



*Elder Joseph Fielding Smith in 1910, soon after he was ordained an Apostle*



## Proclaiming the Gospel to the World

*“We have tasted the fruits of the gospel and know they are good, and we desire that all men shall receive the same blessings and the same spirit that have been poured out so abundantly upon us.”*

### **From the Life of Joseph Fielding Smith**

Joseph Fielding Smith and his wife, Louie, were not surprised when they received a letter, signed by President Lorenzo Snow, calling Joseph to serve a full-time mission. In those early days of the Church, married men often served away from home. So when that letter arrived on March 17, 1899, about a month before their first wedding anniversary, Joseph and Louie accepted the opportunity with faith and courage, mixed with sadness at the thought of being separated for two years.

Elder Smith served in England, about 4,700 miles (about 7,600 kilometers) from home. He and Louie sent letters to each other often—letters filled with expressions of love and testimony. In one of Elder Smith’s first letters to Louie, he wrote: “I know that the work I have been called to do is the work of God or I would not stay here one minute, no, I would not have left home. But I know that our happiness is dependent upon my faithfulness while I am here. I should be willing to do this much for the love of mankind when our Savior could suffer as He did for us. . . . I am in the hands of our Heavenly Father and he will watch over me and protect me if I do his will. And he will be with you while I am away and watch over you and protect you in all things.”<sup>1</sup>

Elder Smith and his missionary companions were dedicated servants of the Lord. In one letter to Louie, he reported that each

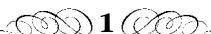
month, he and the other missionaries distributed about 10,000 tracts, or pamphlets, and visited about 4,000 homes. However, he followed this report with a sobering observation: "I don't believe one, or more than one, tract in every hundred is read."<sup>2</sup> During the time Elder Smith was in England, very few of the people there accepted the message of the restored gospel. In his two years of service, "he did not make one convert, did not have opportunity to perform one baptism, although he did confirm one convert."<sup>3</sup> Unable to see many results of his labors, he found comfort in knowing that he was doing the Lord's will and that he was helping prepare people who might receive the gospel later in their lives.

For about two weeks of his mission, Elder Smith was confined in a hospital with four other missionaries. The five elders had been exposed to smallpox, so they were quarantined to prevent the illness from spreading. Although Elder Smith referred to their stay as an "imprisonment," he and his companions made the best of it. They even shared the gospel with the hospital staff. At the end of the confinement, Elder Smith wrote the following report in his journal: "We have made friends with the nurses and others who visited us during our imprisonment. Many times we have had talks with them about the gospel; also left with them books to read. When we left the hospital we sang a hymn or two, which among other things impressed those who listened, for we left them with tears in their eyes. I think we have made an impression at the hospital for good, especially with the nurses, who confess that we are not the people they thought we were and [that] they will now defend us at all times."<sup>4</sup>

Elder Smith concluded his mission in June 1901. Seventy years later, he returned to England as President of the Church to preside over an area conference. By that time, the seeds he and others had planted had sprouted and flourished. He rejoiced to see so many British Saints come to the meetings.<sup>5</sup> He said, "Several stakes of Zion, a temple dedicated to the Lord, a considerable number of ward and stake buildings, and some highly successful missionary work—all testify to the fact that the Church is coming of age in Great Britain." And he said that this progress in Great Britain was representative of what would happen throughout the world. He

declared that the gospel is for all people and that “the Church shall be established everywhere, in all nations, even to the ends of the earth, before the second coming of the Son of Man.”<sup>6</sup>

## Teachings of Joseph Fielding Smith



### **We alone have the fulness of the restored gospel, and we desire that all people receive the same blessing.**

In his infinite wisdom, and to fulfill the covenants and promises made to the prophets of old, the Lord has restored in these last days the fullness of his everlasting gospel. This gospel is the plan of salvation. It was ordained and established in the councils of eternity before the foundations of this earth were laid, and it has been revealed anew in our day for the salvation and blessing of all our Father’s children everywhere. . . .

Nearly six hundred years before Christ—that is, his coming—the great prophet Nephi said to his people: “. . . there is one God and one Shepherd over all the earth.

“And the time cometh that he shall manifest himself unto all nations. . . .” (1 Ne. 13:41–42.)

That promised day is now dawning. This is the appointed time for the preaching of the gospel in all the world and for the building up of the Lord’s kingdom in every nation. There are good and upright people in all nations who will respond to the truth; who will come into the Church; and who will become lights to guide their own people. . . .

. . . The gospel is for all people, and the Lord expects those who receive it to live its truths and to offer them to those of their own nation and tongue.

And so now, in the spirit of love and brotherhood, we invite all men everywhere to give heed to the words of eternal life revealed in this day through the Prophet Joseph Smith and his associates.

