

THE BOOK OF NELSON

Vol 2: 2018 - present

THE FIFTH BOOK OF RUSSELL M NELSON

2018 - Present

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
1 - As We Go Forward Together	2	33 - Witnesses, Aaronic Priesthood Quorums, and Young Women Classes	86
2 - First Presidency News Conference.....	5	34 - Spiritual Treasures	88
3 - Introductory Remarks	9	35 - The Second Great Commandment	92
4 - Ministering with the Power and Authority of God.....	11	36 - Closing Remarks	97
5 - Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives.....	15	37 - How Do You #HearHim?	101
6 - Ministering.....	20	38 - My Message of Hope and Love For You. 102	
7 - Let Us All Press On.....	21	39 - Invitation to All to Join in a Fast for Relief from COVID-19	102
8 - Worldwide Priesthood Celebration.....	22	40 - The Future of the Church: Preparing the World for the Savior's Second Coming	103
9 - Hope of Israel	23	41 - Opening Message	108
10 - Special Witness of the Living Christ and His Atonement.....	35	42 - Opening the Heavens for Help.....	109
11 - Opening Remarks	37	43 - Hear Him	113
12 - Sisters' Participation in the Gathering of Israel	39	44 - Hosannah Shout.....	120
13 - The Correct Name of the Church	43	45 - Go Forward with Faith.....	120
14 - Becoming Exemplary Latter-day Saints .48		46 - Encouragement of Caution.....	123
15 - Concepción Chile Temple Dedicatory Prayer	50	47 - Call for Respect For Human Dignity	124
16 - Interview in Chile	51	48 - Moving Forward	125
17 - Sergio Rubín Interview	52	49 - Embrace the Future with Faith	126
18 - Four Gifts That Jesus Christ Offers to You 54		50 - Let God Prevail	131
19 - Symbols in the New Testament	57	51 - A New Normal	137
20 - A Message of Gratitude and a Promise for the Women of the Church in 2019.....	58	52 - The Healing Power of Gratitude	138
21 - President Nelson Meets with Pope Francis 59		53 - Divine Gifts.....	141
22 - Rome Italy Temple Dedicatory Prayer 59		54 - Grow into the Principle of Revelation ... 145	
23 - We Can Do Better and Be Better	61	55 - The Peace and Hope of Easter	148
24 - "Come, Follow Me"	65	56 - Welcome Message.....	150
25 - Closing Remarks	70	57 - What We Are Learning and Will Never Forget	151
26 - Samoa Interview with Mata'afa Keni Lesa 72		58 - Christ is Risen; Faith in Him Will Move Mountains	155
27 - Changes to Seminary and Institute Curriculum.....	73	59 - COVID-19 and Temples	160
28 - How Repentance Can Help You Overcome Pornography	74	60 - Pure Truth, Pure Doctrine, and Pure Revelation	161
29 - Brazil Interview.....	75	61 - The Temple and Your Spiritual Foundation.....	162
30 - Isabel Tacaki Interview	76	62 - Make Time for the Lord	168
31 - 95th Birthday Celebration	78	63 - Jesus Christ is Your Savior.....	169
32 - The Love and Laws of God	80	64 - Preaching the Gospel of Peace	172
		65 - The Power of Spiritual Momentum	173

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
66 - Now Is The Time.....	178
67 - Choices for Eternity	180
68 - Washington D.C. Temple Dedicatory Prayer.....	188
69 - Ephraim Temple Site Groundbreaking Remarks and Dedicatory Prayer	190
70 - The Everlasting Covenant	193
71 - What is True?	200
72 - Overcome the World and Find Rest.....	202
73 - Focus on the Temple.....	206
74 - The Light of Jesus Christ.....	207
75 - Patient, Persistant and Prayerful	208
76 - Jesus Christ is Our Savior	209
77 - Your Savior and the Future Before You .	213
78 - Peacemakers Needed	215
79 - The Answer is Always Jesus Christ	220
80 - Forgiving Others	221
81 - Fulfilling Our Comission As Disciples of Jesus Christ.....	223
82 - Think Celestial!	224
83 - Connect to Christ's Power	228
84 - Come, Let Us Adore Him	230
85 - The Influence of Women.....	233
86 - Manti Temple Rededication	235
87 - Rejoice in the Gift of Priesthood Keys ...	236
88 - A Pattern for Unity in Jesus Christ.....	241
89 - The Lord Jesus Christ Will Come Again	244

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
----------------	-------------

THE FIFTH BOOK OF RUSSELL M NELSON

A collection of conference talks, devotionals and videos from 2018 thru the present. With the death of Thomas S Monson on January 2, 2018, Nelson became the anticipated successor to the church’s presidency. Nelson signed 1,150 mission calls as the presiding apostle. He was ordained and set apart as church president on January 14, 2018. The first trip as prophet, called a global ministry tour by the church, occurred in April 2018, when Nelson along with his wife, and Jeffrey R. Holland and his wife, met with Latter-day Saints in London, England; Jerusalem; Nairobi, Kenya; Harare, Zimbabwe; Bengaluru, India; Bangkok, Thailand; Hong Kong; and Laie, Hawaii. Later that year, Nelson toured five South American countries, during which he dedicated the Concepción Chile Temple as well as a trip to Canada. On February 10, 2019, Nelson spoke to church members in Arizona at State Farm Stadium in Glendale. On March 9, 2019, Nelson met with Pope Francis at the Vatican. The event marked the first time in history that a pope and an LDS Church president met face-to-face. The meeting took place the day before the church’s Rome Italy Temple was dedicated. In August 2019, Nelson visited Guatemala, Colombia, Ecuador, Argentina and Brazil. Up through August 2019, he had visited sixteen countries, addressing thousands of members of the faith. Numerous procedural and policy changes have been implemented since he become prophet including but not limited to: changes to priesthood quorum structure on the ward and stake level, retiring of home and visiting teaching with implementation of ministering, urging of use of the church’s full and proper name, home-centered worship and the Come Follow Me program, class progression based on calendar years instead of birthdays, and much more.

CHAPTER 1

As We Go Forward Together - Delivered from the Salt Lake Temple on January 16, 2018. Printed in the April 2018 Ensign.

DEAR brothers and sisters, I’m humbled to be with you this morning. Four days ago we laid to rest a giant of a man, a prophet of God—President Thomas S. Monson. No words can do justice to the magnitude and magnificence of his life. I will forever cherish our friendship with gratitude for what he taught me. Now we must look forward to the future with complete faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, whose Church this is.

2 Two days ago all of the living Apostles met in the upper

room of the Salt Lake Temple. There they made a unanimous decision, first, to reorganize the First Presidency now and, second, that I serve as President of the Church. Words are inadequate to tell you what it felt like to have my Brethren—Brethren who hold all the priesthood keys restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith in this dispensation—place their hands upon my head to ordain and set me apart as President of the Church. It was a sacred and humbling experience.

3 It then became my responsibility to discern whom the Lord had prepared to be my counselors. How could I choose only two of the twelve other Apostles, each of whom I love so dearly? I’m

deeply grateful to the Lord for answering my fervent prayers. I am very thankful that President Dallin Harris Oaks and President Henry Bennion Eyring are willing to serve with me as First and Second Counselors, respectively. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf has resumed his place in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He has already received major assignments for which he is uniquely qualified.

4 I pay tribute to him and to President Eyring for their magnificent service as counselors to President Monson. They've been totally capable, devoted, and inspired. We are very grateful for them. Each is willing to serve now where he is needed most.

5 As the Apostle second in seniority, President Oaks also becomes President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. However, given his call to the First Presidency and consistent with the order of the Church, President M. Russell Ballard, next in seniority, will serve as the Acting President of that quorum. The First Presidency will work hand in hand with the Twelve to discern the will of the Lord and move His sacred work forward.

6 We are thankful for your prayers. They have been offered throughout the world for us. On the morning following President Monson's passing, one such prayer was offered by a four-year-old boy named Benson. I quote excerpts from his mother's letter written to my wife, Wendy. Benson prayed, "Heav-

enly Father, thank you that President Thomas S. Monson could see his wife again. Thank you for our new prophet. Help him to be brave and not scared that he's new. Help him to grow up to be healthy and strong. Help him to have power because he has the priesthood. And help us always to be nice."

7 I thank God for children like this and for parents who are serious about their commitment to righteous, intentional parenting—for every parent, teacher, and member who carries heavy burdens and yet serves so willingly. In other words, for each one of you, I am most humbly grateful.

The Lord Is at the Helm

8 As we go forward together, I invite you to think about the majestic manner by which the Lord governs His Church. When a President of the Church passes away, there is no mystery about who is next called to serve in that capacity. There is no electioneering, no campaigning, but only the quiet workings of a divine plan of succession put in place by the Lord Himself.

9 Each day of an Apostle's service is a day of learning and preparing for more responsibility in the future. It takes decades of service for an Apostle to move from the junior chair to the senior chair in the circle. During that time, he gains firsthand experience in each facet of the work of the Church. He also becomes well acquainted with the peoples of the earth, including

their histories, cultures, and languages as assignments take him repeatedly across the globe. This process of succession in the leadership of the Church is unique. I know of nothing else like it. That should not surprise us, because this is the Lord's Church. He does not work after the manner of men.

10 I've served in the Quorum of the Twelve under five previous Presidents of the Church. I have watched each President receive revelation and respond to that revelation. The Lord always has and always will instruct and inspire His prophets. The Lord is at the helm. We who have been ordained to bear witness of His holy name throughout the world will continue to seek to know His will and follow it.

Stay on the Covenant Path

11 Now, to each member of the Church I say, keep on the covenant path. Your commitment to follow the Savior by making covenants with Him and then keeping those covenants will open the door to every spiritual blessing and privilege available to men, women, and children everywhere.

12 As a new Presidency, we want to begin with the end in mind. For this reason, we're speaking to you today from a temple. The end for which each of us strives is to be endowed with power in a house of the Lord, sealed as families, faithful to covenants made in a temple that qualify us for the greatest gift of God—that of eternal life. The ordinanc-

es of the temple and the covenants you make there are key to strengthening your life, your marriage and family, and your ability to resist the attacks of the adversary. Your worship in the temple and your service there for your ancestors will bless you with increased personal revelation and peace and will fortify your commitment to stay on the covenant path.

13 Now, if you have stepped off the path, may I invite you with all the hope in my heart to please come back. Whatever your concerns, whatever your challenges, there is a place for you in this, the Lord's Church. You and generations yet unborn will be blessed by your actions now to return to the covenant path. Our Father in Heaven cherishes His children, and He wants each of us to return home to Him. This is a grand goal of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—to help each of us to come back home.

14 I express my deep love for you—love that has grown over decades of meeting you, worshipping with you, and serving you. Our divine mandate is to go to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, helping to prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord. This we will do with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that He is in charge. This is His work and His Church. We are His servants.

15 I declare my devotion to God our Eternal Father and to His Son, Jesus Christ. I know Them,

love Them, and pledge to serve Them—and you—with every remaining breath of my life. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 2

First Presidency News Conference - Excerpts from President Nelson-during the news conference held on January 16th, 2018.

DEAR brothers and sisters we've just come from the Salt Lake temple where we broadcast our feelings of fondness for President Thomas S Monson, with profound gratitude for his life of service to the Lord and to the people of the world. I also announced that two days ago, my brethren of the quorum of the twelve apostles laid hands upon my head to ordain me, set me apart as the President of the Church. It was a sacred and humbling experience. Prayers and good wishes have come from near and far; for which I am very grateful.

2 We live in a most vibrant era in the history of the world. I wake up every morning eager for the adventures of the day. And I hope you feel that same exuberance for the gift of life. Though our world is filled with serious challenges, I am optimistic about the future and feel confident about the fundamental goodness of humankind. I marvel and the compassionate outreach we see constantly from leaders and members of other faiths and from people of good will everywhere who seek to re-

duce human suffering wherever it is found.

3 Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who live in virtually every country of the world, care deeply about the human family. The Church will continue to contribute resources and manpower to provide aid in areas of need and in times of turmoil.

4 In addition, we wish for people everywhere to have the opportunity to hear the positive message of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Because we declare that it has the answers to the most compelling and complicated challenges facing us today. I give you my assurance that, regardless of the world's condition and your personal circumstances, you can face the future with optimism and joy if you have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His gospel.

5 Now if you're not yet affiliated with His Church, I invite you to come and see if we can add knowledge, perspective, and hope to your life in a way that will make it more abundant, meaningful, and joyful.

6 To each member of the church, man, woman, and child, I express my deep love for you; love that has grown over decades of meeting with you, worshiping with you and serving you. Your commitment to follow the Savior by making covenants with Him, and then keeping those covenants, will open the door to every spiritual privilege and bless-

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

ing available to women, men, and children everywhere. The ordinances of the temple and the covenants you make there, are key to strengthening your life, your marriage, your family, and your ability to resist the attacks of the adversary. Your worship in the temple and your service there for your ancestors will bless you with increased personal revelation and peace and will fortify your commitment to keep on the covenant path.

7 I encourage each of us to go forward with faith in Jesus Christ knowing that He is in charge. This is His work and its His church. We are His servants. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will continue to go forward to bless every nation, kindred, tongue and people. I declare my devotion to God our Eternal Father and to His Son Jesus Christ. I know Them, love Them and pledge to serve Them and you with every remaining breath of my life. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

LGBT Issues

8 God loves His children and He wants them to have joy. We know that there are challenges with the commandments of God, challenges to be worthy to enter His holy presence when we're through with this mortal experience. We're trying to help people find joy in this life and prepare for their great possibilities in the world ahead. God loves His children and we love them and there's a place for everyone who wishes to do so regardless of its challenges to be with us

in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

World Economic Challenges

9 You know, we have a special love for the people of Mexico as we do for the people everywhere. Our hearts go out to the victims of natural disasters like we've had in Mexico and in other parts of the world; earthquakes, hurricanes, tornados and floods. That's going to be a fact of life. We have to live with danger around us.

10 Now how do you do that? I think the most important thing is to prepare our people with faith in God and a knowledge that he has a plan for us. That plan will immunize us from a lot of the social apathy and challenges that could be avoided. One day at the end of our mortal sojourn we can have that glorious privilege of being reunited with God and with His beloved Son and with our families.

Equality in Church Leadership

11 I hope I can be forgiven if I say I have a special place in my heart for you [Peggy]. I know your mother. I know your father. I know all four of your grandparents. And I know your family; your missionary children who've distinguished themselves with wonderful service. So Peggy is special to me.

12 We are white. We are American. But look at our quorums of the seventy and look at our leaders locally. Wherever we go the leadership of the church is from the local communities and

those are the real leaders. The twelve and the seventy are not a representative assembly of any kind. That means we don't have representatives. How would you govern a church with a representative from all of the 188 countries? Somebodies going to be left out. But it doesn't matter because the Lord's in charge and we'll live to see the day when there will be other flavors in the mix.

13 We respond because we've been called by the Lord. Not one of us asked to be here. I'll have to tell you about when I was called to the twelve, nearly 34 years ago. I was on the board of directors of a commercial concern and one of them was a rather worldly person, not of our faith. When I was called to the twelve he said, "I just don't understand your church. They live on the tithing of the people and then they take one of their best tithe payers out of production." So we don't think the way man thinks. God's ways are not man's ways.

14 I have a special place in my heart about the women. I'm the father of nine beautiful daughters. I often wondered, "How am I so lucky as to get girls? Where are all the missionary boys?" Well we finally did get one and the poor boy didn't even know who his real mother was for the first couple of years. But now with a little more seasoning and maturing and time passing by, I now understand because they had a superb mother, those girls. And now those girls are mothers

of their own flock teaching them things that my wife taught them. All my girls are now grandmothers. They have strong children; strong in faith, strong in capacity. They emulate the work of their wonderful mother and their grandmother.

15 We have women on our councils. We have women administering ordinances in the temple. We have women presidents of the auxiliaries and their counselors. We depend on their voices. I think I said something about that in a conference talk a little while ago (A Plea To My Sisters) to take their place. We need their voices. We need their input. We love their participation with us.

16 In the Doctrine and Covenants there's that verse that says that before the foundation of the world, women were created to bear and care for the sons and daughters of God. In doing so they glorify God.

Millennials

17 The best way I know is to help them to understand what it really means when we sing and say, "I am a child of God."

18 As a surgeon, I've become so amazed and marvel at the structure and the function of the human body; how it can defend itself, how it can repair itself.

19 Help them to appreciate eyes that see and fingers that feel and ears that hear the wonderful things. That's not an accident. That's a gift from their creator. So I would start right there.

Help them to understand how precious their life is and their ability to learn and appreciate and love and cry and have the experiences of life. It's all a gift from God. And he can take us home any time he wants. But he allows us to have this period where we can choose what we will do and more importantly who we will become.

Future of Church in Brazil

20 The Church in Brazil is a seabed for the leadership of the church worldwide. Just look who we've had in the presidency of the 70 from Brazil; past, present and I might add future. It's an interesting phenomenon really how we have such strength from Brazil.

21 Now, Brazil's going through some social issues and problems which can happen all the time in every country. But we see nothing but continued power from Brazil. I think Brazil, Mexico, Peru have more than 100 stakes in them. But in a way they started from very little.

22 I remember when James E Faust was a young missionary there, they didn't have much success. And remember that in the year I was born, there were no members of the church in South America.

23 So the Lord's growing his membership in every country of the world. We have a member of the church in nearly every country. So Brazil, Mexico, Peru, they're following the patterns that we've seen established in

the United States but the same thing is going to happen in Ghana, Nigeria, Congo, South Africa, and in the countries of South America and in the countries of Asia. It just takes time.

Relating to the Youth

24 Thanks Sam. Sam's a great friend. He shared a great assignment with us in Ephraim one time; Scandinavian festival. Sam went with us when we were looking at the graves of our relatives and the homes of our ancestors down there in San Pete County.

25 I think what you were saying in essence was, "How can the youth follow an old man?" Let me talk about age. It's a good thing. I hope you all live to be old people. A well-educated person never stops learning. In the few months that have elapsed since our last October conference, Wendy and I have been in 10 different countries, in 3 different continents. We've met with kings, rulers, (well not kings), magistrates and presidents and governmental leaders. Some of those countries were new. I'm really more valuable to the brethren and sisters of the church now than I was six months ago.

26 If you add the number of years that Brother Oaks and I and Eyring have been apostles, you're talking about 90 years. That can't help but be helpful to the young people of the church so they don't have to look laterally for what will bring them joy in life.

and Elder Robert D. Hales. Yet we “all press on in the work of the Lord.”^a

3 I am very grateful for each man who bears the holy priesthood. You are the hope of our Redeemer, who desires “that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world.”^b He wants all of His ordained sons to represent Him, to speak for Him, to act for Him, and to bless the lives of God’s children throughout the world, to the end “that faith also might increase in [all] the earth.”^c

4 Some of you serve where the Church has been established for generations. Others serve where the Church is relatively new. For some, your wards are large. For others, your branches are small and distances are great. Regardless of your individual circumstances, each of you is a member of a priesthood quorum with a divine mandate to learn and to teach, to love and to serve others.

5 Tonight we announce a significant restructuring of our Melchizedek Priesthood quorums to accomplish the work of the Lord more effectively. In each ward, the high priests and the elders will now be combined into one elders quorum. This adjustment will greatly enhance the capacity and the ability of men who bear the priesthood to serve others. Prospective elders

will be welcomed in and fellowshiped by that quorum.

6 In each stake, the stake presidency will continue to preside over the stake high priests quorum. But the composition of that quorum will be based on current priesthood callings, as will be explained later.

7 Elder D. Todd Christofferson and Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will now teach us more about these important adjustments.

8 These modifications have been under study for many months. We have felt a pressing need to improve the way we care for our members and report our contacts with them. To do that better, we need to strengthen our priesthood quorums to give greater direction to the ministering of love and support that the Lord intends for His Saints.

9 These adjustments are inspired of the Lord. As we implement them, we will be even more effective than we have ever been previously.

10 We are engaged in the work of Almighty God. Jesus is the Christ! We are His humble servants! God bless you, brethren, as we learn of and do our duty, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

a “Let Us All Press On,” Hymns, no. 243.

b Doctrine and Covenants 1:20.

c Doctrine and Covenants 1:21.

CHAPTER 4

Ministering with the Power and Authority of God - Delivered in the Priesthood Session of the April 2018 General Conference.

MY beloved brethren, thank you for your devotion to the Lord and His holy work. It is truly a joy to be with you. As a new First Presidency, we thank you for your prayers and for your sustaining efforts. We are grateful for your lives and for your service to the Lord. Your devotion to duty and your selfless service are just as important in your callings as ours are in our callings. Through a lifetime of service in this Church, I have learned that it really doesn't matter where one serves. What the Lord cares about is how one serves.

2 I express deep gratitude for President Thomas S. Monson, who was an example to me for more than 50 years. And for his counselors, President Henry B. Eyring and President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, I express profound admiration. I commend them for their service to the Lord and His prophets. Both of these devoted servants have received new assignments. They continue to serve with vigor and commitment. I honor and love them both.

3 It is a remarkable blessing to serve in the Lord's true and liv-

ing Church with His authority and power. The restoration of the priesthood of God, including the keys of the priesthood, opens to worthy Latter-day Saints the greatest of all spiritual blessings. We see those blessings flowing to women, men, and children throughout the world.

4 We see faithful women who understand the power inherent in their callings and in their endowment and other temple ordinances. These women know how to call upon the powers of heaven to protect and strengthen their husbands, their children, and others they love. These are spiritually strong women who lead, teach, and minister fearlessly in their callings with the power and authority of God!^a How thankful I am for them!

5 Likewise, we see faithful men who live up to their privileges as bearers of the priesthood. They lead and serve by sacrifice in the Lord's way with love, kindness, and patience. They bless, guide, protect, and strengthen others by the power of the priesthood they hold. They bring miracles to those they serve while they keep their own marriages and families safe. They shun evil and are mighty elders in Israel.^b I am most thankful for them!

6 Now, may I voice a concern? It is this: Too many of our brothers

a See Russell M. Nelson, "A Plea to My Sisters," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 96.

b See Russell M. Nelson, "The Price of Priesthood Power," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2016, 66–69; see also Alma 13:7–8; Doctrine and Covenants 84:17–20, 35–38.

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

and sisters do not fully understand the concept of priesthood power and authority. They act as though they would rather satisfy their own selfish desires and appetites than use the power of God to bless His children.

7 I fear that too many of our brothers and sisters do not grasp the privileges that could be theirs.^c Some of our brethren, for example, act like they do not understand what the priesthood is and what it enables them to do. Let me give you some specific examples.

8 Not long ago, I attended a sacrament meeting in which a new baby was to be given a name and a father's blessing. The young father held his precious infant in his arms, gave her a name, and then offered a beautiful prayer. But he did not give that child a blessing. That sweet baby girl got a name but no blessing! That dear elder did not know the difference between a prayer and a priesthood blessing. With his priesthood authority and power, he could have blessed his infant, but he did not. I thought, "What a missed opportunity!"

9 Let me cite some other examples. We know of brethren who set sisters apart as Primary, Young Women, or Relief Society

leaders and teachers but fail to bless them—to bless them with the power to fulfill their callings. They give only admonitions and instructions. We see a worthy father who fails to give his wife and his children priesthood blessings when that is exactly what they need. Priesthood power has been restored to this earth, and yet far too many brothers and sisters go through terrible trials in life without ever receiving a true priesthood blessing. What a tragedy! That's a tragedy that we can eliminate.

10 Brethren, we hold the holy priesthood of God! We have His authority to bless His people. Just think of the remarkable assurance the Lord gave us when He said, "Whomsoever you bless I will bless."^d It is our privilege to act in the name of Jesus Christ to bless God's children according to His will for them. Stake presidents and bishops, please ensure that every member of the quorums within your stewardship understands how to give a priesthood blessing—including the personal worthiness and spiritual preparation required to call fully upon the power of God.^e

11 To all brethren holding the priesthood, I invite you to inspire members to keep their cov-

c See Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–22; 107:18–19; Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 14:30–31 (in the Bible appendix).

d Doctrine and Covenants 132:47.

e The connection between the power of the priesthood and personal righteousness is developed more fully in Russell M. Nelson, "The Price of Priesthood Power," 66–69; see also Doctrine and Covenants 121:34–37, 41–44.

enants, fast and pray, study the scriptures, worship in the temple, and serve with faith as men and women of God. We can help all to see with the eye of faith that obedience and righteousness will draw them closer to Jesus Christ, allow them to enjoy the companionship of the Holy Ghost, and experience joy in life!

12 A hallmark of the Lord’s true and living Church will always be an organized, directed effort to minister to individual children of God and their families.^f Because it is His Church, we as His servants will minister to the one, just as He did.^g We will minister in His name, with His power and authority, and with His loving-kindness.

13 An experience I had more than 60 years ago in Boston taught me just how powerful the privilege of ministering one-on-one can be. I was then a resident surgeon at the Massachusetts General Hospital—on duty every day, every other night, and every other weekend. I had limited time for my wife, our four children, and Church activity. Nonetheless, our branch president assigned me to visit the home of Wilbur and Leonora Cox with the hope that Brother Cox might come

back into activity in the Church. He and Leonora had been sealed in the temple.^h Yet Wilbur had not participated for many years.

14 My companion and I went to their home. As we entered, Sister Cox welcomed us warmly,ⁱ but Brother Cox abruptly walked into another room and closed the door.

15 I went to the closed door and knocked. After a moment, I heard a muffled “Come in.” I opened the door to find Brother Cox sitting beside an array of amateur radio equipment. In that small room, he lit up a cigar. Clearly, my visit was not all that welcome.

16 I gazed about the room with wonderment and said, “Brother Cox, I have always wanted to learn more about amateur radio work. Would you be willing to teach me about it? I’m sorry I can’t stay any longer tonight, but could I come back another time?”

17 He hesitated for a moment and then said yes. That was the beginning of what became a wonderful friendship. I returned and he taught me. I began to love and respect him. Through our

f The essential role of an organized, directed effort to minister to individuals and families is evident wherever and whenever the Church of Jesus Christ has been established. See, for example, Luke 10:1–20; Acts 6:1–6; Ephesians 4:11–14; Mosiah 18:9, 18–19, 27–29; Doctrine and Covenants 20:42, 51, 57.

g See 3 Nephi 17:9–10, 20–21.

h Manti Utah Temple, June 15, 1937.

i Leonora’s fasting and praying every Monday for years surely had a powerful influence for good.

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

subsequent visits, the greatness of this man emerged. We became very good friends, as did our dear eternal companions. Then, with the passage of time, our family moved away. Local leaders continued to nurture the Cox family.^j

18 About eight years after that first visit, the Boston Stake was created.^k Can you guess who its first stake president was? Yes! Brother Cox! During subsequent years, he also served as a mission president and a temple president.

19 Years later, I, as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, was assigned to create a new stake in Sanpete County, Utah. During the usual interviews, I was pleasantly surprised to encounter again my dear friend Brother Cox! I felt impressed to call him as the new stake patriarch. After I ordained him, we embraced each other and wept. People in the room were wondering why these two grown men were crying. But we knew. And Sister Cox knew. Ours were tears of joy! We silently remembered the incredible journey of love and repentance that began more than 30 years ago, one night in their home.

20 The account doesn't end there. Brother and Sister Cox's

family grew to include 3 children, 20 grandchildren, and 54 great-grandchildren. Add to that their impact on hundreds of missionaries, on thousands more in the temple, and on hundreds more who received patriarchal blessings at the hands of Wilbur Cox. His and Leonora's influence will continue to ripple through many generations throughout the world.

21 Experiences such as this with Wilbur and Leonora Cox occur every week—hopefully, every day—within this Church. Dedicated servants of the Lord Jesus Christ carry out His work, with His power and authority.

22 Brethren, there are doors we can open, priesthood blessings we can give, hearts we can heal, burdens we can lift, testimonies we can strengthen, lives we can save, and joy we can bring into the homes of the Latter-day Saints—all because we hold the priesthood of God. We are the men who have been “called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of [our] exceeding faith,” to do this work.^l

23 Tonight I invite you literally to rise up with me in our great eternal brotherhood. When I name your priesthood office,

j In 1954, branch president Ira Terry called Wilbur to be the branch Sunday School superintendent. Wilbur accepted the calling and dropped forever all habits contrary to the Word of Wisdom. He devoted the rest of his life in service to the Savior's work.

k In 1962.

l Alma 13:3.

please stand and remain standing. Deacons, please arise! Teachers, arise! Priests! Bishops! Elders! High priests! Patriarchs! Seventies! Apostles!

24 Now, brethren, will you please remain standing and join with our chorus in singing all three verses of "Rise Up, O Men of God."^a While you sing, think of your duty as God's mighty army to help prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord. This is our charge. This is our privilege. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 5

Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives - Delivered in the Sunday Morning Session of the April 2018 General Conference.

WHAT a glorious privilege it has been to celebrate Easter with you on this Sunday of general conference! Nothing could be more fitting than to commemorate the most important event that ever occurred on this earth by worshipping the most important being who ever walked this earth. In this, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we worship Him who commenced His infinite Atonement in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was willing to suffer for the sins and weaknesses of each of us, which suffering caused Him "to bleed at every pore."^b He was crucified on Calvary's cross^c and rose the

third day as the first resurrected being of our Heavenly Father's children. I love Him and testify that He lives! It is He who leads and guides His Church.

2 Without our Redeemer's infinite Atonement, not one of us would have hope of ever returning to our Heavenly Father. Without His Resurrection, death would be the end. Our Savior's Atonement made eternal life a possibility and immortality a reality for all.

3 It is because of His transcendent mission and the peace He grants His followers that my wife, Wendy, and I felt comfort late on January 2, 2018, when we were awakened by a phone call telling us that President Thomas S. Monson had stepped through the veil.

4 How we miss President Monson! We honor his life and his legacy. A spiritual giant, he left an indelible imprint upon all who knew him and upon the Church that he loved.

5 On Sunday, January 14, 2018, in the upper room of the Salt Lake Temple, the First Presidency was reorganized in the simple yet sacred pattern established by the Lord. Then, at yesterday morning's solemn assembly, members of the Church throughout the world raised their hands to confirm the earlier action taken by the Apostles. I am humbly grateful for your sustaining support.

a "Rise Up, O Men of God," Hymns, no. 324.

b Doctrine and Covenants 19:18.

c See Luke 23:33.

Handwriting lines on the right side of the page.

6 I am also grateful for those upon whose shoulders I stand. It has been my privilege to serve in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles for 34 years and to know personally 10 of the 16 previous Presidents of the Church. I learned much from each of them.

7 I also owe much to my forebears. All eight of my great-grandparents were converts to the Church in Europe. Each of these stalwart souls sacrificed everything to come to Zion. During subsequent generations, however, not all my ancestors remained so committed. As a result, I was not raised in a gospel-centered home.

8 I adored my parents. They meant the world to me and taught me crucial lessons. I cannot thank them enough for the happy homelife they created for me and my siblings. And yet, even as a boy, I knew I was missing something. One day I jumped on the streetcar and went to an LDS bookstore to find a book about the Church. I loved learning about the gospel.

9 As I came to understand the Word of Wisdom, I wanted my parents to live that law. So, one day when I was very young, I went to our basement and smashed on the concrete floor every bottle of liquor! I expected my father to punish me, but he never said a word.

10 As I matured and began to

understand the magnificence of Heavenly Father's plan, I often said to myself, "I don't want one more Christmas present! I just want to be sealed to my parents." That longed-for event did not happen until my parents were past 80, and then it did happen. I cannot fully express the joy that I felt that day,^d and each day I feel that joy of their sealing and my being sealed to them.

11 In 1945, while I was in medical school, I married Dantzel White in the Salt Lake Temple. She and I were blessed with nine splendid daughters and one precious son. Today our ever-growing family is one of the greatest joys of my life.

12 In 2005, after nearly 60 years of marriage, my dear Dantzel was unexpectedly called home. For a season, my grief was almost immobilizing. But the message of Easter and the promise of resurrection sustained me.

13 Then the Lord brought Wendy Watson to my side. We were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple on April 6, 2006. How I love her! She is an extraordinary woman—a great blessing to me, to our family, and to the entire Church.

14 Each of these blessings has come as a result of seeking and heeding the promptings of the Holy Ghost. Said President Lorenzo Snow, "This is the grand privilege of every Latter-day Saint ... that it is our right to

d See Alma 26:16.

have the manifestations of the Spirit every day of our lives.”^e

15 One of the things the Spirit has repeatedly impressed upon my mind since my new calling as President of the Church is how willing the Lord is to reveal His mind and will. The privilege of receiving revelation is one of the greatest gifts of God to His children.

16 Through the manifestations of the Holy Ghost, the Lord will assist us in all our righteous pursuits. I remember in an operating room, I have stood over a patient—unsure how to perform an unprecedented procedure—and experienced the Holy Ghost diagramming the technique in my mind.^f

17 To strengthen my proposal to Wendy, I said to her, “I know about revelation and how to receive it.” To her credit—and, as I have come to learn, typical of her—she had already sought and received her own revelation about us, which gave her the courage to say yes.

18 As a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, I prayed daily for revelation and gave thanks to the Lord every time He spoke to my heart and mind.

19 Imagine the miracle of it! Whatever our Church calling, we can pray to our Heaven-

ly Father and receive guidance and direction, be warned about dangers and distractions, and be enabled to accomplish things we simply could not do on our own. If we will truly receive the Holy Ghost and learn to discern and understand His promptings, we will be guided in matters large and small.

20 When I recently faced the daunting task of choosing two counselors, I wondered how I could possibly choose just two from twelve men whom I love and respect.

21 Because I know that good inspiration is based upon good information, I prayerfully met one-on-one with each Apostle.^g I then sequestered myself in a private room in the temple and sought the Lord’s will. I testify that the Lord instructed me to select President Dallin H. Oaks and President Henry B. Eyring to serve as my counselors in the First Presidency.

22 In like manner, I testify that the Lord inspired the call of Elder Gerrit W. Gong and Elder Ulisses Soares to be ordained as His Apostles. I and we welcome them to this unique brotherhood of service.

