

STEADFAST AND IMMOVABLE

ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN GOOD WORKS

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The Lord Jesus Christ is the sure foundation, and you and I cannot and will not fall if we build upon Him as our foundation.

If you and I desire to become steadfast and immovable disciples of the Master, we must build appropriately and effectively upon Him as our foundation.

The Mutual theme for 2008 is taken from a prophetic and powerful sermon contained in the Book of Mormon. Approximately 124 years before the birth of the Savior, King Benjamin taught his people an essential truth that is important for us to understand today.

“Therefore, I would that ye should be *steadfast and immovable, always abounding in good works*, that Christ, the Lord God Omnipotent, may seal you his, that you may be brought to heaven, that ye may have everlasting salvation and eternal life, through the wisdom, and power, and justice, and mercy of him who created all things, in heaven and in earth, who is God above all” (Mosiah 5:15; emphasis added).

Note how the promised blessings of everlasting salvation and eternal life, made possible through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, are predicated upon being *steadfast, immovable, and always abounding in good works*—the central elements in the 2008 theme.

Following the example of Nephi, let us “liken [this scripture] unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning” (1 Nephi

19:23) by considering three basic questions.

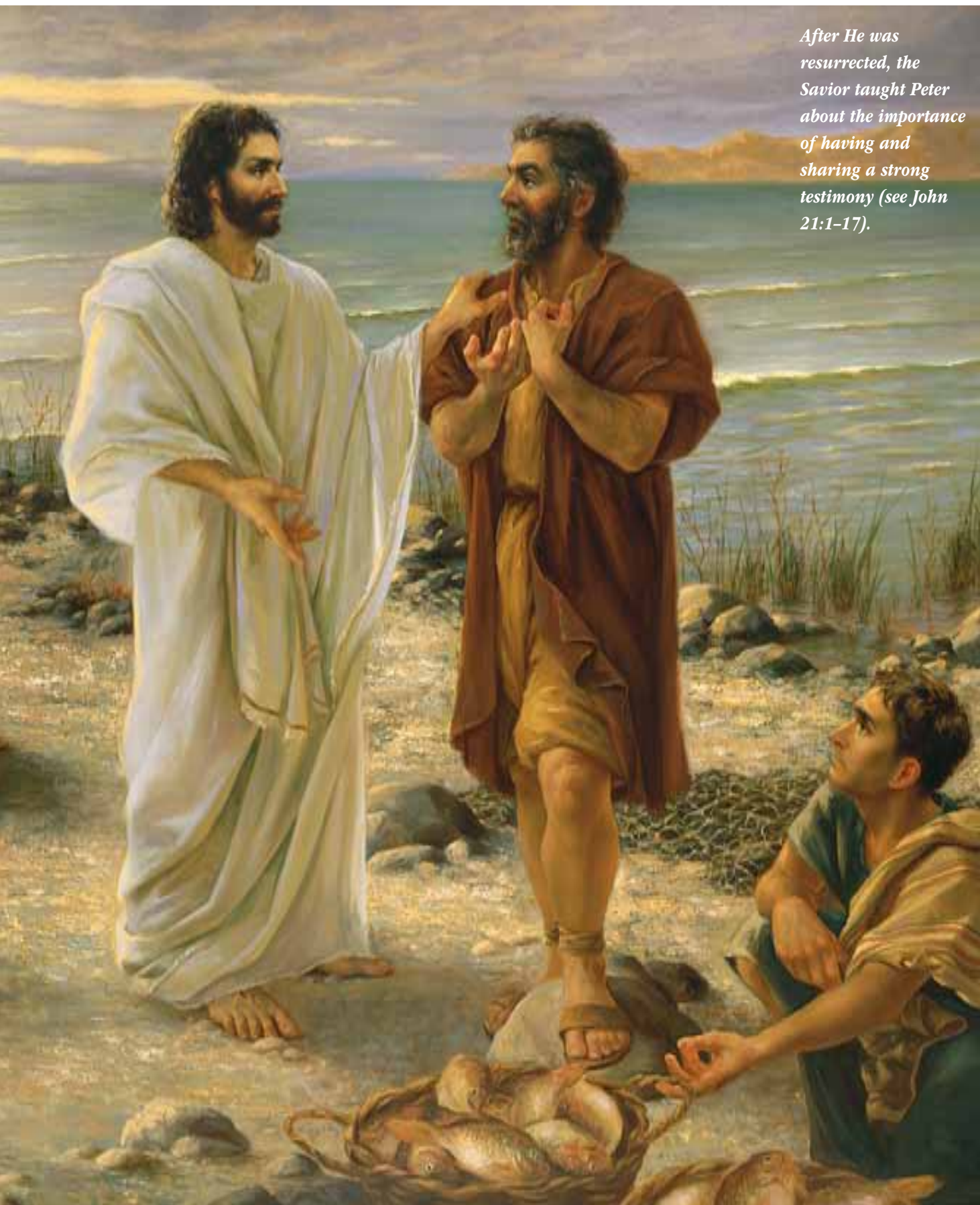
1. What does it mean to be steadfast and immovable?
2. How can we become steadfast and immovable?
3. What blessings are associated with being a steadfast and immovable disciple of the Savior?

