

# Opportunities to Bless Appear as We See and Feel

## SISTER BONNIE H. CORDON

Well, this is a delight, to be with all of you. I just could not contain myself as I walked up the stairs from my office, because my office is just below you all. And I could feel and hear the good news of the gospel.

I mean, as I just could see and feel all of you talking, I thought, I just want to sit knee to knee with each one of you and hear your stories, because I know that they would be stories of faith and stories that would just drop my jaw. And it would lift my testimony that Jesus Christ lives. So I am grateful to be with you today.

Many of you have just had the opportunity for two days to be in the presence of our prophet, whether it be through technology or actually in the Conference Center. Is it not such a blessing in our lives that we have a prophet of the Lord?

I would just have a question to ask, because I have had a chance, just a small glimpse, to talk to some people that have had husbands or have been chaplains. So I just—we have a roving mic. I'd just love to take a few comments.

What were your thoughts when your spouse decided that they wanted to be a chaplain? So just quick thoughts, OK? We have a hand right here.

[LAUGHTER]

She's got a thought.

**AUDIENCE:** I have since repented.

[LAUGHTER]

My first thought was, no way.

[LAUGHTER]

You'll go away from the family. And then, instantly, into my mind came this thought of, what is it to you if I have need of him? And I said, OK, we will embark on that journey. And I'm so grateful that we've done that.

**BONNIE CORDON:** Thank you. OK, just raise your hand. There we go, another hand.

**AUDIENCE:** Maybe I need to repent because I had the opposite. I was like, oh, good. No.

[LAUGHTER]

It was more that he told me. And I had this overwhelming feeling of support from previous women in the Church. We had a family meeting. And we had gone through a lot of influential people, and people that we respected in the Church.

And we realized their service in the Church and in the military. And we thought, what greater calling could we do than to be chaplains? And again, I was so supported by the women.

**BONNIE CORDON:** Wonderful. There's a hand right back there. And then this brother right here—all the way in the back.

**AUDIENCE:** My husband was prior enlisted in military intelligence. It seemed as though everybody around him was telling him, you know, you would make a really great chaplain. He finally came home to me, and he said, every-

body is telling me to be a chaplain. I don't want to be a chaplain! And so I asked him, well, does Heavenly Father have an opinion?

[LAUGHTER]

Because I was not going to offer mine. I was not going to get in the middle of that. And I asked him, does Heavenly Father have an opinion? He said, I don't want to ask because I don't want the answer. He went, and he asked. And neither one of us have regretted a day.

**BONNIE CORDON:** Good.

**AUDIENCE:** We've regretted—well, we don't regret it. We've disliked moments. But we've never regretted a day.

**BONNIE CORDON:** A day, oh, I love that. Thank you. Right here, we have a brother.

**AUDIENCE:** It was unusual. My wife is a chaplain, and she's not in the military. She did this on her own. And when she asked me about it, and she came to me, and talked to me about it, I said, well, let's pray about it, honestly, because I don't know. I don't really have an opinion, and it sounds good.

My wife is one of the (CRYING) kindest, most compassionate people I know. And I told her, I said, if you decide to do this, you have 100 percent of my support. And it has been challenging.

It has been a challenging journey for me, her, our family. We've gone from California to Pennsylvania, and Ohio, and back west now already. So it's been challenging. But it's also been very rewarding.

I think, just due to the nature of the profession, your family grows with you. Along with your own personal growth, your family will grow with you, as well. And I haven't regretted her doing that at all.

**BONNIE CORDON:** Wonderful. OK, let's take one more with a sister right here in the back. And I'm grateful that you gave us that insight, because families do grow together in this journey, don't we?

**AUDIENCE:** Sorry, this thought just keeps bumping into my mind. So I'm going to share it.

[LAUGHTER]

My story's a little bit different. My husband has no military background before coming into the chaplaincy. And I had the thought come into my mind that we needed to join the chaplaincy, and totally blinded by it, went to my husband. He looked at me like I was crazy.

We went to the temple. It was confirmed. Our kids were older. We joined the chaplaincy later. And we went to our kids, had a family council, and said, this is going to be a family decision. If you guys aren't OK with it, then we won't do it. And they were OK with it. And we walked into it.

**BONNIE CORDON:** That is a wonderful story. I love the threads of common things and how unique each story is. So as you sit knee to knee, you think sometimes, no one understands. And sometimes they don't, because your situation is so unique. But we do know there is One who knows all of what we're going through, and how grateful we are for the Savior Jesus Christ.