23 When we convene as a Council of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, our meeting rooms become rooms

e Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow (2012), 76.

f See Russell M. Nelson, “Sweet Power of Prayer,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2003, 7–8.

g See 3 Nephi 28:1.

Horizontal lines for writing.

of revelation. The Spirit is palpably present. As we wrestle with complex matters, a thrilling process unfolds as each Apostle freely expresses his thoughts and point of view. Though we may differ in our initial perspectives, the love we feel for each other is constant. Our unity helps us to discern the Lord's will for His Church.

24 In our meetings, the majority never rules! We listen prayerfully to one another and talk with each other until we are united. Then when we have reached complete accord, the unifying influence of the Holy Ghost is spine-tingling! We experience what the Prophet Joseph Smith knew when he taught, "By union of feeling we obtain power with God."^h No member of the First Presidency or Quorum of the Twelve would ever leave decisions for the Lord's Church to his own best judgment!

25 Brothers and sisters, how can we become the men and women—the Christlike servants—the Lord needs us to be? How can we find answers to questions that perplex us? If Joseph Smith's transcendent experience in the Sacred Grove teaches us anything, it is that the heavens are open and that God speaks to His children.

26 The Prophet Joseph Smith set a pattern for us to follow in

resolving our questions. Drawn to the promise of James that if we lack wisdom we may ask of God,ⁱ the boy Joseph took his question directly to Heavenly Father. He sought personal revelation, and his seeking opened this last dispensation.

27 In like manner, what will your seeking open for you? What wisdom do you lack? What do you feel an urgent need to know or understand? Follow the example of the Prophet Joseph. Find a quiet place where you can regularly go. Humble yourself before God. Pour out your heart to your Heavenly Father. Turn to Him for answers and for comfort.

28 Pray in the name of Jesus Christ about your concerns, your fears, your weaknesses—yes, the very longings of your heart. And then listen! Write the thoughts that come to your mind. Record your feelings and follow through with actions that you are prompted to take. As you repeat this process day after day, month after month, year after year, you will "grow into the principle of revelation."^j

29 Does God really want to speak to you? Yes! "As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course ... as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints."^k

h Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 393–94.

i See James 1:5.

j Teachings: Joseph Smith, 132.

k Doctrine and Covenants 121:33.

30 You don't have to wonder about what is true.¹ You do not have to wonder whom you can safely trust. Through personal revelation, you can receive your own witness that the Book of Mormon is the word of God, that Joseph Smith is a prophet, and that this is the Lord's Church. Regardless of what others may say or do, no one can ever take away a witness borne to your heart and mind about what is true.

31 I urge you to stretch beyond your current spiritual ability to receive personal revelation, for the Lord has promised that "if thou shalt [seek], thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal."^m

32 Oh, there is so much more that your Father in Heaven wants you to know. As Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught, "To those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, it is clear that the Father and the Son are giving away the secrets of the universe!"ⁿ

33 Nothing opens the heavens quite like the combination of increased purity, exact obedience, earnest seeking, daily feasting on the words of Christ in the Book of Mormon,^o and regular

time committed to temple and family history work.

34 To be sure, there may be times when you feel as though the heavens are closed. But I promise that as you continue to be obedient, expressing gratitude for every blessing the Lord gives you, and as you patiently honor the Lord's timetable, you will be given the knowledge and understanding you seek. Every blessing the Lord has for you—even miracles—will follow. That is what personal revelation will do for you.

35 I am optimistic about the future. It will be filled with opportunities for each of us to progress, contribute, and take the gospel to every corner of the earth. But I am also not naive about the days ahead. We live in a world that is complex and increasingly contentious. The constant availability of social media and a 24-hour news cycle bombard us with relentless messages. If we are to have any hope of sifting through the myriad of voices and the philosophies of men that attack truth, we must learn to receive revelation.

36 Our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, will perform some of His mightiest works between now and when He comes again. We will see miraculous indications that God the Father and His

1 See Moroni 10:5.

m Doctrine and Covenants 42:61.

n Neal A. Maxwell, "Meek and Lowly" (Brigham Young University devotional, Oct. 21, 1986), 9, speeches.byu.edu.

o See 2 Nephi 32:3.

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the text blocks on the left.

Son, Jesus Christ, preside over this Church in majesty and glory. But in coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost.

37 My beloved brothers and sisters, I plead with you to increase your spiritual capacity to receive revelation. Let this Easter Sunday be a defining moment in your life. Choose to do the spiritual work required to enjoy the gift of the Holy Ghost and hear the voice of the Spirit more frequently and more clearly.

38 With Moroni, I exhort you on this Easter Sabbath to “come unto Christ, and lay hold upon every good gift,”^a beginning with the gift of the Holy Ghost, which gift can and will change your life.

39 We are followers of Jesus Christ. The most important truth the Holy Ghost will ever witness to you is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. He lives! He is our Advocate with the Father, our Exemplar, and our Redeemer. On this Easter Sunday, we commemorate His atoning sacrifice, His literal Resurrection, and His divinity.

40 This is His Church, restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. I so testify, with my expression of love for each of you, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 6

Ministering - Delivered in the Sunday Afternoon Session of the April 2018 General Conference.

THANK you, Elder Gong and Elder Soares, for your heartfelt expressions of faith. We are so very grateful for you and your dear companions.

2 Dear brothers and sisters, we constantly seek direction from the Lord on how we can help our members keep the commandments of God, especially those two great commandments to love God and our neighbors.^b

3 For months we have been seeking a better way to minister to the spiritual and temporal needs of our people in the Savior’s way.

4 We have made the decision to retire home teaching and visiting teaching as we have known them. Instead, we will implement a newer, holier approach to caring for and ministering to others. We will refer to these efforts simply as “ministering.”

5 Effective ministering efforts are enabled by the innate gifts of the sisters and by the incomparable power of the priesthood. We all need such protection from the cunning wiles of the adversary.

6 Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Sister Jean B. Bingham, General President of the Relief Soci-

a Moroni 10:30.

b See Luke 10:27.

ety, will explain how assigned brethren of the priesthood and assigned sisters of the Relief Society and Young Women will now function in serving and watching over members of the Church throughout the world.

7 The First Presidency and the Twelve are united in endorsing their messages. Gratefully and prayerfully we open this new chapter in the history of the Church. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 7

Let Us All Press On - Delivered in the Sunday Afternoon Session of the April 2018 General Conference.

MY beloved brothers and sisters, as we come to the close of this historic conference, I join with you in thanking the Lord for His direction and inspiring influence. The music has been beautiful and uplifting. Not only have the messages been edifying, but they have been life-changing!

2 In solemn assembly we sustained a new First Presidency. Two great men have been placed in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. And eight new General Authority Seventies have been called.

3 Now a favorite hymn summarizes our renewed resolve, our challenge, and our charge going forward:

*Let us all press on in the work of the Lord,
That when life is o'er we may gain a reward;
In the fight for right let us wield a sword,
The mighty sword of truth.
Fear not, though the enemy deride;
Courage, for the Lord is on our side.
We will heed not what the wicked may say,
But the Lord alone we will obey.^a*

4 I exhort you to study the messages of this conference frequently—even repeatedly—during the next six months. Conscientiously look for ways to incorporate these messages in your family home evenings, your gospel teaching, your conversations with family and friends, and even your discussions with those not of our faith. Many good people will respond to the truths taught in this conference when offered in love. And your desire to obey will be enhanced as you remember and reflect upon what you have felt these past two days.

5 This general conference marks the beginning of a new era of ministering. The Lord has made important adjustments in the way we care for each other. Sisters and brothers—old and young—will serve one another in a new, holier way. Elders quorums will be strengthened to bless the lives of men, women, and children throughout the world. Relief Society sisters

a "Let Us All Press On," Hymns, no. 243.

will continue to minister in their unique and loving way, extending opportunities to younger sisters to join them as appropriately assigned.

6 Our message to the world is simple and sincere: we invite all of God’s children on both sides of the veil to come unto their Savior, receive the blessings of the holy temple, have enduring joy, and qualify for eternal life.^a

7 Eventual exaltation requires our complete fidelity now to covenants we make and ordinances we receive in the house of the Lord. At this time, we have 159 functioning temples, and more are under construction. We want to bring temples closer to the expanding membership of the Church. So we are now pleased to announce plans to construct seven more temples. Those temples will be located in the following locations: Salta, Argentina; Bengaluru, India; Managua, Nicaragua; Cagayan de Oro, Philippines; Layton, Utah; Richmond, Virginia; and a major city yet to be determined in Russia.

8 My dear brothers and sisters, construction of these temples may not change your life, but your time in the temple surely will. In that spirit, I bless you to identify those things you can set aside so you can spend more time in the temple. I bless you with greater harmony and love in your homes and a deeper de-

sire to care for your eternal family relationships. I bless you with increased faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and a greater ability to follow Him as His true disciples.

9 I bless you to raise your voice in testimony, as I do now, that we are engaged in the work of Almighty God! Jesus is the Christ. This is His Church, which He directs through His anointed servants. I so testify, with my expression of love for each of you, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 8

Worldwide Priesthood Celebration - An address given at the “Be One” celebration marking the 40th anniversary celebration of the revelation on the priesthood, at the Conference Center in Salt Lake City, June 1, 2018.

DEAR brothers and sisters, we have been uplifted by the message of President Oaks and by wonderful musicians and dancers. We are especially grateful for Gladys Knight, the Be One Choir, Alex Boyé, and the Bonner family. These talented performers have inspired us all.

2 Centuries ago, an exacting lawyer asked the Savior:

3 “Master, which is the great commandment in the law?”

4 “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with

a Defined in Doctrine and Covenants 14:7 as “the greatest of all the gifts of God.”

all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

5 “This is the first and great commandment.

6 “And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

7 “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”^a

8 Again in 1831, this instruction was revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, when the Lord said, “And let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practice virtue and holiness before me.”

9 Then, by way of emphasis, He added, “And again I say unto you, let every man esteem his brother as himself.”^b

10 In the meridian of time, and again in the latter days, the Lord has stressed His essential doctrine of equal opportunity for His children. And tonight, President Oaks has reminded us, “[The Lord] denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; ... all are alike unto God.”^c

11 On every continent and across the isles of the sea, faithful people are being gathered into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Differences in culture, language, gender, race, and nationality fade into insignificance as the faithful enter the covenant path and come unto our beloved Redeemer.

nificance as the faithful enter the covenant path and come unto our beloved Redeemer.

12 Ultimately, we realize that only the comprehension of the true Fatherhood of God can bring full appreciation of the true brotherhood of men and the true sisterhood of women. That understanding inspires us with passionate desire to build bridges of cooperation instead of walls of segregation.

13 It is my prayer and blessing that I leave upon all who are listening that we may overcome any burdens of prejudice and walk uprightly with God—and with one another—in perfect peace and harmony. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 9

Hope of Israel - Delivered as a Worldwide CES Youth Devotional on June 3, 2018 from the Conference Center in Salt Lake City, Utah.

PRESIDENT Russell M. Nelson: Words are inadequate to express our gratitude to that seminary choir. My goodness, you did that well. Thank you. Thank you very much. As I look at this Conference Center filled with beautiful Latter-day Saints, I feel like I finally got the large family I was hoping for. There’s 22,000 of you here tonight and many more thousands who are with us through this broadcast.

a Matthew 22:36–40.
b Doctrine and Covenants 38:24–25.
c 2 Nephi 26:33.

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

2 Sister Nelson and I are really overjoyed to be with you tonight. We love being with you, the youth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—and your teachers and parents.

3 We wish we could hear from each one of you about your experiences in preparing for our worldwide gathering, as you read daily from the Book of Mormon and as you prayed to hear what the Lord is eager to teach you.

4 Again, I express our thanks for the seminary choir for singing our opening hymn with such feeling. That hymn—“We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet”—those words turned our hearts to the Prophet Joseph Smith. How indebted we are to him! He is the prophet of this last dispensation! Imagine! He was your age when he was inspired by the words of the Apostle James: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God.”^d

5 Those words compelled young Joseph to go to a nearby grove of trees, where he poured out his heart to God.

6 The heavens opened! Joseph saw the Father and the Son and learned for himself where to go for answers to his questions.

7 Now I plead with each of you to do as the teenaged Joseph did. Take your questions directly to your Heavenly Father in prayer. Ask Him, in the name of Jesus

Christ, to guide you. You can learn for yourself—right now at your age—how to receive personal revelation. And nothing will make a bigger difference in your life than that!

8 I promise you—not the person sitting next to you, but you—that, wherever you are in the world, wherever you are on the covenant path—even if, at this moment, you are not centered on the path—I promise you that if you will sincerely and persistently do the spiritual work needed to develop the crucial, spiritual skill of learning how to hear the whisperings of the Holy Ghost, you will have all the direction you will ever need in your life. You will be given answers to your questions in the Lord’s own way and in His own time. And don’t forget the counsel of your parents and Church leaders. They are also seeking revelation in your behalf.

9 When you know your life is being directed by God, regardless of the challenges and disappointments that may and will come, you will feel joy and peace.

10 Now, we would like to talk with you about the greatest challenge, the greatest cause, and the greatest work on earth. And we want to invite you to be part of it!

11 I’ve asked Sister Wendy Nelson to provide some context for that important message. Please, Sister Nelson.

d James 1:5.

12 Sister Wendy W. Nelson: My dear brothers and sisters, whom we love and believe in, I'd like to begin by telling you what my husband and I saw one day as we drove through the hills of Utah on an all-terrain vehicle.

13 It was a beautiful autumn day. We loved being among trees that were golden and gorgeous, tall and straight, all reaching to heaven.

14 Then, we turned a corner and I saw a tree that reminded me of me and how I often feel in many situations.

15 Do you know that feeling? You look around and everyone else is tall and straight and reaching to heaven, so to speak.

16 They have everything figured out. They wear the perfect clothes, always seem to say the right things, have no problems, are perfectly obedient—and seem never to have made a mistake in their lives.

17 And then, well, there's you and me!

18 My dear brothers and sisters, it's time to stop comparing ourselves with others. It's time to put away those erroneous views of ourselves and others. The truth is that we are not as hopelessly flawed as we may think, and others are not as perfect as they may appear—all except, of course, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

19 The only thing that really matters is that you and I are doing exactly what we committed—even covenanted—premortally with our Heavenly Father we would do while we are here on earth.

20 So, let me ask you a question: What were you born to do?

21 How I wish you could watch a 10-minute video of your premortal life on YouTube.

22 The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that if you could gaze into heaven for five minutes, you would know more on a topic than if you studied it all of your life.^e So just imagine if you could gaze for 10 minutes at your premortal life!

23 Of course we realize that the Lord has wisely drawn a veil over those memories. But, just for a moment, imagine the effect on your life right now if you were permitted to watch 10 minutes of your premortal life.

24 I believe if you could see yourself living with your Heavenly Parents and with Jesus Christ; if you could observe what you did premortally and see yourself making commitments—even covenants—with others, including your mentors and teachers; if you could see yourself courageously responding to attacks on truth and valiantly standing up for Jesus Christ, I believe that every one of you would have

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the text on the left.

^e See Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 419.

the increased power, increased commitment, and eternal perspective to help you overcome any and all of your confusion, doubts, struggles, and problems. All of them!

25 I believe if you could remember who you said you would help while you are here on earth, or what anguishing experiences you agreed to go through, that whatever really tough situation you are presently in—or will be in—you would say, “Oh, now I remember. Now I understand. This difficult situation makes sense to me now. With the Lord’s help I can do this!”

26 Now, here’s another thing I invite you to think about. I like to imagine that each of us came to earth with a scroll attached to our spirits entitled “Things to Do While on Earth.”

27 Let’s talk about what might be on that scroll. Let’s talk about five of the things surely written on your scroll according to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

28 First, you came to receive a mortal body. And that, my friends, is a really big deal.

29 Second, you came to be tested.

30 By the way, have you noticed that our testing often involves learning to control our bodies’ appetites and passions, which can sometimes get way out of control? If you are presently struggling with the residual effects of any kind of addiction or

of major unrepented sin, I urge you to unburden yourself by talking with your bishop—today. He holds priesthood keys that can help you.

31 A third thing to do while on earth: choose to follow Jesus Christ and stand up for Him, just as you did premortally.

32 Fourth, choose to repent daily and partake of the sacrament weekly. As you do, you will be spiritually healed, strengthened and magnified, and ultimately sanctified and exalted through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

33 Now, here is a fifth item on your list: find and fulfill your mortal missions. My dear friends, premortally you and I were each given wonderful missions to fulfill while we are here on earth.

34 We have opportunities to fulfill our mortal missions, but we don’t have to. No one will make us. We have our agency to choose how we spend our time and energy, our talents and resources. In fact, what we choose to do is actually part of our testing.

35 The choice is yours and mine. Will we choose to do whatever it takes to fulfill the wonderful missions for which we were sent to earth?

36 While that question simmers in your mind, let’s shift and talk about why you are here on earth—at this particular time, which is such a unique time in the history of the earth.

37 Why are you here on earth right now?

38 Why were you not born back in the 1880s? or 30 years from now?

39 Let me tell you of an experience that taught me firsthand about the historic days in which we live.

40 We often talk about living in the latter days. We are, after all, Latter-day Saints. But perhaps these days are more "latter" than we have ever imagined.

41 This truth became a reality for me because of what I experienced during one 24-hour period of time that commenced on June 15, 2013. My husband and I were in Moscow, Russia.

42 While President Nelson met with priesthood leaders, I had the privilege of meeting with nearly 100 of our sisters. I love our Russian sisters. They are spectacular!

43 When I stepped to the pulpit to speak, I found myself saying something I'd never anticipated. I said to the women: "I'd like to get to know you by lineage. Please stand as the tribe of Israel that represents the lineage declared in your patriarchal blessing is spoken."

44 "Benjamin?" A couple of women stood.

45 "Dan?" A couple more.

46 "Reuben?" A few more stood.

47 "Naphtali?" More stood.

48 As the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were announced—from Asher to Zebulun—and as the women stood, we were all amazed with what we were witnessing, feeling, and learning.

49 How many of the twelve tribes of Israel do you think were represented in that small gathering of fewer than 100 women on that Saturday in Moscow?

50 Eleven! Eleven of the twelve tribes of Israel were represented in that one room! The only tribe missing was that of Levi. I was astonished. It was a spiritually moving moment for me.

51 Immediately after those meetings my husband and I went directly to Yerevan, Armenia. The first people we met as we got off the plane were the mission president and his wife. Somehow, she had heard about this experience in Moscow, and with great delight, she said, "I've got Levi!"

52 Just imagine our thrill when my husband and I met their missionaries the next day, including an elder from the tribe of Levi who just happened to be from Gilbert, Arizona.

53 Now, when I was a little girl attending Primary in Raymond, Alberta, Canada, I learned that in the last days—before the Second Coming of the Savior—the twelve tribes of Israel would be gathered. That truth was thrilling to me and, at the same time,

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the text on the left.

quite overwhelming to wrap my mind around. So imagine what it was like for me to be with members of all twelve tribes of Israel within one 24-hour period of time!

54 I have since learned that I probably should not have asked those sisters to identify themselves by lineage because patriarchal blessings are sacred and the lineage declared in them is personal. Yet I am so grateful for the privilege I had of seeing the fruits of the gathering of Israel firsthand. The impact of that experience has never diminished in my heart or mind.

55 My dear brothers and sisters, these are indeed the latter days! There has never been a time like this in the history of this world. Never! Premortally, you and I committed to do a great work while we are here on earth. And with the Lord's help, we will do it! In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

56 President Nelson: Thank you, Wendy. I love you! Isn't she wonderful?

57 My dear young brothers and sisters, these surely are the latter days, and the Lord is hastening His work to gather Israel. That gathering is the most important thing taking place on earth today. Nothing else compares in magnitude, nothing else compares in importance, nothing else compares in majesty. And

if you choose to, if you want to, you can be a big part of it. You can be a big part of something big, something grand, something majestic!

58 When we speak of the gathering, we are simply saying this fundamental truth: every one of our Heavenly Father's children, on both sides of the veil, deserves to hear the message of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. They decide for themselves if they want to know more.

59 Those whose lineage is from the various tribes of Israel are those whose hearts will most likely be turned to the Lord. He said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."^f Those who are of the house of Israel will most easily recognize the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and will desire to be gathered into His fold. They will want to become members of His Church, make covenants with Him and Heavenly Father, and receive their essential ordinances.

60 The Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith that now, meaning our day, is the eleventh hour and the last time that He will call laborers into His vineyard for the express purpose of gathering the elect from the four quarters of the earth.^g

61 My question tonight to every one of you between the ages of 12 and 18 is this: Would you

f John 10:27.

g See Doctrine and Covenants 33:3, 6.

like to be a big part of the greatest challenge, the greatest cause, and the greatest work on earth today?

62 Would you like to help gather Israel during these precious latter days? Would you, who are the elect, be willing to help find the elect who have not heard the message of the restored gospel? Would you like to be among those "swift messengers" of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke?^h

63 Now, participating in the gathering of Israel will require some sacrifice on your part. It may even require some changes in your life. It will definitely take some of your time and energy and your God-given talents. Are you interested?

64 Just think of the excitement and urgency of it all: every prophet commencing with Adam has seen our day. And every prophet has talked about our day, when Israel would be gathered and the world would be prepared for the Second Coming of the Savior. Think of it! Of all the people who have ever lived on planet earth, we are the ones who get to participate in this final, great gathering event. How exciting is that!

65 Our Heavenly Father has reserved many of His most noble spirits—perhaps, I might say, His finest team—for this final phase. Those noble spirits—those finest players, those heroes—are you!

66 I testify that the gathering is now, and it is real. In the year I was born, the total membership of the Church was less than 600,000 people, with no members in South America. Today there are more than 16 million members worldwide, with nearly 3 million members in South America.

67 Let me tell you about an experience I had in 1979. I was then serving as the General President of the Sunday School. I was invited to attend a meeting of Church leaders at which the President of the Church, President Spencer W. Kimball, spoke. He charged us to pray that the doors of nations would be opened so that the gospel of Jesus Christ could be brought to all people on earth. He specifically mentioned China and asked that we pray for the people of China. He also said, "We should be of service to the Chinese people. We should learn their language. We should pray for them and help them."

68 I returned home to my wife, Dantzel (who passed away more than 13 years ago), and said to her, "President Kimball asked us in that meeting to learn Chinese! And I did not hear him say, 'Everyone except Brother Nelson!' So, would you be willing to study Mandarin Chinese with me?" Of course, she agreed and we were tutored in Mandarin.

69 Six weeks after President Kimball's charge, I was attending the annual meeting of the American

^h See Isaiah 18:2.

Association for Thoracic Surgery. It was being held in Boston, Massachusetts. That morning, I had prayed in my hotel room for the people of China, just as President Kimball had requested. I went to the first meeting of the day and sat where I always sat at these professional meetings—at the front of the room. As the meeting proceeded, however, I became increasingly uncomfortable in my chair. As the lights were turned down for a slide presentation, I slipped out of my chair and walked quietly to the back of the room—a place where I would usually never sit. When the lights came up again, I found myself sitting by a Chinese doctor. He introduced himself as Professor Wu Ying-Kai from Beijing, China!

70 After a pleasant conversation with him, I extended an invitation for him to visit Salt Lake City and give a lecture at the University of Utah Medical School. He gladly accepted and did exceptionally well. Then he returned to China.

71 Not long thereafter, he invited me to be a visiting professor of surgery at Shandong Medical University in Jinan, China. That led to subsequent invitations for me to serve as a visiting professor at two more universities in China.

72 These wonderful professional experiences—prior to my call to the Twelve—climaxed when I was asked by Chinese surgeons to perform an open-heart operation to save the life of their most

celebrated opera star. That I did, and gratefully that operation was a success. It was, incidentally, the last one of my professional life.

73 For almost 40 years now, I have been praying for the people of China. I rejoice in my association with medical colleagues and other dear friends in China. What a joy it is for me now to be officially designated as an “old friend of China.”

74 It is my testimony that when we follow through with whatever the prophet of God asks us to do, the way will be opened and lives will be changed.

75 Now, I hope you are asking yourself, “What can I, as a teenager, do to help gather Israel?” Well, Sister Nelson and I asked that very question, and a few others, to a group of youth from the ages of 12 to 18, many of whom are here tonight.

76 We first asked, “What is the gathering of Israel? And what does it mean to you?” Their answers varied, but the majority indicated they weren’t quite sure what it was. Tonight, we want you to know that the gathering of Israel ultimately means offering the gospel of Jesus Christ to God’s children on both sides of the veil who have neither made crucial covenants with God nor received their essential ordinances.

77 Every child of our Heavenly Father deserves the opportunity to choose to follow Jesus Christ,

to accept and receive His gospel with all of its blessings—yes, all the blessings that God promised to the lineage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who, as you know, is also known as Israel.

78 My dear extraordinary youth, you were sent to earth at this precise time, the most crucial time in the history of the world, to help gather Israel. There is nothing happening on this earth right now that is more important than that. There is nothing of greater consequence. Absolutely nothing.

79 This gathering should mean everything to you. This is the mission for which you were sent to earth.

80 So my question to you is “Are you willing to enlist in the youth battalion of the Lord to help gather Israel?” Please think about it. Don’t answer just yet.

81 Let’s return to other questions Sister Nelson and I asked our young friends. We asked, “If the prophet invited every 12- to 18-year-old person in the Church to enlist to help gather Israel, what would you be willing to do?”

82 The youth responded with inspiring comments such as, “If the prophet invited us to enlist to help gather Israel, I absolutely would take part in it.” Another said, “I would drop whatever I’m doing and help!” Another: “I would go and do whatever he asks me to do, because the prophet is a preacher from God.”

83 Their answers also included: “I would be willing to do more family history work. I would be more open and make a greater effort to talk with others about the gospel. I would be a good example in showing Christlike attributes. I would do more baptisms for the dead, change aspects of how I live my life and the choices I make, travel anywhere he needs me to go, learn a new language, meet new people, lend my copy of the Book of Mormon to those who have never read it. And I would be the very kindest person I can be.”

84 We also asked these youth what they would be willing to sacrifice so they could help gather Israel. Again, the youth thrilled us. They responded: “I would spend less time in sports so I could help a person in need of truth. I would sacrifice hanging out with friends and instead invite them to come to the temple. I’d definitely cut down time on my phone. I’d give up some screen time. I’d [even] be willing to sacrifice Sunday afternoon naps!”

85 We asked, “If you wanted to enlist to help gather Israel, what would you want to start doing or stop doing?” They responded with such answers as “I would study the scriptures more, and more intently, so I could answer questions people might ask me. I would spend less time on social media; be more engaged in doing simple acts of member-missionary work, including daily acts of service. I would spend less time on my phone,

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

and, when I am on my phone, I would post scriptures or other spiritual messages on social media. I would study general conference talks because they are super important. I would eat healthy foods so I can stay fit. I would stop thinking everything is about me.” Thank you, brothers and sisters, for your answers to our questions.

86 Think of this, my dear young brothers and sisters, right now I am preparing for the day when I will be required to give an accounting to the Prophet Joseph Smith, to President Brigham Young, and others—and ultimately to the Lord—about my stewardship as God’s prophet upon the earth today. I do not want to be asked, “Brother Nelson, why were you not more clear with the youth about their part in gathering Israel? Why were you not more bold in enlisting them to participate?”

87 So, now I am inviting every young woman and every young man between the ages of 12 and 18 in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to enlist in the youth battalion of the Lord to help gather Israel.

88 What will help you? As you continue to read daily from the Book of Mormon, you will learn

the doctrine of the gathering,ⁱ truths about Jesus Christ, His Atonement, and the fulness of His gospel not found in the Bible. The Book of Mormon is central to the gathering of Israel.^j In fact, if there were no Book of Mormon, the promised gathering of Israel would not occur.

89 And now I invite you to prepare yourself by doing five more things—five things that will change you and help you change the world.

90 First, disengage from a constant reliance on social media, in order to decrease its worldly influence upon you.

91 Let me tell you about one young man your age, the grandson of a dear friend of mine. He is popular with his friends and a leader in his high school. Recently, his parents found things on his phone that were inappropriate for a follower of Jesus Christ. They insisted that he go off social media for a time. They exchanged his smartphone for a flip phone, and he panicked. How would he stay connected with his friends?

92 Initially he was furious with his parents, but after just a few days, he thanked them for taking his smartphone away. He

i Doctrine relating to the gathering of the house of Israel is among the earliest lessons taught in the Book of Mormon: “After the house of Israel should be scattered they should be gathered together again; ... the natural branches of the olive tree, or the remnants of the house of Israel, should be grafted in, or come to the knowledge of the true Messiah, their Lord and their Redeemer” (1 Nephi 10:14).

j See, for example, 3 Nephi 5:23–26.

said, "I feel free for the first time in a long time." Now he calls his friends on his flip phone to connect with them. He actually talks with them instead of always texting!

93 What other changes have occurred in this young man's life? He says he now loves being free from the fake life that social media creates. He is actively engaged in life instead of having his head in his phone all the time. He participates in outdoor recreational activities instead of playing video games. He is more positive and helpful in his home. He seeks opportunities to serve. He listens better in church, has a brighter countenance, is so much happier, and is actively preparing for his mission! All this because he took a break from the negative influence of social media.

94 So, my first invitation to you today is to disengage from a constant reliance on social media by holding a seven-day fast from social media. I acknowledge that there are positives about social media. But if you are paying more attention to feeds from social media than you are to the whisperings of the Spirit, then you are putting yourself at spiritual risk—as well as the risk of experiencing intense loneliness and depression. You and I both know youth who have been influenced through social media to do and say things that they never would do or say in person. Bullying is one example.

95 Another downside of social media is that it creates a false reality. Everyone posts their most fun, adventurous, and exciting pictures, which create the erroneous impression that everyone except you is leading a fun, adventurous, and exciting life. Much of what appears in your various social media feeds is distorted, if not fake. So give yourself a seven-day break from fake!

96 Choose seven consecutive days and go for it! See if you notice any difference in how you feel and what you think, and even how you think, during those seven days. After seven days, notice if there are some things you want to stop doing and some things you now want to start doing.

97 This social media fast can be just between you and the Lord. It will be your sign to Him that you are willing to step away from the world in order to enlist in His youth battalion.

98 My second invitation is to make a weekly sacrifice of time to the Lord, for three weeks in a row, to let Him know that you want to be part of His youth battalion—more than you want anything else. For three weeks give up something you like to do and use that time to help gather Israel.

99 Anytime you do anything that helps anyone—on either side of the veil—take a step toward making covenants with God and receiving their essential baptismal and temple ordinances, you

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the text on the left.

are helping to gather Israel. It is as simple as that.

100 As you pray about this sacrifice of time, you will be guided to know both what you can give up that week and what you can do instead to help gather Israel. For example, a young golfer might give up a round of golf and spend that time in the temple baptistry.

101 My third invitation is for you to do a thorough life assessment with the Lord, and perhaps with your parents and your bishop, to ensure that your feet are firmly planted on the covenant path. If you have wandered off, or if there are some things you need to let go of to help your mind and heart be more pure, today is the perfect time to change.

102 If you aren't sure how to repent, talk with your bishop or your parents or both. They will help you understand the Atonement of Jesus Christ. They will help you experience the joy that true repentance always brings.

103 Please do not stay off the covenant path one more minute. Please come back through true repentance, now. We need you with us in this youth battalion of the Lord. It just won't be the same without you!

104 My fourth invitation is for you to pray daily that all of God's children might receive the blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. You and I are living to see, and will continue to see, Israel gathered with great power.

And you can be part of the power behind that gathering!

105 My fifth invitation is for you to stand out; be different from the world. You and I know that you are to be a light to the world. Therefore, the Lord needs you to look like, sound like, act like, and dress like a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Yes, you are living in the world, but you have very different standards from the world to help you avoid the stain of the world.

106 With the Holy Ghost as your companion, you can see right through the celebrity culture that has smitten our society. You can be smarter than previous generations have ever been. And if you are sometimes called "weird," wear that distinction as a badge of honor and be happy that your light is shining brightly in this ever-darkening world!

107 Set a standard for the rest of the world! Embrace being different! The booklet entitled For the Strength of Youth should be your standard. It is the standard that the Lord expects all His youth to uphold. Now, as His humble servant, I plead with you to study this booklet again. Prayerfully read it like you've never read it before. Mark it up. Talk about it. Discuss the standards with your friends. Decide how you can live these standards, your standards, with even more exactness.

108 You have a copy of your own. So tonight at the end of the meeting, if you choose to enlist, please take a copy of For the

Strength of Youth and give this new copy to a friend who may not know your standards or who may not live them.

109 Pray about who needs this booklet. You will be guided. And it will be exciting.

110 Now, let me summarize by reviewing my five invitations for you to enlist in the Lord’s youth battalion to help gather Israel:

- 1. Hold a seven-day fast from social media.
- 2. Make a weekly sacrifice of time to the Lord for three weeks.
- 3. Keep on the covenant path. If you are off, repent and get back on the path.
- 4. Pray daily that all of God’s children might receive the blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- 5. Stand out. Be different. Be a light. Give to a friend one copy of the booklet *For the Strength of Youth*.

111 My beloved younger brothers and sisters, you are among the best the Lord has ever sent to this world. You have the capacity to be smarter and wiser and have more impact on the world than any previous generation!

112 As I conclude, I invite you to stand with the youth from all around the world and experience the thrill of being a member of the Lord’s youth battalion in “Zion’s army” by singing our closing hymn, “Hope of Israel,”

because this hymn is all about you!

113 From the depths of my soul, I testify that this is the work of Almighty God. He lives. Jesus is the Christ. This is His Church, restored to accomplish its divine destiny, including the promised gathering of Israel.

114 You are the hope of Israel, “children of the promised day”!^a I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 10

Special Witness of the Living Christ and His Atonement - Filmed in Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives during President Nelson’s 2018 worldwide tour, the video is part of the “Special Witnesses of Christ” video series first published in February of 2011.

WHENEVER I come to this great city of Jerusalem, I feel a renewed reverence for Him who made this land holy.

2 Under the direction of the Father, Jesus the Christ was Creator of this and other worlds. He was Jehovah, God of the Old Testament. Jesus was the promised Immanuel, as prophesied by Isaiah.

