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FACE THE FUTURE WITH **Faith & Hope**

The conditions in the world are uncertain and dangerous, and the economies of the world are unstable and unpredictable. The cherished values of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are under attack by those who want to restrict agency and make us dependent rather than encourage us to use our skills and talents to create new and exciting ways of doing things.

Standards of morality are failing. The family is under attack and is crumbling. Love in the hearts of men and women has waxed cold and is unnatural (see Matthew 24:12; Romans 1:31). There is a continuing breakdown in the integrity, honesty, and righteousness of political, business, and other leaders. Wars and rumors of wars among nations and creeds abound. And even more destructive than any armed conflict is the war raging between good and evil—between the Savior with His army of light and Satan with his evil minions of darkness—for the very souls of the children of God.

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) described the world that today's young people are about to enter when he said: "We live in a season when fierce men do terrible and despicable things. We live in a season of war. We live in a season of arrogance. We live in a season of wickedness, pornography, immorality. All of the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah haunt our society. Our young people have never faced a greater challenge. We have never seen more clearly the lecherous face of evil."¹

We should not be surprised at these circumstances of our time because the scriptures and prophecies about our day testify of what will happen in the world if people turn their backs on God. We will yet experience more unpleasant things, for the devil continues his attempts to accomplish his evil designs. At the same time, the prophets of old who saw our day, who saw today's young generation, knew this time would be an age of light and wonderment such as the world has never before experienced.

As I prepared this message, I asked for guidance to know what message our Heavenly Father would want me to share. The calming and assuring words spoken by the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith came to my mind: "Be of good cheer, for I will lead you along. The kingdom is yours . . . , and the riches of eternity are yours" (D&C 78:18).

Replace Fear with Faith

What I believe the Lord wants me to say is that we should replace fear with faith—faith in God and the power of the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I can remember as a young 13-year-old boy coming home from priesthood meeting on Sunday, December 7, 1941, to learn from my parents that Japan had just bombed Pearl Harbor. This propelled the United States into a world war that had already been raging in Europe for two years. It seemed that life as we knew it was going to come to an end. There was much uncertainty as many young men were swept up into military service. However, just as now, amid all the conflicts, struggles, and evil influences in the world, there was still much good.

As we think about the future, we should be filled with faith and hope. Always remember that Jesus Christ—the Creator of the universe, the architect of our salvation, and the head of this Church—is in control. He will not permit His work to fail. He will be victorious over all darkness and evil. And He invites us all, members of His Church and others who are the honest in heart, to join in the battle for the souls of God's children. Along with all else we will do in life, we must also dedicate and consecrate our

heart, might, mind, and strength to His cause, walking in faith and working with conviction.

Face the future with optimism. I believe we are standing on the threshold of a new era of growth, prosperity, and abundance. Barring a calamity or unexpected international crisis, I think the next few years will bring a resurgence in the world economy as new discoveries are made in communication, medicine, energy, transportation, physics, computer technology, and other fields of endeavor.

Many of these discoveries, as in the past, will be the result of the Spirit whispering insights into and enlightening the minds of truth-seeking individuals. With these discoveries and advances will come new employment opportunities and prosperity for those who work hard and especially for those who strive to keep the commandments of God. This has been the case in other significant periods of national and international economic growth.

In addition, many of these discoveries will be made to help bring to pass the purposes and work of God and to quicken, including through missionary work, the building of His kingdom on earth today.

Do Your Part

Before the Savior's Second Coming—and based on His divine timetable—the gospel must be taken to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people until it fills the whole earth. As the Prophet Joseph declared: "No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done."²

As the gospel is carried to billions of spiritually hungry souls, miracles will be performed by the hand of the Lord. Missionaries of many nationalities will serve the Lord throughout the earth. New chapels and many more temples



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will be built to bless the Saints, as has been prophesied regarding premillennial growth of the Church.

You may ask, “Where will the financial resources come from to fund this growth?” The resources will come from faithful members through their tithes and offerings. As we do our part, the Lord will bless us with prosperity and with the wisdom to keep our mind focused on what matters most in life: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

So for yet a season, possibly a short season, it will seem as though the windows of heaven will have truly opened so that “there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10).

I believe many of today’s young adults will be active participants in temporal blessings if they keep the commandments of the Lord. With prosperity will come a unique challenge—a test that will try many to their spiritual core. As you step into this new world of prosperity and engage in converting your education and skills into financial success, you will always have to distinguish between wants and needs.