In conference on Saturday, I had the opportunity to tell the world some of the things that our Heavenly Father has wanted his daughters, his young daughters from 11 to 18, know. And one of the things is the theme. If we—oh, I see. I think I have the clicker. OK, let's see if this works.

So this is the new theme for the Young Women. And as you start out, and it says, "I am a beloved daughter of heavenly parents, with a divine nature and eternal destiny." And that applies to each one of us in this room. And for

the men, you are beloved sons of heavenly parents.

But as we think of this, the next line is really—or the next part is really where I'd like to talk today. And that is “As a disciple of Jesus Christ, I strive to become like Him. I seek and act upon personal revelation and minister to others in His holy name.”

Each one of us, as we think of all the responsibility that you all have—you're mothers. You're neighbors. You're aunts. You're uncles. You're moving. You're packing. You're everything that comes with this career choice.

One of the things that we all are is disciples of our Savior Jesus Christ. And He knows who we are. I feel like tonight or today, as we're talking about this topic, of talking to the Tabernacle Choir about the importance of music, because you know this. And so, hopefully, as we go over some of the thoughts today, please feel free to share some of your thoughts, because truth helps heal hearts.

And the truth that we have here—that we are disciples of Jesus Christ, and we try to become like Him, the fact of seeking and acting on personal revelation—you will be guided to heal hearts. And in the process, your heart, in many cases, will also heal as you minister to others in His holy name. And one of the statements I love, as we go around with these Young Women, is we are truly here to bless, not impress.

And when you think about that little statement—to bless and not impress—it's liberating. Because when you walk into a room, or move to a new area, or join a book club of a bunch of women you don't know, or find the new hairdresser, or in some cases, when you don't need a hairdresser, as this brother, as this reverend told us, the great thing about that is if you walk in thinking, I'm here to bless, and I don't have to have that responsibility to impress anyone, realize that so much worry is taken off your shoulders.

I love Sister Eubank. She's just a joy. And you're going to have a chance to hear from her this week. But one of the things she said at a BYU Women's Conference stood out to me. And it's simple.

When you think about being a disciple of Jesus Christ, it's the simple things that make us disciples of Jesus Christ. And she said, “Sometimes I'm so pressed with everything that I have to do that I . . . don't even know what the priority is.” I know I've felt that way. “I have started asking the Lord every morning [when I wake up], ‘What is one thing you want me to do today?’”

And I thought, isn't that a great question? What is one thing the Lord wants me to do today, if I could just do one thing for the Lord as a disciple? And then she said. “I'm a maximizer, [so] I tend to think if one is good [then] five [is] better and ten [is] best.”

And then she says, “[And] then I'm [completely] overwhelmed.” So she says, “[But] I've calculated if I do one thing that comes [from] inspiration, [and I do it] 365 [days a] year for 50 years, that [would] be a total of 18,250 things that the Lord wanted [me to do]. [So He can count] on me [for] 18,250 times, and I have tried to respond. That is no small thing” (“That We May All Sit Down in Heaven Together” [BYU Women's Conference, May 3, 2018], [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org)).

So sisters, as we try to do one thing in our busy world that will help lift someone else or help come from inspiration, just one a day—it almost sounds like taking your vitamins, doesn't it? Just one a day—it will bless us. So I want you to think in your mind. I'm going to tell you about two simple acts, just two simple acts of kindness.

And as I do so, I want you to think in your mind, what are two simple acts of service or ministering that you've

experienced or you have given that has helped heal a heart or helped gladden someone else or your own? The first one I want to tell you is very simple. Last night, I came home, and I was rather tired after conference. It had been a busy week leading up to conference.

And I came home. And I had gotten to the part where I just had my big sweatshirt. And in fact, it was a girl's camp sweatshirt, best sweatshirts ever. It was on with my skirt and my high heels still. The doorbell rang, and I thought, hmm, this is a good look.

I opened up the door. And there stood a neighbor, a dear, dear friend, who has had an enormous amount of challenges in her life. And she stood with this most delicious-looking bundt cake. And she said, I was just thinking of you. And I thought, that is sweet on so many levels.

And it was such a simple act of kindness. But it just went right to my heart. And I think, more than anything, I just hugged her. And we just sat and cried as she was telling me some things in her world. But just the fact that she would go to that effort—what a simple act of kindness.

The next one touches my heart. And this is the story. And I'm going to read her words because her words are much better than if I tried to just tell you. She said, "Last March, my husband of 20 years moved out, which meant my children would be splitting time between us. I was devastated.

"It also meant that every Sunday, every other Sunday, I would be sitting on a pew by myself. In a church where the family is paramount in importance, sitting alone can be painful. Sure, I'd been sitting alone for many years, when Derek served for years in the bishopric and then left when—then later, when he left the Church.