3 More than 2,000 years ago, the Lord Jesus Christ was born in nearby Bethlehem. As the Only Begotten Son of Almighty God, Jesus was the only perfect man to walk the earth. In New Testa-

a “Hope of Israel,” Hymns, no. 259.

ment days, Jesus established His Church, built on the foundation of apostles and prophets.

4 He healed the sick and caused the lame to walk, the blind to see, and the deaf to hear. He raised the dead.

5 Yet He allowed His life to be taken to make resurrection a reality and eternal life a possibility for all humankind. It was here in Jerusalem that the Savior spent His final days in mortality.

6 I am standing on the Mount of Olives. Here at the base of the mount, Jesus came to the Garden of Gethsemane. He came to submit to the will of His Father and offer Himself as the sacrifice for the sins and weaknesses, the pains and burdens of all who had ever lived.

7 In that garden, olives had been pressed under great weight to squeeze precious oil from the olives. In like manner, Jesus was literally pressed under the weight of the sins of the world. There He sweat great drops of blood, his life's 'oil,' which issued from every pore.

8 Not far from here is a hill named Golgotha, meaning 'skull,' which symbolized death. There upon the cross, the Savior of the world was lifted up. He gave His life as part of His atoning sacrifice.

9 His subsequent Resurrection, His triumphant victory over the

grave, is recorded in holy writ: 'But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept'.^b

10 Because the Savior offered Himself as the infinite Atonement, you and I have the opportunity, the privilege, to be forgiven when we repent. We can also turn to Him for healing of our hearts, for strength where we are weak, and for help to do things we simply cannot do on our own.

11 By virtue of His transcendent offering, Jesus also gave us the gift of immortality and the opportunity for eternal life, proclaiming: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die".^c

12 Another testament of Jesus Christ comes from ancient America, where God the Father introduced His Son to the Nephites, declaring, "Behold my Beloved Son, ... hear ye him".^d

13 Modern prophets have also borne witness of Him, including this declaration by the Prophet Joseph Smith: 'And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!'.^e

14 I also declare that Jesus the Christ lives, that His Church has

b 1 Corinthians 15:20

c John 11:25-26

d 3 Nephi 11:7

e Doctrine and Covenants 76:22

been restored to the earth, complete with His power and authority, with apostles and prophets and essential ordinances and covenants.

15 In a coming day the Lord will return to this Holy Land. Then ‘the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together’.^a Then He will offer these words: ‘I was wounded in the house of my friends. I am he who was lifted up. I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the Son of God’.^b And then every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ.

16 I testify that He is the living Christ, our Lord and Savior, Exemplar, Redeemer, and Judge in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 11

Opening Remarks - Delivered in the Saturday Morning Session of the October 2018 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters, we have looked forward to gathering with you again in this October general conference of the Church. We extend our heartfelt welcome to each of you. We are deeply grateful for your sustaining prayers. We can feel their effect. Thank you!

2 We are grateful for your tremendous efforts to follow

through with counsel given at general conference six months ago. Stake presidencies throughout the world have sought revelation necessary to reorganize elders quorums. Men of those quorums along with our dedicated Relief Society sisters are working diligently to minister to our brothers and sisters in a higher, holier way. We are inspired by your goodness and extraordinary efforts to bring the Savior’s love to your families, neighbors, and friends and to minister to them as He would.

3 Since April conference, Sister Nelson and I have met with members on four continents and on islands of the sea. From Jerusalem to Harare, from Winnipeg to Bangkok, we have experienced your great faith and the strength of your testimonies.

4 We are overjoyed with the number of our youth who have joined the Lord’s youth battalion to help gather scattered Israel.^c We thank you! And as you continue to follow my invitations offered at our worldwide youth devotional, you are setting a standard for the rest of us to follow. And what a difference you youth are making!

5 In recent years, we in the presiding councils of the Church have wrestled with a fundamental question: how can we take the gospel in its simple purity and

a Isaiah 40:5
b Doctrine and Covenants 45:52
c See Russell M. Nelson and Wendy W. Nelson, “Hope of Israel” (worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018), HopeofIsrael.lds.org.

Horizontal lines for writing notes on the right side of the page.

the ordinances with their eternal efficacy to all of God's children?

6 As Latter-day Saints, we have become accustomed to thinking of "church" as something that happens in our meetinghouses, supported by what happens at home. We need an adjustment to this pattern. It is time for a home-centered Church, supported by what takes place inside our branch, ward, and stake buildings.

7 As the Church continues to expand throughout the world, many members live where we have no chapels—and may not for the foreseeable future. I remember a family who, because of such circumstances, was required to meet in their home. I asked the mother how she liked going to church in her own home. She replied, "I like it! My husband uses better language at home now, knowing that he will bless the sacrament here each Sunday."

8 The long-standing objective of the Church is to assist all members to increase their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and in His Atonement, to assist them in making and keeping their covenants with God, and to strengthen and seal their families. In this complex world today, this is not easy. The adversary is increasing his attacks on faith and upon us and our families at an exponential rate. To survive spiritually, we need counterstrategies and proactive plans. Accordingly, we

now want to put in place organizational adjustments that will further fortify our members and their families.

9 For many years, Church leaders have been working on an integrated curriculum to strengthen families and individuals through a home-centered and Church-supported plan to learn doctrine, strengthen faith, and foster greater personal worship. Our efforts over these recent years to hallow the Sabbath—to make it a delight and a personal sign to God of our love for Him—will be augmented by the adjustments we will now introduce.

10 This morning we will announce a new balance and connection between gospel instruction in the home and in the Church. We are each responsible for our individual spiritual growth. And scriptures make it clear that parents have the primary responsibility to teach the doctrine to their children.^d It is the responsibility of the Church to assist each member in the divinely defined goal of increasing his or her gospel knowledge.

11 Elder Quentin L. Cook will now explain these important adjustments. All members of the Council of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles are united in endorsing this message. We gratefully acknowledge the inspiration from the Lord that has influenced the development of the plans and

d See Doctrine and Covenants 93:40; Moses 6:58–62.

procedures that Elder Cook will present.

12 My dear brothers and sisters, I know that God lives! Jesus is the Christ! This is His Church that He directs by prophecy and revelation to His humble servants. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 12

Sisters' Participation in the Gathering of Israel - Delivered in the Women's Session of the October 2018 General Conference.

IT is wonderful to be with you, my dear and precious sisters. Perhaps a recent experience will give you a glimpse into how I feel about you and the supernal abilities with which you are endowed.

2 One day while I was speaking to a congregation in South America, I became exceedingly excited about my topic, and at a pivotal moment, I said, "As the mother of 10 children, I can tell you that ..." And then I went on to complete my message.

3 I did not realize that I had said the word mother. My translator, assuming I had misspoken, changed the word mother to father, so the congregation never knew that I had referred to myself as mother. But my wife Wendy heard it, and she was delighted with my Freudian slip.

4 In that moment, the deep longing of my heart to make a difference in the world—like only a

mother does—bubbled up from my heart. Through the years, whenever I have been asked why I chose to become a medical doctor, my answer has always been the same: "Because I could not choose to be a mother."

5 Please note that anytime I use the word mother, I am not talking only about women who have given birth or adopted children in this life. I am speaking about all of our Heavenly Parents' adult daughters. Every woman is a mother by virtue of her eternal divine destiny.

6 So tonight, as the father of 10 children—nine daughters and one son—and as President of the Church, I pray that you will sense how deeply I feel about you—about who you are and all the good you can do. No one can do what a righteous woman can do. No one can duplicate the influence of a mother.

7 Men can and often do communicate the love of Heavenly Father and the Savior to others. But women have a special gift for it—a divine endowment. You have the capacity to sense what someone needs—and when he or she needs it. You can reach out, comfort, teach, and strengthen someone in his or her very moment of need.

8 Women see things differently than men do, and oh, how we need your perspective! Your nature leads you to think of others first, to consider the effect that any course of action will have on others.

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

9 As President Eyring pointed out, it was our glorious Mother Eve—with her far-reaching vision of our Heavenly Father’s plan—who initiated what we call “the Fall.” Her wise and courageous choice and Adam’s supporting decision moved God’s plan of happiness forward. They made it possible for each of us to come to earth, receive a body, and prove that we would choose to stand up for Jesus Christ now, just as we did premortally.

10 My dear sisters, you have special spiritual gifts and propensities. Tonight I urge you, with all the hope of my heart, to pray to understand your spiritual gifts—to cultivate, use, and expand them, even more than you ever have. You will change the world as you do so.

11 As women, you inspire others and set a standard worthy of emulation. Let me give you a little background on two of the major announcements made at our last general conference. You, my dear sisters, were key to each.

12 First, ministering. The supreme standard for ministering is that of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Generally, women are, and always have been, closer to that standard than men. When you are truly ministering, you follow your feelings to help someone else experience more of the Savior’s love. The inclination to minister is inherent in righteous women. I know women who pray every day, “Whom wouldst Thou have me help today?”

13 Before the April 2018 announcement about the higher and holier way of caring for others, the tendency of some men was to check off their home teaching assignment as “done” and move on to the next task.

14 But when you sensed that a sister you visit taught needed help, you responded immediately and then throughout the month. Thus, it was how you visit taught that inspired our upward shift to ministering.

15 Second, in the last general conference, we also restructured Melchizedek Priesthood quorums. When we wrestled with how to help the men of the Church be more effective in their responsibilities, we carefully considered the example of the Relief Society.

16 In Relief Society, women in various ages and stages of life meet together. Each decade of life brings unique challenges, and yet, there you were, week after week, mingling together, growing and teaching the gospel together, and making a real difference in the world.

17 Now, following your example, Melchizedek Priesthood bearers are members of the elders quorum. These men range in age from 18 to 98 (maybe more), with equally wide-ranging priesthood and Church experiences. These brethren can now create stronger fraternal linkages, learn together, and bless others more effectively.

18 You remember that last June, Sister Nelson and I spoke to the youth of the Church. We invited them to enlist in the Lord’s youth battalion to help gather Israel on both sides of the veil. This gathering is “the greatest challenge, the greatest cause, and the greatest work on earth today”!^a

19 It is a cause that desperately needs women, because women shape the future. So tonight I’m extending a prophetic plea to you, the women of the Church, to shape the future by helping to gather scattered Israel.

20 Where can you start?

21 May I offer four invitations:

22 First, I invite you to participate in a 10-day fast from social media and from any other media that bring negative and impure thoughts to your mind. Pray to know which influences to remove during your fast. The effect of your 10-day fast may surprise you. What do you notice after taking a break from perspectives of the world that have been wounding your spirit? Is there a change in where you now want to spend your time and energy? Have any of your priorities shifted—even just a little? I urge you to record and follow through with each impression.

23 Second, I invite you to read the Book of Mormon between now and the end of the year.

As impossible as that may seem with all you are trying to manage in your life, if you will accept this invitation with full purpose of heart, the Lord will help you find a way to achieve it. And, as you prayerfully study, I promise that the heavens will open for you. The Lord will bless you with increased inspiration and revelation.

24 As you read, I would encourage you to mark each verse that speaks of or refers to the Savior. Then, be intentional about talking of Christ, rejoicing in Christ, and preaching of Christ with your families and friends.^b You and they will be drawn closer to the Savior through this process. And changes, even miracles, will begin to happen.

25 This morning the announcement was made regarding the new Sunday schedule and home-centered, Church-supported curriculum. You, my dear sisters, are a key to the success of this new, balanced, and coordinated gospel-teaching effort. Please teach those whom you love what you are learning from the scriptures. Teach them how to turn to the Savior for His healing and cleansing power when they sin. And teach them how to draw upon His strengthening power every day of their lives.

26 Third, establish a pattern of regular temple attendance. This may require a little more sac-

a Russell M. Nelson, “Hope of Israel” (worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018), HopeofIsrael.lds.org.

b See 2 Nephi 25:26.

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

rifice in your life. More regular time in the temple will allow the Lord to teach you how to draw upon His priesthood power with which you have been endowed in His temple. For those of you who don't live near a temple, I invite you to study prayerfully about temples in the scriptures and in the words of living prophets. Seek to know more, to understand more, to feel more about temples than you ever have before.

27 In our worldwide youth devotional last June, I spoke about a young man whose life changed when his parents exchanged his smartphone for a flip phone. This young man's mother is a fearless woman of faith. She saw her son drifting toward choices that could prevent him from serving a mission. She took her pleadings to the temple to know how best to help her son. Then she followed through with every impression.

28 She said: "I felt the Spirit guiding me to check my son's phone at specific times to catch specific things. I don't know how to navigate these smartphones, but the Spirit guided me through all the social media that I don't even use! I know the Spirit helps parents who are seeking guidance to protect their children. [At first] my son was furious with

me. ... But after only three days, he thanked me! He could feel the difference."

29 Her son's behavior and attitudes changed dramatically. He became more helpful at home, smiled more, and was more attentive at church. He loved serving for a time in a temple baptistry and preparing for his mission.

30 My fourth invitation, for you who are of age, is to participate fully in Relief Society. I urge you to study the current Relief Society purpose statement. It is inspiring. It may guide you in developing your own purpose statement for your own life. I also entreat you to savor the truths in the Relief Society declaration published almost 20 years ago.^c A framed copy of this declaration hangs on the wall in the office of the First Presidency. I am thrilled every time I read it. It describes who you are and who the Lord needs you to be at this precise time as you do your part to help gather scattered Israel.

31 My dear sisters, we need you! We "need your strength, your conversion, your conviction, your ability to lead, your wisdom, and your voices."^d We simply cannot gather Israel without you.

^c These documents are available online. For the Relief Society purpose statement, see lds.org/callings/relief-society. For the Relief Society declaration, see Mary Ellen Smoot, "Rejoice, Daughters of Zion," *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 92–94; Liahona, Jan. 2000, 111–14.

^d Russell M. Nelson, "A Plea to My Sisters," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 96; emphasis added.

seph Smith did not name the Church restored through him; neither did Mormon. It was the Savior Himself who said, “For thus shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”^d

5 Even earlier, in AD 34, our resurrected Lord gave similar instruction to members of His Church when He visited them in the Americas. At that time He said:

6 “Ye shall call the church in my name. ...

7 “And how be it my church save it be called in my name? For if a church be called in Moses’ name then it be Moses’ church; or if it be called in the name of a man then it be the church of a man; but if it be called in my name then it is my church.”^e

8 Thus, the name of the Church is not negotiable. When the Savior clearly states what the name of His Church should be and even precedes His declaration with, “Thus shall my church be called,” He is serious. And if we allow nicknames to be used or adopt or even sponsor those nicknames ourselves, He is offended.

9 What’s in a name or, in this case, a nickname? When it comes to nicknames of the Church, such

as the “LDS Church,” the “Mormon Church,” or the “Church of the Latter-day Saints,” the most important thing in those names is the absence of the Savior’s name. To remove the Lord’s name from the Lord’s Church is a major victory for Satan. When we discard the Savior’s name, we are subtly disregarding all that Jesus Christ did for us—even His Atonement.

10 Consider this from His perspective: Premortally, He was Jehovah, God of the Old Testament. Under the direction of His Father, He was the Creator of this and other worlds.^f He chose to submit to the will of His Father and do something for all of God’s children that no one else could do! Condescending to come to earth as the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh, He was brutally reviled, mocked, spit upon, and scourged. In the Garden of Gethsemane, our Savior took upon Himself every pain, every sin, and all of the anguish and suffering ever experienced by you and me and by everyone who has ever lived or will ever live. Under the weight of that excruciating burden, He bled from every pore.^g All of this suffering was intensified as He was cruelly crucified on Calvary’s cross.

11 Through these excruciating experiences and His subsequent Resurrection—His infinite

d Doctrine and Covenants 115:4.

e 3 Nephi 27:7–8.

f See Moses 1:33.

g See Doctrine and Covenants 19:18.

Atonement—He granted immortality to all and ransomed each one of us from the effects of sin on condition of our repentance.

12 Following the Savior’s Resurrection and the death of His Apostles, the world plunged into centuries of darkness. Then in the year 1820, God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith to initiate the Restoration of the Lord’s Church.

13 After all He had endured—and after all He had done for humankind—I realize with profound regret that we have unwittingly acquiesced in the Lord’s restored Church being called by other names, each of which expunges the sacred name of Jesus Christ!

14 Every Sunday as we worthily partake of the sacrament, we make anew our sacred promise to our Heavenly Father that we are willing to take upon us the name of His Son, Jesus Christ.^h We promise to follow Him, repent, keep His commandments, and always remember Him.

15 When we omit His name from His Church, we are inadvertently removing Him as the central focus of our lives.

16 Taking the Savior’s name upon us includes declaring and witnessing to others—through our actions and our words—that Jesus is the Christ. Have we been so afraid to offend someone who called us “Mormons” that we have failed to defend the Savior Himself, to stand up for Him even in the name by which His Church is called?

17 If we as a people and as individuals are to have access to the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ—to cleanse and heal us, to strengthen and magnify us, and ultimately to exalt us—we must clearly acknowledge Him as the source of that power. We can begin by calling His Church by the name He decreed.

18 For much of the world, the Lord’s Church is presently disguised as the “Mormon Church.” But we as members of the Lord’s Church know who stands at its head: Jesus Christ Himself. Unfortunately, many who hear the term Mormon may think that we worship Mormon. Not so! We honor and respect that great ancient American prophet.ⁱ But we are not Mormon’s disciples. We are the Lord’s disciples.

19 In the early days of the restored Church, terms such as Mormon Church and Mormons^j were often used as epithets—as

h See Moroni 4:3; Doctrine and Covenants 20:37, 77.
i Mormon was one of the four major writers of the Book of Mormon, the others being Nephi, Jacob, and Moroni. All were eyewitnesses of the Lord, as was its inspired translator, the Prophet Joseph Smith.
j Even the word Mormonites was among terms of derision that were employed (see History of the Church, 2:62–63, 126).

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the text on the left.

cruel terms, abusive terms—designed to obliterate God’s hand in restoring the Church of Jesus Christ in these latter days.^k

20 Brothers and sisters, there are many worldly arguments against restoring the correct name of the Church. Because of the digital world in which we live and with search engine optimization that helps all of us find information we need almost instantly—including information about the Lord’s Church—critics say that a correction at this point is unwise. Others feel that because we are known so widely as “Mormons” and as the “Mormon Church,” we should make the best of it.

21 If this were a discussion about branding a man-made organization, those arguments might prevail. But in this crucial matter, we look to Him whose Church

this is and acknowledge that the Lord’s ways are not, and never will be, man’s ways. If we will be patient and if we will do our part well, the Lord will lead us through this important task. After all, we know that the Lord helps those who seek to do His will, just as He helped Nephi accomplish the task of building a ship to cross the sea.¹

22 We will want to be courteous and patient in our efforts to correct these errors. Responsible media will be sympathetic in responding to our request.

23 In a previous general conference, Elder Benjamín De Hoyos spoke of such an event. He said:

24 “Some years ago while serving in the office of public affairs of the Church in Mexico, [a companion and I] were invited to participate in a radio talk show.

k Other epithets seem to have occurred in New Testament times. During the Apostle Paul’s trial before Felix, Paul was said to be “a ring-leader of the sect of the Nazarenes” (Acts 24:5). Regarding the use of the phrase “of the Nazarenes,” one commentator wrote: “This was the name usually given to Christians by way of contempt. They were so called because Jesus was of Nazareth” (Albert Barnes, *Notes, Explanatory and Practical, on the Acts of the Apostles* [1937], 313).

Similarly, another commentary states: “As our Lord was contemptuously called ‘The Nazarene’ (Matt. xxvi. 71), so the Jews designated his disciples ‘Nazarenes.’ They would not admit that they were Christians, i.e. disciples of the Messiah” (The Pulpit Commentary: The Acts of the Apostles, ed. H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell [1884], 2:231).

In a related vein, Elder Neal A. Maxwell observed: “Throughout scriptural history, we see recurring efforts to demean prophets in order to dismiss them—to label them in order to diminish them. Mostly, however, they are simply ignored by their contemporaries and by secular history. After all, early Christians were merely called ‘the sect of the Nazarenes.’ (Acts 24:5.)” (“Out of Obscurity,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 10).

1 See 1 Nephi 18:1–2.

... [One of the program directors] asked [us], 'Why does the Church have such a long name? ...'

25 "My companion and I smiled at such a magnificent question and then proceeded to explain that the name of the Church was not chosen by man. It was given by the Savior. ... The program director immediately and respectfully responded, 'We will thus repeat it with great pleasure.'"^m

26 That report provides a pattern. One by one, our best efforts as individuals will be required to correct errors that have crept in through the years.ⁿ The rest of the world may or may not follow our lead in calling us by the correct name. But it is disingenuous for us to be frustrated if most of the world calls the Church and its members by the wrong names if we do the same.

27 Our revised style guide is helpful. It states: "In the first reference, the full name of the Church is preferred: 'The Church of Jesus Christ of Lat-

ter-day Saints.' When a shortened [second] reference is needed, the terms 'the Church' or the 'Church of Jesus Christ' are encouraged. The 'restored Church of Jesus Christ' is also accurate and encouraged."^o

28 If someone should ask, "Are you a Mormon?" you could reply, "If you are asking if I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, yes, I am!"

29 If someone asks, "Are you a Latter-day Saint?"^p you might respond, "Yes, I am. I believe in Jesus Christ and am a member of His restored Church."

30 My dear brothers and sisters, I promise you that if we will do our best to restore the correct name of the Lord's Church, He whose Church this is will pour down His power and blessings upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints,^q the likes of which we have never seen. We will have the knowledge and power of God to help us take the blessings of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ to every nation, kindred,

m Benjamín De Hoyos, "Called to Be Saints," Ensign or Liahona, May 2011, 106.

n While we have no control over what other people may call us, we are in complete control over how we refer to ourselves. How can we expect others to honor the correct name of the Church if we as its members fail to do so?

o "Style Guide—The Name of the Church," mormonnewsroom.org.

p The term saint is used often in the Holy Bible. In Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, for example, he used the word saint at least once in every chapter. A saint is a person who believes in Jesus Christ and strives to follow Him.

q See Doctrine and Covenants 121:33.

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

tongue, and people and to prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord.

31 So, what’s in a name? When it comes to the name of the Lord’s Church, the answer is “Everything!” Jesus Christ directed us to call the Church by His name because it is His Church, filled with His power.

32 I know that God lives. Jesus is the Christ. He leads His Church today. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 14

Becoming Exemplary Latter-day Saints - Delivered in the Sunday Afternoon Session of the October 2018 General Conference.

THIS has been an inspirational and historic conference. We look to the future with enthusiasm. We have been motivated to do better and to be better. The marvelous messages delivered from this pulpit by our General Authorities and General Officers and the music have been sublime! I urge you to study these messages, commencing this week.^a They express the mind and the will of the Lord for His people, today.

2 The new home-centered, Church-supported integrated curriculum has the potential to

unleash the power of families, as each family follows through conscientiously and carefully to transform their home into a sanctuary of faith. I promise that as you diligently work to remodel your home into a center of gospel learning, over time your Sabbath days will truly be a delight. Your children will be excited to learn and to live the Savior’s teachings, and the influence of the adversary in your life and in your home will decrease. Changes in your family will be dramatic and sustaining.

3 During this conference we have strengthened our resolve to execute the essential effort to honor the Lord Jesus Christ every time we refer to His Church. I promise you that our rigorous attention to use the correct name of the Savior’s Church and its members will lead to increased faith and access to greater spiritual power for members of His Church.

4 Now let’s turn to the topic of temples. We know that our time in the temple is crucial to our salvation and exaltation and to that of our families.

5 After we receive our own temple ordinances and make sacred covenants with God, each one of us needs the ongoing spiritual strengthening and tutoring that is possible only in the house

a See general conference messages online at LDS.org and on the Gospel Library app. They will be printed in the Ensign and Liahona. The Church magazines, including the New Era and the Friend, delivered through the mail or downloaded online, are an important part of your home-centered gospel curriculum.

of the Lord. And our ancestors need us to serve as proxy for them.

6 Consider the great mercy and fairness of God, who, before the foundation of the world, provided a way to give temple blessings to those who died without a knowledge of the gospel. These sacred temple rites are ancient. To me that antiquity is thrilling and another evidence of their authenticity.^b

7 My dear brothers and sisters, the assaults of the adversary are increasing exponentially, in intensity and in variety.^c Our need to be in the temple on a regular basis has never been greater. I plead with you to take a prayerful look at how you spend your time. Invest time in your future and in that of your family. If you have reasonable access to a temple, I urge you to find a way to make an appointment regularly with the Lord—to be in His holy house—then keep that appointment with exactness and joy. I promise you that the Lord will bring the miracles He knows you need as you make sacrifices to serve and worship in His temples.

8 Currently we have 159 dedicated temples. The proper care and maintenance of those temples is very important to us. With the

passage of time, temples are inevitably in need of refreshing and renewal. To that end, plans are now being made to renovate and update the Salt Lake Temple and other pioneer-generation temples. Details on these projects will be shared as they are developed.

9 Today we are pleased to announce plans to construct 12 more temples. Those temples will be built in the following locations: Mendoza, Argentina; Salvador, Brazil; Yuba City, California; Phnom Penh, Cambodia; Praia, Cape Verde; Yigo, Guam; Puebla, Mexico; Auckland, New Zealand; Lagos, Nigeria; Davao, Philippines; San Juan, Puerto Rico; and Washington County, Utah.

10 Building and maintaining temples may not change your life, but spending your time in the temple surely will. To those who have long been absent from the temple, I encourage you to prepare and return as soon as possible. Then I invite you to worship in the temple and pray to feel deeply the Savior’s infinite love for you, that each of you may gain your own testimony that He directs this sacred and ageless work.^d

11 Brothers and sisters, I thank you for your faith and sustain-

b See, for example, Exodus 28; 29; Leviticus 8.

c See Mosiah 4:29.

d See Wilford Woodruff, “The Law of Adoption,” discourse delivered at the general conference of the Church, Apr. 8, 1894. President Woodruff said: “We have not got through [with] revelation. We have not got through [with] the work of God. . . . There will be no end to this work until it is perfected” (Deseret Evening News, Apr. 14, 1894, 9).

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

ing efforts. I leave my love and blessing upon you, that you may feast upon the word of the Lord and apply His teachings in your personal lives. I assure you that revelation continues in the Church and will continue until "the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done."^a

12 I bless you with increased faith in Him and in His holy work, with faith and patience to endure your personal challenges in life. I bless you to become exemplary Latter-day Saints. I so bless you and bear my testimony that God lives! Jesus is the Christ! This is His Church. We are His people, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 15

Concepción Chile Temple Dedicatory Prayer - Delivered on Sunday October 28, 2018.

O God, our Eternal Father, prayerfully and humbly we come before Thee in the name of Thy Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. In this holy house, we bow in reverent prayer to praise and honor Thee and to dedicate this edifice unto Thee for its sacred purposes.

2 We are most grateful that Thou hast blessed us with resources necessary to construct this house of the Lord. We thank Thee for faithful Saints who, in their prosperity or in their poverty, have

made sacred offerings for this holy edifice. We thank Thee for every sacrifice of time and effort made to construct this beautiful building.

3 We are grateful for the Prophet Joseph Smith and for the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in these latter days. We thank Thee for the ministration of heavenly messengers who have restored priesthood keys that make possible the salvation and exaltation of Thy children.

4 We acknowledge those Chilean pioneers of faith and devotion who established the foundation of Thy work in this beautiful country. May their names be remembered and their legacy revered by all succeeding generations.

5 We pray for the families and individual members of the Church who reside in this choice land. As they are faithful and true to the covenants they have made and will make in this holy temple, wilt Thou prosper them and grant them the desires of their hearts. We pray for the youth, that they may be drawn to these sacred precincts. We pray for the children that their hearts may be turned to their fathers. May the ordinances and covenants of salvation and exaltation be provided to all on both sides of the veil who yearn for them.

6 Wilt Thou bless those who depart this temple for missionary service, that they may go forth

a Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 142.

with power and determination to help in the gathering of Israel in preparation for the Second Coming of Thy Beloved Son.

7 We pray for members of the Church who direct Thy work here on earth. We pray for the general officers, local leaders, and faithful members of Thy Church. We pray that Thy love may sustain them according to Thy holy will for them.

8 We pray for the government leaders of this great nation of Chile. Dear Father, soften their hearts and inspire their minds that this country may prosper under their direction. We pray for the citizens of Chile. Bless them according to Thy will for them. Strengthen those who will help to secure freedom and security for all. Bless the members of Thy Church who reside here that they may be exemplary citizens, with integrity and charity in all their labors.

9 Now, Beloved Father, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ and in the authority of the holy Melchizedek Priesthood, we dedicate unto Thee this the Concepción Chile Temple. We dedicate the structure from the depth of its foundation to the height of its steeple, that it may withstand the forces of nature and the ravages of time. We dedicate each room for its sacred purpose. We dedicate the furnishings and fixtures that they may serve their function well and give comfort and utility to those who use them. We dedicate the grounds upon which this temple stands,

with their flowers, trees, shrubs, and grass. Thwart the hand of any who would approach these premises with evil intent.

10 Dear Father, wilt Thou bless the temple presidents and matrons who will serve here, that they may do so with Thine approbation. Bless all who serve here that exactness and love will prevail in their efforts. Bless those who come to worship and perform work for their departed ancestors and others. May Thy Holy Spirit bring inspiration, comfort, and joy to all who labor in this sacred edifice.

11 Holy Father, we praise and honor Thee and Thy Beloved Son. May Thy Saints here and throughout the world fulfill their responsibilities in the gathering of Israel, preparing a Zion people, and doing a work worthy of all acceptance.

12 We express unto Thee our abiding love and sincere gratitude as we dedicate unto Thee this the Concepción Chile Temple, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 16

Interview in Chile - Excerpts from the October 30th, 2018 interview in Chile during President Nelson's worldwide tour with Elder Stevenson.

THE Book of Mormon refutes the mistaken impression that all you need is "good works" and to be a nice fellow. You have to have ordinances if you're going

Handwriting practice lines consisting of horizontal lines spaced evenly down the right side of the page.

to reach the celestial glory that God has in mind. There are so many wonderful people in the world who have that feeling that: as long as I don't break the law and that I'm polite and careful to people that's all I need to do.

2 The Book of Mormon teaches over and over again that you need to have the ordinances. And of course, that's why we have temples so that all the potential that God has in store for His children can become a fact, a reality. ... No one else can offer perpetuation of the family unit beyond the grave. And that, according to our Heavenly Father, is the greatest gift that He can give to His children.

3 So on this tour we've talked to people in 5 different countries. If there are 200 countries in the world, and more, 5 is such a small drop in the bucket. We'll get around but we'll still miss more than we touch. But we'll try. We won't give up just because it's a big job.

4 We're just at the exponential phase of growth yes, but it will continue. The Lord said, "I will hasten my work in it's time." And He makes good on his promises.

5 Everyone did their parts well. And the people — they're so loving and so anxious to serve the Lord and serve each other. The Church is relatively young here in South America. Ninety years ago, nothing. ... I'm 94 years old. I was born in 1924. ...And

now, former General Authorities were there and young people who have been in the Church for a long time. We saw four-generation families. Now, we have millions in this South American continent. And it's not just numbers; it's strength, it's power, it's faith. It's almost palpable.

6 We're witnesses to a process of restoration. If you think the Church has been fully restored, you're just seeing the beginning. There is much more to come. ... Wait till next year. And then the next year. Eat your vitamin pills. Get your rest. It's going to be exciting.

7 This is a global ministry. We're prophets for the whole world — all of God's children — not just the members of the Church. You see these beautiful children. You see these beautiful people who love the Lord, and they love the Lord's servants. It's not Russell or Gary [Stevenson] that they love; it's the office. This is a calling. ... It's the Lord's work. And it's a privilege for us to participate in it in any way. We love it. It's very energizing.

CHAPTER 17

Sergio Rubin Interview - Interview with Pope Francis' biographer Sergio Rubin in Montevideo Uruguay on October 30th, 2018.

Church Growth in South America

WE'VE be anxious to meet with the people of South America. I believe [people get close to the church in Latin America]

because they understand the Book of Mormon so well. It's a record of the ministry of the resurrected Lord, Jesus Christ, when he came to visit the people who were in the American hemisphere. I find the people of South America, Central America, feel a closeness to the people of those ancestors.

Rome Temple

2 We appreciate the kindness of the Pope and the Vatican. They've been most gracious and welcoming to us.

Homosexuality

3 I'm a father of 10 children and the grandfather of 57 grandchildren. I watch their excitement when they get their report from the doctor. The first thing they want to know is "is it a boy or is it a girl?" Our doctrine teaches us that in that premortal realm we were spirit sons and spirit daughters of our Heavenly Parents and that gender is the same in the premortal world as in the mortal world as in the post-mortal world. The Lord taught that we must be chaste. The adversary would tempt us to eat things we shouldn't eat, drink things we shouldn't drink and love as we should not love. Chastity is very important. Some people don't want to be chaste and that's regrettable because when they lose their chastity, they lose joy. And so should the heterosexual men [refrain and be chaste]. They both should discipline themselves so they can stand before the Lord and say, "I'm clean."

Family Tree for Humanity

4 That's right, you and I are brothers! If we go back far enough, we're related. We are in the process of creating a family tree pattern for the whole human race. We are growing exponentially! We have billions of people now for which we have their genealogical relationships.

Food Storage

5 We teach the doctrine of self-reliance. Not only temporal self-reliance but spiritual self-reliance. So you can pray to Heavenly Father and get your own answers to problems in life. There's a lot of comfort in knowing that you're spiritually self-reliant and temporally self-reliant.

The Religious Future of the World

6 I think the religious element will continue to thrive. There will also be growth of the irreligious. And hopefully we can learn to live together. There are countries that now do not allow religious freedom. And some of those countries are thriving economically with big skyscrapers and fine highways. As I meet with their government leaders they say, "We need faith. We need values. We need high principles. We need stronger families. Will you please help us." So I think there's going to be change. Countries without faith are going to want more faith. I watched the countries of Eastern Europe under communism. They had complete religious intolerance. And when the communism collapsed, the first thing they asked for, "Where can I go to church? What am I miss-

ing in life?" They are missing a knowledge of God, knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the conviction that there is absolute truth in the world.

