

doing right” (Glenn L. Pace, “Crying with the Saints” [Brigham Young University devotional, Dec. 13, 1987], 2; speeches.byu.edu).

While presiding over the Ukraine Kyiv Mission, I once asked one of my most faithful sisters why she was always so hard on herself, why she was always beating herself up over the smallest things. Her answer was a classic example of someone listening to the wrong voice as she replied, “So no one can beat me to it.”

Brothers and sisters, my counsel to this sister missionary is my counsel to you: acknowledge and face your weaknesses, but don’t be immobilized by them, because some of them will be your companions until you depart this earth life. No matter what your current status, the very moment you voluntarily choose honest, joyful, daily repentance by striving to simply do and be your very best, the Savior’s Atonement envelops and follows you, as it were, wherever you go. Living in this manner, you can truly “always retain a remission of your sins” (Mosiah 4:12) every hour of every day, every second of every minute, and thus be fully clean and acceptable before God *all the time*.

Yours is the privilege, if you want it, to come to know for yourself, today or soon, that you are pleasing God in spite of your shortcomings. I testify of a loving Savior who expects us to live the commandments. I testify of a loving Savior who is so very anxious to bestow His grace and mercy. I testify of a loving Savior who rejoices when we apply His Atonement daily with the calm and happy assurance that we are facing in the right direction. I testify of a loving Savior who is anxious for your “confidence [to] wax strong in the presence of God” (D&C 121:45). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



**By Elder Eduardo Gavarret**  
Of the Seventy

## Yes, Lord, I Will Follow Thee

*The Lord invites us using various verbs: “Come unto me,” “Follow me,” “Walk with me.” In each case it is an invitation to act.*

**F**or behold, the Lord doth grant unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word.<sup>1</sup> Today this scripture is fulfilled once more as I have been given the opportunity to express my feelings in my native tongue.

It was the year 1975, and I was serving in the Uruguay-Paraguay Mission as a young missionary. During my first month in the mission, the zone leaders held an activity to demonstrate a gospel principle. Each missionary in the zone was blindfolded, and we were told that we were to follow a path leading to the cultural hall. We were to follow the voice of one particular leader, a voice we heard before starting to walk. However, we were warned that during the journey, we would hear several voices that would try to confuse us and get us to stray from the path.

After some minutes of hearing noises, talking, and—in the midst of it all—a voice that said, “Follow me,” I felt confident I was following the right voice. When we arrived at the cultural hall of the chapel, we were asked to take off our blindfolds. When I did so, I realized that there were two groups and that I was

in the group that had followed the wrong voice. “It sounded so much like the right one,” I said to myself.

That experience of 39 years ago had a lasting effect on me. I told myself, “Never, ever again follow the wrong voice.” Then I told myself, “Yes, Lord, I will follow Thee.”

I want to relate this experience with the Savior’s tender invitation to us:

“I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep. . . .

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”<sup>2</sup>

The invitation to “follow Him” is the most simple, direct, and powerful invitation we can receive. It comes from a clear voice that cannot be confused.

The Lord invites us using various verbs: “Come unto me,” “Follow me,” “Walk with me.” In each case it is not a passive invitation; it is an invitation to act. It is addressed to all mankind by the one who is the Prophet of prophets, the Teacher of teachers, the Son of God, the Messiah.

### **The Invitation to “Come unto Me”**

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”<sup>3</sup>



“Come, . . . follow me.”<sup>8</sup> However, even though the invitation was simple, it was not without sacrifice. It required effort—coupled with decision and action.

The prophet Nephi invited self-reflection when he questioned: “And [Jesus] said unto the children of men: Follow thou me. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, can we follow Jesus save we shall be willing to keep the commandments of the Father?”<sup>9</sup>

The invitation to “come unto me,” to listen to His voice, and to follow it has been the message of missionaries from the beginning, helping many to change their lives for good.

Fifty years ago the missionaries entered my father’s watchmaker shop to leave a watch to be repaired. As good missionaries do, they took advantage of the opportunity to speak with my father and mother about the gospel. My father accepted the missionaries, and my mother accepted the message and invitation to follow Christ. From that day to this, she has remained active in the Church. She said, “Yes, Lord, I will follow Thee!”

As you strive to come to Him, you will gain the power to relieve life’s burdens, whether physical or spiritual, *and experience a positive inner change that will help you be happier.*

#### **The Invitation to “Walk with Me”**

Enoch was called to preach the gospel to a difficult, hard-hearted people. He did not feel qualified. He had doubts about whether he could do it. The Lord calmed his doubts and strengthened his faith through the invitation “Walk with me”—an invitation that, like a blind man’s cane or a friend’s arm, can guide the footsteps of one whose step is not sure. By taking the Savior’s arm and walking

You who are not yet members of the Church will receive this invitation through the voice of the missionaries with the words, “Will you read the Book of Mormon? Will you pray? Will you attend church? Will you follow the example of Jesus Christ and be baptized by those who have authority?”<sup>4</sup> How will you answer this invitation today?<sup>5</sup>

I invite you to listen to and accept the message by saying, “Yes, Lord, I will follow Thee!”