"But I also had kids. Now, it was just me. 20 years and nothing to show for it—that's how I felt. That first Sunday, I walked in praying no one would speak to me. I was barely holding it together.

"I looked terrible, and tears were on the brink. I sat in my normal spot—center section, right side, about six rows from the front. One of the young women in my ward, who always sits with her family on the second row, turned and looked at me. I pretended to smile. It was pathetic.

"She smiled back. I could see the concern in her face. I silently pleaded that she wouldn't come talk to me. I had nothing good to say. And I knew I would cry if she asked how I was. I looked back down at my lap and avoided eye contact.

"During the next hour, I noticed her looking back at me occasionally. And then as soon as the meeting ended, she made a beeline for me. 'Hi, Rosalind,' I muttered. She wrapped her arms around me and said, 'Sister Smith, I can tell that today is a bad day for you. I'm so sorry. I love you.'

"The tears came. I managed to smile at her. She hugged me again and then laughed. Deep breath. Hopefully, no one else talks to me, I thought. Cue the next Sunday, and the next. The sweet 16-year-old lady found me every Sunday, and continues to.

"Every single Sunday, I could count on a hug and a 'how are you, Sister Smith?' from Rosalind. And you know what? It made a difference about how I felt coming to church. The truth is, I started to rely on those hugs.

"Someone noticed me and knew I was there. Someone cared. I had many acts of incredible service and love demonstrated over the years, more than I ever deserved or could hold. But none has been consistent or as heartwarming as this one."

What a simple act of love. All it was was a hug, that someone noticed. And here's the cute young woman who took time to notice a sister in her ward that needed a hug and continues to hug.

Have you experienced a simple act of love or ministry that has touched your heart? Do you have a simple one you would like to share? Yes, we'll just take this one right in the back there.

**AUDIENCE:** When my husband deployed a couple years ago, we didn't get the word out very well to our ward. And one of my good friends, who also has a big family, she saw me. And she's like, Mackenzie, what is wrong? And I said, Johnny left yesterday.

And she just hugged me and wouldn't let me go. And I didn't want to be let go. I needed someone to hold me up in that moment. She didn't—and she has a husband that's home all the time, but just her quick—that reaching out. Other people would use words, but that physical touch really did make a big difference for me.

**BONNIE CORDON:** Oh, thank you. It's amazing. We've all had them. But those simple acts of someone just being aware of what's going on. And just know that our husbands, and our wives, our spouses, sometimes, as we have different experiences, they don't know exactly what we are thinking about.

And so as we give people the benefit of the doubt, it is very helpful in our homes and with our children because, sometimes, we're saying one thing, and we perceive something else. So may we have a heart, as dear sisters, as a heart of—and men, a heart of just allowing the misunderstandings—to not take it so personally, I guess. Maybe a thought for us.

Let me tell you, just a quick story, which I just loved. This is from a dear sister whose husband works with the border patrol. And she says, "I've been thinking about the importance of ministering and how the Savior ministered. I've recognized that the Savior never passed an opportunity to minister. He also looked for ways to minister rather than waiting for those opportunities to come his way."

She goes on to say, "On Thanksgiving Day, Leo"—her husband—"had to work. To make this day a little more enjoyable for our son, I suggested that we spend the day baking our favorite holiday cookies. After many hours in the kitchen, we were getting ready to decorate the last batch of cookies.

"I made two batches of frosting. My son took the frosting. And I took one, and he took one. As we started to decorate, I noticed my son was getting very upset that his cookies didn't look as nice as mine." You'd think there might have been a few years of experience on her cookies.

"He started to be very hard on himself and even began to pick apart his frosting abilities. I tried to encourage him, but it didn't matter what I said. He was very upset. He felt like he had made a horrible mistake with the frosting.

"After we cleaned up the kitchen, I got a feeling to make another batch of frosting to let him frost over his cookies so he could feel better about his frosting abilities." Isn't that interesting? What was He thinking?

But she says, "I was very tired. And I really didn't want to do anything else with frosting." She says, "I called him back to the kitchen and let him frost over his cookies again. As he started frosting over his uneven frosting, the new frosting was covering all his mistakes.

"He started to smile. I could see his hurt feelings and frustrations melt away. I then had another impression to talk about repentance, and how we do not have to live with our own mistakes, and that through the Savior's Atonement, we were able to correct our mistakes, so we can be happy.

"After our conversation, I felt so relieved that I listened to this simple prompting. Who would have guessed that you could have had a spiritual conversation about cookies and frosting? This has taught me not to pass up an opportunity to have a spiritual discussion, listening to those promptings, or ministering even when it feels like an insignificant thing."