CHAPTER 18

Four Gifts That Jesus Christ Offers to You - Delivered at the First Presidency Christmas Devotional on December 2, 2018.

MY beloved brothers and sisters, what a treasured season this is! We love the strains of "Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful"^a and eagerly come to adore Him: Jesus the Christ—that singular babe of Bethlehem—"the Great Jehovah of the Old Testament [and] the Messiah of the New."^b

2 Tonight let us consider together the blessings that come to us as we focus on the life, mission, doctrine, and Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. I invite you, as King Benjamin did for Saints in his day, to "consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God." That blessing is for us here and now, but added to it is the eventual promise of "never-ending happiness."^c Simply stated, true followers of Jesus Christ have the privilege of experiencing unspeakable joy forever.

3 I was reminded of this the other day when I met an angel

named Lydia. This angel was not dressed in white, and she made it easy for us to visit by coming to my office. Lydia is 12 years old. I was told that she is suffering from a rare, aggressive form of brain cancer.^d She has an angelic face and a poise beyond her years. As we talked about her life and what lies ahead, she was calm and at peace. When I asked if she had any questions, she quickly replied, "What is heaven like?" This led to a heart-to-heart discussion about the purpose of life and the blessings that our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son have offered to those who honor and follow Them.

4 I am deeply moved by the faith of Lydia and her family! Though facing a monumental challenge as far as this earth life is concerned, Lydia is filled with faith. She has an eternal perspective. She knows that the Lord loves her and will care for her. Her devoted family is filled with the same peace and composure that only faith in the Lord can bring.

5 Lydia's wish was to meet the President of the Lord's Church, but her desires run much deeper than any onetime experience here in mortality. Her deepest desire is to be with her family forever in the celestial realm. That includes her desire always to be with Heavenly Father and Jesus too.

a "Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful," Hymns, no. 202.

b The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles," Ensign or Liahona, May 2017, inside front cover.

c Mosiah 2:41.

d Anaplastic astrocytoma.

6 Indeed, our desires influence each of us in profound ways, not just here and now but beyond. Consider the significance of this statement from Alma: “[The Lord] granteth unto men according to their desire.”^e

7 Desire is important in this season of gift giving, when we are particularly mindful of the desires of those whom we love. During this season, I invite you to consider your own desires. What are your deepest desires? What do you really want to experience and accomplish in this life? Do you really want to become more and more like Jesus Christ? Do you really want to live with Heavenly Father and with your family forever and live as He lives?

8 If you do, you will want to accept many gifts offered by the Lord to help you and me during our time of mortal probation. Let us focus on four of the gifts Jesus Christ gave to all who are willing to receive them.^f

9 First, He gave you and me an unlimited capacity to love. That includes the capacity to love the unlovable and those who not only do not love you but presently persecute and despitefully use you.^g

10 With the Savior’s help, we can learn to love as He loved. It may require a change of heart—

most certainly a softening of our hearts—as we are tutored by the Savior how to really take care of each other. My dear brothers and sisters, we can truly minister in the Lord’s way as we accept His gift of love.

11 Ask for the Lord’s help to love those He needs you to love, including those for whom it is not always easy to feel affection. You may even want to ask God for His angels to walk with you where you presently do not want to tread.^h

12 A second gift the Savior offers you is the ability to forgive. Through His infinite Atonement, you can forgive those who have hurt you and who may never accept responsibility for their cruelty to you.

13 It is usually easy to forgive one who sincerely and humbly seeks your forgiveness. But the Savior will grant you the ability to forgive anyone who has mistreated you in any way. Then their hurtful acts can no longer canker your soul.

14 A third gift from the Savior is that of repentance. This gift is not always well understood. As you know, the New Testament was originally written in the Greek language. In passages where the Savior calls upon people to repent, the word translated as “repent” is the Greek

e Alma 29:4; emphasis added.

f See Doctrine and Covenants 88:33.

g See Matthew 5:44–45.

h See Doctrine and Covenants 84:88.

term metanoeo.ⁱ This is a very powerful Greek verb. The prefix meta means “change.” We also use that prefix in English. For example, the word metamorphosis means “change in form or shape.” The suffix noeo relates to a Greek word that means “mind.”^j It also relates to other Greek words that mean “knowledge,”^k “spirit,”^l and “breath.”^m

15 Can we begin to see the breadth and depth of what the Lord is giving to us when He offers us the gift to repent? He invites us to change our minds, our knowledge, our spirit, even our breathing. For example, when we repent, we breathe with gratitude to God, who lends us breath from day to day.ⁿ And we desire to use that breath in serving Him and His children. Repentance is a resplendent gift. It is a process never to be feared. It is a gift for us to receive with joy and to use—even embrace—day after day as we seek to become more like our Savior.

16 King Lamoni’s father caught a glimpse of what lay ahead for those who believed in Christ and followed Him. He declared that he would give away all his sins for the privilege of knowing the Lord.^o True repentance is not an event. It is a never-ending privilege. It is fundamental to

progression and having peace of mind, comfort, and joy.

17 A fourth gift from our Savior is actually a promise—a promise of life everlasting. This does not mean simply living for a really, really, really long time. Everyone will live forever after death, regardless of the kingdom or glory for which they may qualify. Everyone will be resurrected and experience immortality. But eternal life is so much more than a designation of time. Eternal life is the kind and quality of life that Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son live. When the Father offers us everlasting life, He is saying in essence, “If you choose to follow my Son—if your desire is really to become more like Him—then in time you may live as we live and preside over worlds and kingdoms as we do.”

18 These four unique gifts will bring us more and more joy as we accept them. They were made possible because Jehovah condescended to come to earth as the baby Jesus. He was born of an immortal Father and a mortal mother. He was born in Bethlehem under the most humble of circumstances. His was the holy birth foreseen by prophets since the days of Adam. Jesus Christ is God’s transcendent gift—the gift of the Father to all of His

i Metanoeo: see Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3, 5.

j Dianoia: see Mark 12:30.

k Gnosis: see Luke 11:52.

l Pneuma: see Matthew 3:16.

m Pnoe: see Acts 17:25.

n See Mosiah 2:21.

o See Alma 22:18.

children.^a That birth we joyfully celebrate each Christmas season.

19 With our thoughts and feelings so focused on the Savior of the world, what, then, do we need to do to receive these gifts offered to us so willingly by Jesus Christ? What is the key to loving as He loves, forgiving as He forgives, repenting to become more like Him, and ultimately living with Him and our Heavenly Father?

20 The key is to make and keep sacred covenants. We choose to live and progress on the Lord's covenant path and to stay on it. It is not a complicated way. It is the way to true joy in this life and eternal life beyond.

21 My dear brothers and sisters, my deepest desires are for all of Heavenly Father's children to have the opportunity to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ and to heed His teachings and for Israel to be gathered as promised in these latter days. And I desire that we will believe and receive the love the Savior has for each of us. His infinite and perfect love moved Him to atone for you and me. That gift—His Atonement—allows all of His other gifts to become ours.

22 In a coming day—in that Millennium for which we are now

preparing—"every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess"^b that Jesus is the Christ. And it won't just be this magnificent Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square singing "Hallelujah."^c Every person who has chosen to follow Jesus Christ will sing and shout: "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."^d "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever,"^e "King of kings, and Lord of lords."^f

23 I testify that God lives! Jesus is the Christ—the Messiah. This is His Church, which He directs through His prophets. Humbly, we invoke His blessings upon each of you, including desire and ability to accept all gifts the Savior offers to you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 19

Symbols in the New Testament - Excerpted from Russell M. Nelson, "Why This Holy Land?" Ensign, Dec. 1989.

WATER: "The River Jordan was the site Jesus chose for His baptism by John to 'fulfill all righteousness'.^g Is it significant that this sacred ordinance was performed in virtually the low-

a See John 3:16.
b Mosiah 27:31; see also Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:10-11; Doctrine and Covenants 76:110; 88:104.
c See George Frideric Handel, "Hallelujah Chorus," Messiah.
d Revelation 19:6.
e Revelation 11:15.
f Revelation 19:16; see also Revelation 17:14.
g Matthew 3:15

Horizontal lines for writing.

est body of fresh water on the planet? Could He have selected a better place to symbolize the humble depths to which He went and from which He rose?"

2 Mountains: "Mountains are not easy to climb. Then, as now, the Lord called His disciples to climb mountains to emphasize the efficacy of effort and obedience. He will ask the same of you, figuratively and possibly literally, also."

3 Olives: "Jesus came to the base of the Mount of Olives to effect the first component of the Atonement. This He did at the Garden of Gethsemane. The word Gethsemane comes from two Hebrew roots: gath, meaning 'press,' and shemen, meaning 'oil,' especially that of the olive.

4 "There olives had been pressed under the weight of great stone wheels to squeeze precious oil from the olives. So the Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane was literally pressed under the weight of the sins of the world. He sweated great drops of blood—his life's 'oil'—which issued from every pore."^a

5 Skull: "The Crucifixion took place at a hill called Golgotha (Greek) or Calvary (Latin) meaning 'the skull.' The skull symbolized death. At a place such as this, the atoning sacrifice was completed. On the cross, the Savior of the world was lifted up over death in the greatest of all possible significance—the reali-

zation and reality of the Lord's power over death."

CHAPTER 20

A Message of Gratitude and a Promise for the Women of the Church in 2019 - Published in the February 2019 Ensign magazine.

MY dear and precious sisters, four months have now passed since I extended my invitation to you to help gather scattered Israel. Do you recall how I told you that gathering Israel is "the greatest challenge, the greatest cause, and the greatest work on earth today"? Many of you have seized this challenge with great vigor. I wish to tell you that the Lord loves you and is pleased with every effort you make.

2 Since last October, I have heard from women all over the world about how they have responded to my four invitations to help gather scattered Israel. You will remember that the four invitations included:

1. Participate in a 10-day fast from social media and any other media that bring negative and impure thoughts to your mind.
2. Read the Book of Mormon by the end of 2018.
3. Establish a pattern of regular temple attendance.
4. Participate fully in Relief Society.

3 If you participated in any of these challenges, I want you to know that you are helping to

^a See Luke 22:44; D&C 19:18

gather scattered Israel. No matter how much time you spend on them, please know that the Lord is mindful and pleased with every effort you make.

4 I wish to thank you all for responding to my invitations. Your experiences with these challenges have been varied but meaningful. As we shift to a more home-centered, Church-supported curriculum, please remember that we need you. You are a key to the success of this new, balanced, and coordinated gospel-teaching effort.

5 Sisters, I love you and thank you. As a result of your efforts, I promise that the heavens will open for you. The Lord will bless you with increased inspiration and revelation. Together we can do all that our Heavenly Father needs us to do to prepare the world for the Second Coming of His Beloved Son.

CHAPTER 21

President Nelson Meets with Pope Francis - Expert from a short interview President Nelson had outside the Vatican after his meeting with Pope Francis on March 9th, 2019.

WE had a most cordial, unforgettable, experience with his holiness. He was most gracious and warm and welcoming. We talked about our mutual concern for the people who suffer throughout the world. We want to relieve human suffering. We talked about the importance of religious liberty, the importance of the family, our mutual con-

cern for the youth of the church and the need for people to come to God and worship Him, pray to Him, and have the stability that faith in Jesus Christ will bring to their lives. We gave to him a miniature replication of Torvaldsen’s statue of the Christus. And he gave us a gift of his declaration on the family. What a sweet, wonderful man he is. How fortunate the Catholic people are to have gracious, concerned, loving and capable leader. He’s a dear, wonderful, humble, competent, gracious man.

CHAPTER 22

Rome Italy Temple Dedicatory Prayer - Delivered Sunday, March 10, 2019.

O God, our Eternal Father, Thou great Elohim, we come before Thee on this sacred occasion in the name of Thy Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to dedicate the Rome Italy Temple.

2 We thank Thee for Thy Son, Jesus Christ, who assures us of immortality and invites us to repent and have enduring joy here and hereafter. We are grateful to Thee for providing us with Thy great plan of happiness that enables us to return to live with Thee.

3 We thank Thee for the Restoration of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ through Thy Prophet Joseph Smith. We are thankful that keys of the priesthood have been restored that enable sacred ordinances to be

Lined writing area for notes or a response to the prayer.

performed on earth for the benefit of Thy children on both sides of the veil.

4 In this ancient and great city that has stood since biblical times—in this historic nation of Italy—we acknowledge the ministry of two of Thy Son’s early Apostles, Peter and Paul, who once blessed this land with their labors. May the influence of their abiding testimony of Jesus Christ continue to be felt among the vital values of this great country. We express gratitude for the feelings of faith in and service to Jesus Christ that have long established this area as a bastion of Christianity.

5 We thank Thee that Thou hast called Apostles in these latter days to bear special witness of the name of Jesus Christ throughout the world. We pray for Thy blessings to be upon them as they teach and testify of Thy Son and His gospel. We are grateful that all living Apostles are participating in these dedicatory services.

6 We are thankful for the early missionaries of this dispensation who dedicated this part of Thy vineyard for the preaching of the restored gospel. We give thanks for those who have labored here ever since. May Thy work continue to flourish and righteousness prevail in this important part of the world.

7 We are grateful for the support of church, government, and civic leaders who have offered much-appreciated goodwill in

our desire to build this holy temple here in Rome. Wilt Thou bless them for their kindness and fortify their continued desire to preserve religious liberty for all.

8 Bless Thy children that they may be imbued with an earnest desire to learn of Thee. Help them to be receptive to the promptings of Thy Holy Spirit, seek the path of righteousness, and choose to be blessed by obedience to Thy commandments.

9 We pray for members of Thy Church who reside within this temple district. Please bless them and their families with faith in and devotion to Thy Son. Bless the youth that they may be valiant in their testimonies of Jesus Christ. Bless the parents that they will be exemplary and committed covenant keepers who strive to follow Thy Son and become more like Him.

10 May all Latter-day Saints in this area—young and old—be drawn frequently to this holy temple. Bless them to feel Thy Spirit as they participate in the great redemptive work performed here. May they be infused with the spirit of the gathering of Israel. May they receive and perform sacred ordinances here, with a commitment to stay on the covenant path that leads to eternal life with their families.

11 Now, Beloved Father, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, and by the authority of the holy Melchizedek Priesthood, we hereby dedicate unto Thee and

unto Thy Son the Rome Italy Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

12 We dedicate this beautiful temple—from its footings to its spires—to be a house of the Lord, raised up unto Thy Son for His holy redemptive work. We dedicate each room for Thy sacred use. We dedicate the furnishings, fixtures, and supporting systems for their specific purposes.

13 We dedicate each of the ancillary buildings. We dedicate the adjacent landscaping and grounds, that they may be attractive and kept safe from harm. As we dedicate the beautiful visitors' center, we are mindful that Jesus Christ and His early Apostles are magnificently memorialized there in marble sculpture. May Thy blessings be upon all who visit the center, that they may desire to come closer to Thy Son, learn more of His life and teachings, and be numbered among the Lord's devoted disciples.

14 Bless all workers who have helped to prepare these beautiful buildings and grounds. Wilt Thou protect these facilities from natural disasters and any human acts of evil intent.

15 Wilt Thou bless the temple presidency and matrons who will render consecrated service. Protect them and their families as they fulfill their callings. Bless all who serve here, that their ef-

forts may be extended with love and kindness as they assist patrons who come to receive exalting ordinances for themselves and for their ancestors. Bless all those who come here seeking to know Thy will in their lives, that they may receive needed inspiration and revelation.

16 Beloved Father, we honor Thy holy name and that of Thy Son. We pray that Thy great plan of salvation will continue to roll forward throughout the earth in accordance with Thy desire to bless Thy children everywhere. On this sacred day, we express unto Thee our love and gratitude for the privilege of dedicating this, the Rome Italy Temple, and do so in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 23

We Can Do Better and Be Better - Delivered in the Priesthood Session of the April 2019 General Conference.

MY dear brethren, it is inspiring to look out over this vast congregation of the Lord's battalion of priesthood bearers. What a mighty force for good you are! We love you. We pray for you. And we are most grateful for you.

2 Recently I have found myself drawn to the Lord's instruction given through the Prophet Joseph Smith: "Say nothing but repentance unto this generation."^a This declaration is often

Horizontal lines for writing, consisting of 20 lines.

a Doctrine and Covenants 6:9; 11:9.

repeated throughout scripture.^b It prompts an obvious question: “Does everyone need to repent?” The answer is yes.

3 Too many people consider repentance as punishment—something to be avoided except in the most serious circumstances. But this feeling of being penalized is engendered by Satan. He tries to block us from looking to Jesus Christ,^c who stands with open arms,^d hoping and willing to heal, forgive, cleanse, strengthen, purify, and sanctify us.

4 The word for repentance in the Greek New Testament is *metanoeo*. The prefix *meta-* means “change.” The suffix *-noeo* is related to Greek words that mean “mind,” “knowledge,” “spirit,” and “breath.”^e

5 Thus, when Jesus asks you and me to “repent,”^f He is inviting us to change our mind, our knowledge, our spirit—even the way we breathe. He is asking us to change the way we love, think, serve, spend our time, treat our wives, teach our children, and even care for our bodies.

6 Nothing is more liberating, more ennobling, or more crucial

to our individual progression than is a regular, daily focus on repentance. Repentance is not an event; it is a process. It is the key to happiness and peace of mind. When coupled with faith, repentance opens our access to the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.^g

7 Whether you are diligently moving along the covenant path, have slipped or stepped from the covenant path, or can’t even see the path from where you are now, I plead with you to repent. Experience the strengthening power of daily repentance—of doing and being a little better each day.

8 When we choose to repent, we choose to change! We allow the Savior to transform us into the best version of ourselves. We choose to grow spiritually and receive joy—the joy of redemption in Him.^h When we choose to repent, we choose to become more like Jesus Christ!ⁱ

9 Brethren, we need to do better and be better because we are in a battle. The battle with sin is real. The adversary is quadrupling his efforts to disrupt testimonies and impede the work of the

b See Mark 1:4; Mosiah 18:20; Alma 37:33; 3 Nephi 7:23; Moroni 3:3; Doctrine and Covenants 19:21; 44:3; 55:2.

c See Doctrine and Covenants 6:36.

d See Deuteronomy 26:8; 2 Nephi 1:15; Mormon 6:17; Doctrine and Covenants 6:20.

e See Russell M. Nelson, “Repentance and Conversion,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2007, 103.

f See, for example, Luke 13:3, 5.

g See 2 Nephi 9:23; Mosiah 4:6; 3 Nephi 9:22; 27:19.

h See Russell M. Nelson, “Repentance and Conversion,” 103–4.

i See 3 Nephi 27:27.

Lord. He is arming his minions with potent weapons to keep us from partaking of the joy and love of the Lord.^j

10 Repentance is the key to avoiding misery inflicted by traps of the adversary. The Lord does not expect perfection from us at this point in our eternal progression. But He does expect us to become increasingly pure. Daily repentance is the pathway to purity, and purity brings power. Personal purity can make us powerful tools in the hands of God. Our repentance—our purity—will empower us to help in the gathering of Israel.

11 The Lord taught the Prophet Joseph Smith “that the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.”^k

12 We know what will give us greater access to the powers of heaven. We also know what will hinder our progress—what we need to stop doing to increase our access to the powers of heav-

en. Brethren, prayerfully seek to understand what stands in the way of your repentance. Identify what stops you from repenting. And then, change! Repent! All of us can do better and be better than ever before.^l

13 There are specific ways in which we can likely improve. One is in the way we treat our bodies. I stand in awe of the miracle of the human body. It is a magnificent creation, essential to our gradual ascent toward our ultimate divine potential. We cannot progress without it. In giving us the gift of a body, God has allowed us to take a vital step toward becoming more like Him.

14 Satan understands this. He chafes at the fact that his pre-mortal apostasy permanently disqualifies him from this privilege, leaving him in a constant state of jealousy and resentment. Thus many, if not most, of the temptations he puts in our path cause us to abuse our bodies or the bodies of others. Because Satan is miserable without a body, he wants us to be miserable because of ours.^m

j See Jude 1:17–21; 2 Nephi 2:25, 27; 28:20; see also 1 Nephi 8:10–12, 21–23; 11:21–22; 12:17; Doctrine and Covenants 10:22; Moses 5:13.

k Doctrine and Covenants 121:36.

l The words the Lord has inspired in the revelations and in present-day teachings—higher, holier, accelerate, increase, strengthen, greater, transform, remodel, improve, enhance, change, deepen, stretch—are words of spiritual growth (see Russell M. Nelson, “Becoming Exemplary Latter-day Saints,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 113–14).

m We know that “men are free according to the flesh. ... They are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Nephi 2:27).

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the text on the left.

15 Your body is your personal temple, created to house your eternal spirit.ⁿ Your care of that temple is important. Now, I ask you, brethren, are you more interested in dressing and grooming your body to appeal to the world than to please God? Your answer to this question sends a direct message to Him about your feelings regarding His transcendent gift to you. In this reverence for our bodies, brethren, I think we can do better and be better.

16 Another way we can also do better and be better is how we honor the women in our lives, beginning with our wives and daughters, our mothers and sisters.^o

17 Months ago, I received a heart-breaking letter from a dear sister. She wrote: “[My daughters and I] feel we are in fierce competition for our husbands’ and sons’ undivided attention, with 24/7 sports updates, video games, stock market updates, [and] endless analyzing and watching of games of every [conceivable] sport. It feels like we’re losing our front-row seats with our husbands and sons because of their permanent front-row seats with [sports and games].”^p

18 Brethren, your first and foremost duty as a bearer of the priesthood is to love and care for your wife. Become one with

her. Be her partner. Make it easy for her to want to be yours. No other interest in life should take priority over building an eternal relationship with her. Nothing on TV, a mobile device, or a computer is more important than her well-being. Take an inventory of how you spend your time and where you devote your energy. That will tell you where your heart is. Pray to have your heart attuned to your wife’s heart. Seek to bring her joy. Seek her counsel, and listen. Her input will improve your output.

19 If you have a need to repent because of the way you have treated the women closest to you, begin now. And remember that it is your responsibility to help the women in your life receive the blessings that derive from living the Lord’s law of chastity. Never be the reason that a woman is unable to receive her temple blessings.

20 Brethren, we all need to repent. We need to get up off the couch, put down the remote, and wake up from our spiritual slumber. It is time to put on the full armor of God so we can engage in the most important work on earth. It is time to “thrust in [our] sickles, and reap with all [our] might, mind, and strength.”^q The forces of evil have never raged more forcefully than they do today. As servants of the Lord, we cannot be asleep while this battle rages.

n See 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 6:18–20.

o See Jacob 2:35.

p Letter received Feb. 4, 2019.

q Doctrine and Covenants 33:7.

21 Your family needs your leadership and love. Your quorum and those in your ward or branch need your strength. And all who meet you need to know what a true disciple of the Lord looks like and acts like.

22 My dear brethren, you were chosen by our Father to come to earth at this crucial time because of your premortal spiritual valor. You are among the finest, most valiant men who have ever come to the earth. Satan knows who you are and who you were premortally, and he understands the work that must be done before the Savior returns. And after millennia of practicing his cunning arts, the adversary is experienced and incorrigible.

23 Gratefully, the priesthood we hold is far stronger than are the wiles of the adversary. I plead with you to be the men and young men the Lord needs you to be. Make your focus on daily repentance so integral to your life that you can exercise the priesthood with greater power than ever before. This is the only way you will keep yourself and your family spiritually safe in the challenging days ahead.

24 The Lord needs selfless men who put the welfare of others ahead of their own. He needs men who intentionally work to hear the voice of the Spirit with clarity. He needs men of the covenant who keep their covenants with integrity. He needs men who are determined to keep themselves sexually pure—worthy men who can be called

upon at a moment's notice to give blessings with pure hearts, clean minds, and willing hands. The Lord needs men eager to repent—men with a zeal to serve and be part of the Lord's battalion of worthy priesthood bearers.

25 I bless you to become those men. I bless you with the courage to repent daily and learn how to exercise full priesthood power. I bless you to communicate the love of the Savior to your wife and children and to all who know you. I bless you to do better and be better. And I bless you that as you make these efforts, you will experience miracles in your life.

26 We are engaged in the work of Almighty God. Jesus is the Christ. We are Their servants. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 24

"Come, Follow Me" - Delivered in the Sunday Morning Session of the April 2019 General Conference.

MY beloved brothers and sisters, my wife Wendy and I rejoice in being with you on this Sabbath morning. Much has happened since our last general conference. New temples have been dedicated in Concepción, Chile; Barranquilla, Colombia; and Rome, Italy. We experienced a rich outpouring of the Spirit at these sacred events.

2 I congratulate the many women (and men) who have recently

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

read the Book of Mormon and discovered joy and hidden treasures. I am inspired by reports about miracles received.

3 I marvel at 11-year-old young men who, now as deacons, worthily pass the sacrament each Sunday. They go to the temple along with our 11-year-old young women, who are now eagerly learning and serving as Beehives. Both young men and young women are preaching gospel truths with clarity and conviction.

4 I rejoice with children and youth who are helping to teach the gospel in their homes as they work with their parents to follow the home-centered, Church-supported curriculum.

5 We received this photo of four-year-old Blake, who, early on a Saturday morning, grabbed a Church book and exclaimed, "I need to feed my spirit!"

6 Blake, we are thrilled with you and others who are choosing to feed their spirits by feasting on the truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. And we delight in knowing that many are receiving the power of God in their lives as they worship and serve in the temple.

7 As many of you know, our family experienced a tender separation three months ago when our daughter Wendy departed from this mortal life. In the final days of her battle with cancer, I was

blessed with the opportunity to have our farewell daddy-daughter conversation.

8 I held her hands and told her how much I loved her and how grateful I was to be her father. I said: "You married in the temple and faithfully honored your covenants. You and your husband welcomed seven children into your home and raised them to be devout disciples of Jesus Christ, valiant Church members, and contributing citizens. And they have chosen spouses of that same caliber. Your daddy is very, very proud of you. You have brought me much joy!"

9 She quietly responded, "Thank you, Daddy."

10 It was a tender, tearful moment for us. During her 67 years, we worked together, sang together, and often skied together. But that evening, we talked of things that matter most, such as covenants, ordinances, obedience, faith, family, fidelity, love, and eternal life.

11 We miss our daughter greatly. However, because of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, we do not worry about her. As we continue to honor our covenants with God, we live in anticipation of our being with her again. Meanwhile, we're serving the Lord here and she is serving Him there—in paradise.^a

12 Actually, my wife and I visited Paradise earlier this year—

a See Alma 40:12–14.

Paradise, California, that is. As it happened, our scheduled visit there came less than 40 hours after our daughter departed from this world. We, along with Elder Kevin W. Pearson and his wife, June, were bolstered by the Saints of the Chico California Stake. We learned of their great faith, their ministering, and the miracles that occurred even amidst their devastating losses from the most destructive wildfire in the history of California.

13 While there, we spoke at length with a young police officer, John, who was one of many brave first responders. He recalled the thick darkness that descended upon Paradise on November 8, 2018, as flames and embers raced through the town, devouring property and possessions like a scourge and leaving nothing but piles of ash and stark brick chimneys.

14 For 15 hours, John drove through an impenetrable darkness that was streaked with javelins of threatening embers as he helped person after person, family after family escape to safety—all at the peril of his own life. Yet during that strenuous ordeal, what terrified John most was his all-consuming question: “Where is my family?” After many long, terrifying hours of anguish, he finally learned of their safe evacuation.

15 The account of John’s concern for his family has prompted me

to speak today with those of you who may ask when approaching the end of your mortal life, “Where is my family?” In that coming day when you will complete your mortal probation and enter the spirit world, you will be brought face-to-face with that heart-wrenching question: “Where is my family?”

16 Jesus Christ teaches the way back to our eternal home. He understands our Heavenly Father’s plan of eternal progression better than any of us. After all, He is the keystone of it all. He is our Redeemer, our Healer, and our Savior.

17 Ever since Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, Jesus the Christ has offered His mighty arm to help all who choose to follow Him. Repeatedly, scriptures record that despite all kinds of sins from all kinds of people, His arms are outstretched still.^b

18 The spirit in each of us naturally yearns for family love to last forever. Love songs perpetuate a false hope that love is all you need if you want to be together forever. And some erroneously believe that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ provides a promise that all people will be with their loved ones after death.

19 In truth, the Savior Himself has made it abundantly clear that while His Resurrection assures that every person who ever

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

^b See Jeremiah 27:5; Matthew 23:37; Luke 13:34; Alma 5:33; 3 Nephi 9:14.

lived will indeed be resurrected and live forever;^c much more is required if we want to have the high privilege of exaltation. Salvation is an individual matter, but exaltation is a family matter.

20 Listen to these words spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ to His prophet: “All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise ... are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead.”^d

21 So, what is required for a family to be exalted forever? We qualify for that privilege by making covenants with God, keeping those covenants, and receiving essential ordinances.

22 This has been true since the beginning of time. Adam and Eve, Noah and his wife, Abraham and Sarah, Lehi and Sariah, and all other devoted disciples of Jesus Christ—since the world was created—have made the same covenants with God. They have received the same ordinances that we as members of the Lord’s restored Church today have made: those covenants

that we receive at baptism and in the temple.

23 The Savior invites all to follow Him into the waters of baptism and, in time, to make additional covenants with God in the temple and receive and be faithful to those further essential ordinances. All these are required if we want to be exalted with our families and with God forever.

24 The anguish of my heart is that many people whom I love, whom I admire, and whom I respect decline His invitation. They ignore the pleadings of Jesus Christ when He beckons, “Come, follow me.”^e

25 I understand why God weeps.^f I also weep for such friends and relatives. They are wonderful men and women, devoted to their family and civic responsibilities. They give generously of their time, energy, and resources. And the world is better for their efforts. But they have chosen not to make covenants with God. They have not received the ordinances that will exalt them with their families and bind them together forever.^g

26 How I wish I could visit with them and invite them to consider seriously the enabling laws of the Lord. I’ve wondered what I could possibly say so they

c The Resurrection will come to all because of Christ’s victory over death (see Alma 11:41–45; 40; Doctrine and Covenants 76; Moses 7:62).

d Doctrine and Covenants 132:7.

e Luke 18:22.

f See John 11:35; Moses 7:28–29.

g See Doctrine and Covenants 76:50–70.

would feel how much the Savior loves them and know how much I love them and come to recognize how covenant-keeping women and men can receive a "fulness of joy."^h

27 They need to understand that while there is a place for them hereafter—with wonderful men and women who also chose not to make covenants with God—that is not the place where families will be reunited and be given the privilege to live and progress forever. That is not the kingdom where they will experience the fulness of joy—of never-ending progression and happiness.ⁱ Those consummate blessings can come only by living in an exalted celestial realm with God, our Eternal Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and our wonderful, worthy, and qualified family members.

28 I feel to say to my reticent friends:

29 "In this life, you have never settled for second best in anything. Yet, as you resist fully embracing the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, you are choosing to settle for second best.

30 "The Savior said, 'In my Father's house are many mansions.'^j However, as you choose not to make covenants with God, you are settling for a most meager roof over your head throughout all eternity."

31 I would further entreat my reticent friends by saying:

32 "Pour out your heart to God. Ask Him if these things are true. Make time to study His words. Really study! If you truly love your family and if you desire to be exalted with them throughout eternity, pay the price now—through serious study and fervent prayer—to know these eternal truths and then to abide by them.

33 "If you are not sure you even believe in God, start there. Understand that in the absence of experiences with God, one can doubt the existence of God. So, put yourself in a position to begin having experiences with Him. Humble yourself. Pray to have eyes to see God's hand in your life and in the world around you. Ask Him to tell you if He is really there—if He knows you. Ask Him how He feels about you. And then listen."

34 One such dear friend of mine had limited experiences with God. But he longed to be with his departed wife. So he asked me to help him. I encouraged him to meet with our missionaries in order to understand the doctrine of Christ and learn of gospel covenants, ordinances, and blessings.

35 That he did. But he felt the course they advised would require him to make too many

h Doctrine and Covenants 138:17.
i See Mosiah 2:41; Alma 28:12.
j John 14:2.

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the text on the left.

changes in his life. He said, "Those commandments and covenants are just too difficult for me. Also, I can't possibly pay tithing, and I don't have time to serve in the Church." Then he asked me, "Once I die, please do the necessary temple work for my wife and me so that we can be together again."

36 Thankfully, I am not this man's judge. But I do question the efficacy of proxy temple work for a man who had the opportunity to be baptized in this life—to be ordained to the priesthood and receive temple blessings while here in mortality—but who made the conscious decision to reject that course.

37 My dear brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ invites us to take the covenant path back home to our Heavenly Parents and be with those we love. He invites us to "come, follow me."

38 Now, as President of His Church, I plead with you who have distanced yourselves from the Church and with you who have not yet really sought to know that the Savior's Church has been restored. Do the spiritual work to find out for yourselves, and please do it now. Time is running out.

39 I testify that God lives! Jesus is the Christ. His Church and the fulness of His gospel have been restored to bless our lives with joy, here and hereafter. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 25

Closing Remarks - Delivered in the Sunday Afternoon Session of the April 2019 General Conference.

MY beloved brothers and sisters, as we come to the end of this historic conference, we thank the Lord for His inspiration and protection. The messages have instructed and edified us.

2 Topics were not assigned to the speakers. They each prayed for personal revelation in preparing their messages. To me, it is remarkable how those themes seem to fit so well with each other. As you study them, seek to learn what the Lord is trying to teach you through His servants.

3 The music has been glorious. We are deeply grateful to the many musicians who have blended their talents to bring the Spirit of the Lord into each session. And He has blessed the prayers and the congregations in every session. Truly, conference has again been a spiritual feast for us all.

4 We hope and pray that each member's home will become a true sanctuary of faith, where the Spirit of the Lord may dwell. Despite contention all around us, one's home can become a heavenly place, where study, prayer, and faith can be merged with love. We can truly become disciples of the Lord, standing up and speaking up for Him wherever we are.