Carlos Badiola and his family, of Minas, Uruguay, were meeting with the missionaries. Since the elders asked a lot of questions during the lessons, they decided to invite a nonmember neighbor—a beautiful 14-year-old girl named Norma—to help them answer. Norma was a dedicated high school student who was studying the Bible at school that year, so when the missionaries asked a question, Norma answered. She was a “golden investigator.” The lesson taught that day was about the Word of Wisdom.

When she returned home after the lesson with the missionaries, Norma knew what she had to do. She said to her mother, “Mom, from now on,

no more coffee with milk for me. Just milk.” That response was the visible manifestation of her desire to accept the invitation to follow Christ, as extended by the missionaries.

Both Carlos Badiola and Norma were baptized. Later on, following Norma’s example, her mother, father, and siblings were also baptized. Norma and I grew up together in that little but powerful branch. Later on, when I returned from serving a mission, we were married. I always knew that it would be easier to follow the Savior with her by my side.

One who is a member of the Church and has accepted this invitation renews the commitment each week by partaking of the sacrament.<sup>6</sup> Part of that commitment includes keeping the commandments; by doing so you are saying, “Yes, Lord, I will follow Thee!”<sup>7</sup>

#### **The Invitation to “Follow Me”**

“Follow me” was the Lord’s invitation to the rich young ruler. The rich man had kept the commandments throughout his life. When he asked what more he could do, he received an answer with a clear invitation:

with Him, Enoch found that his step became firm and he became a great missionary and a prophet.<sup>10</sup>

The decision to “come unto me” and “follow me” is personal. When we accept this invitation, our level of commitment is raised, and it is then that we can “walk with Him.” This level establishes a closer relationship with the Savior—the fruit of our accepting the first invitation.

Norma and I individually accepted the invitation to “come unto me” and to “follow me.” Then, together, supporting each other, we have learned to walk with Him.

The effort and the determination to seek Him and to follow Him will be rewarded with the blessings we need.

Such was the case of the woman who, with great effort, managed to touch the Savior’s garment<sup>11</sup> or of Bartimaeus the blind man, whose determination was a key factor in the miracle that happened in his life.<sup>12</sup> In both cases a healing of body and spirit was granted.

Reach out your hand, touch His garment, accept His invitation, say,

“Yes, Lord, I will follow Thee!”—and walk with Him.

“Come unto me,” “Follow me,” and “Walk with me” are invitations containing inherent power—for those who accept them—to transform your life and generate a *change within you* that will lead you to say, “[I] have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually.”<sup>13</sup>

As an outward manifestation of that change, you will feel the strong desire to “succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees.”<sup>14</sup>

What steps can we take today to “walk with Him”?

1. *Feed the desire* to be a better follower of Christ.<sup>15</sup>
2. *Pray* for this desire that your faith in Him may grow.<sup>16</sup>
3. *Obtain knowledge* from the scriptures, lighting the way and strengthening your desire to change.<sup>17</sup>
4. *Make the decision today* to act and say, “Yes, Lord, I will follow Thee!” Simply knowing the truth will not change your world unless you turn knowledge into *action*.<sup>18</sup>

5. *Persevere* in the decision you have made by exercising these principles daily.<sup>19</sup>

May the words of our beloved prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, motivate us to action in our desire to accept the Savior’s invitation. President Monson said: “Who is the King of glory, this Lord of hosts? He is our Master. He is our Savior. He is the Son of God. He is the Author of our Salvation. He beckons, ‘Follow me.’ He instructs, ‘Go, and do thou likewise.’ He pleads, ‘Keep my commandments.’”<sup>20</sup>

May we make the decision today to increase our level of worship and commitment to God, and may our response to His invitation be heard loud and clear: “Yes, Lord, I will follow Thee!”<sup>21</sup> In the sacred name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen. ■

*This address was delivered in Spanish.*

#### NOTES

1. Alma 29:8.
2. John 10:14, 27.
3. Matthew 11:28; see also Isaiah 55:3.
4. See *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 31, 195–202.
5. See Acts 2:37–38.
6. See Doctrine and Covenants 20:37, 77–79.
7. See Doctrine and Covenants 42:29.
8. Mark 10:21.
9. 2 Nephi 31:10.
10. See Moses 6:33–35.
11. See Luke 8:43–48.
12. See Mark 10:46–52.
13. Mosiah 5:2.
14. Doctrine and Covenants 81:5; see also Isaiah 35:3.
15. See Alma 22:15–16; Dallin H. Oaks, “Desire,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 42–45.
16. See Alma 34:17–27; 37:37.
17. See Psalm 119:105; Helaman 3:29.
18. See Mosiah 5:5.
19. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “That which we persist in doing becomes easier to do, not that the nature of the thing has changed but that our power to do has increased” (in Heber J. Grant, *Gospel Standards*, comp. G. Homer Durham [1941], 355).
20. Thomas S. Monson, “Finding Joy in the Journey,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 88.
21. See “Lord, I Would Follow Thee,” *Hymns*, no. 220.



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