To that young man, it was a big thing. He was feeling like he was sinking with his uneven frosted cookies. And so as we look around us, somebody else's frustration may seem so simple compared to your huge loss. But if we can look through the Savior's eyes, we will see the need in great abundance.

I'm always amazed. I was reading the other day and was reminded in one of our trainings about the parable of the Good Samaritan. And it was brought to my attention, three verses. And so I went back and studied them.

And I thought, I'm going to show those dear spouses this video to refresh our minds about the good Samaritan. We all know what happened. But let's take a little closer look at those three verses and how it applies in our lives. Let's just take a minute and see what we have with the good Samaritan.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[END PLAYBACK]

**BONNIE CORDON:** My dear friends, if you have your scriptures on your phone, or wherever, why don't we open up those scriptures? Let's go to Luke in the New Testament, Luke 10:31. And wherever that microphone is, would there be someone who would read Luke 10:31 for me? I've got the microphone. Just raise your hand, and he'll bring you the microphone. Thank you, sister.

**AUDIENCE:** "And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side."

**BONNIE CORDON:** Interesting word there, isn't it? He did see. I think the word here, the one I underlined, was saw. Let's go ahead and read 32, another sister who could read the next verse for us. Thank you.

**AUDIENCE:** "And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side."

**BONNIE CORDON:** So what do we notice? Sister, before you give that microphone up, what do we notice that this Levite did? What did he do? What were some of the action things that he did?

**AUDIENCE:** He looked at him. So he knew he was there.

**BONNIE CORDON:** Yeah, so he did look. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Let's go now to 33.

**AUDIENCE:** "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him."

**BONNIE CORDON:** So what are some of the things that stood out to you in that verse?

**AUDIENCE:** He "came where he was," so he came over to him. "And when he saw him, he had compassion," so he must have felt it, something in his heart, that this man was hurt on the road, and he wanted to help.

**BONNIE CORDON:** Thank you. Thank you. Isn't it fascinating? And all three men had the same opportunity. They all saw. But that third brother, what did he have? He had compassion.

And so as we go about and see, may we pray that we will have more compassion as we go about and notice what is around us. I don't know why the Lord asks us that when He put all the laws into two things—"Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, . . . mind, and . . . strength" (Mark 12:30)—and then what is it?

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

**BONNIE CORDON:** “Love thy neighbour as thyself” (verse 31). He put—He lumped all of it into just two huge actions. And I always wondered, why is that? It changes us as we serve others. And it’s powerful.

I want to show you just a little video of a modern-day good Samaritan. And let me just tell you a little bit about this. This sister was struggling with cancer. And she heard of a clinic in China that might be of benefit to her.

And at this point in her life, she said, I was going to try anything. She was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. And she went over to China. Now, I do not know how these dear Chinese sisters, that, too, were members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, found out about this fellow sister that was in their country.

But they found out. And this is what they did. They did not know her. They had no connection with her, except that they knew she was a beloved daughter of her Heavenly Father and was alone in their country. And so this is what these dear sisters did.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

- [INAUDIBLE]

- [INAUDIBLE]

[END PLAYBACK]

**BONNIE CORDON:** Very short little video—she said, you have to—if a picture is not taken, it never happened, right? So she filmed this because she was so grateful that these sisters, who she couldn’t communicate with, came, and put lotion on her feet, and rubbed her feet, and ministered to her in such a way that it just healed her soul. Now, her cancer was never healed. And it did take her life.

But she was ministered to by some caring sisters. I don’t know how far they had to travel to get to her. We don’t know much about these Chinese sisters that came and loved on this fellow sister.

But the fact is they heard of a need, heard of a challenge. And then they said, how can I help? And they created a space to minister. Elder Holland says, “May we labor side by side with the Lord of the vineyard, giving the God and Father of us all a helping hand with His staggering task of answering prayers, providing comfort, drying tears, and strengthening feeble knees. [And] if we . . . do that, we will be more like the true disciples . . . we are meant to be” (“Be With and Strengthen Them,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 103).

Now, let me just see. I’m going to tell you a tender story for me, and how grateful I am for our Heavenly Father requiring us to do service in our callings. In 2016, our family had traveled to the greatest and most happiest place on Earth. We went to Disney World. And interesting, we had all of our kids with us.

We had a hotel room for each one of the kids. And it was a glorious time. We were in day four of—day five of this fabulous vacation with our little grandboys. And in the middle of the night, our little Derek, who was two-and-a-half years old, stopped breathing. And he was rushed to the children’s hospital there in Florida.