5 God's objective should be our objective. He wants His chil-

dren to choose to return to Him, prepared, qualified, endowed, sealed, and faithful to covenants made in holy temples.

6 We now have 162 dedicated temples. The earliest ones stand as monuments to the faith and vision of our beloved pioneers. Each temple constructed by them resulted from their great personal sacrifice and effort. Each one stands as a stunning jewel in the crown of pioneer achievement.

7 Ours is a sacred responsibility to care for them. Therefore, these pioneer temples will soon undergo a period of renewal and refreshing and, for some, a major restoration. Efforts will be made to preserve the unique historicity of each temple wherever possible, preserving the inspiring beauty and unique craftsmanship of generations long-since passed.

8 Details for the St. George Utah Temple have already been released. Plans for the renovation of the Salt Lake Temple, Temple Square, and the adjoining plaza near the Church Office Building will be announced on Friday, April 19, 2019.

9 The Manti and Logan Utah Temples will also be renovated in coming years. When those plans are prepared, they too will be announced.

10 This work will require that each temple be closed for a period of time. Church members may continue to enjoy temple

worship and service in other temples nearby. When each project is completed, each historic temple will be rededicated.

11 Brothers and sisters, we regard a temple as the most sacred structure in the Church. As we announce plans to construct a new temple, it becomes part of our sacred history. Now, please listen carefully and reverently. If I announce a temple in a place that is special to you, may I suggest that you simply bow your head with a silent prayer of gratitude in your heart. We do not want any verbal outbursts to detract from the sacred nature of this conference and the Lord's holy temples.

12 Today we are pleased to announce plans to construct more temples, to be built in the following locations:

13 Pago Pago, American Samoa; Okinawa City, Okinawa; Neiafu, Tonga; Tooele Valley, Utah; Moses Lake, Washington; San Pedro Sula, Honduras; Antofagasta, Chile; Budapest, Hungary.

14 Thank you, my dear brothers and sisters.

15 As we speak of our temples old and new, may each of us signify by our actions that we are true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. May we renovate our lives through our faith and trust in Him. May we access the power of His Atonement by our repentance each day. And may we dedicate and rededicate our

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

lives to serving God and His children—on both sides of the veil.

16 I leave my love and blessing with you, assuring you that revelation continues in this, the Lord’s Church. It will continue until “the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done.”^a

17 I so bless you and bear my testimony that God lives! Jesus is the Christ! This is His Church. We are His people. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 26

Samoa Interview with Mata’afa Keni Lesa - Excerpts while on his world tour with Sister Wendy Nelson on May 18, 2019.

Importance of this Trip

I first came to Samoa in 1976 and have had many visits between then and now. In fact it all kind of merges into one assignment that’s taken me 20 years to fulfil. I love the people of Samoa. They love the church. They love the Lord. We just wanted to come and have a connection with me in my new calling.

Reception on the Streets

2 It was a once in a lifetime experience. I have to qualify that. I was with President Kimball in 1976 when he received a similar welcome. They declared a holiday and the people lined the streets for his entry. I nev-

er thought I’d be the recipient of such a warm welcome.

Message to the Members of the Pacific

3 The main message everywhere we go is to come unto Christ and to receive His blessings in your life. Everyone has a choice: either to follow the Lord Jesus Christ or to choose another path. And as His disciple I invite people to come unto Christ because he will make life better for you.

Growth in Samoa

4 We invite people and they choose to come or not to come. Actually, the church is growing all over the world. When I was called as an apostle in 1984 the church membership was 5.45million. And in those 35 years the population has tripled. Samoa’s curve is about the same as other nations. It’s accelerating everywhere.

Humanitarian Aid

5 Let me correct you. It is not the LDS Church. The church is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and I made that correction because we’re humanitarian because Jesus taught us to be a caring people. Wherever we go, whatever the country is we’re caring for the needs of the people. I remember in the year 1992 when Samoa was hit by hurricane Val. We saw palm trees just like matchsticks on the road. Many of the homes and schools and churches had no roof. Our humanitarian aid was about the first that came in

a Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 142.

here to Samoa to help out. Now it could be anywhere. We're helping the children of Yemen right now and nobody knows about it because we don't like to talk about the good things we do. But our people are generous, and they contribute freely to the humanitarian needs of other people. When box loads of supplies come in, there's not one box that's labeled 'for church members only.' They are for everyone.

Climate Change

6 That's a topic about which there's quite a bit of controversy. Of course, our position is to recognize that we care for all of God's creations: the planet, the flora, the fauna, and the people. We have a reverence for life. We have a reverence for God's creations. It's an important issue for us.

Gender and Family Issues

7 The media change has been a great blessing. The changes in communication and transportation have all been explosive in the last century. And of course, people can misuse any blessing. I regard it as a blessing. When I typed my PHD thesis, I'd introduce more errors every time I'd type a page than I did when I was correcting it. That is a thing of the past. Now of course there's a lot of abuse. I tell the young people who are maybe spending a little too much time with their social media, "Take a break from fake. Learn to talk again."

Missionary Work and Political Correctness

8 Truth is truth. I learned a long time ago not to compartmentalize truth. I remember one of my colleagues criticized me once for injecting my religious feelings with my scientific training and background and research. I said, "Well, I can't separate one half of my brain from the other half. What's true is true and I'll speak up for it."

Family History

9 In 1976 I was asked that same question in Samoa. I answered it then as I would answer it now. There is something divine about our ancestors and we all yearn to know more about who they were and what they did for us. With us it's a religious principle because we know that life can be preserved in perpetuity, and we will be reunited with our ancestors. So, it will be nice to say, "Hello" by name.

A Traveling Prophet

10 Well, I feel well. The Lord blesses me, and He wants me to work and I'm working!

CHAPTER 27

Changes to Seminary and Institute Curriculum - Recorded for the S&I Annual Training Broadcast on June 15, 2019.

BEGINNING in the year 2020, the course of study for seminary will shift to an annual calendar. Classes will study the same book of scripture used for the Come, Follow Me curriculum. This adjustment will enhance

A series of horizontal lines for taking notes, corresponding to the text on the left side of the page.

the home-centered, Church-supported approach to gospel study through a unified study at home, in Sunday School, and in seminary.

2 As you consider this change, I invite you to ponder your future. Your potential to have a greater impact on the world than any previous generation is completely dependent upon the level of your devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ. Each of you is responsible to help teach His gospel in your home to those with whom you live. Seminary and institute will help you remodel your home to become a sanctuary of faith—a place where the gospel of Jesus Christ is taught, learned, lived, and loved.

CHAPTER 28

How Repentance Can Help You Overcome Pornography - An address in the Overcoming Pornography video series of June 2019.

WHEN a man has hooked by pornography, his wife is hurt, his children are hurt, and they all have to deal with this. Fortunately, there is repentance. With patient, loving repentance, particularly on the part of the person who needs to repent, the Lord will welcome him into that realm of relief.

2 I like this passage in Mosiah 26:30: "As often as my people repent, I will forgive them from their trespasses against me." So, it takes patience, it takes love and kindness.

3 Repentance is a beautiful word. It's a beautiful concept. It comes from the Greek word "metanoeo". "Meta" which means "change" like metamorphosis, metastasis of a tumor from one place to another. And the second part of the word relates to the Greek word "nous" which means "mind". It also relates to the Greek word "gnos" which means "knowledge." Its also related to the Greek word "pneuma" which means "air" like you put in a pneumatic tire but it also means "spirit". Noeo is also related to the Greek work "pneo" which means "breath". So when the Lord said: "Have faith, repent, and be baptized," the people writing in the Greek record of the New Testament put that word "metanoeo" which is one of the most powerful verbs in the Greek language. So that means if you're going to repent, you're going to change your mind, you're going to change your body of knowledge, you're going to change your spirit, you're going to change even the way you breathe.

4 You will breathe with gratitude to God who lends you breath from day to day. And you realize that He could take that life and breath away from you any day he chooses to do so. So, each day we should live in gratitude. And to repent means you've completely turned around. It really is synonymous with "conversion" which means "turning with the Savior".

5 Now you understand why the Lord said in 3 Nephi 27:27:

I'm so happy that he's had that experience.

The Restoration Continues

8 I want our members to know that the Restoration is a continuing process. We have a lot to do before the Lord will come again. He wants Israel to be gathered, and the world to be made ready for the second coming of the Lord. So all I know is that there's a lot of work to be done and we're going to do it.

President Nelson's Health

9 I know something about the human body. And I have watched the Lord work his magic on me. Things that I know weren't unattended. I give thanks for that. I'm the very first one to admit that the Lord has spared my life. I've had occasions where I should have died, and didn't. And illnesses that went away spontaneously that maybe would have been otherwise. So I'm grateful. I count my many blessings. They're real.

95th Birthday

10 I hope that the focus won't be on me. I hope the focus will be on the Lord, His work and the fact that He can work with anyone he puts in that presidential chair.

CHAPTER 30

Isabel Tacaki Interview - Excerpts from President Nelson's interview with Brazil national Band TV news anchor Isabel Tacaki on September 1st, 2019.

Members of the Church

WE are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The word "Mormon church" is a nickname. We don't like nicknames. We like to be called the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints because we are Christians. This is His church.

Missionaries

2 I can't speak for all of them with white shirts and name tags, but I'll tell you this: our young male missionaries are dressed nicely. They want to be a credit to the community. They want to be worthy of the message they're bringing because it's the message about the Lord Jesus Christ. Some of our missionaries are lady missionaries.

God and Science

3 Truth is truth. Whether it comes from a scientific laboratory or whether it comes as revelation from God to his prophet, truth is truth. It's never in contradiction with another. Confusion comes when there is lack of understanding of the truth of religion or the truth of science.

World Leaders

4 I have a great respect for Pope Francis. He and I resonated very well one with another. Together we lock arms in the care of the poor and needy, giving relief to humanitarian causes. Of course there are differences in theology and that's important but the things we have in common is so much more important.

Religious Freedom

5 Religious freedom is a protector of society. It gives values. It gives morals. If you have no religious foundation for society, if they have no belief in God, they don't believe in right and wrong and you have a chaotic society. Religious is like the ballast of a ship. It gives it stability. It keeps it from tipping over.

Humanitarian

6 Our members are very generous. They love God and they love their neighbors as their self. These are the first two great commandments. And the way we show our love to God is by loving our neighbor. When our neighbors are in distress, we help. They may have a yellow shirt and it may have the helping hands logo or it may be in the care of the poor. It may be giving wheelchairs to those who are handicapped. It may be bringing fresh water to a village by digging wells and making pipes conduits. So wherever there's a need, you can be sure the people of our church are willing to help. They're ready to help. They do help.

95th Birthday

7 I've never had a drink of alcohol. I've never smoked a cigarette or a cigar or a pipe. I do not drink tea or coffee. I've always been obedient to our code of health, which we call the Word of Wisdom. Statistically speaking, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints live longer than the societies at large.

Differing Religions

8 Our religion differs from others in that we believe in God. We believe in Jesus Christ. We believe the Bible to be the word of God. We believe the Book of Mormon to be companion scripture to the Bible. It has a record of the ministry of Jesus Christ to the people of North America, Central America, and South America in ancient times. We also know that the authority to act in the name of the priesthood has been restored to the earth. These are the fundamental differences we have with other religious denominations.

Hope for Differing Family Situations

9 The greatest hope comes to people when they have something to look forward to. We will all have challenges in life; great disappointments, or sickness or injuries, maybe even deaths in the family. When one has an eternal perspective, and he knows that there is life after death, that the resurrection is real, that there are degrees of glory on the other side of this mortal life, then one can endure these challenges with a little more hope and great expectations. We have the prospect of eternal life if we keep all of the commandments of God. That is beyond imagination. It is so beautiful, wonderful, and glorious.

The Mission of the Church

10 We invite all to come unto Jesus Christ, live His commandments, and receive the blessings that will give them joy in this life and eternal life in the life to come.

Popes and Prophets

11 The Pope and I have a nice relationship. I pray for him and he prays for me. We have differences in theology of course. But the things we have in common: the love of God, the love of our neighbor and the desire to help out where help is needed, we share those and want to support one another. We walk arm-in-arm with the Catholic Church on many humanitarian projects.

God's Message for Brazil

12 God loves the people of Brazil. And the people of Brazil have a great love for God and a love for Jesus Christ. I admire the people of Brazil because I know that God has created them with a desire to know more about Him and His ways of truth and righteousness.

Role of Prophet

13 Well, I studied to be a surgeon. Then I helped to develop the field of heart surgery. I was very busily engaged in the operating room one day when I received a phone call, "Please come and see the prophet of the Lord." When I went to see him he said, "The Lord has called you to be an apostle of the Lord." So in one conversation my life changed from repairing physical hearts to healing spiritual hearts.

The Correct Name of the Church

14 The name of the church was given to the church by the Lord himself. He said, "Thus shall my church be called, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." Opponents to the church tried to annihilate

the prophet Joseph Smith. They called him a "mormon." It was a nickname and also an epithet which means not a nice name. The enemies to the church promoted the name "Mormon." We who are members of the church like to call it by the name the Lord gave: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. So we are not called "Mormons" we are called latter-day saints in contrast to the saints of Jesus Christ who lived in former days.

Suffering and Wars

15 Ever since man came on the planet Earth, he's had a tendency to dislike his neighbor. Every history book is a history of war and contention. All throughout the Bible you read about the wars. Throughout the Book of Mormon you read of wars. That's what man will do to himself. Man's hatred for his fellow men. That's why the message of Jesus Christ is so healing and so invigorating and so peaceful, because it invites people to love their neighbor and to help their neighbor. There will always be contention. You have these two competing forces: the forces of contention and the forces of the Lord who favors peace. So we're trying to be peacemakers. That's my message. We're trying to be peacemakers.

CHAPTER 31

95th Birthday Celebration - Remarks given at the close of the gala on September 6, 2019.

MY dear precious family and friends, I'm totally overcome

with feelings of love and gratitude. I cannot adequately thank the many who have planned and performed for us tonight. Please know of my heartfelt feelings of appreciation and affection. I thank you all most sincerely.

2 I reflect upon those who have made my life possible. I'm ever so grateful for my petite mother who entered the valley of the shadow of death to give birth to this baby boy who weighed in at nearly 10 pounds. I am ever grateful for a father who taught me to respect and honor womanhood. He also taught me the importance of education and the joy of rendering service of worth for other people. I am thankful for my teachers through these many years. They have insisted on excellence of effort and a continuing search for truth. Whether it comes from the scientific laboratory or by revelation from heaven, truth is truth.

3 To my dear wife Dantzel, the mother of our 10 children, I'm eternally grateful. She embodied all the attributes of a devoted wife and saintly mother. Our dear children have always been a credit to their parents. They have prayerfully sought to know the will of our Heavenly Father. Now they have children and grandchildren of their own. Two of our 10 children have already completed their sojourn here in mortality. They now live on the other side of the veil. Perhaps they and their mother each received a "hall pass" to witness this event tonight.

4 To my beloved wife Wendy, I express my profound love and deep appreciation. Wendy is a devoted servant of the Lord; willing to fulfill any challenge in His holy work. She is a great blessing to me, our family and to the entire church.

5 To my counselors, President Oaks and President Eyring, our colleagues in the quorum of the twelve apostles, the seventy, the bishopric, and our general officers, each member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and our many choice friends not of our faith I express my deep feelings of love and appreciation. It is a great privilege to serve beside you throughout the world. These colorful flags represent the many nations where our members reside.

6 Every day of my life I thank my Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ for the gift of life and the privilege of serving His children. On occasions past when my mortal life was in grave danger, They intervened with help only They could have delivered. Jesus the Christ is literally my Savior, my Redeemer, my Exemplar and Friend.

7 In this celebration tonight, efforts have been made to depict the influence of the Lord in my life. From my earliest childhood to my most recent miraculous experience, I acknowledge timely and generous help from heaven. In retrospect I can see things now that I could not see at the time. I not only know that God lives, I know that He loves His

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the numbered sections on the left.

children. He wants us to have joy. Choose to return to His holy presence and receive the blessings, all the blessings, that He has in store for His faithful children.

8 If I've learned anything certain in my 95 years of life is that Jesus the Christ is the son of God. His church has been restored in these latter days to prepare the world for the second coming of our Redeemer. He provides the doctrine, covenants and ordinances that enable families to be perpetuated beyond the grave. He is the light and life of the world. Only through Him can we reach our divine destiny and eventual exaltation.

9 My message to the world is simple and sincere: I invited all of God's children on both sides of the veil to come unto their Savior, the receive the blessings of the temple, have enduring joy and qualify for eternal life. Most humbly and gratefully I thank you for this sublime celebration tonight. To each of you I express my love, my gratitude and my testimony in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 32

The Love and Laws of God - Delivered as a Devotional Address at BYU-Provo on September 17, 2019.

MY dear brothers and sisters, Wendy and I have looked forward to being with you today. Just a few days ago we returned from an international assignment, and now we are in the fi-

nal stages of preparing for general conference. But there is no group we would rather be with today than you.

2 I wish to discuss five truths that I feel impressed to share with you.

I. Truth number one: You are sons and daughters of God.

3 You already know this. You have sung about it since you were toddlers. But let me clarify a distinguishing characteristic about your identity. You are the children whom God chose to be part of His battalion during this great climax in the longstanding battle between good and evil—between truth and error. I would not be surprised if, when the veil is lifted in the next life, we learn that you actually pled with our Heavenly Father to be reserved for now. I would not be surprised to learn that premortally you loved the Lord so much that you promised to defend His name and gospel during this world's tumultuous winding-up scenes. One thing is certain: You are of the house of Israel and you have been sent here to help gather God's elect.

II. Truth number two:

Truth is truth.

4 Some things are simply true. The arbiter of truth is God—not your favorite social media news feed, not Google, and certainly not those who are disaffected from the Church.

5 President Spencer W. Kimball taught that absolute truth cannot be "altered by the opinions

to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.^b

15 Just as the rules that my wife and I developed for our children were motivated by love, God's laws reflect His perfect love for each of us. His laws keep us spiritually safe and help us to progress eternally.

16 The second experience by which I came to see the power of divine law came during my career as a medical doctor and scientific researcher.

17 After graduating from medical school, I pursued advanced education in surgery. At that time there was no such thing as heart surgery. Then I teamed up with other researchers in the daunting task of making an artificial heart and lung machine. We knew that such an apparatus could possibly maintain the body's circulation while repairs might be made on the heart. But during that early era, there was much we did not know.

18 Then one day, two truths articulated in the Doctrine and Covenants spoke to my inquiring mind. These truths were, first, that all blessings are predicated upon obedience to law^c and, second, that to every kingdom there is a law given.^d

19 Well, I reasoned that if every kingdom had a law, there must

be laws that govern the beating heart. I was determined to discover those laws and obey them. By doing so, blessings would come and lives could be saved.

20 In medical school I had been taught that if one touched the beating heart, it would stop beating. However, one of the first laws we discovered in the lab was that we could touch the heart of an animal without losing its heartbeat. This finding opened the door later to uncovering another law that made more complex open-heart operations possible.

21 We learned that if we added potassium chloride to blood flowing into the coronary arteries, thereby altering the normal sodium/potassium ratio, the heart would stop beating instantly. Then, when we nourished the heart with blood that had a normal sodium/potassium ratio, the heart would spring back to its normal beating pattern. Literally we could turn the heart off long enough to repair it and then turn it back on again.

22 Decades later, when I explained this to a group of medical students, one prominent professor asked, "But what if it doesn't work?" My answer? It always works, because it is based on divine law.

23 Divine law is incontrovertible! The same can be said of the

b Romans 8:38-39.

c See D&C 130:21.

d See D&C 88:38.

law of gravity and the laws of foil and lift that allow airplanes to fly. Each is an absolute truth. Doctors or pilots do not have the power to change those laws, but their understanding of them safeguards lives.

24 My dear brothers and sisters, divine laws are God’s gifts to His children. Just as our family’s rules kept our children safe as they grew to adulthood, just as divine laws governing the heart and the flight of airplanes keep you safe on an operating table or while traveling, abiding by God’s laws will keep you safe as you progress toward eventual exaltation. Let me say it as succinctly as I can: As you abide by God’s laws, you are progressing toward exaltation.

25 The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that God “institute[d] laws whereby [we] could have a privilege to advance like himself.”^e God’s greatest blessings are reserved for those who obey His laws, as He explained: “For all who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing.”^f God’s laws are motivated entirely by His infinite love for us and His desire for us to become all we can become.

IV. Truth number four: The Lord Jesus Christ, whose Church this is, appoints prophets and apostles to communicate His love and teach His laws.

26 The gospel of Jesus Christ is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”^g

27 Each of the Lord’s apostles is in a position to observe and feel the love that Heavenly Father has for His children, particularly for those who are struggling. He cares deeply about those who have strayed from the covenant path, especially when they fear there is no way back.

28 My dear young friends, there is always a way back. Jesus Christ (and His gospel) is the way. You have not committed any sin so serious that you are beyond the reach of the Savior’s love and atoning grace. As you take steps to repent and follow God’s laws, you will begin to feel just how much Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son want you back home with Them! They want you to be happy. They will do anything within Their power that does not violate your agency or Their laws to help you come back. How I cherish the privilege of feeling Their love for you!

29 Sometimes we as leaders of the Church are criticized for holding firm to the laws of God, defending the Savior’s doctrine, and resisting the social pressures of our day. But our commission as ordained apostles is “to go

e Joseph Smith, HC 6:312 (7 April 1844); quoted in Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 210.

f D&C 132:5.

g Ephesians 2:20.

Horizontal lines for writing, consisting of 20 lines on the right side of the page.

into all the world to preach [His] gospel unto every creature.”^h That means we are commanded to teach truth.

30 In doing so, sometimes we are accused of being uncaring as we teach the Father’s requirements for exaltation in the celestial kingdom. But wouldn’t it be far more uncaring for us not to tell the truth—not to teach what God has revealed?

31 It is precisely because we do care deeply about all of God’s children that we proclaim His truth. We may not always tell people what they want to hear. Prophets are rarely popular. But we will always teach the truth!

32 My dear young friends, exaltation is not easy. Requirements include a focused and persistent effort to keep God’s laws, rigorously repenting when we don’t. But the reward for doing so is far greater than anything we can imagine, because it brings us joy here and “never-ending happiness”ⁱ hereafter.

33 Thus our commission as apostles is to teach nothing but truth. That commission does not give us the authority to modify divine law.

34 For example, let’s consider the definition of marriage. In re-

cent years, many countries, including the United States, have legalized same-sex marriage. As members of the Church, we respect the laws of the land and abide by them, including civil marriage. The truth is, however, that in the beginning—in the beginning—marriage was ordained by God! And to this day it is defined by Him as being between a man and a woman. God has not changed His definition of marriage.

35 God has also not changed His law of chastity. Requirements to enter the temple have not changed. And our desire for there to be love at home and harmony between parent and child has not changed.

36 Though we of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles cannot change the laws of God, we do have the charge “to build up the church, and regulate all the affairs of the same in all nations.”^j Thus we can adjust policy when the Lord directs us to do so. You have recently seen such examples. Because the Restoration is ongoing, policy changes will surely continue.^k

37 Perhaps I can illustrate this through policy adjustments regarding those who identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bi-

h D&C 18:28.

i Mosiah 2:41.

j D&C 107:33.

k “We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.” (Articles of Faith 1:9.)

sexual, or transgender (LGBT) and their children. (I realize that other initials could be added to this acronym, but LGBT should suffice for the purposes of this message.)

38 Consider the policy announced in November 2015 related to the advisability of baptism for the children of LGBT parents. Our concern then, and one we discussed at length and prayed about fervently over a long period of time, was to find a way to reduce friction between gay or lesbian parents and their children.

39 Because parents are the primary exemplars for their children, we did not want to put young children in the position of having to choose between beliefs and behavior they learned at home and what they were taught at church. We wanted to facilitate harmony in the home and avoid pitting children and parents against each other. Thus in 2015 the policy was made to assist children and their parents in this circumstance; namely, that children being raised by LGBT parents would not automatically be eligible for baptism at age eight. Exceptions to this policy would require First Presidency approval.

40 The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve have continued to seek the Lord’s guidance and to plead with Him in behalf of His children who were affected by the 2015 policy. We knew that this policy created concern and confusion for some

and heartache for others. That grieved us. Whenever the sons and daughters of God weep—for whatever reasons—we weep. So our supplications to the Lord continued.

41 We also took note of LGBT parents who sought permission from the First Presidency for their children to be baptized. In nearly every case in which the LGBT parents agreed to teach their children about—and be supportive of—the covenant of baptism, the requested exception was granted.

42 As a result of our continued supplication, we recently felt directed to adjust the policy such that the baptism of children of LGBT parents may be authorized by bishops without First Presidency approval, if the custodial parents request the baptism and understand that a child will be taught about sacred covenants to be made at baptism.

43 We also determined that LGBT parents may request that a baby be named and blessed by one who worthily holds the Melchizedek Priesthood. It is important that these parents understand that ward members will contact them periodically and that when a child who has been blessed reaches eight years of age, local leaders will recommend that the child be baptized.

44 Finally, we also clarified that homosexual immorality would be treated in the eyes of the Church in the same manner as heterosexual immorality.

Horizontal lines for writing, consisting of 20 lines on the page.

45 Though it may not have looked this way to some, the 2015 and 2019 policy adjustments on this matter were both motivated by love—the love of our Heavenly Father for His children and the love of the Brethren for those whom we serve.

46 Because we feel the depth of God’s love for His children, we care deeply about every child of God, regardless of age, personal circumstances, gender, sexual orientation, or other unique challenges.

V. Now, for the fifth truth: You may know for yourself what is true and what is not by learning to discern the whisperings of the Spirit.

47 “For the Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not. . . . It speaketh of things as they really are, and of things as they really will be.”^a

48 My dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to seek earnestly a confirmation from the Spirit that what I have told you is true and is from the Lord. He has declared that we may seek knowledge from heaven and expect to receive it: “If thou shalt ask,” the Lord promised, “thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge.”^b

49 Ask your Heavenly Father if we truly are the Lord’s apostles and prophets. Ask if we have received revelation on this and

other matters. Ask if these five truths are, in fact, true.

50 Now, in my capacity as president of the Church, I invoke a blessing upon you to be able to discern between right and wrong, between the laws of God and the conflicting voices of the world. I bless you with power to detect the adversary’s deceptions. I bless you with greater capacity to receive revelation. And I bless you to be able to feel the infinite reach of God’s perfect love for you.

51 I so bless you and express my love for you, along with my witness that this is the Lord’s Church and that He presides over and guides all we do, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 33

Witnesses, Aaronic Priesthood Quorums, and Young Women Classes - Delivered in the Saturday Afternoon Session of the October 2019 General Conference.

DEAR brothers and sisters, it is wonderful to be with you again in general conference. Earlier this week, announcements were made to members of the Church about changes in policy regarding who may serve as witnesses to baptism and sealing ordinances. I would like to highlight those three points.

a Jacob 4:13.

b D&C 42:61.

dren of the promised day.”^a We express our complete confidence in our youth and our gratitude for them. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 34

Spiritual Treasures - Delivered in the Women’s Session of the October 2019 General Conference.

THANK you for that beautiful music. As we all stood to sing that intermediate hymn, “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet,” I had two overpowering thoughts come to me. One is about the Prophet Joseph Smith, the prophet of this dispensation. My love and admiration for him grows with every passing day. The second thought occurred as I looked at my wife, my daughters, granddaughters, and great-granddaughters. I felt like I’d like to claim every one of you as part of my family.

2 Several months ago, at the end of a temple endowment session, I said to my wife Wendy, “I hope the sisters understand the spiritual treasures that are theirs in the temple.” Sisters, I often find myself thinking about you, including two months ago when Wendy and I visited Harmony, Pennsylvania.

3 This was our second trip there. Both times we have been deeply moved as we walked on that sacred ground. It was near Harmony that John the Baptist ap-

peared to Joseph Smith and restored the Aaronic Priesthood.

4 It was there that the Apostles Peter, James, and John appeared to restore the Melchizedek Priesthood.

5 It was in Harmony that Emma Hale Smith served as her husband’s first scribe while the Prophet translated the Book of Mormon.

6 It was also in Harmony that Joseph received a revelation manifesting the Lord’s will to Emma. The Lord instructed Emma to expound the scriptures, to exhort the Church, to receive the Holy Ghost, and to spend her time “learning much.” Emma was also counseled to “lay aside the things of this world and seek for the things of a better” and to hold fast to her covenants with God. The Lord concluded His instruction with these compelling words: “This is my voice unto all.”^b

7 Everything that happened in this area has profound implications for your lives. The restoration of the priesthood, along with the Lord’s counsel to Emma, can guide and bless each of you. How I yearn for you to understand that the restoration of the priesthood is just as relevant to you as a woman as it is to any man. Because the Melchizedek Priesthood has been restored, both covenant-keeping women and men have access to

a “Hope of Israel,” Hymns, no. 259.

b See Doctrine and Covenants 25:7–16.

“all the spiritual blessings of the church”^c or, we might say, to all the spiritual treasures the Lord has for His children.

8 Every woman and every man who makes covenants with God and keeps those covenants, and who participates worthily in priesthood ordinances, has direct access to the power of God. Those who are endowed in the house of the Lord receive a gift of God’s priesthood power by virtue of their covenant, along with a gift of knowledge to know how to draw upon that power.

9 The heavens are just as open to women who are endowed with God’s power flowing from their priesthood covenants as they are to men who bear the priesthood. I pray that truth will register upon each of your hearts because I believe it will change your life. Sisters, you have the right to draw liberally upon the Savior’s power to help your family and others you love.

10 Now, you might be saying to yourself, “This sounds wonderful, but how do I do it? How do I draw the Savior’s power into my life?”

11 You won’t find this process spelled out in any manual. The Holy Ghost will be your personal tutor as you seek to understand what the Lord would have you know and do. This process is neither quick nor easy, but it is spiritually invigorating. What could possibly be more excit-

ing than to labor with the Spirit to understand God’s power—priesthood power?

12 What I can tell you is that accessing the power of God in your life requires the same things that the Lord instructed Emma and each of you to do.

13 So, I invite you to study prayerfully section 25 of the Doctrine and Covenants and discover what the Holy Ghost will teach you. Your personal spiritual endeavor will bring you joy as you gain, understand, and use the power with which you have been endowed.

14 Part of this endeavor will require you to put aside many things of this world. Sometimes we speak almost casually about walking away from the world with its contention, pervasive temptations, and false philosophies. But truly doing so requires you to examine your life meticulously and regularly. As you do so, the Holy Ghost will prompt you about what is no longer needful, what is no longer worthy of your time and energy.

15 As you shift your focus away from worldly distractions, some things that seem important to you now will recede in priority. You will need to say no to some things, even though they may seem harmless. As you embark upon and continue this lifelong process of consecrating your life to the Lord, the changes in your

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

c Doctrine and Covenants 107:18; emphasis added.

perspective, feelings, and spiritual strength will amaze you!

16 Now a little word of warning. There are those who would undermine your ability to call upon the power of God. There are some who would have you doubt yourself and minimize your stellar spiritual capacity as a righteous woman.

17 Most certainly, the adversary does not want you to understand the covenant you made at baptism or the profound endowment of knowledge and power you have received or will receive in the temple—the house of the Lord. And Satan certainly does not want you to understand that every time you worthily serve and worship in the temple, you leave armed with God’s power and with His angels having “charge over” you.^d

18 Satan and his minions will constantly contrive roadblocks to prevent you from understanding the spiritual gifts with which you have been and can be blessed. Unfortunately, some roadblocks may be the result of another’s misbehavior. It grieves me to think that any of you have felt marginalized or have not been believed by a priesthood leader or have been abused or betrayed by a husband, father, or a supposed friend. I feel deep sorrow that any of you have felt sidelined, disrespected, or misjudged. Such offenses have no place in the kingdom of God.

19 Conversely, it thrills me when I learn of priesthood leaders who eagerly seek the participation of women in ward and stake councils. I am inspired by each husband who demonstrates that his most important priesthood responsibility is to care for his wife.^e I praise that man who deeply respects his wife’s ability to receive revelation and treasures her as an equal partner in their marriage.

20 When a man understands the majesty and power of a righteous, seeking, endowed Latter-day Saint woman, is it any wonder that he feels like standing when she enters the room?

21 From the dawning of time, women have been blessed with a unique moral compass—the ability to distinguish right from wrong. This gift is enhanced in those who make and keep covenants. And it diminishes in those who willfully ignore the commandments of God.

22 I hasten to add that I do not absolve men in any way from God’s requirement for them also to distinguish between right and wrong. But my dear sisters, your ability to discern truth from error, to be society’s guardians of morality, is crucial in these latter days. And we depend upon you to teach others to do likewise. Let me be very clear about this: if the world loses the moral rectitude of its women, the world will never recover.

d Doctrine and Covenants 109:22.

e See Doctrine and Covenants 131:2–4.

23 We Latter-day Saints are not of the world; we are of covenant Israel. We are called to prepare a people for the Second Coming of the Lord.

24 Now, may I clarify several additional points with respect to women and priesthood. When you are set apart to serve in a calling under the direction of one who holds priesthood keys—such as your bishop or stake president—you are given priesthood authority to function in that calling.

25 Similarly, in the holy temple you are authorized to perform and officiate in priesthood ordinances every time you attend. Your temple endowment prepares you to do so.

26 If you are endowed but not currently married to a man who bears the priesthood and someone says to you, "I'm sorry you don't have the priesthood in your home," please understand that that statement is incorrect. You may not have a priesthood bearer in your home, but you have received and made sacred covenants with God in His temple. From those covenants flows an endowment of His priesthood power upon you. And remember, if your husband should die, you would preside in your home.

27 As a righteous, endowed Latter-day Saint woman, you speak and teach with power and authority from God. Whether by exhortation or conversation, we need your voice teaching the

doctrine of Christ. We need your input in family, ward, and stake councils. Your participation is essential and never ornamental!

28 My dear sisters, your power will increase as you serve others. Your prayers, fasting, time in the scriptures, service in the temple, and family history work will open the heavens to you.