Seek First the Kingdom of God

You will have two choices. Will your motivation to build and acquire the blessings of the Lord be for personal gratification, for the recognition of men, and for power, influence, and self-aggrandizement? Or will your motivation be to glorify God, to work to help usher in the growth and expansion of His Church?

Those who seek riches to build up their own egos will find their treasure to be slippery and easily lost in unwise ways (see Helaman 13:31). The welfare of their souls will be in great jeopardy. Jacob, an obedient younger brother of Nephi, warned us:

“And the hand of providence hath smiled upon you most pleasingly, that you have obtained many riches; and because some of you have obtained more abundantly than that of your brethren ye are lifted up in the pride of your hearts, and wear stiff necks and high heads because of the costliness of your apparel, and persecute your brethren because ye suppose that ye are better than they.

“. . . Do ye suppose that God justifieth you in this thing? Behold, I say unto you, Nay. But he condemneth you, and

if ye persist in these things his judgments must speedily come unto you.

“. . . Let not this pride of your hearts destroy your souls!” (Jacob 2:13, 14, 16).

Jacob then put our motivation to acquire wealth in the proper perspective with a promise:

“But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God.

“And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted” (Jacob 2:18–19).

The Lord is not telling us that we should not be prosperous or that prosperity is a sin. On the contrary, He has always blessed His obedient children. But He is telling us that we should seek prosperity only after we seek, find, and serve Him. Then, because our hearts are right, because we love Him first and foremost, we will choose to invest the riches we obtain in building His kingdom.

If you choose to seek riches for the sake of riches, you will fall short. You will never be satisfied. You will be empty, never finding true happiness and lasting joy.



BE OF GOOD CHEER

“Though the storm clouds may gather, though the rains may pour down upon us, our knowledge of the gospel and our love of our Heavenly Father and of our Savior will comfort and sustain us and bring joy to our hearts as we walk uprightly and keep the commandments. There will be nothing in this world that can defeat us.

“My beloved brothers and sisters, fear not. Be of good cheer. The future is as bright as your faith.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Be of Good Cheer,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2009, 92.

The trial of your faith in the next few years will likely not be that you lack the material things of this world. Rather it will be in choosing what to do with the temporal blessings you receive.

Of today’s younger generation, President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) said:

“For nearly six thousand years, God has held you in reserve to make your appearance in the final days before the second coming of the Lord. . . .

“. . . God has saved for the final inning some of His strongest . . . children, who will help bear off the kingdom triumphantly.”³

President Thomas S. Monson said, “You are some of our Heavenly Father’s strongest children, and He has saved you to come to the earth ‘for such a time as this’ [Esther 4:14].”⁴

To be a vital part of the “marvelous work and a wonder” (2 Nephi 25:17) of these last days, you must submit your will to God, letting it be swallowed up in His will. As you “press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men . . . feasting upon the word of Christ” (2 Nephi 31:20), searching diligently, praying always, and believing, then as the Lord promises, “all things shall work together for your good” (D&C 90:24).

Dedicate and Consecrate

I urge you to make a commitment to yourself and to Heavenly Father to dedicate your life and to consecrate your time and talents to building up the Church of Jesus Christ in anticipation of the Savior’s Second Coming. Let the motive of your thoughts and actions be to glorify God and to bless your fellowman. Let this desire inspire you to greet each new morning with enthusiasm and let it fuel your thoughts and actions throughout each day.

If you do this, you will be blessed amid a world that is fast losing its way, and you and your loved ones will be secure and happy. This does not mean that you will not face trials and tests, but it does mean you will have the spiritual

DOCTRINAL POINTS

We can remain optimistic about the future if we:

- Maintain faith in the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.
- Put Heavenly Father first in our lives.
- Dedicate our life and consecrate our time to building the kingdom of God.



power to handle them with faith and trust in the Lord.

The purpose of my message is to help you envision your future. Have faith and hope for the bright future you face. Young men are future fathers; young women are future mothers and nurturers. Together you are “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people” (1 Peter 2:9).

For both men and women, one of your top priorities is to find your eternal companion if you have not already done so. Marriage in the temple will provide you with a companion to help you stay on the right path that leads

back to the presence of our Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We must do our part to continue the preparation for the Second Coming. ■

From a commencement address delivered at Brigham Young University–Idaho on April 6, 2012. For the full text in English, go to web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches/speeches.aspx.

NOTES

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Living in the Fulness of Times,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 6; *Liahona*, Jan. 2002, 6.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 142.
3. Ezra Taft Benson, in Thomas S. Monson, “Dare to Stand Alone,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 62.
4. Thomas S. Monson, “May You Have Courage,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 127.