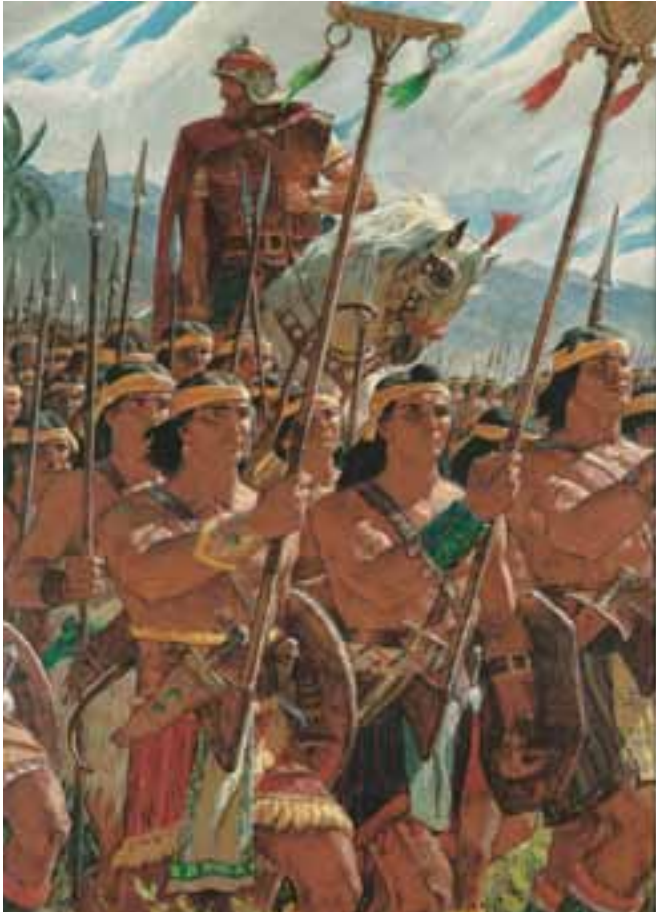
What does it mean to be steadfast and immovable?

The word “steadfast” is used to suggest fixed in position, solid and firm, unshaken and resolute (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*, 2nd ed. [1989], “Steadfast”). The word “immovable” is used to indicate that a person or thing is unalterable, firmly secured, and not subject to change. It also signifies the quality of being unyielding and incapable of being diverted from one’s purpose (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*, “Immovable”). Thus, a person who is steadfast and immovable is solid, firm, resolute, firmly secured, and incapable of being diverted from a primary purpose or mission.

In the scriptures we find many

After He was resurrected, the Savior taught Peter about the importance of having and sharing a strong testimony (see John 21:1-17).





noteworthy examples of individuals who are steadfast and immovable. Captain Moroni is one such striking example. He was strong and mighty, a man of perfect understanding. He did not delight in bloodshed but found joy in the liberty and freedom of his country and his people. Therefore, he labored exceedingly to secure their welfare and safety. His heart was full of thanksgiving to God for the privileges and blessings bestowed upon the Nephites (see Alma 48:11–12). Captain Moroni is described as “a man who was firm in the faith of Christ” (Alma 48:13).