29 I entreat you to study prayerfully all the truths you can find about priesthood power. You might begin with Doctrine and Covenants sections 84 and 107. Those sections will lead you to other passages. The scriptures and teachings by modern prophets, seers, and revelators are filled with these truths. As your understanding increases and as you exercise faith in the Lord and His priesthood power, your ability to draw upon this spiritual treasure that the Lord has made available will increase. As you do so, you will find yourselves better able to help create eternal families that are united, sealed in the temple of the Lord, and full of love for our Heavenly Father and for Jesus Christ.

30 All our efforts to minister to each other, proclaim the gospel, perfect the Saints, and redeem the dead converge in the holy temple. We now have 166 temples throughout the world, and more are coming.

31 As you know, the Salt Lake Temple, Temple Square, and the adjoining plaza near the Church Office Building will be renewed in a project that will begin at the

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the text on the left.

close of this year. This sacred temple must be preserved and prepared to inspire future generations, just as it has influenced us in this generation.

32 As the Church grows, more temples will be built so that more families can have access to that greatest of all blessings, that of eternal life.^a We regard a temple as the most sacred structure in the Church. Whenever plans are announced to construct a new temple, it becomes an important part of our history. As we have discussed here tonight, you sisters are vital to the work of the temple, and the temple is where you will receive your highest spiritual treasures.

33 Please listen carefully and reverently as I will now announce plans to build eight new temples. If one is announced in a place that is meaningful to you, I suggest that you simply bow your head prayerfully with gratitude in your heart. We are pleased to announce plans to construct temples in the following locations: Freetown, Sierra Leone; Orem, Utah; Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea; Bentonville, Arkansas; Bacolod, Philippines; McAllen, Texas; Cobán, Guatemala; and Taylorsville, Utah. Thank you, dear sisters. We deeply appreciate your receipt of these plans and your reverent response.

34 Now, in closing, I would like

to leave a blessing upon you, that you may understand the priesthood power with which you have been endowed and that you will augment that power by exercising your faith in the Lord and in His power.

35 Dear sisters, with deep respect and gratitude, I express my love for you. Humbly, I declare that God lives! Jesus is the Christ. This is His Church. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 35

The Second Great Commandment - Delivered in the Saturday Morning Session of the October 2019 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters, thank you for all you are doing to help gather Israel on both sides of the veil, to strengthen your families, and to bless the lives of those in need. Thank you for living as true followers of Jesus Christ.^b You know and love to obey His two great commandments, to love God and to love your neighbors.^c

2 During the last six months, Sister Nelson and I have met thousands of Saints as we have traveled to Central and South America, the islands of the Pacific, and various cities in the United States. As we travel, our hope is to build your faith. Yet we always return having had

a See Doctrine and Covenants 14:7.

b See Moroni 7:48.

c See Matthew 22:37–39; Luke 10:27.

our faith strengthened by the members and friends we meet. May I share three meaningful moments from our recent experiences?

3 In May, Sister Nelson and I traveled with Elder Gerrit W. and Sister Susan Gong to the South Pacific. While in Auckland, New Zealand, we had the honor of meeting with imams from two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, where just two months earlier, innocent worshippers had been gunned down in an act of horrible violence.

4 We extended our sympathy to these brothers of another faith and reaffirmed our mutual commitment to religious freedom.

5 We also offered volunteer labor and modest financial assistance to rebuild their mosques. Our meeting with these Muslim leaders was filled with tender expressions of brotherhood.

6 In August, along with Elder Quentin L. and Sister Mary Cook, Sister Nelson and I met individuals in Buenos Aires, Argentina—most of them not of our faith—whose lives have been changed by wheelchairs provided to them through our Latter-day Saint Charities. We were inspired as they expressed joy-filled gratitude for their newfound mobility.

7 A third precious moment occurred just a few weeks ago here in Salt Lake City. It came from a

unique letter I received on my birthday from a young woman I will call Mary—age 14.

8 Mary wrote about things she and I had in common: “You have 10 kids. We have 10 kids. You speak Mandarin. Seven of the kids in my family, including me, were adopted from China, so Mandarin is our first language. You are a heart surgeon. My sister has had two open-heart [operations]. You like two-hour church. We like two-hour church. You have perfect pitch. My brother has perfect pitch too. He is blind like me.”

9 Mary’s words touched me deeply, revealing not only her great spirit but also the consecration of her mother and father.

10 Latter-day Saints, as with other followers of Jesus Christ, are always looking for ways to help, to lift, and to love others. They who are willing to be called the Lord’s people “are willing to bear one another’s burdens, ... to mourn with those that mourn; ... and [to] comfort those that stand in need of comfort.”^d

11 They truly seek to live the first and second great commandments. When we love God with all our hearts, He turns our hearts to the well-being of others in a beautiful, virtuous cycle.

12 It would be impossible to calculate the amount of service that Latter-day Saints render around the globe every day of every year,

d Mosiah 18:8–9.

but it is possible to calculate the good the Church as an organization does to bless men and women—boys and girls—who are in need of a helping hand.

13 The Church's humanitarian outreach was launched in 1984. Then a Churchwide fast was held to raise funds to assist those afflicted by a devastating drought in eastern Africa. Church members donated \$6.4 million on that single fast day.

14 Then-Elder M. Russell Ballard and Brother Glenn L. Pace were dispatched to Ethiopia to assess how those consecrated funds could best be used. This effort proved to be the beginning of what would later be known as Latter-day Saint Charities.

15 Since that time, Latter-day Saint Charities has provided more than two billion dollars in aid to assist those in need throughout the world. This assistance is offered to recipients regardless of their church affiliation, nationality, race, sexual orientation, gender, or political persuasion.

16 That is not all. To assist members of the Lord's Church in distress, we love and live the ancient law of the fast.^e We go hungry to help others who are hungry. One day each month, we go without food and donate the cost of that food (and more) to help those in need.

17 I will never forget my first visit to West Africa in 1986. The Saints came to our meetings in great numbers. Though they had little in terms of material possessions, most came dressed in spotless white clothing.

18 I asked the stake president how he cared for members who had so little. He replied that their bishops knew their people well. If members could afford two meals a day, no help was needed. But if they could afford only one meal or less—even with family help—bishops provided food, financed from fast offerings. Then he added this remarkable fact: their fast-offering contributions usually exceeded their expenses. Surplus fast offerings were then sent to people elsewhere whose needs exceeded theirs. Those stalwart African Saints taught me a great lesson about the power of the law and the spirit of the fast.

19 As members of the Church, we feel a kinship to those who suffer in any way.^f As sons and daughters of God, we are all brothers and sisters. We heed an Old Testament admonition: "Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy."^g

20 We also strive to live the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ as recorded in Matthew 25:

e See Isaiah 58:3–12.

f In early Church history, courageous pioneers were also hungry, homeless, and harassed.

g Deuteronomy 15:11.

21 "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

22 "Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me. ...

23 "... Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."^h

24 Let me cite just a few examples of how the Church follows these teachings of the Savior.

25 To help relieve hunger, the Church operates 124 bishops' storehouses throughout the world. Through them, approximately 400,000 food orders are given each year to individuals in need. In locations where no storehouse exists, bishops and branch presidents draw from fast-offering funds of the Church to provide food and supplies for their needy members.

26 However, the challenge of hunger goes far beyond the boundaries of the Church. It is increasing throughout the world. A recent United Nations report indicated that the number of undernourished people in the world now exceeds 820 million—or almost one in nine of the earth's inhabitants.ⁱ

27 What a sobering statistic! How grateful we are for your

contributions. Thanks to your heartfelt generosity, millions throughout the world will receive much-needed food, clothing, temporary shelter, wheel-chairs, medicines, clean water, and more.

28 Much sickness throughout the world is caused because of unclean water. To date, the Church's humanitarian initiative has helped provide clean water in hundreds of communities in 76 countries.

29 A project in Luputa, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is a great example. With a population exceeding 100,000, the town had no running water. Citizens had to walk long distances for sources of safe water. A mountain spring was discovered 18 miles (29 km) away, but townspeople could not access that water on a regular basis.

30 When our humanitarian missionaries learned about this challenge, they worked with the leaders of Luputa by supplying materials and training to pipe the water to the city. The people of Luputa spent three years digging a one-meter-deep trench through rock and jungle. By working together, the joyful day finally arrived when fresh, clean water was available to all in that village.

31 The Church also helps refugees, whether from civil strife, the ravages of nature, or reli-

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the text on the left.

^h Matthew 25:35–36, 40.

ⁱ See Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and others, The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019, 6, fao.org/3/ca5162en/ca5162en.pdf.

gious persecution. More than 70 million people are now displaced from their homes.^j

32 In the year 2018 alone, the Church provided emergency supplies to refugees in 56 countries. In addition, many Church members volunteer their time to help refugees integrate into new communities. We thank every one of you who reach out to help those who are trying to establish new homes.

33 Through generous donations to Deseret Industries outlets in the United States, millions of pounds of clothing are collected and sorted each year. While local bishops use this vast inventory to help members in need, the greatest portion is donated to other charitable organizations who distribute the items worldwide.

34 And just last year, the Church provided vision care for more than 300,000 people in 35 countries, newborn care for thousands of mothers and infants in 39 countries, and wheelchairs for more than 50,000 people living in dozens of countries.

35 The Church is well known for being among the first responders when tragedy strikes. Even

before a hurricane hits, Church leaders and staff in the affected locations are mapping out plans for how they will deliver relief supplies and volunteer assistance to those who will be impacted.

36 Building temporary shelters project after Typhoon Haiyan. Last year alone, the Church carried out more than 100 disaster-relief projects around the world, helping victims of hurricanes, fires, floods, earthquakes, and other calamities. Whenever possible, our Church members in yellow Helping Hands vests mobilize in great numbers to help those afflicted by the disaster. This kind of service, rendered by so many of you, is the very essence of ministering.

37 My dear brothers and sisters, the activities I have described are merely a small part of the growing welfare and humanitarian outreach of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.^k And you are the ones who make all this possible. Because of your exemplary lives, your generous hearts, and your helping hands, it is no wonder that many communities and government leaders are praising your efforts.^l

j See "Worldwide Displacement Tops 70 Million, UN Refugee Chief Urges Greater Solidarity in Response," United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees website, June 19, 2019, unhcr.org/en-us.

k For additional information on the Church's charitable efforts, please see ChurchofJesusChrist.org/topics/welfare; LatterDaySaintCharities.org; facebook.com/LatterDaySaintCharities; JustServe.org.

l "The most effective tract we will carry will be the goodness of our own lives and example" (Gordon B. Hinckley, "Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep," *Ensign*, May 1999, 107; *Liahona*, July 1999, 121).

38 Since becoming President of the Church, I have been amazed at how many presidents, prime ministers, and ambassadors have sincerely thanked me for our humanitarian aid to their people. And they have also expressed gratitude for the strength that our faithful members bring to their country as loyal, contributing citizens.

39 I have also marveled as world leaders have visited the First Presidency expressing their hope for the Church to be established in their lands. Why? Because they know that Latter-day Saints will help to build strong families and communities, making life better for others wherever they live.

40 Regardless of where we call home, members of the Church feel passionately about the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Thus, our greatest joy comes as we help our brothers and sisters, no matter where we live in this wonderful world.

41 Giving help to others—making a conscientious effort to care about others as much as or more than we care about ourselves—is our joy. Especially, I might add, when it is not convenient and when it takes us out of our comfort zone. Living that second great commandment is the key to becoming a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

42 My dear brothers and sisters, you are living exemplars of the fruits that come from following

the teachings of Jesus Christ. I thank you! I love you!

43 I know that God lives. Jesus is the Christ. His Church has been restored in these latter days to fulfill its divine purposes. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 36

Closing Remarks - Delivered in the Sunday Afternoon Session of the October 2019 General Conference.

MY beloved brothers and sisters, as we come to the end of this historic conference, we thank the Lord for inspiring the messages and the music that have edified us. We have truly enjoyed a spiritual feast.

2 We know the restored gospel of Jesus Christ will bring hope and joy to people who will hear and heed His doctrine. We also know that each home can become a true sanctuary of faith, where peace, love, and the Spirit of the Lord may dwell.

3 Of course, the crowning jewel of the Restoration is the holy temple. Its sacred ordinances and covenants are pivotal to preparing a people who are ready to welcome the Savior at His Second Coming. Presently we have 166 dedicated temples, and more are coming.

4 An open house will be held prior to the dedication of each new and renovated temple. Many friends not of our faith will participate in tours of those temples

Horizontal lines for writing.

and will learn something about temple blessings. And some of those visitors will be moved upon to know more. Some will sincerely ask how they might qualify for the blessings of the temple.

5 As members of the Church, we need to be prepared to answer their questions. We can explain that the blessings of the temple are available to any and all people who will prepare themselves. But before they can enter a dedicated temple, they need to qualify. The Lord wants all His children to partake of the eternal blessings available in His temple. He has directed what each person must do to qualify to enter His holy house.

6 A good place for us to begin such a teaching opportunity is to call attention to the words etched on the temple's exterior: "Holiness to the Lord: The House of the Lord." President Henry B. Eyring's message today and many others have inspired us to become more holy. Each temple is a holy place; each temple patron strives to become more holy.

7 All requirements to enter the temple relate to personal holiness. To assess that readiness, each person who wants to enjoy the blessings of the temple will have two interviews: first with a bishop, bishopric counselor, or branch president; second with a stake or mission president or one of his counselors. In those interviews, several questions will be asked.

8 Some of those questions have recently been edited for clarity. I would like to review them for you now:

1. Do you have faith in and a testimony of God, the Eternal Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost?
2. Do you have a testimony of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and of His role as your Savior and Redeemer?
3. Do you have a testimony of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ?
4. Do you sustain the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as the prophet, seer, and revelator and as the only person on the earth authorized to exercise all priesthood keys? Do you sustain the members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators? Do you sustain the other General Authorities and local leaders of the Church?
5. The Lord has said that all things are to be "done in cleanliness" before Him (Doctrine and Covenants 42:41). Do you strive for moral cleanliness in your thoughts and behavior? Do you obey the law of chastity?
6. Do you follow the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ in your private and public behavior with members of your family and others?
7. Do you support or promote any teachings, practices, or doctrine contrary to those of

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

- 8. Do you strive to keep the Sabbath day holy, both at home and at church; attend your meetings; prepare for and worthily partake of the sacrament; and live your life in harmony with the laws and commandments of the gospel?
- 9. Do you strive to be honest in all that you do?
- 10. Are you a full-tithe payer?
- 11. Do you understand and obey the Word of Wisdom?
- 12. Do you have any financial or other obligations to a former spouse or to children? If yes, are you current in meeting those obligations?
- 13. Do you keep the covenants that you made in the temple, including wearing the temple garment as instructed in the endowment?
- 14. Are there serious sins in your life that need to be resolved with priesthood authorities as part of your repentance?
- 15. Do you consider yourself worthy to enter the Lord's house and participate in temple ordinances?

9 Tomorrow, these revised temple recommend questions will be distributed to Church leaders throughout the world.

10 In addition to their answering those questions honestly, it is understood that each adult temple patron will wear the sacred garment of the priesthood under their regular clothing. This

is symbolic of an inner commitment to strive each day to become more like the Lord. It also reminds us to remain faithful each day to covenants made and to walk on the covenant path each day in a higher and holier way.

11 Now, for just a moment, I would like to speak to our youth. We encourage you to qualify for limited-use temple recommends. You will be asked only those questions applicable to you in your preparation for the ordinances of proxy baptism and confirmation. We are very grateful for your worthiness and willingness to participate in that sacred temple work. We thank you!

12 Individual worthiness to enter the Lord's house requires much individual spiritual preparation. But with the Lord's help, nothing is impossible. In some respects, it is easier to build a temple than it is to build a people prepared for a temple. Individual worthiness requires a total conversion of mind and heart to be more like the Lord, to be an honest citizen, to be a better example, and to be a holier person.

13 I testify that such preparatory work brings innumerable blessings in this life and inconceivable blessings for the life to come, including the perpetuation of your family unit throughout all eternity "in a state of never-ending happiness."^a

a Mosiah 2:41.

14 Now I would like to turn to another topic: plans for the coming year. In the springtime of the year 2020, it will be exactly 200 years since Joseph Smith experienced the theophany that we know as the First Vision. God the Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to Joseph, a 14-year-old youth. That event marked the onset of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in its fulness, precisely as foretold in the Holy Bible.^b

15 Then came a succession of visits from heavenly messengers, including Moroni, John the Baptist, and the early Apostles Peter, James, and John. Others followed, including Moses, Elias, and Elijah. Each brought divine authority to bless God's children on the earth once again.

16 Miraculously, we have also received the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ, a companion scripture to the Holy Bible. The revelations published in the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price have also greatly enriched our understanding of God's commandments and eternal truth.

17 The keys and offices of the priesthood have been restored, including the offices of Apostle, Seventy, patriarch, high priest, elder, bishop, priest, teacher, and deacon. And women who love the Lord serve valiantly in the Relief Society, Primary,

Young Women, Sunday School, and other Church callings—all vital parts of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in its fulness.

18 Thus, the year 2020 will be designated as a bicentennial year. General conference next April will be different from any previous conference. In the next six months, I hope that every member and every family will prepare for a unique conference that will commemorate the very foundations of the restored gospel.

19 You may wish to begin your preparation by reading afresh Joseph Smith's account of the First Vision as recorded in the Pearl of Great Price. Our course of study for next year in Come, Follow Me is the Book of Mormon. You may wish to ponder important questions such as, "How would my life be different if my knowledge gained from the Book of Mormon were suddenly taken away?" or "How have the events that followed the First Vision made a difference for me and my loved ones?" Also, with the Book of Mormon videos now becoming available, you may wish to incorporate them in your individual and family study.

20 Select your own questions. Design your own plan. Immerse yourself in the glorious light of the Restoration. As you do, gen-

^b See Isaiah 2:2; 29; Ezekiel 37:15–20, 26–28; Daniel 2:44; Amos 3:7; Acts 3:21; Ephesians 1:10; Revelation 14:6.

eral conference next April will be not only memorable; it will be unforgettable.

21 Now in closing, I leave with you my love and my blessing that each of you may become happier and holier with each passing day. Meanwhile, please be assured that revelation continues in the Church and will continue under the Lord’s direction until “the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done.”^a

22 I so bless you, reaffirming my love for you, with my testimony that God lives! Jesus is the Christ! This is His Church and we are His people. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 37

“How Do You #HearHim?” A Special Invitation - Delivered as a video on February 26, 2020.

IN the scriptures, there are very few sacred instances in which the voice of God the Father has been heard. So, when He says something, we really need to listen. Repeatedly, He has personally introduced His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, with a specific charge to “Hear Him!”

2 Have you ever stopped to ask, “Why?” Why is our Heavenly Father so insistent—and consistent—in His plea that we should

hear His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ?

3 Jesus answered this question Himself. He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.”

4 Our Father loves us and yearns for each one of us to choose to return to His holy presence. He pleads with us to listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, whom the Father anointed and appointed as our Mediator, Savior, and Redeemer.

5 In this special year as we commemorate the 200th anniversary of the First Vision, I invite you to think deeply and often about this key question: How do you hear Him? I also invite you to take steps to hear Him better and more often. Throughout this year, we will focus in a special way on the historic event that took place in the Sacred Grove.

6 I invite you to be proactive and look for opportunities to share your feelings about the Lord Jesus Christ with your family and friends, including inviting your friends to join you in worshiping Him on Easter Sunday.

7 Now, as one of the Lord’s special witnesses, I bless you in your efforts to get on and stay on His covenant path, and strive with all your heart, might, mind and soul to Hear Him!

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the numbered sections on the left.

a Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 142.

CHAPTER 38

My Message of Hope and Love For You - Delivered on March 14, 2020 on his social media channels in video format.

MY beloved brothers and sisters, we are living in a remarkable age when we constantly see the hand of the Lord in the lives of His children. Our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, know us, love us, and are watching over us. Of that, we can be certain.

2 At the same time, as you are well aware, we as a global Church are facing a unique challenge. COVID-19 and its resulting illness has affected thousands of lives and interrupted many regular routines. We pray for those who are suffering and for those who have lost loved ones.

3 After prayerful consideration, and with our deep desire to be part of the solution to this challenge, we have recently made many temporary adjustments to the way we worship and serve the Lord. We are most grateful for your faith, your prayers, your cooperation, and understanding. These unique challenges will pass in due time.

4 I remain optimistic for the future. I know the great and marvelous blessings that God has in store for those who love Him and serve Him. I see evidence of His hand in this holy work in so many ways. So, during these

uncertain times, be comforted by this promise from the Savior. He said, 'I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say'.^a I promise you that joy is always within the reach of everyone who will hear Him and obey His laws.

5 Brothers and sisters, please take good care of yourselves and your loved ones. And look for opportunities to help those around you near and far. We have the great privilege of ministering to our neighbors wherever they live. Temporary changes in our normal routine may allow additional time to experience how precious home-centered gospel study can be. Don't hesitate to use the new Book of Mormon videos and other technology to study the gospel of Jesus Christ.

6 We are all looking forward to general conference. Then we will focus on the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in its fulness. That gospel provides certain hope and help to a troubled world. I love you. I pray for you. And I promise that you will receive comfort and peace as you continue to hear Him."

CHAPTER 39

Invitation to All to Join in Fast for Relief from COVID-19 - Delivered as a video address on March 26, 2020.

AS a physician and surgeon, I have great admiration for medical professionals, scientists, and all who are working around

a D&C 82:10

the clock to curb the spread of COVID-19. I am also a man of faith, and I know that during these challenging times, we can be strengthened and lifted as we call upon God and His Son, Jesus Christ—the Master Healer.

2 I invite you to join with me in a worldwide fast—for all whose health permits—to pray for relief from the physical, emotional, and economic effects of this global pandemic. I invite members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints everywhere, along with our many friends, to fast and pray this Sunday, March 29. Let us unite our faith to plead for physical, spiritual, and other healing throughout the entire world.

3 The Lord understands the feelings you are experiencing. He loves and cares for you, as I do too.

CHAPTER 40

The Future of the Church: Preparing the World for the Savior's Second Coming - Published in the April 2020 Ensign Magazine.

YOU and I get to participate in the ongoing Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is wondrous! It is not man-made! It comes from the Lord, who said, "I will hasten my work in its time".^a This work is empowered by a divine announcement made 200 years ago. It consisted

of only seven words: "This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!"^b

2 Uttered by Almighty God, that announcement brought a young Joseph Smith to the Lord Jesus Christ. Those seven words launched the Restoration of His gospel. Why? Because our living God is a loving God! He wants His children to gain immortality and eternal life! The great latter-day work of which we are a part was established, on schedule, to bless a waiting and weeping world.

3 I cannot speak of the Restoration in tempered tones. This fact of history is absolutely stunning! It is incredible! It is breathtaking! How amazing is it that messengers from heaven came to give authority and power to this work?

4 Today, the Lord's work in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is moving forward at an accelerated pace. The Church will have an unprecedented, unparalleled future. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, ... the things which God hath prepared for them that love him".^c

5 Remember that the fulness of Christ's ministry lies in the future. The prophecies of His Second Coming have yet to be fulfilled. We are just building up to the climax of this last dispensation—when the Savior's Second Coming becomes a reality.

a Doctrine and Covenants 88:73
b see Joseph Smith—History 1:17
c 1 Corinthians 2:9; see also Doctrine and Covenants 76:10

Horizontal lines for writing or notes, spanning the right side of the page.

*Gathering Israel on
Both Sides of the Veil*

6 A necessary prelude to that Second Coming is the long-awaited gathering of scattered Israel.^d This doctrine of the gathering is one of the important teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Lord has declared: "I give unto you a sign ... that I shall gather in, from their long dispersion, my people, O house of Israel, and shall establish again among them my Zion".^e

7 We not only teach this doctrine, but we participate in it. We do so as we help to gather the elect of the Lord on both sides of the veil. As part of the planned destiny of the earth and its inhabitants, our kindred dead are to be redeemed.^f Mercifully, the invitation to "come unto Christ"^g can also be extended to those who died without a knowledge of the gospel.^h Part of their preparation, however, requires the earthly efforts of others. We gather pedigree charts, create family group sheets, and do temple work vicariously to gather individuals unto the Lord and into their families.ⁱ

8 Families are to be sealed to-

gether for all eternity.^j A welding link is to be forged between the fathers and the children. In our time, a whole, complete, and perfect union of all dispensations, keys, and powers are to be welded together.^k For these sacred purposes, holy temples now dot the earth. I emphasize again that construction of these temples may not change your life, but your service in the temple surely will.

9 The time is coming when those who do not obey the Lord will be separated from those who do.^l Our safest insurance is to continue to be worthy of admission to His holy house. The greatest gift you could give to the Lord is to keep yourself unspotted from the world, worthy to attend His holy house. His gift to you will be the peace and security of knowing that you are worthy to meet Him, whenever that time comes.

10 In addition to temple work, the coming forth of the Book of Mormon is a sign to the entire world that the Lord has commenced to gather Israel and fulfill the covenants He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.^m The Book of Mormon declares

d see 1 Nephi 15:18; see also the title page of the Book of Mormon
e 3 Nephi 21:1
f see Doctrine and Covenants 128:15
g Jacob 1:7; Moroni 10:32; Doctrine and Covenants 20:59
h see Doctrine and Covenants 137:6–8
i see 1 Corinthians 15:29; 1 Peter 4:6
j see Doctrine and Covenants 2:2–3; 49:17; 138:48; Joseph Smith—History 1:39
k see Doctrine and Covenants 128:18
l see Doctrine and Covenants 86:1–7
m see Genesis 12:2–3; 3 Nephi 21; 29

the doctrine of the gathering.ⁿ It causes people to learn about Jesus Christ, to believe His gospel, and to join His Church. In fact, if there were no Book of Mormon, the promised gathering of Israel would not occur.

11 Missionary work is also crucial to that gathering. Servants of the Lord go forth proclaiming the Restoration. In many nations our members and missionaries have searched for those of scattered Israel; they have hunted for them “out of the holes of the rocks”;^o and they have fished for them, as in ancient days.

12 Missionary work connects people to the covenant the Lord made with Abraham anciently:

13 “Thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations;

14 “And I will bless them through thy name; for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father”.^p

15 Missionary work is only the beginning of the blessing. The fulfillment, the consummation, of those blessings comes as those who have entered the waters of

baptism perfect their lives to the point that they may enter the holy temple. Receiving an endowment there seals members of the Church to the Abrahamic covenant.

16 The choice to come unto Christ is not a matter of physical location; it is a matter of individual commitment. All members of the Church have access to the doctrine, ordinances, priesthood keys, and blessings of the gospel, regardless of their location. People can be “brought to the knowledge of the Lord”^q without leaving their homelands.

17 True, in the early days of the Church, conversion often meant emigration as well. But now the gathering takes place in each nation. The Lord has decreed the establishment of Zion^r in each realm where He has given His Saints their birth and nationality. The place of gathering for Brazilian Saints is in Brazil; the place of gathering for Nigerian Saints is in Nigeria; the place of gathering for Korean Saints is in Korea. Zion is “the pure in heart”.^s It is wherever righteous Saints are.

18 Spiritual security will always depend upon how one lives, not where one lives. I promise that if we will do our best to exercise faith in Jesus Christ and access the power of His Atonement through repentance, we will

n see, for example, 1 Nephi 10:14

o Jeremiah 16:16

p Abraham 2:9–10

q 3 Nephi 20:13

r see Doctrine and Covenants 6:6; 11:6

s Doctrine and Covenants 97:21

have the knowledge and power of God to help us take the blessings of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people and to prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord.

The Second Coming

19 The Lord will return to the land that He made holy by His mission there in mortality. In triumph, He will come again to Jerusalem. In royal robes of red to symbolize His blood, which oozed from every pore, He shall return to the Holy City.^t There and elsewhere, “the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together”.^u His “name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace”.^v

20 He will govern from two world capitals: one in old Jerusalem^w and the other in the New Jerusalem “built upon the American continent”.^x From these centers He will direct the affairs of His Church and kingdom. Another temple will yet be built in Jerusalem. From that temple He shall reign forever as Lord of Lords. Water will issue from under the temple. Waters of the Dead Sea will be healed.^y

21 In that day He will bear new titles and be surrounded by special Saints. He will be known as “Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that [will be] with him [will be those who] are called, and chosen, and faithful”^z to their trust here in mortality. Then He “shall reign for ever and ever”.^{aa}

22 The earth will be returned to its paradisiacal state and be made new. There will be a new heaven and a new earth.^{ab}

23 It is our charge—it is our privilege—to help prepare the world for that day.

Face the Future with Faith

24 Meanwhile, here and now, we live in a time of turmoil. Earthquakes and tsunamis wreak devastation, governments collapse, economic stresses are severe, the family is under attack, and divorce rates are rising. We have great cause for concern. But we do not need to let our fears displace our faith. We can combat those fears by strengthening our faith.

25 Why do we need such resilient faith? Because difficult days are ahead. Rarely in the future will it be easy or popular to be a faithful Latter-day Saint. Each

t see Doctrine and Covenants 133:46–48

u Isaiah 40:5; see also Doctrine and Covenants 101:23

v Isaiah 9:6

w see Zechariah 14

x Articles of Faith 1:10

y See Ezekiel 47:1–8.

z Revelation 17:14

aa Revelation 11:15

ab see Revelation 21:1; Ether 13:9; Doctrine and Covenants 29:23–24

of us will be tested. The Apostle Paul warned that in the latter days, those who diligently follow the Lord “shall suffer persecution”.^{ac} That very persecution can either crush you into silent weakness or motivate you to be more exemplary and courageous in your daily lives.

26 How you deal with life’s trials is part of the development of your faith. Strength comes when you remember that you have a divine nature, an inheritance of infinite worth. The Lord has reminded you, your children, and your grandchildren that you are lawful heirs, that you have been reserved in heaven for your specific time and place to be born, to grow and become His standard bearers and covenant people. As you walk in the Lord’s path of righteousness, you will be blessed to continue in His goodness and be a light and a savior unto His people.^{ad}

27 Do whatever it takes to strengthen your faith in Jesus Christ by increasing your understanding of the doctrine taught in His restored Church and by relentlessly seeking truth. Anchored in pure doctrine, you will be able to step forward with faith and dogged persistence and cheerfully do all that lies in your power to fulfill the purposes of the Lord.

28 You will have days when you will be discouraged. So pray for courage not to give up! Sadly, some who you thought were your friends will betray you. And some things will simply seem unfair.

29 However, I promise you that as you follow Jesus Christ, you will find sustained peace and true joy. As you keep your covenants with increasing precision, and as you defend the Church and kingdom of God on the earth today, the Lord will bless you with strength and wisdom to accomplish what only members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints can accomplish.

30 We are to be builders of an individual faith in God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and faith in His Church. We are to build families and be sealed in holy temples. We are to build the Church and kingdom of God upon the earth.^{ae} We are to prepare for our own divine destiny: glory, immortality, and eternal lives.^{af}

31 I humbly testify to you that—as the Prophet Joseph Smith proclaimed—the restored gospel of Jesus Christ “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

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the text on the left.

ac 2 Timothy 3:12
ad see Doctrine and Covenants 86:8–11
ae see Matthew 6:33
af see Romans 2:7; Doctrine and Covenants 75:5

Jehovah shall say the work is done".^a

32 We are engaged in the work of Almighty God. I pray for His blessings to be with each and every one of you.

CHAPTER 41

Opening Message - Delivered in the Saturday Morning Session of the April 2020 General Conference.

MY beloved brothers and sisters, as we welcome you to this historic April 2020 general conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for reasons you know, I stand before you in an empty auditorium!

2 Little did I know, when I promised you at the October 2019 general conference that this April conference would be "memorable" and "unforgettable," that speaking to a visible congregation of fewer than 10 people would make this conference so memorable and unforgettable for me! Yet the knowledge that you are participating by electronic transmission, and the choir's beautiful rendition of "It Is Well with My Soul," bring great comfort to my soul.

3 As you know, attendance at this general conference has been strictly limited as part of our efforts to be good global citizens and do all we can to limit the

spread of COVID-19. This virus has had a major impact throughout the world. It has also altered our Church meetings, missionary service, and temple work for a while.

4 Though today's restrictions relate to a virulent virus, life's personal trials stretch far beyond this pandemic. Future trials could result from an accident, a natural disaster, or an unexpected personal heartache.

5 How can we endure such trials? The Lord has told us that "if ye are prepared ye shall not fear."^b Of course, we can store our own reserves of food, water, and savings. But equally crucial is our need to fill our personal spiritual storehouses with faith, truth, and testimony.

6 Our ultimate quest in life is to prepare to meet our Maker. We do this by striving daily to become more like our Savior, Jesus Christ.^c And we do that as we repent daily and receive His cleansing, healing, and strengthening power. Then we can feel enduring peace and joy, even during turbulent times. This is exactly why the Lord has implored us to stand in holy places and "be not moved."^d

7 This year, we commemorate the 200th anniversary of one of the most significant events in the history of the world—namely,

a History of the Church, 4:540

b Doctrine and Covenants 38:30.

c See 3 Nephi 27:27.

d Doctrine and Covenants 87:8.

WHAT a unique and wonderful session this has been! Thank you, dear Laudy and Enzo. You represented the magnificent young women and young men of the Church so very well.

2 My dear brothers and sisters, we have heard much today about the Restoration of the Church—the very Church that our Savior, Jesus Christ, established during His earthly ministry. That Restoration began 200 years ago this spring when God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to the young Joseph Smith.

3 Ten years after this transcendent vision, the Prophet Joseph Smith and five others were called as founding members of the Lord’s restored Church.

4 From that small group assembled on April 6, 1830, has come a global organization of more than 16 million members. The good this Church accomplishes around the world to alleviate human suffering and provide uplift for humankind is widely known. But its prime purpose is to help men, women, and children follow the Lord Jesus Christ, keep His commandments, and qualify for the greatest of all blessings—that of eternal life with God and their loved ones.^c

5 As we commemorate the event that was launched in 1820, it is important to remember that

while we revere Joseph Smith as a prophet of God, this is not the church of Joseph Smith, nor is it the church of Mormon. This is the Church of Jesus Christ. He decreed exactly what His Church should be called: “For thus shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”^d

6 I have spoken previously about a needed course correction in the way we refer to the name of the Church.^e Since that time, much has been done to accomplish this correction. I am very grateful to President M. Russell Ballard and the entire Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who have done so much to lead these efforts as well as those related to another initiative that I will announce this evening.