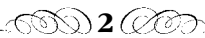
We invite our Father’s other children to “come unto Christ, and be perfected in him,” and to deny themselves of “all ungodliness.” (Moro. 10:32.)

We invite them to believe in Christ and his gospel, to come into his church, and to be one with his saints.

We have tasted the fruits of the gospel and know they are good, and we desire that all men shall receive the same blessings and the same spirit that have been poured out so abundantly upon us.<sup>7</sup>

I am not unmindful that there are good and devout people among all sects, parties, and denominations, and they will be blessed and rewarded for all the good they do. But the fact remains that we alone have the fullness of those laws and ordinances which prepare men for the fullness of reward in the mansions above. And so we say to the good and noble, the upright and devout people everywhere: Keep all the good you have; cleave unto every true principle which is now yours; but come and partake of the further light and knowledge which that God who is the same yesterday, today, and forever is again pouring out upon his people.<sup>8</sup>

I pray that the Lord's purposes on earth, both in and out of the Church, may speedily be brought to pass; that he will bless his faithful Saints; and that the hearts of hosts of men who seek truth and whose hearts are right before the Lord may become inheritors with us of the fullness of the blessings of the restored gospel.<sup>9</sup>



**All Church members have a responsibility  
to use their strength, energy, means, and  
influence to proclaim the gospel.**

We have heard that we are all missionaries. . . . We are all set apart, not by the laying on of hands; we have not had a special calling; we have not been singled out to do missionary labor, but as members of the Church, having pledged ourselves to the advancement of the gospel of Jesus Christ we become missionaries. That is part of the responsibility of every member of the Church.<sup>10</sup>

With a heart full of love for all men, I ask the members of the Church to learn and live the gospel and to use their strength, energy, and means in proclaiming it to the world. We have received a commission from the Lord. He has given a divine mandate. He has commanded us to go forth with unwearying diligence and offer



*“Every person who receives the light of the gospel becomes a light and a guide to all those whom he is able to teach.”*

to his other children those saving truths revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith.<sup>11</sup>

Our mission, I say, is, so far as it is within our power, to regenerate, to bring to repentance, just as many of the children of our Father in heaven as it is possible for us to do. . . . That is an obligation the Lord has placed upon the Church, and more particularly upon the quorums of the priesthood of the Church, and yet this obligation belongs to every soul.<sup>12</sup>

There are among us a great many honest souls who have never accepted the opportunity, or have never taken the trouble to search, that they might find these glorious truths which have been made known in the revelations of the Lord. They do not think of these things, they live among us, we associate with them and we come in contact with them daily. They think we are a pretty nice sort of people, but peculiar in our religious views, and therefore they pay

no attention to our faith, and therefore this great missionary work that is being carried on now in the stakes of Zion is gathering in a harvest of honest, faithful souls right here from among those who before had never taken the opportunity, I say, which has been theirs, to hear the gospel.<sup>13</sup>

We who have received the truth of the everlasting gospel ought not to be satisfied with anything short of the best, and the best is the fulness of the Father's kingdom; and for that I hope and pray we shall live and set examples in righteousness to all men that none may stumble, that none may falter, that none may turn from the path of righteousness, due to anything that we may do or say.<sup>14</sup>

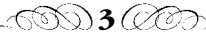
There is an influence that radiates not only from the individual but from the Church. I believe that our success in the world depends largely upon the attitude of the Saints. If we were united wholly, in thought, in deed, in our actions; if we loved the word of truth, if we walked in it as the Lord would have us do, then there would radiate from this community, from [congregations] of the Latter-day Saints in all of these communities, out into all the world, an influence that would be irresistible. More honest men and women would be converted, for the Spirit of the Lord would go before us to prepare the way. . . . If they, this people, would keep the commandments of the Lord it would be a force and a power and influence that would break down opposition and would prepare people to receive the light of the everlasting Gospel; and when we fail to do it we take upon ourselves a responsibility that is dreadful in its consequences.

How will I feel, or you, when called before the judgment seat if someone shall point his finger at me or you and say that "if it had not been for the actions of this man or this group I would have received the truth, but I was blinded because they, professing to have the light, did not live it."<sup>15</sup>

The Lord says if we labor all our days and save but one soul, how great will be our joy with him [see D&C 18:15]; on the other hand how great will be our sorrow and our condemnation if through our acts we have led one soul away from this truth.<sup>16</sup>

The Latter-day Saints, wherever they may be, are and should be a light to the world. The gospel is a light breaking forth in darkness, and every person who receives the light of the gospel becomes a light and a guide to all those whom he is able to teach.

