



By Elder
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“PUT ON THE Armour OF Light”

*May each of us let our light shine as we strive to become like
the perfect Light—our Savior, Jesus Christ.*

When I was 23 years old, I experienced one of the most enlightening events of my life, even though I was terrified at the time. After I was drafted by the Houston Oilers, an American professional football team, Wendy and I moved our family of four to Texas, USA.

After the first practice of summer training camp, I was greeted by several of the team’s veteran players. They invited me to have a beer with them for “team bonding.” They looked pretty serious about it, and I felt prompted to join them. With a huge prayer in my wildly pounding heart, I said, “Sure, I’ll go with you this one time—on two conditions: I choose what I drink, and I choose what we talk about.”

Have you ever sipped soda for several hours straight? Around the table sat famous, award-winning football icons, some of whom I had revered since following their every game as a starstruck child. They peppered me with questions about my faith, family, and lifestyle. I, the rookie, began telling my football heroes all about Latter-day Saint standards. After that day there wasn’t much they didn’t know about me and what we as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stand for.

Reflecting on that experience reminds me of my favorite New Testament scriptural passage, which comes from the Sermon on the Mount:

“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

“Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

“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).



I have been blessed to see for myself the paths Jesus walked. As I sat on the Mount of Beatitudes one beautiful spring day, I thought of how I have always been drawn to the Sermon on the Mount. I see it as the foundation for a life that would be acceptable to Heavenly Father. In fact, President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) referred to the first part of the sermon, the Beatitudes, as “the constitution for a perfect life.”¹

President Lee also said: “Christ came not only into the world to make an atonement for the sins of mankind but to set an example before the world of the standard of perfection of God’s law and of obedience to the Father. In his Sermon on the Mount the Master has given us somewhat of a revelation of his own character, which was perfect, . . . and in so doing has given us a blueprint for our own lives.”²

What did the Savior mean when He taught these thought-provoking doctrines? He often described Himself as “the light of the world” (John 8:12), yet in this sermon He said, “Ye are the light of the world.” Do we realize that with His help, *we* can become like *Him*?

Reflect the Savior’s Light

At the end of a cultural seminar in Greece, author Robert Fulghum asked the organizer of the event, Dr. Alexander Papaderos, “What is the meaning of life?” Dr. Papaderos responded by pulling a small, round mirror from his wallet. Then he said:

“When I was a small child, during the war [World War II], we were very poor and we lived in a remote village. One day, on the road, I found the broken pieces of a mirror. A German motorcycle had been wrecked in that place.

“ . . . I kept only the largest piece. . . . I began to play with it as a toy and became fascinated by the fact that I could reflect light into dark places where the sun would never shine—in deep holes and crevices and dark closets.”

Reflecting light into inaccessible places became a game for him. But when he became an adult, Dr. Papaderos realized that his childhood game was a metaphor for his life’s mission.



Light will shine in dark places only if we reflect it.

“I came to understand that I am not the light or the source of light. But light—the light of truth, understanding, and knowledge—is there, and that light will only shine in many dark places if I reflect it.

“ . . . I can reflect light into the dark places of this world . . . and change some things in some people. Perhaps others may see and do likewise. This is what I am about. This is the meaning of my life.”³

When we encounter people who are struggling, can we reflect the Savior’s light to encourage them? The Apostle Paul taught the Romans, “Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light” (Romans 13:12). How do we do this?

Dispel Darkness with Music

Uplifting music can overcome darkness. One-third of our hymns directly reference light, and most of them allude to it in some way. We can become enlightened by listening to inspired music and memorizing sacred words. President David O. McKay (1873–1970) taught, “Music is truly the universal language, and when it is excellently expressed how deeply it moves our souls!”⁴

I know of two missionaries who, while serving in Mexico, learned the power of music. A family that had excitedly

anticipated joining the Church encountered serious challenges the week before their baptism and felt a spirit of darkness. The elders were shocked when the family revealed that they had decided not to be baptized. The family told the missionaries of their recent trials, and a somber spirit filled the room. The senior companion asked the couple to close their eyes and simply listen as the missionaries sang:

*Lead, kindly Light, amid th'encircling gloom;
Lead thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home;
Lead thou me on!
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene—one step enough for me.*⁵

At the end of the hymn, there was silence for an extended period of time as the family members sat still, tears streaming down their faces. The elders waited patiently, knowing that the Spirit was dispelling the darkness in the hearts of this little family and teaching them eternal principles.

Finally, the husband said, “The Lord has spoken to my heart. You were not singing alone—you were surrounded by a chorus of angels. We want to be baptized as scheduled.”

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has taught, “Music can set an atmosphere of worship which invites [the] spirit of revelation, of testimony.”⁶

Brighten Lives with Service

Another powerful protection against spiritual darkness is service. Opportunities to help our neighbors abound. On September 13 and 14, 2008, Hurricane Ike swept across North America, becoming the third most destructive storm ever to strike the United States.

After the storm had cleared the Texas Gulf Coast, 5,000 Latter-day Saint volunteers completed 2,500 work orders and contributed 50,000 hours of service. Wearing yellow “Helping Hands” T-shirts, the Church members went to work canvassing neighborhoods, clearing debris, and

removing tree limbs. One government official called the volunteers “angels in yellow T-shirts.”⁷

Sometimes simple things like hard work and gentle smiles can send sunshine to soften the storms we face. One recipient of our service offered to pay me. I responded, “No, we do this because we love the Lord and love our neighbors.” Serving others brightens their lives as well as ours.

I’ve been asked if sharing my beliefs so openly with my Oiler teammates ever backfired on me. Thankfully, just the opposite occurred. As the starting quarterback in a pre-season win against the Dallas Cowboys, I had just finished answering questions from the media. It was a hot, humid August night in north Texas, and I felt exhausted and thirsty.

While sitting by my locker, I was longing for something to drink. One of my teammates offered me an icy can of beer and said, “You can ask any doctor in the world if one beer will hurt you, and he’ll say no. Celebrate your big win with me!”

Before I could decline, another veteran player confronted him, grabbed the drink, and said, “Don’t you ever offer our young quarterback another beer! He doesn’t drink!”

Not all experiences are ideal, but in this case my teammates protected me on and off the field.

In 3 Nephi, the Savior says, “Therefore, hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up—that which ye have seen me do” (3 Nephi 18:24).

We can reflect the Savior’s light and become more like Him. We can lift and bless the lives of those around us as we “put on the armour of light” and feel the protecting safety offered through living the gospel of Jesus Christ. May each of us let our light shine as we strive to become like the perfect Light—our Savior, Jesus Christ. ■

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee* (2000), 200.
2. *Teachings: Harold B. Lee*, 199–200.
3. Robert Fulghum, *What on Earth Have I Done?* (2007), 290–91.
4. David O. McKay, in Conference Report, Apr. 1945, 119.
5. “Lead, Kindly Light,” *Hymns*, no. 97.
6. Boyd K. Packer, “Reverence Invites Revelation,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 22.
7. The information in this paragraph, including the quote, comes from a public affairs video prepared by the Houston Bishops’ Storehouse.