7 Church leaders and departments, related entities, and millions of members—and others—now use the correct name of the Church. The Church’s official style guide has been adjusted. The Church’s principal website is now ChurchofJesusChrist.org. Addresses for email, domain names, and social media channels have been updated. Our beloved choir is now the Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square.

8 We have gone to these extraordinary efforts because when we remove the Lord’s name from the name of His Church, we in-

c See Doctrine and Covenants 14:7.

d Doctrine and Covenants 115:4.

e See Russell M. Nelson, “The Correct Name of the Church,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 87–89.

advertently remove Him as the central focus of our worship and our lives. When we take the Savior's name upon us at baptism, we commit to witness, by our words, thoughts, and actions, that Jesus is the Christ.^f

9 Previously, I promised that if we would "do our best to restore the correct name of the Lord's Church," He would "pour down His power and blessings upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints, the likes of which we have never seen."^g I renew that promise today.

10 To help us remember Him and to identify The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as the Lord's Church, we are pleased to introduce a symbol that will signify the central place of Jesus Christ in His Church.

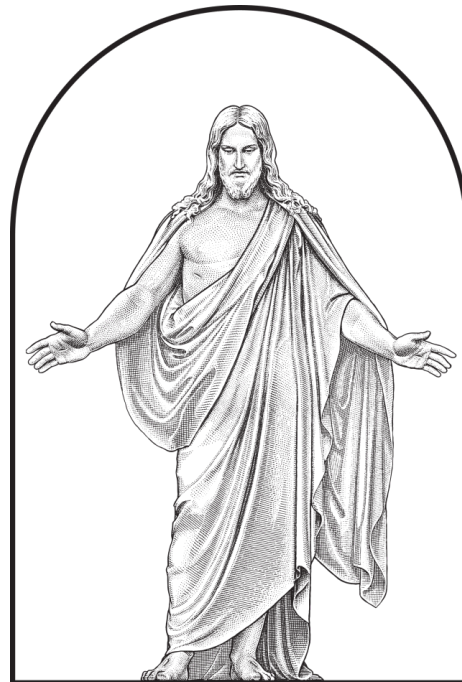
11 This symbol includes the name of the Church contained within a cornerstone. Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone.^h



12 At the center of the symbol is a representation of Thorvaldsen's marble statue the Christus. It portrays the resurrected, living

Lord reaching out to embrace all who will come unto Him.

13 Symbolically, Jesus Christ is standing under an arch. The arch reminds us of the resurrected Savior emerging from the tomb on the third day following His Crucifixion.



14 This symbol should feel familiar to many, as we have long identified the restored gospel with the living, resurrected Christ.

15 The symbol will now be used as a visual identifier for official literature, news, and events of

f See Russell M. Nelson, "The Correct Name of the Church," 88.
g Russell M. Nelson, "The Correct Name of the Church," 89.
h See Ephesians 2:20.

A series of horizontal lines for writing, located on the right side of the page.

the Church.ⁱ It will remind all that this is the Savior's Church and that all we do as members of His Church centers on Jesus Christ and His gospel.

16 Now, my dear brothers and sisters, tomorrow is Palm Sunday, as Elder Gong has so eloquently taught. Then we enter the special week that culminates with Easter. As followers of Jesus Christ, living in a day when the COVID-19 pandemic has put the whole world in commotion, let us not just talk of Christ or preach of Christ or employ a symbol representing Christ.

17 Let us put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ into action!

18 As you know, members of the Church observe the law of the fast one day each month.

19 The doctrine of fasting is ancient. It has been practiced by biblical heroes from the earliest days. Moses, David, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Isaiah, Daniel, Joel, and many others fasted and preached of fasting.^j Through Isaiah's writings, the Lord said:

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free?"^k

20 The Apostle Paul admonished Saints in Corinth to "give yourselves to fasting and prayer."^l The Savior Himself declared that certain things go "not out but by prayer and fasting."^m

21 I said recently in a social media video that "as a physician and surgeon, I have great admiration for medical professionals, scientists, and all who are working around the clock to curb the spread of COVID-19."ⁿ

22 Now, as President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, I know that God "has all power, all wisdom, and all understanding; he comprehendeth all things, and he is a merciful Being, even unto salvation, to those who will repent and believe on his name."^o

23 So, during times of deep distress, as when illness reaches pandemic proportions, the most

i To respect the sacred nature of the Church symbol and preserve legal protection, the Church's official symbol is to be used only as approved by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Further information may be obtained by contacting the Church's Intellectual Property Office at cor-intellectualproperty@ChurchofJesusChrist.org

j See Exodus 34:28; 2 Samuel 12:16; Ezra 10:6; Nehemiah 1:4; Esther 4:16; Isaiah 58:3; Daniel 9:3; Joel 2:12.

k Isaiah 58:6; emphasis added.

l 1 Corinthians 7:5.

m Matthew 17:21; emphasis added.

n Russell M. Nelson, in "Prophet Invites All to Fast and Pray for Relief from COVID-19," Mar. 26, 2020, newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

o Alma 26:35.

natural thing for us to do is to call upon our Heavenly Father and His Son—the Master Healer—to show forth Their marvelous power to bless the people of the earth.

24 In my video message, I invited all to join in fasting on Sunday, March 29, 2020. Many of you may have seen the video and joined in the fast. Some may have not. Now we still need help from heaven.

25 So tonight, my dear brothers and sisters, in the spirit of the sons of Mosiah, who gave themselves to much fasting and prayer,^a and as part of our April 2020 general conference, I am calling for another worldwide fast. For all whose health may permit, let us fast, pray, and unite our faith once again. Let us prayerfully plead for relief from this global pandemic.

26 I invite all, including those not of our faith, to fast and pray on Good Friday, April 10, that the present pandemic may be controlled, caregivers protected, the economy strengthened, and life normalized.

27 How do we fast? Two meals or a period of 24 hours is customary. But you decide what would constitute a sacrifice for you, as you remember the supreme sacrifice the Savior made for you. Let us unite in pleading for healing throughout the world.

28 Good Friday would be the perfect day to have our Heavenly Father and His Son hear us!

29 Dear brothers and sisters, I express my deep love for you, along with my testimony of the divinity of the work in which we are engaged. This is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He stands at its head and directs all that we do. I know that He will respond to the pleadings of His people. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 43

Hear Him - Delivered in the Sunday Morning Session of the April 2020 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters, how thankful I am that through the use of technology we have been able to meet together and worship on this Sunday morning. How blessed we are to know that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored to the earth!

2 In the past several weeks, most of us have experienced disruptions in our personal lives. Earthquakes, fires, floods, plagues, and their aftermaths have disrupted routines and caused shortages of food, staples, and savings.

3 Amidst all of this, we commend you and thank you for choosing to hear the word of the Lord during this time of turmoil by joining with us for gen-

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

a See Alma 17:3.

eral conference. The increasing darkness that accompanies tribulation makes the light of Jesus Christ shine ever brighter. Just think of the good each of us can do during this time of global upheaval. Your love of and faith in the Savior may very well be the catalyst for someone to discover the Restoration of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

4 In the past two years, Sister Nelson and I have met with thousands of you around the world. We have convened with you in outdoor arenas and in hotel ballrooms. In each location, I have felt that I was in the presence of the Lord's elect and that I was seeing the gathering of Israel occur before my eyes.

5 We live in the day that "our forefathers have awaited with anxious expectation."^b We have front-row seats to witness live what the prophet Nephi saw only in vision, that "the power of the Lamb of God" would descend "upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory."^c

6 You, my brothers and sisters, are among those men, women, and children whom Nephi saw. Think of that!

7 Regardless of where you live or what your circumstances are, the

Lord Jesus Christ is your Savior, and God's prophet Joseph Smith is your prophet. He was foreordained before the foundation of the earth to be the prophet of this last dispensation, when "nothing shall be withheld"^d from the Saints. Revelation continues to flow from the Lord during this ongoing process of restoration.

8 What does it mean for you that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored to the earth?

9 It means that you and your family can be sealed together forever! It means that because you have been baptized by one who has authority from Jesus Christ and have been confirmed a member of His Church, you can enjoy the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. He will guide and protect you. It means you will never be left comfortless or without access to the power of God to help you. It means that priesthood power can bless you as you receive essential ordinances and make covenants with God and keep them. What an anchor to our souls are these truths, especially during these times when the tempest is raging.

10 The Book of Mormon chronicles the classic rise and fall of two major civilizations. Their history demonstrates how easy it is for a majority of the people to forget God, reject warnings of the Lord's prophets, and seek

b Doctrine and Covenants 121:27.

c 1 Nephi 14:14.

d Doctrine and Covenants 121:28.

power, popularity, and pleasures of the flesh.^e Repeatedly, past prophets have declared “great and marvelous things unto the people, which they did not believe.”^f

11 It is no different in our day. Through the years, great and marvelous things have been heard from dedicated pulpits across the earth. Yet most people do not embrace these truths—either because they do not know where to look for them^g or because they are listening to those who do not have the whole truth or because they have rejected truth in favor of worldly pursuits.

12 The adversary is clever. For millennia he has been making good look evil and evil look good.^h His messages tend to be loud, bold, and boastful.

13 However, messages from our Heavenly Father are strikingly different. He communicates simply, quietly, and with such stunning plainness that we cannot misunderstand Him.ⁱ

14 For example, whenever He has introduced His Only Begotten Son to mortals upon the earth, He has done so with remarkably few words. On the Mount of Transfiguration to Pe-

ter, James, and John, God said, “This is my beloved Son: hear him.”^j His words to the Nephites in ancient Bountiful were “Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him.”^k And to Joseph Smith, in that profound declaration that opened this dispensation, God simply said, “This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!”^l

15 Now, my dear brothers and sisters, consider the fact that in these three instances just mentioned, just before the Father introduced the Son, the people involved were in a state of fear and, to some degree, desperation.

16 The Apostles were afraid when they saw Jesus Christ encircled by a cloud on the Mount of Transfiguration.

17 The Nephites were afraid because they had been through destruction and darkness for several days.

18 Joseph Smith was in the grips of a force of darkness just before the heavens opened.

19 Our Father knows that when we are surrounded by uncertainty and fear, what will help us the very most is to hear His Son.

e See 1 Nephi 22:23.

f Ether 12:5.

g See Doctrine and Covenants 123:12.

h See Isaiah 5:20; 2 Nephi 15:20.

i See 2 Nephi 25:4; Alma 5:43.

j Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35.

k 3 Nephi 11:7.

l Joseph Smith—History 1:17.

20 Because when we seek to hear—truly hear—His Son, we will be guided to know what to do in any circumstance.

21 The very first word in the Doctrine and Covenants is hearken.^m It means “to listen with the intent to obey.”ⁿ To hearken means to “hear Him”—to hear what the Savior says and then to heed His counsel. In those two words—“Hear Him”—God gives us the pattern for success, happiness, and joy in this life. We are to hear the words of the Lord, hearken to them, and heed what He has told us!

22 As we seek to be disciples of Jesus Christ, our efforts to hear Him need to be ever more intentional. It takes conscious and consistent effort to fill our daily lives with His words, His teachings, His truths.

23 We simply cannot rely upon information we bump into on social media. With billions of words online and in a marketing-saturated world constantly infiltrated by noisy, nefarious efforts of the adversary, where can we go to hear Him?

24 We can go to the scriptures. They teach us about Jesus Christ and His gospel, the magnitude of His Atonement, and our Father’s great plan of happiness and redemption. Daily immer-

sion in the word of God is crucial for spiritual survival, especially in these days of increasing upheaval. As we feast on the words of Christ daily, the words of Christ will tell us how to respond to difficulties we never thought we would face.

25 We can also hear Him in the temple. The house of the Lord is a house of learning. There the Lord teaches in His own way. There each ordinance teaches about the Savior. There we learn how to part the veil and communicate more clearly with heaven. There we learn how to rebuke the adversary and draw upon the Lord’s priesthood power to strengthen us and those we love. How eager each of us should be to seek refuge there.

26 When these temporary COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, please schedule regular time to worship and serve in the temple. Every minute of that time will bless you and your family in ways nothing else can. Take time to ponder what you hear and feel when you are there. Ask the Lord to teach you how to open the heavens to bless your life and the lives of those you love and serve.

27 While worshipping in the temple is presently not possible, I invite you to increase your participation in family history, in-

^m See Doctrine and Covenants 1:1.

ⁿ In the Old Testament, the word hearken is translated from the Hebrew shama, which is a strong verb that means to “listen with the intent to obey.” Hearken is a scriptural word that occurs in 40 sections of the Doctrine and Covenants.

cluding family history research and indexing. I promise that as you increase your time in temple and family history work, you will increase and improve your ability to hear Him.

28 We also hear Him more clearly as we refine our ability to recognize the whisperings of the Holy Ghost. It has never been more imperative to know how the Spirit speaks to you than right now. In the Godhead, the Holy Ghost is the messenger. He will bring thoughts to your mind which the Father and Son want you to receive. He is the Comforter. He will bring a feeling of peace to your heart. He testifies of truth and will confirm what is true as you hear and read the word of the Lord.

29 I renew my plea for you to do whatever it takes to increase your spiritual capacity to receive personal revelation.

30 Doing so will help you know how to move ahead with your life, what to do during times of crisis, and how to discern and avoid the temptations and the deceptions of the adversary.

31 And, finally, we hear Him as we heed the words of prophets, seers, and revelators. Ordained Apostles of Jesus Christ always testify of Him. They point the way as we make our way through the heart-wrenching maze of our mortal experiences.

32 What will happen as you more intentionally hear, hear-ken, and heed what the Savior has said and what He is saying now through His prophets? I promise that you will be blessed with additional power to deal with temptation, struggles, and weakness. I promise miracles in your marriage, family relationships, and daily work. And I promise that your capacity to feel joy will increase even if turbulence increases in your life.

33 This April 2020 general conference is our time to commemorate an event that changed the world. As we anticipated this 200th anniversary of Joseph Smith’s First Vision, the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles wondered what we might do to commemorate appropriately this singular event.

34 That theophany initiated the Restoration of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ and ushered in the dispensation of the fulness of times.

35 We wondered if a monument should be erected. But as we considered the unique historic and international impact of that First Vision, we felt impressed to create a monument not of granite or stone but of words—words of solemn and sacred proclamation—written, not to be carved in “tables of stone” but rather to be etched in the “fleshy tables” of our hearts.^o

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the text on the left.

o See 2 Corinthians 3:3.

36 Since the Church was organized, only five proclamations have been issued, with the last being “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” presented by President Gordon B. Hinckley in 1995.

37 Now as we contemplate this significant time in the history of the world and the Lord’s charge to gather scattered Israel in preparation for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, we, the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles, issue the following proclamation. Its title is “The Restoration of the Fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: A Bicentennial Proclamation to the World.” It is authored by the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is dated April 2020. To prepare for today, I previously recorded this proclamation in the Sacred Grove, where Joseph Smith first saw the Father and the Son.

38 “We solemnly proclaim that God loves His children in every nation of the world. God the Father has given us the divine birth, the incomparable life, and the infinite atoning sacrifice of His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. By the power of the Father, Jesus rose again and gained the victory over death. He is our Savior, our Exemplar, and our Redeemer.

39 “Two hundred years ago, on a beautiful spring morning in 1820, young Joseph Smith, seeking to know which church to join, went into the woods to

pray near his home in upstate New York, USA. He had questions regarding the salvation of his soul and trusted that God would direct him.

40 “In humility, we declare that in answer to his prayer, God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to Joseph and inaugurated the ‘restitution of all things’ (Acts 3:21) as foretold in the Bible. In this vision, he learned that following the death of the original Apostles, Christ’s New Testament Church was lost from the earth. Joseph would be instrumental in its return.

41 “We affirm that under the direction of the Father and the Son, heavenly messengers came to instruct Joseph and reestablish the Church of Jesus Christ. The resurrected John the Baptist restored the authority to baptize by immersion for the remission of sins. Three of the original twelve Apostles—Peter, James, and John—restored the apostleship and keys of priesthood authority. Others came as well, including Elijah, who restored the authority to join families together forever in eternal relationships that transcend death.

42 “We further witness that Joseph Smith was given the gift and power of God to translate an ancient record: the Book of Mormon—Another Testament of Jesus Christ. Pages of this sacred text include an account of the personal ministry of Jesus Christ among people in the Western Hemisphere soon after His Resurrection. It teaches of life’s pur-

pose and explains the doctrine of Christ, which is central to that purpose. As a companion scripture to the Bible, the Book of Mormon testifies that all human beings are sons and daughters of a loving Father in Heaven, that He has a divine plan for our lives, and that His Son, Jesus Christ, speaks today as well as in days of old.

43 “We declare that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, organized on April 6, 1830, is Christ’s New Testament Church restored. This Church is anchored in the perfect life of its chief cornerstone, Jesus Christ, and in His infinite Atonement and literal Resurrection. Jesus Christ has once again called Apostles and has given them priesthood authority. He invites all of us to come unto Him and His Church, to receive the Holy Ghost, the ordinances of salvation, and to gain enduring joy.

44 “Two hundred years have now elapsed since this Restoration was initiated by God the Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Millions throughout the world have embraced a knowledge of these prophesied events.

45 “We gladly declare that the promised Restoration goes forward through continuing revelation. The earth will never again be the same, as God will ‘gather together in one all things in Christ’ (Ephesians 1:10).

46 “With reverence and gratitude, we as His Apostles invite

all to know—as we do—that the heavens are open. We affirm that God is making known His will for His beloved sons and daughters. We testify that those who prayerfully study the message of the Restoration and act in faith will be blessed to gain their own witness of its divinity and of its purpose to prepare the world for the promised Second Coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

47 Beloved brothers and sisters, that is our bicentennial proclamation to the world regarding the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in its fulness. It has been translated into 12 languages. Other languages will soon follow. It will be available immediately on the Church website, from which you may obtain a copy. Study it privately and with your family members and friends. Ponder the truths and think of the impact those truths will have on your life if you will hear them, hearken to them, and heed the commandments and covenants that accompany them.

48 I know that Joseph Smith is the foreordained prophet whom the Lord chose to open this last dispensation. Through him the Lord’s Church was restored to the earth. Joseph sealed his testimony with his blood. How I love and honor him!

49 God lives! Jesus is the Christ! His Church has been restored! He and His Father, our Heavenly Father, are watching over us. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Horizontal lines for writing, consisting of 20 lines.

CHAPTER 44

Hosannah Shout - Delivered in the Sunday Morning Session of the April 2020 General Conference.

NOW, my dear brothers and sisters, as we commemorate Joseph Smith’s First Vision of the Father and the Son, we felt that it would be appropriate to rejoice together by participating in the Hosanna Shout.

2 This sacred shout was first given in this dispensation at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple on March 27, 1836. It is now given at the dedication of each temple. It is a sacred tribute to the Father and the Son, symbolizing the reaction of the multitude when the Savior made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. It also reaffirms what young Joseph experienced that day in the Sacred Grove—namely, that the Father and the Son are two glorified Beings, whom we worship and praise.

3 I will now demonstrate how the Hosanna Shout is given. As I do, I invite our colleagues in the media to treat this very sacred observance with dignity and respect.

4 Each one participating takes a clean white handkerchief, holding it by one corner, and waves it while saying in unison, “Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna to God and the Lamb,” repeated three times, followed by “Amen, Amen, and Amen.” If you do not have a white handkerchief, you may simply wave your hand.

5 Brothers and sisters, I now invite you to stand and participate in the Hosanna Shout, following which the “Hosanna Anthem” and “The Spirit of God”^a will be sung.

6 Upon a signal from the conductor, please join in singing “The Spirit of God.”

7 Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna to God and the Lamb.

Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna to God and the Lamb.

Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna to God and the Lamb.

Amen, Amen, and Amen.

CHAPTER 45

Go Forward With Faith - Delivered in the Sunday Afternoon Session of the April 2020 General Conference.

MY beloved brothers and sisters, as we come to the end of this historic conference, we express our gratitude to the Lord. The music has been sublime and the messages inspiring.

2 During this conference, we have experienced many highlights. On this bicentennial anniversary, we have introduced a proclamation to the world declaring the reality of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in its fulness.

3 We commemorated the Restoration with the Hosanna Shout.

4 We unveiled a new symbol signifying our faith in the Lord

a Hymns, no. 2.

Jesus Christ and for visual recognition of official Church information and materials.

5 We have called for a global day of fasting and prayer, that the present pandemic may be controlled, caregivers protected, the economy strengthened, and life normalized. This fast will be held on Good Friday, April 10. What a great Friday that will be!

6 Next Sunday is Easter Sunday, when we will again commemorate the Atonement and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of His Atonement, His gift of resurrection will come to all who have ever lived. And His gift of eternal life will come to all who qualify by fidelity to ordinances and covenants made in His holy temples.

7 The many inspiring components of this April 2020 general conference—and the sacred week that we now begin—can be summarized by two divinely decreed words: “Hear Him.”^{1b}We pray that your focus on Heavenly Father, who spoke those words, and on His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, will loom largest in your memories of all that has transpired. We pray that you will begin anew truly to hear, hearken to, and heed the words of the Savior.^c I promise that decreased fear and increased faith will follow.

8 Thank you for your desire to make your homes true sanctuaries of faith, where the Spirit of the Lord may dwell. Our gospel study curriculum, Come, Follow Me, will continue to bless your lives. Your consistent efforts in this endeavor—even during those moments when you feel that you are not being particularly successful—will change your life, that of your family, and the world. We will be strengthened as we become even more valiant disciples of the Lord, standing up and speaking up for Him, wherever we are.

9 Now, let’s talk about temples. We have 168 dedicated temples across the world. Others are at various stages of planning and construction. When plans are announced to erect a new temple, it becomes part of our sacred history.

10 It may seem odd to announce new temples when all our temples are closed for a while.

11 More than a century ago, President Wilford Woodruff foresaw conditions such as ours today, as recorded in his dedicatory prayer of the Salt Lake Temple, given in 1893. Some of you may have recently seen excerpts from this remarkable prayer on social media.

12 Hear these pleadings from a mighty prophet of God: “When Thy people shall not have the

b Joseph Smith—History 1:17; see also Luke 9:35.

c See John 10:27; Revelation 3:20; Mosiah 26:21, 28; Doctrine and Covenants 29:7.

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the numbered paragraphs on the left.

opportunity of entering this holy house ... and they are oppressed and in trouble, surrounded by difficulties ... and shall turn their faces towards this Thy holy house and ask Thee for deliverance, for help, for Thy power to be extended in their behalf, we beseech Thee, to look down from Thy holy habitation in mercy ... and listen to their cries. Or when the children of Thy people, in years to come, shall be separated, through any cause, from this place, ... and they shall cry unto Thee from the depths of their affliction and sorrow to extend relief and deliverance to them, we humbly entreat Thee to ... hearken to their cries, and grant unto them the blessings for which they ask."^d

13 Brothers and sisters, during times of our distress when temples are closed, you can still draw upon the power of your temple covenants and endowment as you honor your covenants. Please use this time when temples are closed to continue to live a temple-worthy life or to become temple worthy.

14 Talk about the temple with your family and friends. Because Jesus Christ is at the center of everything we do in the temple, as you think more about the temple you will be thinking more about Him. Study and pray to learn more about the power and knowledge with which you have

been endowed—or with which you will yet be endowed.

15 Today we are pleased to announce plans to construct eight new temples in the following locations: Bahía Blanca, Argentina; Tallahassee, Florida; Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Benin City, Nigeria; Syracuse, Utah; Dubai, United Arab Emirates; and Shanghai, People’s Republic of China.

16 In all eight locations, Church architects will work with local officials so that the temple will harmonize with and be a beautiful addition to each community.

17 The plan for a temple in Dubai comes in response to their gracious invitation, which we gratefully acknowledge.

18 Context for the plan for Shanghai is very important. For more than two decades, temple-worthy members in the People’s Republic of China have attended the Hong Kong China Temple. But in July 2019, that temple was closed for long-planned and much-needed renovation.

19 In Shanghai, a modest multi-purpose meeting place will provide a way for Chinese members to continue to participate in ordinances of the temple—in the People’s Republic of China—for them and their ancestors.^e

d Wilford Woodruff, dedicatory prayer of the Salt Lake Temple, Apr. 6, 1893, ChurchofJesusChrist.org; emphasis added.

e For thousands of years, the Chinese people have kept clan histories and genealogies. Traditional Chinese ceremonies show respect for their ancestors, such as the Qingming Festival. This year’s Qingming Festival was calendared for April 4–5.

20 In every country, this Church teaches its members to honor, obey, and sustain the law.^a We teach the importance of the family, of being good parents and exemplary citizens. Because we respect the laws and regulations of the People’s Republic of China, the Church does not send proselyting missionaries there; nor will we do so now.

21 Expatriate and Chinese congregations will continue to meet separately. The Church’s legal status there remains unchanged. In an initial phase of facility use, entry will be by appointment only. The house of the Lord in Shanghai will not be a destination place for tourists from other countries.

22 These eight new temples will bless the lives of many people on both sides of the veil of death. Temples are a crowning part of the Restoration of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In God’s goodness and generosity, He is bringing the blessings of the temple closer to His children everywhere.

23 As the Restoration continues, I know that God will continue to reveal many great and important things pertaining to His kingdom here on earth.^b That kingdom is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

24 Dear brothers and sisters, I express my love for you. During this time of tension and uncertainty, and invoking the authority vested in me, I would like to confer upon you an apostolic blessing.

25 I bless you with peace and increasing faith in the Lord.^c

26 I bless you with a desire to repent and become a little more like Him each day.^d

27 I bless you to know that the Prophet Joseph Smith is the prophet of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in its fullness.

28 Should there be illness among you or your loved ones, I leave a blessing of healing, consistent with the will of the Lord.

29 I so bless you, adding once more my expression of love for each of you, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 46

Encouragement of Caution - Delivered on May 6, 2020 as a video.

MY dear friends and associates, during these months of the COVID-19 pandemic, as the world has grappled with unprecedented challenges, I have marveled at the countless examples of faith, courage, and

a See Articles of Faith 1:12.
b See Articles of Faith 1:9.
c See John 14:27.
d See 3 Nephi 27:27.

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the text on the left.

Christlike love that I have seen.

2 Thank you for serving and loving one another as the Savior would have us do. We are grateful for the helpful direction that government, health, and civic leaders have provided to keep us safe. And we will continue to be prayerful and proceed with an abundance of caution. Your safety and well-being will always be our utmost concern.

3 As we cautiously move forward to a more normal way of life, Church leaders will continue to monitor information and determine how soon we may again gather in our meetinghouses and temples in various locations. We know that ordinances of the holy temple need to be performed. They are of eternal significance. We will clearly communicate step by step when and where such gatherings and other Church-sponsored activities may be resumed. Readjustments in missionary service are currently underway.

4 Meanwhile, we rejoice in the peace that radiates from the Lord Jesus Christ. It will continue to fill us with hope and joy. Our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son love us, are aware of us, and will bless each of us.

5 I love you, dear brothers and sisters, and assure you that wonderful days are ahead. Our commitment to follow the Lord is everlasting!"

CHAPTER 47

Call For Respect For Human Dignity - In light of recent events, Russell M. Nelson, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints shared the following message on his social media accounts June 1, 2020.

WE join with many throughout this nation and around the world who are deeply saddened at recent evidences of racism and a blatant disregard for human life. We abhor the reality that some would deny others respect and the most basic of freedoms because of the color of his or her skin.

2 We are also saddened when these assaults on human dignity lead to escalating violence and unrest.

3 The Creator of us all calls on each of us to abandon attitudes of prejudice against any group of God’s children. Any of us who has prejudice toward another race needs to repent!

4 During the Savior’s earthly mission, He constantly ministered to those who were excluded, marginalized, judged, overlooked, abused, and discounted. As His followers, can we do anything less? The answer is no! We believe in freedom, kindness, and fairness for all of God’s children!

5 Let us be clear. We are brothers and sisters, each of us the child of a loving Father in Heaven. His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, invites all to come unto Him—“black and white, bond and free,

male and female.”^a It behooves each of us to do whatever we can in our spheres of influence to preserve the dignity and respect every son and daughter of God deserves.

6 Any nation can only be as great as its people. That requires citizens to cultivate a moral compass that helps them distinguish between right and wrong.

7 Illegal acts such as looting, defacing, or destroying public or private property cannot be tolerated. Never has one wrong been corrected by a second wrong. Evil has never been resolved by more evil.

8 We need to foster our faith in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

9 We need to foster a fundamental respect for the human dignity of every human soul, regardless of their color, creed, or cause.

10 And we need to work tirelessly to build bridges of understanding rather than creating walls of segregation.

11 I plead with us to work together for peace, for mutual respect, and for an outpouring of love for all of God’s children.

CHAPTER 48

Moving Forward - Delivered in the Saturday Morning Session of the October 2020 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters, what a joy it is to be with you as we begin the 190th Semi-annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I love joining with you in your homes or wherever you are to listen together to the messages of prophets, seers, and revelators and other Church leaders.

2 How grateful we are for the technology that allows us to be connected as one great worldwide gathering of disciples of Jesus Christ. General conference last April was viewed by more people than any preceding it, and we have every expectation that will happen again.

3 During the past few months, a global pandemic, raging wildfires, and other natural disasters have turned our world upside down. I grieve with each of you who has lost a loved one during this time. And I pray for all who are currently suffering.

4 Meanwhile, the work of the Lord is steadily moving forward. Amid social distancing, face masks, and Zoom meetings, we have learned to do some things differently and some even more effectively. Unusual times can bring unusual rewards.

5 Our missionaries and mission leaders have been resourceful, resilient, and truly remarkable. Although most missionaries have had to find new, creative ways to do their work, many

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

missions have reported doing more teaching than ever.

6 We had to close temples for a time, and some construction projects were briefly delayed, but now they are all moving forward. In the calendar year 2020, we will have broken ground for 20 new temples!

7 Family history work has increased exponentially. Many new wards and stakes have been created. And we are gratified to report that the Church has provided pandemic humanitarian aid for 895 projects in 150 countries.

8 Increased gospel study in many homes is resulting in stronger testimonies and family relationships. One mother wrote: "We feel much closer to our children and grandchildren now that we gather on Zoom every Sunday. Each takes a turn giving their thoughts on Come, Follow Me. Prayers for our family members have changed because we better understand what they need."

9 I pray that we as a people are using this unique time to grow spiritually. We are here on earth to be tested, to see if we will choose to follow Jesus Christ, to repent regularly, to learn, and to progress. Our spirits long to progress. And we do that best by staying firmly on the covenant path.

10 Through it all, our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, love us! They care for us! They and Their holy angels are watching over us.^a I know that is true.

11 As we gather to hear the words the Lord has inspired His servants to deliver, I invite you to ponder a promise the Lord made. He declared that "whosoever will may lay hold upon the word of God, which is quick and powerful, which shall divide asunder all the cunning ... and the wiles of the devil, and lead the [disciple] of Christ in a strait and narrow course."^b

12 I pray that you will choose to lay hold upon the word of God as it is declared during this general conference. And I pray that you may feel the Lord's perfect love for you,^c in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 49

Embrace the Future With Faith - Delivered in the Women's Session of the October 2020 General Conference.

THIS has been an unforgettable evening. My dear sisters, I am honored to be with you. You have been on my mind so often during these past few months. You are more than eight million strong. You have not only the numbers but the spiritual power to change the world. I have watched you doing just that during this pandemic.

a See Doctrine and Covenants 84:88.

b Helaman 3:29; emphasis added.

c See 2 Nephi 1:15.

2 Some of you suddenly found yourselves searching for scarce supplies or a new job. Many tutored children and checked on neighbors. Some welcomed missionaries home earlier than expected, while others transformed your homes into missionary training centers. You have used technology to connect with family and friends, to minister to those who have felt isolated, and to study Come, Follow Me with others. You have found new ways to make the Sabbath a delight. And you have made protective masks—millions of them!

3 With heartfelt compassion and love, my heart goes out to the many women around the world whose loved ones have died. We weep with you. And we pray for you. We praise and pray for all who work tirelessly to safeguard the health of others.

4 You young women have also been remarkable. Though social media has been flooded with contention, many of you have found ways to encourage others and share our Savior's light.

5 Sisters, you have all been absolutely heroic! I marvel at your strength and your faith. You

have shown that in difficult circumstances, you bravely carry on. I love you, and I assure you that the Lord loves you and sees the great work you are performing. Thank you! Once again, you have proven that you are literally the hope of Israel!

6 You embody the hopes that President Gordon B. Hinckley had for you when he introduced "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" 25 years ago in the September 1995 general Relief Society meeting.^d It is significant that he chose to introduce this important proclamation to the sisters of the Church. By doing so, President Hinckley underscored the irreplaceable influence of women in the Lord's plan.

7 Now, I would love to know what you have learned this year. Have you grown closer to the Lord, or do you feel further away from Him? And how have current events made you feel about the future?

8 Admittedly, the Lord has spoken of our day in sobering terms. He warned that in our day "men's hearts [would fail] them"^e and that even the very elect would be at risk of being de-

^d See "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," ChurchofJesusChrist.org. In the address that accompanied this proclamation, President Gordon B. Hinckley said to the sisters: "I am grateful for the strength that you have and for your loyalty, your faith, your love. I am thankful for the resolution which you carry in your hearts to walk in faith, to keep the commandments, to do what is right at all times and in all circumstances" ("Stand Strong against the Wiles of the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 98–99).

^e Luke 21:26; see also Doctrine and Covenants 45:26.

ceived.^f He told the Prophet Joseph Smith that “peace [would] be taken from the earth”^g and calamities would befall mankind.^h

9 Yet the Lord has also provided a vision of how remarkable this dispensation is. He inspired the Prophet Joseph Smith to declare that “the work of ... these last days, is one of vast magnitude. ... Its glories are past description, and its grandeur unsurpassable.”ⁱ

10 Now, grandeur may not be the word you would choose to describe these past few months! How are we to deal with both the somber prophecies and the glorious pronouncements about our day? The Lord told us how with simple, but stunning, reassurance: “If ye are prepared ye shall not fear.”^j

11 What a promise! It is one that can literally change the way we see our future. I recently heard a woman of deep testimony admit that the pandemic, combined with an earthquake in the Salt Lake Valley, had helped her realize she was not as prepared as she thought she was. When I asked whether she was referring to her food storage or her testimony,

she smiled and said, “Yes!”