Your responsibility . . . is to be living witnesses of the truth and divinity of the work. We hope you will live the gospel and work out your own salvation, and that others seeing your good works may be led to glorify our Father in heaven [see Matthew 5:16].<sup>17</sup>




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**The Church needs more missionaries  
to go forth on the Lord's errand.**

We need missionaries. . . . The field is wide; the harvest is great; but the laborers are few [see Luke 10:2]. Likewise the field is white and ready for the harvest [see D&C 4:4]. . . .

. . . Our missionaries go forth. No power has been able to stay their hands. It has been tried. Great efforts were made in the very beginning when there was only a handful of missionaries, but the progress of this work could not be stopped. It cannot be stopped now. It must and will go forth that the inhabitants of the earth may have the opportunity of repenting of their sins and receive the remission of their sins and come into the Church and kingdom of God, before these final destructions come upon the wicked, for they have been promised. . . .

And these missionaries, mostly young men, untrained in the ways of the world, go forth with this message of salvation and confound the great and the mighty, because they have the truth. They are proclaiming this gospel; the honest and sincere are hearing it and are repenting of their sins and coming into the Church.<sup>18</sup>

We hope to see the day when every worthy and qualified young Latter-day Saint man will have the privilege of going forth on the Lord's errand to stand as a witness of the truth in the nations of the earth.

We now have many and can use many more stable and mature couples in this great missionary cause, and we hope that those who are worthy and qualified will set their affairs in order and respond





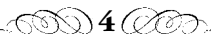
*“We commend those who are serving so valiantly  
in the great missionary cause.”*

to calls to preach the gospel and will perform their obligations acceptably.

We also have and can use many young sisters in this work, although the same responsibility does not rest upon them that rests upon the brethren, and our greater concern with reference to young sisters is that they enter proper marital unions in the temples of the Lord.

We invite members of the Church to assist financially in sustaining the missionary cause and to contribute liberally of their means for the spread of the gospel.

We commend those who are serving so valiantly in the great missionary cause. Joseph Smith said: “After all that has been said, the greatest and most important duty is to preach the gospel.”<sup>19</sup>



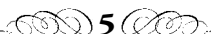
**We are to preach the doctrines of salvation as they are recorded in the scriptures, in plainness and simplicity and as guided by the Spirit.**

In the early days of this dispensation, the Lord said to those called in his ministry, “that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world; . . . That the fulness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and the simple unto the ends of the world, and before kings and rulers.” (D&C 1:20, 23.)

To those called “to go forth to preach” his gospel and to all “the elders, priests and teachers” of his church, he said: They “shall teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon,” and the other scriptures, “as they shall be directed by the Spirit.” (See D&C 42:11–13.)

As agents of the Lord we are not called or authorized to teach the philosophies of the world or the speculative theories of our scientific age. Our mission is to preach the doctrines of salvation in *plainness* and simplicity as they are revealed and recorded in the scriptures.

After directing us to teach the principles of the gospel found in the standard works, as guided by the Spirit, the Lord then made that great pronouncement which governs all the teaching of his gospel by anyone in the Church: “And the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach.” (D&C 42:14.)<sup>20</sup>



**The gospel is the sole hope of the world, the one way that will bring peace on earth.**

Do you know what is the greatest power, the most potent factor in all the world, for the permanent establishment of peace in the earth? Having asked the question I will answer it, at least I will express my view in regard to it—not saying anything about other movements. The greatest factor in all the world is the power of the Holy Priesthood, and that is in the possession of the Latter-day Saints. Right from the beginning the Lord sent out the elders into the

world, commanding them to call upon the people, saying, Repent, come unto Zion. Believe in my gospel and you shall have peace.

Peace will come, of course, through righteousness, through justice, through the mercy of God, through the power which he will grant unto us by which our hearts will be touched and we will have love one for another. Now our duty is to declare these things among all people, call upon them to come unto Zion where the standard is set up—the standard of peace—and to receive of the blessings of the house of the Lord and the influence of his Holy Spirit which is here manifest. And I want to tell you that we ourselves, if we will serve the Lord, have wonderful power in regard to the establishment of peace in the world.

Now we are willing that other movements in this direction should go on. We are in favor of all that will bring peace unto the world; but let us not lose sight of the fact that we, Latter-day Saints, if we will band together, and stand as one serving the Lord and will send forth the word of eternal life among the nations, will have greater power, in my judgment, for the establishment of peace in the world than any other force. I am in full accord with the idea that has been expressed that the Lord is using many agencies; his work is not confined to the Latter-day Saints, for he has called many to his service outside of the Church and has endowed them with power, has inspired them to do his work. . . . However, my brethren and sisters, do not let us lose sight of the fact that we are a power in the earth for good and for the spread of the truth and the establishment of peace among all nations, kindreds, tongues and peoples. . . . Our mission has been and is, “Repent ye, for the kingdom of God is at hand.” [See D&C 33:10.]

