you to learn about and test our message grow out of the positive effects the gospel of Jesus Christ has had in our lives. Sometimes we may be awkward or abrupt or even relentless in our attempts. Our simple desire is to share with you the truths that are of greatest worth to us."

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



CHOOSE WISELY

"When we allow rationalizations to prevent us from temple endowments, worthy missions, and temple marriage, they are particularly harmful. It is heartbreaking when we profess belief in these goals yet neglect the everyday conduct required to achieve them...

"Sometimes it feels like we are drowning in frivolous foolishness, nonsensical noise, and continuous contention. When we turn down the volume and examine the substance, there is very little that will assist us in our eternal quest toward righteous goals...

"...Many choices are not inherently evil, but if they absorb all of our time and keep us from the best choices, then they become insidious...

"...I encourage everyone, young and old, to review goals and objectives and strive to exercise greater discipline. Our daily conduct and choices should be consistent with our goals. We need to rise above rationalizations and distractions. It is especially important to make choices consistent with our covenants to serve Jesus Christ in righteousness...

"...We appreciate a good sense of humor and treasure unstructured time with friends and family. But we need to recognize that there is a seriousness of purpose that must undergird our approach to life and all our choices. Distractions and rationalizations that limit progress are harmful enough, but when they diminish faith in Jesus Christ and His Church, they are tragic."

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



"I felt the Spirit reaffirm to me that President Monson is a true prophet of God and that the Apostles and other General Authorities are also called of God."

Rachel W., 16, Georgia, USA



FREE FOREVER, TO ACT FOR THEMSELVES

"When things turn bad, there is a tendency to blame others or even God. ... In spiritual matters some suppose that men and women need not strive for personal righteousness—because God loves and saves us 'just as we are.'"

"But God intends that His children should act according to the moral agency He has given them, 'that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment' [D&C 101:78]. ...

"... The real manifestation of God's love is His commandments. ...

"Misunderstanding God's justice and mercy is one thing; denying God's existence or supremacy is another, but either will result in our achieving less—sometimes far less—than our full, divine potential. A God who makes no demands is the functional equivalent of a God who does not exist. ...

"In matters both temporal and spiritual, the opportunity to assume personal responsibility is a God-given gift without which we cannot realize our full potential as daughters and sons of God. Personal accountability becomes both a right and a duty that we must constantly defend. ...

"... We must exert ourselves, repent, and choose God for Him to be able to act in our lives consistent with justice and moral agency. My plea is simply to take responsibility and go to work so that there is something for God to help us with."

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



JOSEPH SMITH

"Joseph Smith is the Prophet of the Restoration. ... The importance of Joseph's work requires more than intellectual consideration; it requires that we, like Joseph, 'ask of God' [James 1:5]. ...

"Each believer needs a spiritual confirmation of the divine mission and character of the Prophet Joseph Smith. This is true for every generation. Spiritual questions deserve spiritual answers from God. ...

"To the youth listening today or reading these words in the days ahead, I give a specific challenge: Gain a personal witness of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Let your voice help fulfill Moroni's prophetic words to speak good of the Prophet. Here are two ideas: First, find scriptures in the Book of Mormon that you feel and know are absolutely true. Then share them with family and friends in family home evening, seminary, and your Young Men and Young Women classes, acknowledging that Joseph was an instrument in God's hands. Next, read the testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Pearl of Great Price or in [the *Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith*] pamphlet, now in 158 languages. You can find it online at LDS.org or with the missionaries. This is Joseph's own testimony of what actually occurred. Read it often. Consider recording the testimony of Joseph Smith in your own voice, listening to it regularly, and sharing it with friends. Listening to the Prophet's testimony in your own voice will help bring the witness you seek."

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles