



By Elder S. Gifford Nielsen  
*Of the Seventy*

knowing Christ cannot lie. Such faith is a defining characteristic of the premortal faithful, particularly our youth. “Our Heavenly Father has reserved many of His most noble spirits—perhaps, I might say, His finest team—for this final phase. Those noble spirits—those finest players, those heroes—are *you!*” (Russell M. Nelson, “Hope of Israel,” [HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)). See also John 1:1; 14:6, 17.

17. Revelation 12:11; see also Ether 3:6–9.
18. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Great Plan,” 93.
19. See Alma 36:24–26; see also Psalm 34:8; Jacob 3:2; Mosiah 4:11.
20. Jarom 1:11.
21. Mosiah 16:6.
22. Alma 5:15.
23. See “Gospel Living: Circles,” *New Era*, Oct. 2020, 15.
24. See Russell M. Nelson, “Begin with the End in Mind” (address given at the seminar for new mission presidents, June 22, 2014).
25. See Russell M. Nelson, “Hear Him,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 88–92.
26. For example, Alma spoke to his people about looking forward with an eye of faith to when they would stand before God but warned they could not imagine doing so with confidence and peace unless they had repented of their sins (see Alma 5:15–17).
27. Face to Face with President and Sister Oaks (worldwide youth and children’s broadcast, Feb. 23, 2020), [facetoface.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://facetoface.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
28. See *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 1.2; 10.2.1.3; 11.2.1.3, [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
29. Face to Face with President and Sister Oaks, [facetoface.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://facetoface.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
30. See *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2018), 156, [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org); see also Alma 5:15–17.
31. Quentin L. Cook, “Purpose and Planning” (address given at the seminar for new mission presidents, June 25, 2019).
32. Doctrine and Covenants 58:28.
33. Neil L. Andersen, “Faith Is Not by Chance, but by Choice,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 66.
34. Neil L. Andersen, “The Eye of Faith,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 36.
35. “Aaronic Priesthood Quorum Theme,” [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
36. 2 Nephi 26:8–9.

## This Is Our Time!

*God has sent us right here, right now, at this momentous time in history.*

In 1978, I stood on a football field in a stadium packed with 65,000 fans. In front of me were several very large opponents who looked like they wanted to take my head off. It was my first game as a starting quarterback in the National Football League, and we were playing the reigning Super Bowl champions. To be honest, I questioned whether I was good enough to be on the field. I dropped back to throw my first pass, and as I released the ball, I was hit harder than I’d ever been hit before. At that moment, lying under a pile of those

massive athletes, I wondered what I was doing there. I had a decision to make. Would I let my doubts overtake me, or would I find courage and strength to get up and to carry on?

I didn’t realize at the time how this experience would prepare me for future opportunities. I needed to learn that I could be strong and courageous in the face of difficult situations.

A football game might not be nearly as important as the challenges you will face. In most cases, there won’t be a stadium full of people



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watching. But your valiant decisions will have eternal significance.

Maybe we don't always feel up to the challenge. But our Heavenly Father sees us as fearless builders of His kingdom. That is why He sent us here during this most decisive time in the world's history. This is our time!

Listen to what President Russell M. Nelson said shortly after becoming President of the Church: "Our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, will perform some of His mightiest works between now and when He comes again. We will see miraculous indications that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, preside over this Church in majesty and glory" ("Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 96).

Mightiest works? Miraculous indications? What will that look like? What role will we play, and how will we understand what to do? I don't know all the answers, but I do know that the Lord needs us to be ready! Worthily exercising priesthood power has never been more crucial.

Do we believe God's prophet? Can we find and fulfill our destiny? Yes, we can, and yes, we must, because this is our time!

When we hear stories of God's mighty servants who came before us—like Moses, Mary, Moroni, Alma, Esther, Joseph, and many others—they seem bigger than life. But they were not that different from us. They were regular people who faced challenges. They trusted the Lord. They made the right choices at pivotal moments. And, with faith in Jesus Christ, they performed the works required in their time.

Consider the Old Testament hero Joshua. He was a devoted follower of Moses, one of the greatest leaders in history. After Moses departed, it was Joshua's time. He was to lead the children of Israel into the promised land. How would he do that? Joshua had been born and raised in slavery in Egypt. He had no handbook or instructional videos to help him. He didn't even have a smartphone! But he did have this promise from the Lord:

"As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

"Be strong and of a good courage" (Joshua 1:5–6).

When I was a new and inexperienced Seventy, I received an urgent phone call from the Office of the First

Presidency, asking if I would represent the prophet in visiting a young man in the hospital—immediately. The young man's name was Zach. He was preparing to be a missionary but had been in an accident and suffered a serious head injury.

As I drove to the hospital, my mind raced. An errand for the prophet—are you kidding? What am I going to face? How will I help this young man? Do I have enough faith? Fervent prayer and the knowledge that I possessed the authority of the holy priesthood became my anchors.

When I arrived, Zach was lying in a hospital bed. An orderly stood ready to whisk him to the operating room so doctors could relieve the pressure on his brain. I looked at his tearful mom and a fearful young friend standing nearby, and I knew clearly that Zach needed a priesthood blessing. His friend had recently received the Melchizedek Priesthood, so I asked him to help me. I felt the power of the priesthood as we humbly gave Zach a blessing. Then he was hurried away for the surgery, and a peaceful feeling confirmed that the Savior would handle things according to His wisdom.

The medical staff performed one last X-ray before making the initial incision. They discovered, to their astonishment, that no operation would be needed.

After much therapy, Zach learned to walk and talk again. He served a successful mission and is now raising a beautiful family.

Of course, that is not always the outcome. I have given other priesthood blessings with equal faith, and the Lord did not grant complete healing in this life. We trust His purposes and leave the results to Him. We can't always choose the outcome of our actions, but we can choose to be ready to act.

You might not ever be asked by the First Presidency to represent them in a life-threatening situation. But we are all called upon to do life-changing things as representatives of the Lord. He will not forsake us. This is our time!

Peter, the Savior's chief Apostle, was in a ship on the sea when he saw Jesus walking on the water. He wanted to join Him, and the Savior said, "Come." Courageously and miraculously, Peter left the safety of the boat and began walking toward the Savior. But when Peter focused

on the boisterous wind, his faith faltered. "He was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him." (See Matthew 14:22–33.)

When winds blow in our lives, where is our focus? Remember, there is always one reliable source of strength and courage. The arms of Jesus extend to us, just as they extended to Peter. As we reach for Him, He will lovingly rescue us. We are His. He said, "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine" (Isaiah 43:1). He will prevail in your life if you let Him. The choice is yours. (See Russell M. Nelson, "Let God Prevail," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2020, 92–95.)

At the end of his life, Joshua pleaded with his people, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). Because of the choices he made to serve the Lord, Joshua became a great leader in his time. My dear friends, this is our time! And the choices we make will determine our destiny (see Thomas S. Monson, "Decisions Determine Destiny" [Brigham Young University fireside, Nov. 6, 2005], [speeches.byu.edu](https://speeches.byu.edu)).

While I was serving as a bishop, we had a motto in our ward: Good choices equal happiness—eternally. The youth would pass me in the hall saying, "Bishop, I'm making good choices!" That's a bishop's dream!

What do we mean by "good choices"? Someone once asked Jesus, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" He answered:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:36–39).

I don't know about you, but when I read these two great commandments, I detect a third, implied commandment: to love thyself.

Have you ever thought of loving yourself as a commandment? Can we truly love God and love His children if we don't love ourselves?

A wise leader recently counseled a man who was trying to overcome years of destructive choices. The man felt ashamed, doubting that he was worthy of anyone's love.

His leader said to him, "The Lord knows you, loves you, and is pleased [with] you and the courageous steps you are taking." But then he added, "[You] need to hear the commandment to love yourself so you can feel [God's] love and love others."

When this brother heard that counsel, he saw life with new eyes. He later said, "I have spent my whole life trying to find peace and acceptance. I have looked for those things in many wrong places. Only in the love of Heavenly Father and the Savior can I find comfort. I know They want me to love myself; it really is the only way I can feel Their love for me."

Our Heavenly Father wants us to love ourselves—not to become prideful or self-centered, but to see ourselves as He sees us: we are His cherished children. When this truth sinks deep into our hearts, our love for God grows. When we view ourselves with sincere respect, our hearts are open to treat others that way too. The more we recognize our divine worth, the better we



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understand this divine truth: that God has sent us right here, right now, at this momentous time in history, so that we can do the greatest possible good with the talents and gifts we have. This is our time! (See Russell M. Nelson, “Becoming True Millennials” [worldwide devotional for young adults, Jan. 10, 2016], [broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).)

Joseph Smith taught that every prophet in every age “looked forward with joyful anticipation to the day in which we live; . . . they have sung and written and prophesied of this our day; . . . we are the favored people that God has [chosen] to bring about the Latter-day glory” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 186).

As you face your daily challenges, remember this reassurance offered by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland: “So much rests on our shoulders, but it will be a glorious and successful experience. . . . The victory in this final contest has already been declared. The victory is already in the record books . . . , the scriptures!” (“Be Not Afraid, Only Believe” [address to Church Educational System religious educators, Feb. 6, 2015], [broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)).

On this beautiful Easter weekend, may I extend an invitation that we all pray to recognize and embrace our individual roles as we prepare for the glorious day when the Savior comes again. The Lord loves us more than we can comprehend, and He will answer our prayers! Whether we are on a football field, in a hospital room, or in any other place, we can be an important part of these remarkable events—because this is our time! In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



South Africa