The 2,000 stripling warriors also can accurately be characterized as steadfast and immovable. They were all young men who were exceedingly valiant and courageous. They were also “men who were true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted. Yea, they were men of truth and soberness” (Alma 53:20–21).

Many young women and men in the Church today are blessed with spiritual strength and courage equal to or greater than that exemplified by Captain Moroni or the stripling warriors. They stand firm against the mocking and scorn of the world and live and defend principles

of virtue, integrity, chastity, worthiness, and obedience. Thus, in Captain Moroni, in the stripling warriors, and in so many Latter-day Saint youth of today, we find the characteristics of firmness, of resoluteness, and of an absolute focus upon a compelling and correct purpose.

How do we become steadfast and immovable?

A building or structure that is stable and immovable must be built upon a strong foundation. If you and I desire to become steadfast and immovable disciples of the Master, we must build appropriately and effectively upon Him as our foundation.

“And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon *the rock of our Redeemer*, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must *build your foundation*; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a *sure foundation*, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall” (Helaman 5:12; emphasis added).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the sure foundation, and you and I cannot and will not fall if we build upon Him as our foundation. This is a truly remarkable and faith-promoting promise.

The steps we must follow in building our devotion to and our character upon the foundation of Christ are identified simply and clearly in Helaman 15:

“And behold, ye do know of yourselves, for ye have witnessed it, that as many of them as are brought to the knowledge of the truth, and to know of the wicked and abominable traditions of their fathers, and are led to believe the holy scriptures, yea, the prophecies of the holy prophets, which are written, which leadeth them to faith on the Lord, and unto repentance, which faith and repentance bringeth a change of heart unto them—

“Therefore, as many as have come to this, ye know of yourselves are *firm and steadfast in the faith*, and in the thing wherewith they have been made free” (vv. 7–8; emphasis added).

Please notice the specific steps outlined in these two verses. The first step is (1) *belief in the teachings and prophecies of the holy prophets as recorded in the scriptures*. Such belief (2) *fosters faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*.

Faith in the Savior leads to (3) *repentance*. Faith in Christ and repentance bring about (4) *the mighty change of heart*. As many as have diligently and faithfully followed these steps are (5) *firm and steadfast in the faith*. That is the Lord's blueprint for becoming steadfast and immovable. I testify that as we ponder and follow in faith the building blocks described in these verses, we will be strengthened and blessed to become steadfast and immovable.

What blessings are associated with being a steadfast and immovable disciple of the Savior?

As we become more spiritually mature and increasingly steadfast and immovable, we focus upon and strive to understand the fundamental and foundational doctrines of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Disciples who are steadfast and immovable do not become fanatics or extremists, are not overzealous, and are not preoccupied with misguided gospel hobbies.

President Joseph F. Smith emphasized: "We frequently look about us and see people who incline to extremes, who are fanatical. We may be sure that this class of people do not understand the gospel. They have forgotten, if they ever knew, that it is very unwise to take a fragment of truth and treat it as if it were the whole thing" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 122).

Let me repeat and reinforce this first great blessing associated with being a steadfast and immovable disciple of the Savior: such a follower of Christ consistently is focused upon and striving to understand the fundamental and foundational doctrines of the restored gospel.

Second, as we become more spiritually mature and increasingly steadfast and immovable, we are less prone to zealous and exaggerated spurts of spirituality followed by extended periods of slackness.

In order to better understand this principle, please consider Aesop's fable "The Hare and the Tortoise." After being taunted repeatedly for being slow, the Tortoise challenged the Hare to a race. As the race began, the two started off together. However, the Hare ran rapidly towards the goal and, seeing that he could easily win, lay down and fell asleep a short distance in front of the finish line. The Tortoise maintained a slow but steady and consistent pace toward the finish line. When the Hare awoke from his nap, he started running as fast as he could, only to find that the Tortoise had won the race. The Tortoise is a classic illustration of steadiness and persistence. The Hare, on the other hand, is an example of a "spurter"—one who is given to short bursts of spectacular effort followed by frequent and lengthy periods of rest.