As we sat in the hospital with our sweet little grandson—and he was on life support, and we were not sure where his life hung in the balance—we didn’t know anyone—there was a wonderful chaplain who came in as we were singing “I Am a Child of God” (Hymns, no. 301) to our sweet little Derek.

And he was so kind. He was not of our faith. But he sat very respectfully with us as we sang, as we read the Book of Mormon to him, as we bore our testimony of the Savior Jesus Christ. And I thought of this dear chaplain who spent so many hours with us, what his wife, his dear wife, was giving up so he could come and minister to us—people he didn't know, people he would never see again.

But he took the time away from his own family to just sit and grieve with us. Our little Derek passed away that Sunday, and I flew back to Salt Lake. The next Sunday rolled around, and I had an assignment to visit the Primary Children's Hospital in Salt Lake.

That morning, as I woke up, I pleaded with our Heavenly Father. I said, I don't think I can go because the last time I was in a children's hospital is when we lost our little grandson. And the Lord said, just go. So I cried all the way up to Primary Children's.

And I thought, well, I am no help to anybody. And this is the silliest assignment I've ever had. And as I parked the car, and I saw nurses coming in and out and changing shifts, I pleaded once again. Could I not just leave this assignment for another day when I knew I'd be a little more strong—where I'd be stronger and helpful? And the Spirit said, just go in.

So I went in. We got the little name badge. And I sat in a delightful sacrament meeting of just a half hour, 10:30 to 11:00, and saw many, many children, very sick, come in. My heart was heavy because of just all the emotions that we have, isn't it?

And after that, the branch president came up and said, Sister Cordon, we have a young boy who's been fighting cancer. His name's Oliver. Would you please come? He needs a visit. And I thought, oh, a little boy, Oliver.

As I walked into Oliver's room, a sweet salve just filled my heart as the Lord—you'll never heal your heart from a hole when you lose a grandson. However, He put a sweet, tender patch on it as I met Oliver. And on Oliver's wall, he had written in his own writing—he had the little white board. It said, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5).

That was the message I needed to hear from the Lord. And He knew that a little boy sitting in the Primary Children's Hospital would give me that message of love from Him. How grateful I am for callings that make us stretch. How grateful I am that we do what the Lord asks us to do even if it's hard, because He does things for us to build us and to let us know that He loves us.

William Jennings Bryan, a great orator, said—[INAUDIBLE] I should get to that—"Service is the measure of greatness; . . . he is greatest who does the most good. . . . Nearly all of our controversies . . . grow out of the fact that we are trying to get something from each other—there will be peace when our aim is to do something for each other. . . . The human measure of human life is its income; the divine measure of life is its outgo, its overflow—its contribution to the welfare of all" (The Prince of Peace [1914], 52–53). Sisters, I know that the Lord loves you. I don't know what you're going through. I wish I did.

But the Lord does. And as we turn to the Savior Jesus Christ, that is where we will find peace. And as we look outward, it's amazing how He lifts and strengthens us in the opportunities that we have to minister, and just see, and have compassion.

Now, I do love music. And I realize that music can be a testimony of those things that are true. So I was wondering if all of us could sing together, "Peace in Christ." Now, if you worked in the Young Women last year, that was our theme song.



So I had our wonderful Kristen, who is my right-hand person, put the music up here. And we can just sing together, “Peace in Christ.” Can we do that? OK, let’s see if we—how good we can all do this together.

[MUSIC—“PEACE IN CHRIST”]

(SINGING) “There is peace in Christ/when we learn of Him/Feel the love He felt for us/When He bore our sins/  
Listen to His words/Let them come alive/If we know Him as He is/There is peace in Christ.

“He gives us hope/When hope is gone/He gives us strength/When we can’t go on/He gives us shelter/In the  
storms of life/When there’s no peace on Earth/There is peace in Christ.

“There is peace in Christ/When we walk with Him/Through the streets of Galilee/to Jerusalem/ Mend the broken  
hearts/Dry the tear-filled eyes/When we live the way He lived/There is peace in Christ.

“He gives us hope/When hope is gone/He gives us strength/When we can’t go on/He gives us shelter/In the  
storms of life/When there’s no peace on Earth/There is peace in Christ” (2018 Mutual album).

Sisters, I just want to bear testimony to you that there truly is peace in Christ, and that He is our Redeemer, our Savior. He created the world. He can create in us that which we lack. He can help dry our tears. He can be that healer that we need.

I pray that as we go forth and see, like the Samaritan, that we will see opportunities, large and small, that will help our families come unto Christ. I leave you my love and my extreme gratitude for all that you do to bless this world, to make it a much happier place. And I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]