We must continue until all the righteous are gathered out, until all men are warned, until those who will hear shall hear, and those who will not hear also shall hear, for the Lord has declared that there shall not be a soul that shall not hear, not a heart that shall not be penetrated [see D&C 1:2], for his word will go forth, whether it be the word of his elders or by some other means, it mattereth not, but in his due time he shall cut short his work in righteousness; he shall establish his truth and he shall come and reign upon the earth.<sup>21</sup>

We respect our Father's other children of all sects, parties, and denominations, and have no desire except to see them receive the added light and knowledge that has come to us by revelation, and to become with us inheritors of the great blessings of the restoration of the gospel.

But we have the plan of salvation; we administer the gospel; and the gospel is the sole hope of the world, the one way that will bring peace on earth and right the wrongs that exist in all nations.<sup>22</sup>

We know that if men will have faith in Christ, repent of their sins, covenant in the waters of baptism to keep his commandments, and then receive the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands by those who are called and ordained unto this power—and if they will then keep the commandments—they shall have peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come [see D&C 59:23].<sup>23</sup>

There is no cure for the ills of the world except the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our hope for peace, for temporal and spiritual prosperity, and for an eventual inheritance in the kingdom of God is found only in and through the restored gospel. There is no work that any of us can engage in that is as important as preaching the gospel and building up the Church and kingdom of God on earth.<sup>24</sup>

## **Suggestions for Study and Teaching**

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### *Questions*

- Think about the way Joseph Fielding Smith responded to challenges as a full-time missionary (see “From the Life of Joseph Fielding Smith”). How might his example influence your service in the Church?
- Ponder the blessing of tasting “the fruits of the gospel” (section 1). Think about people with whom you can share these “fruits.”
- How can President Smith’s words in section 2 help us share the gospel with others?
- President Smith said that the Church needs more full-time missionaries, including “mature couples” (section 3). What can we do to help youth prepare to serve? What can you do to prepare yourself to serve?

- In what ways can our words and actions communicate the plainness and simplicity of the gospel? (See section 4.) When have you felt the Holy Ghost guide you in these efforts?
- What teachings in section 5 are particularly inspiring to you? What are your feelings as you think about sharing “the sole hope of the world, the one way that will bring peace on earth”?

### *Related Scriptures*

Matthew 24:14; Mark 16:15; 1 Nephi 13:37; 2 Nephi 2:6–8; 3 Nephi 12:13–16; D&C 1:17–24; 4; 50:13–14; 88:81; 133:57–58

### *Teaching Help*

When a participant reads aloud from President Smith’s teachings, invite the other participants to “listen and look for specific principles or ideas. If a passage contains unusual or difficult words or phrases, explain these before the passage is read. If anyone in the group might have difficulty reading, ask for volunteers instead of having them take turns” (*Teaching, No Greater Call* [1999], 56).

### **Notes**

1. Joseph Fielding Smith to Louie Shurtliff Smith, in Joseph Fielding Smith Jr. and John J. Stewart, *The Life of Joseph Fielding Smith* (1972), 114–15.
2. Joseph Fielding Smith to Louie Shurtliff Smith, in *The Life of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 102.
3. See *The Life of Joseph Fielding Smith*, 91.
4. Journal of Joseph Fielding Smith, Apr. 30, 1901, Church History Library; punctuation and capitalization standardized.
5. See Conference Report, British Area General Conference 1971, 85.
6. In Conference Report, British Area General Conference 1971, 176.
7. “I Know That My Redeemer Liveth,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1971, 26–27.
8. “A Witness and a Blessing,” *Ensign*, June 1971, 109–10.
9. “Out of the Darkness,” *Ensign*, June 1971, 4.
10. *Take Heed to Yourselves*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr. (1966), 27–28.
11. In Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 5–6.
12. In Conference Report, Apr. 1944, 50; see also *Doctrines of Salvation*, ed. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 1:308.
13. In Conference Report, Apr. 1921, 42.
14. In Conference Report, Apr. 1923, 139.
15. In Conference Report, Oct. 1933, 62–63.
16. In Conference Report, Apr. 1951, 153.
17. In Conference Report, British Area General Conference 1971, 176.
18. In Conference Report, Apr. 1953, 19–20.
19. In Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 7; see also *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 330.
20. In Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 5.
21. In Conference Report, Oct. 1919, 89–90.
22. “To the Saints in Great Britain,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1971, 3–4.
23. In Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 7.
24. “Counsel to the Saints and to the World,” *Ensign*, July 1972, 27.