A spurt may appear to be impressive in the short run, but steadiness over time is far more effective, far less dangerous, and produces far better results. Consecutive days of fasting, ultimately, may not be as spiritually edifying as successive months of appropriate fasting and worship on the designated fast Sunday. An attempt to pray one time for several hours likely will not produce the same spiritual results as meaningful morning and evening prayer offered consistently over several weeks. And a single scripture-reading marathon cannot produce the spiritual growth of steady scripture study across many months.

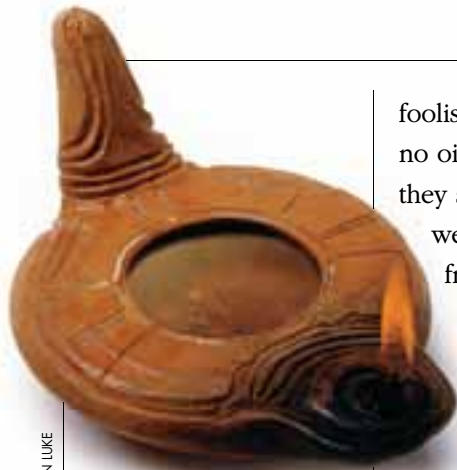
The importance of steadiness and consistency in our spiritual development and progress is beautifully illustrated in the parable of the ten virgins (see Matthew 25:1–13). Ten virgins took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom. Five of the virgins were wise and took oil in their vessels with their lamps. They were prepared to welcome the bridegroom. The five



THE SECOND COMING, BY HARRY ANDERSON

The steps we must follow in building upon the foundation of Christ are simple and clear.

1. *Believe in the teachings and prophecies of the holy prophets as recorded in the scriptures.*
2. *Let belief foster faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.*
3. *Repent.*
4. *Have a mighty change of heart.*
5. *Remain firm and steadfast in the faith.*



The oil of preparedness and steadiness is accumulated each day through consistent, wise choices.

foolish virgins took their lamps but took no oil with them. The foolish virgins knew they should have oil but procrastinated, were unprepared, and were shut out from the wedding feast.

The oil of preparedness and steadiness is accumulated each day through consistent, wise choices. President Spencer W. Kimball described it this way: “Attendance at sacrament meetings adds oil to our lamps, drop by drop over the years. Fasting, family prayer, home teaching, control of bodily appetites, preaching the gospel, studying the scriptures—each act of dedication and obedience is a drop added to our store. Deeds of kindness, payment of offerings and tithes, chaste thoughts and actions, marriage in the covenant for eternity—these, too, contribute importantly to the oil with which we can at midnight refuel our exhausted lamps” (*Faith Precedes the Miracle* [1972], 255–56).

The key lesson for us to learn from this statement by President Kimball is that deliberate, consistent, and reliable preparation and performance provide essential oil for our lamps. Furthermore, steadfastness is a prime indicator of spiritual maturity.

You and I can also learn much about steady spiritual development from the technique of drip irrigation that is used in many agricultural areas throughout the world. Drip irrigation is sometimes called trickle irrigation and involves dripping water onto the soil at very low rates from a system of small plastic pipes fitted with outlets called emitters or drippers. Unlike surface and sprinkler irrigation, which involves flooding, gushing, or spraying large quantities of water where it may not be needed, drip irrigation applies water close to a plant so that only part of the soil in which the roots grow is wetted. With drip irrigation, applications of water are more focused and



FIVE OF THEM WERE WISE, BY WALTER RANE

more frequent than with the other methods. The steady drips of water sink deep into the ground and provide a high moisture level in the soil wherein plants can flourish.

In like manner, if you and I are focused on receiving consistent drops of spiritual nourishment, then gospel roots can sink deep into our souls, can become firmly established and grounded, and can produce extraordinary and delicious fruit. In a gospel sense, you and I need to implement constant spiritual drip saturation and avoid sporadic and shallow spiritual spurting. Sturdy gospel roots that go deep into rich spiritual soil strengthen and steady us in times of trial and difficulty.

I testify and witness that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ. May you and I build our lives upon the foundation of Christ. May we apply correct principles to become steadfast and immovable—solid, firm, resolute, firmly secured, and incapable of being diverted from the path of righteousness—keeping and honoring our covenants and commitments, living worthy and pure lives, and becoming valiant disciples of the Savior. **NE**