12 If preparation is our key to embracing this dispensation and our future with faith, how can we best prepare?

13 For decades, the Lord’s prophets have urged us to store food, water, and financial reserves for a time of need. The current pandemic has reinforced the wisdom of that counsel. I urge you to take steps to be temporally prepared. But I am even more concerned about your spiritual and emotional preparation.

14 In that regard, we can learn a lot from Captain Moroni. As commander of the Nephite armies, he faced opposing forces that were stronger, greater in number, and meaner. So, Moroni prepared his people in three essential ways.

15 First, he helped them create areas where they would be safe—“places of security” he called them.^k Second, he prepared “the minds of the people to be faithful unto the Lord.”^l And third, he never stopped preparing his people—physically or spiritually.^m Let us consider these three principles.

f See Matthew 24:24; Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:22.

g Doctrine and Covenants 1:35.

h See Doctrine and Covenants 1:17. The Apostle Paul prophesied that “in the last days perilous times [would] come.” That would make our day spiritually treacherous. (See 2 Timothy 3:1–5.)

i Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 512.

j Doctrine and Covenants 38:30.

k See Alma 49:5; 50:4.

l Alma 48:7.

m See Alma 49–50.

Principle Number One:

Create Places of Security

16 Moroni fortified every Nephite city with embankments, forts, and walls.ⁿ When the Lamanites came against them, they “were astonished exceedingly, because of the wisdom of the Nephites in preparing their places of security.”^o

17 Similarly, as turmoil rages around us, we need to create places where we are safe, both physically and spiritually. When your home becomes a personal sanctuary of faith—where the Spirit resides—your home becomes the first line of defense.

18 Likewise, the stakes of Zion are “a refuge from the storm”^p because they are led by those who hold priesthood keys and exercise priesthood authority. As you continue to follow the counsel of those whom the Lord has authorized to guide you, you will feel greater safety.

19 The temple—the house of the Lord—is a place of security unlike any other. There, you sisters are endowed with priesthood power through the sacred priesthood covenants you make.^q

There, your families are sealed for eternity. Even this year, when access to our temples has been seriously limited, your endowment has given you constant access to God’s power as you have honored your covenants with Him.

20 Simply said, a place of security is anywhere you can feel the presence of the Holy Ghost and be guided by Him.^r When the Holy Ghost is with you, you can teach truth, even when it runs counter to prevailing opinions. And you can ponder sincere questions about the gospel in an environment of revelation.

21 I invite you, my dear sisters, to create a home that is a place of security. And I renew my invitation for you to increase your understanding of priesthood power and of temple covenants and blessings. Having places of security to which you can retreat will help you embrace the future with faith.

Principle Number Two: Prepare Your Mind to Be Faithful to God

22 We have undertaken a major project to extend the life and capacity of the Salt Lake Temple.

n See Alma 48:8.

o Alma 49:5; emphasis added.

p Doctrine and Covenants 115:6.

q See Russell M. Nelson, “Spiritual Treasures,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2019, 76–79.

r Eliza R. Snow taught that the Holy Ghost “satisfies and fills up every longing of the human heart. ... When I am filled with that Spirit, my soul is satisfied, and I can say in good earnest, that the trifling things of the day do not seem to stand in my way at all. ... Is it not our privilege to so live that we can have this constantly flowing into our souls?” (in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* [2011], 46).

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

23 Some questioned the need for taking such extraordinary measures. However, when the Salt Lake Valley suffered a 5.7-magnitude earthquake earlier this year, this venerable temple shook hard enough that the trumpet on the statue of the angel Moroni fell!^s

24 Just as the physical foundation of the Salt Lake Temple must be strong enough to withstand natural disasters, our spiritual foundations must be solid. Then, when metaphorical earthquakes rock our lives, we can stand “steadfast and immovable” because of our faith.^t

25 The Lord taught us how to increase our faith by seeking “learning, even by study and also by faith.”^u We strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ as we strive to keep His commandments and “always remember him.”^v Further, our faith increases every time we exercise our faith in Him. That is what learning by faith means.

26 For example, each time we have the faith to be obedient to God’s laws—even when popular opinions belittle us—or each time we resist entertainment or ideologies that celebrate covenant-breaking, we are exercising our faith, which in turn increases our faith.

27 Further, few things build faith more than does regular immersion in the Book of Mormon. No other book testifies of Jesus Christ with such power and clarity. Its prophets, as inspired by the Lord, saw our day and selected the doctrine and truths that would help us most. The Book of Mormon is our latter-day survival guide.

28 Of course, our ultimate security comes as we yoke ourselves to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ! Life without God is a life filled with fear. Life with God is a life filled with peace. This is because spiritual blessings come to the faithful. Receiving personal revelation is one of the greatest of those blessings.

29 The Lord has promised that if we will ask, we may receive “revelation upon revelation.”^w I promise that as you increase your capacity to receive revelation, the Lord will bless you with increased direction for your life and with boundless gifts of the Spirit.

*Principle Number Three:
Never Stop Preparing*

30 Even when things went well, Captain Moroni continued to prepare his people. He never stopped. He never became complacent.

s See Daniel Burke, “Utah Earthquake Damages Mormon Temple and Knocks Trumpet from Iconic Angel Statue,” Mar. 18, 2020, cnn.com.

t Mosiah 5:15.

u Doctrine and Covenants 88:118; emphasis added.

v Moroni 4:3.

w Doctrine and Covenants 42:61.

31 The adversary never stops attacking. So, we can never stop preparing! The more self-reliant we are—temporally, emotionally, and spiritually—the more prepared we are to thwart Satan’s relentless assaults.

32 Dear sisters, you are adept at creating places of security for yourselves and those you love. Further, you have a divine endowment that enables you to build faith in others in compelling ways.^a And you never stop. You have demonstrated that once again this year.

33 Please, keep going! Your vigilance in safeguarding your homes and instilling faith in the hearts of your loved ones will reap rewards for generations to come.

34 My dear sisters, we have so much to look forward to! The Lord placed you here now because He knew you had the capacity to negotiate the complexities of the latter part of these latter days. He knew you would grasp the grandeur of His work and be eager to help bring it to pass.

35 I am not saying that the days ahead will be easy, but I promise you that the future will be glorious for those who are prepared and who continue to prepare to be instruments in the Lord’s hands.

36 My dear sisters, let us not just endure this current season. Let us embrace the future with faith! Turbulent times are opportunities for us to thrive spiritually. They are times when our influence can be much more penetrating than in calmer times.

37 I promise that as we create places of security, prepare our minds to be faithful to God, and never stop preparing, God will bless us. He will “deliver us; yea, insomuch that he [will] speak peace to our souls, and [will] grant unto us great faith, and ... cause us that we [can] hope for our deliverance in him.”^b

38 As you prepare to embrace the future with faith, these promises will be yours! I so testify, with my expression of love for you and my confidence in you, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 50

Let God Prevail - Delivered in the Sunday Morning Session of the October 2020 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters, how grateful I am for the marvelous messages of this conference and for my privilege to speak with you now.

2 For the more than 36 years I’ve been an Apostle, the doctrine of the gathering of Israel has cap-

a The Apostle Paul signaled this reality when he attributed Timothy’s unfeigned faith to his mother, Eunice, and his grandmother Lois (see 2 Timothy 1:5).

b Alma 58:11.

Horizontal lines for writing, spanning the right side of the page.

tured my attention.^c Everything about it has intrigued me, including the ministries and names^d of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; their lives and their wives; the covenant God made with them and extended through their lineage;^e the dispersion of the twelve tribes; and the numerous prophecies about the gathering in our day.

3 I have studied the gathering, prayed about it, feasted upon every related scripture, and asked the Lord to increase my understanding.

4 So imagine my delight when I was led recently to a new insight. With the help of two Hebrew scholars, I learned that one of the Hebraic meanings of the word Israel is “let God prevail.”^f Thus the very name of Israel refers to a person who is willing to let God prevail in his or her life. That concept stirs my soul!

5 The word willing is crucial to this interpretation of Israel.^g We all have our agency. We can choose to be of Israel, or not. We can choose to let God prevail in our lives, or not. We can choose to let God be the most powerful influence in our lives, or not.

6 For a moment, let us recall a crucial turning point in the life of Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. At the place Jacob named Peniel (which means “the face of God”),^h Jacob wrestled with a serious challenge. His agency was tested. Through this wrestle, Jacob proved what was most important to him. He demonstrated that he was willing to let God prevail in his life. In response, God changed Jacob’s name to Israel,ⁱ meaning “let God prevail.” God then promised Israel that all the blessings that had been pronounced upon Abraham’s head would also be his.^j

c I have spoken of Israel in at least 378 of the more than 800 messages I have delivered during my 36 years as an Apostle.

d In Hebrew, Abram is a noble name meaning “exalted father.” But when God changed that name to Abraham, the name took on even greater significance, meaning “father of a multitude.” Indeed, Abraham was to be the “father of many nations.” (See Genesis 17:5; Nehemiah 9:7.)

e The Lord God Jehovah made a covenant with Abraham that the Savior of the world would be born through Abraham’s seed, certain lands would be inherited, and all nations would be blessed through Abraham’s lineage (see Bible Dictionary, “Abraham, covenant of”).

f See Bible Dictionary, “Israel.”

g The word Israel appears more than a thousand times in the scriptures. It can apply to Jacob’s (Israel’s) family of 12 sons, plus daughters (see Genesis 35:23–26; 46:7). Today it can apply geographically as a place on planet Earth. But its doctrinal use applies to people who are willing to let God prevail in their lives.

h See Genesis 32:30; also spelled as Peniel in Genesis 32:31.

i See Genesis 32:28.

j See Genesis 35:11–12.

7 Sadly, Israel's posterity broke their covenants with God. They stoned the prophets and were not willing to let God prevail in their lives. Subsequently, God scattered them to the four corners of the earth.^k Mercifully, He later promised to gather them, as reported by Isaiah: "For a small moment have I forsaken thee [Israel]; but with great mercies will I gather thee."^l

8 With the Hebraic definition of Israel in mind, we find that the gathering of Israel takes on added meaning. The Lord is gathering those who are willing to let God prevail in their lives. The Lord is gathering those who will choose to let God be the most important influence in their lives.

9 For centuries, prophets have foretold this gathering,^m and it is happening right now! As an essential prelude to the Second Coming of the Lord, it is the most important work in the world!

10 This premillennial gathering is an individual saga of expanding faith and spiritual courage for millions of people. And as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or "latter-day covenant Israel,"ⁿ we have been charged to assist

the Lord with this pivotal work.^o

11 When we speak of gathering Israel on both sides of the veil, we are referring, of course, to missionary, temple, and family history work. We are also referring to building faith and testimony in the hearts of those with whom we live, work, and serve. Anytime we do anything that helps anyone—on either side of the veil—to make and keep their covenants with God, we are helping to gather Israel.

12 Not long ago, the wife of one of our grandsons was struggling spiritually. I will call her "Jill." Despite fasting, prayer, and priesthood blessings, Jill's father was dying. She was gripped with fear that she would lose both her dad and her testimony.

13 Late one evening, my wife, Sister Wendy Nelson, told me of Jill's situation. The next morning Wendy felt impressed to share with Jill that my response to her spiritual wrestle was one word! The word was myopic.

14 Jill later admitted to Wendy that initially she was devastated by my response. She said, "I was hoping for Grandfather to promise me a miracle for my

k For further study, see Topical Guide, "Israel, Scattering of." Isaiah 54:7.

m See Isaiah 11:11–12; 2 Nephi 21:11–12; Mosiah 15:11.

n See Encyclopedia of Mormonism (1992), "Covenant Israel, Latter-Day," 1:330–31.

o As we participate in the gathering of Israel, the Lord has a wonderful way of describing those being gathered. He refers to us collectively as His "peculiar treasure" (Exodus 19:5; Psalm 135:4), as His "jewels" (Malachi 3:17; Doctrine and Covenants 101:3), and as a "holy nation" (Exodus 19:6; see also Deuteronomy 14:2; 26:18).

dad. I kept wondering why the word myopic was the one he felt compelled to say.”

15 After Jill’s father passed on, the word myopic kept coming to her mind. She opened her heart to understand even more deeply that myopic meant “nearsighted.” And her thinking began to shift. Jill then said, “Myopic caused me to stop, think, and heal. That word now fills me with peace. It reminds me to expand my perspective and seek the eternal. It reminds me that there is a divine plan and that my dad still lives and loves and looks out for me. Myopic has led me to God.”

16 I am very proud of our precious granddaughter-in-law. During this heart-wrenching time in her life, dear Jill is learning to embrace God’s will for her dad, with an eternal perspective for her own life. By choosing to let God prevail, she is finding peace.

17 If we will allow it, there are many ways this Hebraic interpretation of Israel can help us. Imagine how our prayers for our missionaries—and for our own efforts to gather Israel—could change with this concept

in mind. We often pray that we and the missionaries will be led to those who are prepared to receive the truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. I wonder, to whom will we be led when we plead to find those who are willing to let God prevail in their lives?

18 We may be led to some who have never believed in God or Jesus Christ but who are now yearning to learn about Them and Their plan of happiness. Others may have been “born in the covenant”^p but have since wandered away from the covenant path. They may now be ready to repent, return, and let God prevail. We can assist them by welcoming them with open arms and hearts. And some to whom we may be led may have always felt there was something missing in their lives. They too are longing for the wholeness and joy that come to those who are willing to let God prevail in their lives.

19 The gospel net to gather scattered Israel is expansive. There is room for each person who will fully embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ. Each convert becomes one of God’s covenant children,^q whether by birth or by adoption.

^p This phrase refers to the very covenant that God made with Abraham, saying, “In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed” (3 Nephi 20:27). “Born in the covenant” means that before a person was born, that person’s mother and father were sealed in the temple.

^q Such a promise was taught by God to Abraham: “As many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father” (Abraham 2:10; see also Romans 8:14–17; Galatians 3:26–29).

Each becomes a full heir to all that God has promised the faithful children of Israel!^r

20 Each of us has a divine potential because each is a child of God. Each is equal in His eyes. The implications of this truth are profound. Brothers and sisters, please listen carefully to what I am about to say. God does not love one race more than another. His doctrine on this matter is clear. He invites all to come unto Him, "black and white, bond and free, male and female."^s

21 I assure you that your standing before God is not determined by the color of your skin. Favor or disfavor with God is dependent upon your devotion to God and His commandments and not the color of your skin.

22 I grieve that our Black brothers and sisters the world over are enduring the pains of racism and prejudice. Today I call upon our members everywhere to lead out in abandoning attitudes and actions of prejudice. I plead with you to promote respect for all of God's children.

23 The question for each of us, regardless of race, is the same. Are you willing to let God prevail in your life? Are you willing to let God be the most important influence in your life? Will you allow His words, His commandments, and His covenants to influence what you do each day? Will you allow His voice to take priority over any other? Are you willing to let whatever He needs you to do take precedence over every other ambition? Are you willing to have your will swallowed up in His?^t

24 Consider how such willingness could bless you. If you are unmarried and seeking an eternal companion, your desire to be "of Israel" will help you decide whom to date and how.

25 If you are married to a companion who has broken his or her covenants, your willingness to let God prevail in your life will allow your covenants with God to remain intact. The Savior will heal your broken heart. The heavens will open as you seek to know how to move forward. You do not need to wander or wonder.

r Each faithful member may request a patriarchal blessing. Through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the patriarch declares that person's lineage in the house of Israel. That declaration is not necessarily a pronouncement of his or her race, nationality, or genetic makeup. Rather, the declared lineage identifies the tribe of Israel through which that individual will receive his or her blessings.

s 2 Nephi 26:33.

t See Mosiah 15:7. Being of Israel is not for the faint of heart. To receive all the blessings that God has in store for Abraham's seed, we can each expect to be given our own unique "Abrahamic test." God will test us, as the Prophet Joseph Smith taught, by wrenching our very heartstrings. (See recollection of John Taylor in Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith [2007], 231.)

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the text on the left.

26 If you have sincere questions about the gospel or the Church, as you choose to let God prevail, you will be led to find and understand the absolute, eternal truths that will guide your life and help you stay firmly on the covenant path.

27 When you are faced with temptation—even if the temptation comes when you are exhausted or feeling alone or misunderstood—imagine the courage you can muster as you choose to let God prevail in your life and as you plead with Him to strengthen you.

28 When your greatest desire is to let God prevail, to be part of Israel, so many decisions become easier. So many issues become nonissues! You know how best to groom yourself. You know what to watch and read, where to spend your time, and with whom to associate. You know what you want to accomplish. You know the kind of person you really want to become.

29 Now, my dear brothers and sisters, it takes both faith and courage to let God prevail. It takes persistent, rigorous spiritual work to repent and to put off the natural man through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.^u It takes consistent, daily effort to develop personal habits to study the gospel, to learn more about

Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, and to seek and respond to personal revelation.

30 During these perilous times of which the Apostle Paul prophesied,^v Satan is no longer even trying to hide his attacks on God's plan. Emboldened evil abounds. Therefore, the only way to survive spiritually is to be determined to let God prevail in our lives, to learn to hear His voice, and to use our energy to help gather Israel.

31 Now, how does the Lord feel about people who will let God prevail? Nephi summed it up well: "[The Lord] loveth those who will have him to be their God. Behold, he loved our fathers, and he covenanted with them, yea, even Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and he remember[s] the covenants which he [has] made."^w

32 And what is the Lord willing to do for Israel? The Lord has pledged that He will "fight [our] battles, and [our] children's battles, and our children's children's [battles] ... to the third and fourth generation!"^x

33 As you study your scriptures during the next six months, I encourage you to make a list of all that the Lord has promised He will do for covenant Israel. I think you will be astounded!

u See Mosiah 3:19.

v See 2 Timothy 3:1–13.

w 1 Nephi 17:40; emphasis added.

x Doctrine and Covenants 98:37; see also Psalm 31:23; Isaiah 49:25; Doctrine and Covenants 105:14.

Ponder these promises. Talk about them with your family and friends. Then live and watch for these promises to be fulfilled in your own life.

34 My dear brothers and sisters, as you choose to let God prevail in your lives, you will experience for yourselves that our God is “a God of miracles.”^a As a people, we are His covenant children, and we will be called by His name. Of this I testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 51

A New Normal - Delivered in the Sunday Afternoon Session of the October 2020 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters, these two days of general conference have been glorious! I agree with Elder Jeffrey R. Holland. As he mentioned, the messages, the prayers, and the music have all been inspired by the Lord. I am grateful to all who have participated in any way.

2 Throughout the proceedings, I have pictured you in my mind listening to conference. I have asked the Lord to help me understand what you are feeling, worrying about, or trying to resolve. I have wondered what I might say to conclude this conference that would send you

forth with the optimism about the future that I know the Lord wants you to feel.

3 We live in a glorious age, foreseen by prophets for centuries. This is the dispensation when no spiritual blessing will be withheld from the righteous.^b Despite the world’s commotion,^c the Lord would have us look forward to the future “with joyful anticipation.”^d Let us not spin our wheels in the memories of yesterday. The gathering of Israel moves forward. The Lord Jesus Christ directs the affairs of His Church, and it will achieve its divine objectives.

4 The challenge for you and me is to make certain that each of us will achieve his or her divine potential. Today we often hear about “a new normal.” If you really want to embrace a new normal, I invite you to turn your heart, mind, and soul increasingly to our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Let that be your new normal.

5 Embrace your new normal by repenting daily. Seek to be increasingly pure in thought, word, and deed. Minister to others. Keep an eternal perspective. Magnify your callings. And whatever your challenges, my dear brothers and sisters, live each day so that you are more prepared to meet your Maker.^e

a Mormon 9:11.
b See Doctrine and Covenants 121:26–29.
c See Doctrine and Covenants 45:26; 88:91.
d Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 513.
e See Alma 12:24; 34:32.

Horizontal lines for writing notes on the right side of the page.

6 That is why we have temples. The Lord’s ordinances and covenants prepare us for eternal life, the greatest of all of God’s blessings.^a As you know, the COVID pandemic required a temporary closure of our temples. Then we commenced a carefully coordinated, phased reopening. With phase 2 now in place in many temples, thousands of couples have been sealed and thousands have received their own endowments just in the past few months. We look forward to the day when all worthy members of the Church can again serve their ancestors and worship in a holy temple.

7 Now I am pleased to announce plans for the construction of six new temples to be built in the following locations: Tarawa, Kiribati; Port Vila, Vanuatu; Lindon, Utah; Greater Guatemala City, Guatemala; São Paulo East, Brazil; and Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

8 As we build and maintain these temples, we pray that each of you will build and maintain yourself so you can be worthy to enter the holy temple.

9 Now, my dear brothers and sisters, I bless you to be filled with the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ. His peace is beyond all mortal understanding.^b I bless you with an increased desire and ability to obey the laws of God. I promise that as you do, you will be showered with blessings, including greater courage,

increased personal revelation, sweeter harmony in your homes, and joy even amid uncertainty.

10 May we go forward together to fulfill our divine mandate—that of preparing ourselves and the world for the Second Coming of the Lord. I so pray, with my expression of love for you, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 52

The Healing Power of Gratitude - Delivered as a video message on his social media pages November 20, 2020.

DURING my 96 years of life, I have seen a great depression, a world war, the rise of terrorism, hunger and poverty throughout the world. I have also witnessed the advent of space travel, the Internet, medical advancements galore and countless other discoveries that delight me.

2 Prior to my ministry, I was a cardiovascular and thoracic surgeon, and spent many hours in operating rooms. As a surgical resident, I was one of the research team that developed the first heart-lung machine to be used in a human open-heart operation. Subsequently, I had the privilege of helping to save lives of hundreds of patients; and, sadly, I watched other patients die despite my best efforts.

a See Doctrine and Covenants 14:7.
 b See Philippians 4:7.

3 As a man of science, and as a man of faith, the current world-wide pandemic has been of great concern to me. As a man of science, I appreciate the critical need to prevent the spread of infection. I also honor the devoted service of healthcare professionals and grieve for the many whose lives have been upended by COVID-19.

4 As a man of faith, however, I view the current pandemic as only one of many ills that plague our world, including hate, civil unrest, racism, violence, dishonesty and lack of civility.

5 Skilled scientists and researchers are laboring diligently to develop and distribute a vaccine against the coronavirus. But there is no medication or operation that can fix the many spiritual woes and maladies that we face.

6 There is, however, a remedy — one that may seem surprising — because it flies in the face of our natural intuitions. Nevertheless, its effects have been validated by scientists as well as men and women of faith.

7 I am referring to the healing power of gratitude.

8 The book of Psalms is filled with admonitions to express gratitude. Here are just three of them:

9 “It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord.”^c

10 “O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good.”^d

11 “Come before his presence with thanksgiving.”^e

12 Jesus Christ frequently expressed gratitude. Before raising Lazarus from the dead, before miraculously multiplying loaves and fishes, and before passing the cup to His disciples at the Last Supper, the Savior prayed and gave thanks to God. No wonder the Apostle Paul later declared, “In everything give thanks.”^f

13 Over my nine and a half decades of life, I have concluded that counting our blessings is far better than recounting our problems. No matter our situation, showing gratitude for our privileges is a fast-acting and long-lasting spiritual prescription.

14 Does gratitude spare us from sorrow, sadness, grief and pain? No, but it does soothe our feelings. It provides us with a greater perspective on the very purpose and joy of life.

15 Nearly 16 years ago, my wife Dantzel and I were sitting on the sofa holding hands while we watched television. Suddenly, she collapsed. Despite being

c Psalms 92:1
 d Psalms 136:1
 e Psalms 95:2
 f 1 Thessalonians 5:18

well trained to treat the very thing that ended her life, I could not save my own wife.

16 Dantzel and I were blessed with nine daughters and one son. Tragically, I have lost two of those daughters to cancer. No parent is prepared to lose a child.

17 And yet, despite these and other difficult experiences, I am incredibly grateful, eternally, for so very many things.

18 I am grateful to God for the nearly 60 years Dantzel and I shared together, for a lifetime of love and joy and cherished memories. And I thank Him for my wife Wendy, whom I met after Dantzel's passing. Wendy now fills my life with joy.

19 I am grateful to God for the years I had with my two departed daughters. This father's heart melts when I see attributes of those girls in the precious faces of their children and grandchildren.

20 We can all give thanks for the beauties of the earth and the majesty of the heavens that give us an inkling of the vastness of eternity.

21 We can give thanks for the gift of life, for our amazing bodies and minds, that allow us to grow and learn.

22 We can give thanks for art, literature and music that nurture our souls.

23 We can give thanks for the opportunity to repent, start over, make amends and build character.

24 We can give thanks for our families, friends and loved ones.

25 We can give thanks for the opportunity to help, cherish and serve one another, which makes life so much more meaningful.

26 We can even give thanks for our trials; from which we learn the things we would not know otherwise.

27 Most of all, we can give thanks unto God, the Father of our spirits, which makes us all brothers and sisters — one great global family.

28 As a doctor, I know the value of good therapy. So, dear friends, may I prescribe two activities to help us experience the healing power of gratitude.

29 First, I invite you — just for the next seven days — to turn social media into your own personal gratitude journal. Post every day about what you are grateful for, who you are grateful for and why you are grateful.

30 At the end of seven days, see if you feel happier and more at peace. Use the hashtag #GiveThanks. Working together, we can flood social media with a wave of gratitude that reaches the four corners of the earth. Perhaps this will fulfill, in part, the promise God gave to Father Abraham, that through his de-

scendants, "all families of the earth [shall] be blessed."^a

31 Second, let us unite in thanking God through daily prayer. Jesus Christ taught His disciples to pray by first expressing gratitude to God, and then petitioning Him for the things we need. Prayer brings forth miracles.

32 In that spirit, I would now like to offer a prayer for the world and everyone in it. As I pray, I hope you will feel inspired to do the same, pouring out your heart in gratitude for the countless blessings God has given you, and petitioning Him to heal our hearts, our families, our societies and the world at large.

Prayer of gratitude

33 Our Father in Heaven, as fellow passengers on Thy planet Earth, we humbly pray unto Thee. We thank Thee for life and all that sustains life. We thank Thee for the beauties of the earth, for order in the universe, the planets, stars, and all things of eternal significance. We thank Thee for Thy laws that protect and guide us. We thank Thee for Thy mercy and loving watch care. We thank Thee for our families and loved ones, who fill our lives with joy.

34 We are grateful for all who are striving to combat the COVID pandemic. Please bless them with protection and inspiration. Wilt Thou help us end this virus that has plagued so many of Thy children.

35 We thank Thee for the leaders of nations and others who strive to lift us. We pray for relief from political strife. Wilt Thou bless us with a healing spirit that unites us despite our differences.

36 Wilt Thou also help us repent from selfishness, unkindness, pride and prejudice of any kind, so that we can better serve and love one another as brothers and sisters, and as Thy grateful children. We love Thee, our dear Father, and pray for Thy blessings upon us, in the name of Thy Beloved son, Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 53

Divine Gifts - Delivered at the First Presidency Christmas Devotional on December 15, 2020.

MY dear brothers and sisters, this has been a wonderful evening. Our spirits have been uplifted by the beautiful music and messages. Sister Craven has melted our hearts with her thoughts of heavenly hugs and blankets of comfort. Elder Nielson has moved us as he has recounted the life of his father, whose military duty deprived him of Christmas for three consecutive years. Elder Holland has inspired us while teaching about the life of the Savior of the world.

2 May I take this opportunity to thank you for your response to my recent invitation to flood the social media with expressions of gratitude for our many bless-

Horizontal lines for writing, spanning the right side of the page.

a Genesis 12:3

ings. Millions responded. And I am especially grateful that you are continuing to pray daily to our Heavenly Father, to thank Him for His guidance, protection, inspiration, and, most of all, for the gift of His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

3 Christmas evokes wonderful memories. Just a year ago, Wendy and I had the opportunity to celebrate the season with an adorable little girl, Claire Crosby, who sang a beloved Christmas carol. May I share part of our recording made for the “Light the World” initiative.^b

4 As Elder Holland reminded us, truly that blessed night more than two millennia ago was a night made holy by the birth of One who was foreordained to bring peace to this earth and to inspire goodwill among men.^c Jesus Christ was born to bless all humankind, past, present, and future.

5 Even as we sing “Silent Night,” we know the life of that Babe of Bethlehem did not begin there, nor did it end on Calvary. In a premortal realm, Jesus was anointed by His Father to be the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of all humankind. He was foreordained to

atone for us. “He was wounded for our transgressions [and] bruised for our iniquities”.^d He came to make immortality a reality and eternal life a possibility for all who would ever live.^e

6 That means every one of us will be resurrected—including those dear to you who have departed during this turbulent year, and who now live on the other side of the veil. It means each of us can continue to progress. It means we can hope for better things to come.

7 Have you ever wondered why the Lord chose to be born where He was? He could have been born anywhere on earth. Yet he chose the very land that He made holy.

8 Jesus was born in Bethlehem. That word in Hebrew, *bet lehem*, means “house of bread.” How appropriate that He, the “bread of life,”^f would come from the “house of bread.”

9 His birth occurred in humble circumstances among the animals. There the “Lamb of God”^g was born during Passover season among animals being prepared for paschal sacrifice. And one day, He would be “brought as a lamb to the slaughter.”^h

b “Silent Night: 7-Year-Old Claire Crosby Accompanied by President Russell M. Nelson,” video, Dec. 15, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JtPTnpTA1QQ>.

c See Luke 2:14.

d Isaiah 53:5.

e See 1 Corinthians 15:20–22; 3 Nephi 27:13–14.

f John 6:35, 48.

g John 1:29.

h Isaiah 53:7.

He was both the Lamb and the Shepherd.

10 At the birth of Him who is called the “good shepherd,”ⁱ shepherds were the first to receive the announcement of His holy birth.^j

11 At the birth of Him who is called the “bright and morning star,”^k a new star appeared in the heavens.^l

12 At the birth of Him who called Himself the “light of the world,”^m darkness was banished worldwide as a sign of His holy birth.ⁿ

13 Jesus was baptized in the lowest body of fresh water on earth, symbolizing the depths to which He would go in order to save us and from which He would rise above all things—again, to save us.^o From His example, He taught that we, too, can arise from the depths of our individual challenges—our sadness, weakness, and worries—to reach the heights of our own glorious potential and divine destiny. All this is possible by virtue of His mercy and grace.

14 Amid the dry and dusty wilderness of a desert, the Savior

taught lessons that could be fully appreciated only by those who knew what it was like to be parched with thirst.

15 To the woman at the well, Jesus taught:

16 “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

17 “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”^p

18 This scripture reminds me of a tender experience I had with Elder Mark E. Petersen.^q He was then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and prior to my call to that quorum, I had the privilege of accompanying him to the Holy Land on what would prove to be his last trip in mortality.

19 Elder Petersen was suffering greatly from cancer. During a long and painful night for him, I tried my best to comfort him. I saw that he was able to eat and drink only a very little bit. The next day he was scheduled to give a major address.

i John 10:11, 14.
j See Luke 2:8–16.
k Revelation 22:16.
l See Matthew 2:2; 3 Nephi 1:21.
m John 8:12.
n See 3 Nephi 1:15, 19.
o See Doctrine and Covenants 75:16; see also Matthew 3:13–15; Doctrine and Covenants 88:6.
p John 4:13–14.
q In October 1983.

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

20 Morning came. Bravely, Elder Petersen went to the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, where a large congregation awaited him. He chose to teach from the Savior's Sermon on the Mount. When Elder Petersen recited the passage "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness,"^r tears welled in his eyes. He laid his notes aside, looked up, and asked, "Do you know what it is really like to hunger and to thirst?" I knew he really knew. Then he taught, "When you can really hunger and thirst after righteousness, then you can become more Christlike." Elder Petersen was a living example of that. Not long thereafter, he graduated from this mortal life.^s

21 Whenever I contemplate hungering and thirsting after righteousness, I think of this venerable Apostle devoting one of his final sermons to teach what it really means to seek after the Lord Jesus Christ, to hunger and thirst after righteousness, to become more like Him.

22 This year, Sister Nelson and I got an early start working on our Christmas errands of love for our family. In early November, Wendy announced that we were ready for Christmas. My instant response was, "Oh, good! Now we can focus on the Savior."

23 During this unprecedented year, when virtually every person in the world has suffered the effects of a global pandemic, there is nothing more important we can do this Christmas than to rivet our focus on the Savior and on the gift of what His life really means to each of us.

24 Our loving Heavenly Father "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."^t

25 The Son of God then promised us that "whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."^u What unspeakable, incomparable gifts from the Father and the Son!

26 I thank God for the gift of His Beloved Son. And I thank our Lord Jesus Christ for His incomparable sacrifice and mission. At His first coming, Jesus came almost in secret. But at His Second Coming, the Lord's glory "shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."^v Then He shall "rule as King of Kings and reign as Lord of Lords."^w

27 Now, as an authorized servant of the Savior, I would like to invoke a blessing upon each of you, my beloved brothers and sisters. May you and your fami-

r Matthew 5:6.

s Date of death: Jan. 11, 1984.

t John 3:16; emphasis added.

u John 11:26.

v Isaiah 40:5; see also Doctrine and Covenants 101:23.

w "The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles," Church of Jesus Christ.org; see also Revelation 17:14.

lies be blessed with peace, with an increased ability to hear the voice of the Lord, and receive revelation with an enhanced capacity to feel how much our Father and His Son love you, care for you, and are ready to guide all who seek after Them. I join my words with those of Moroni and “commend you to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, ... may be and abide in you forever.”^a For this I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 54

Grow into the Principle of Revelation - Published in the January 2021 Liahona magazine.

ON September 30, 2017, following the afternoon session of general conference, I stopped by the hospital to check on my beloved quorum member Elder Robert D. Hales. He had been hospitalized since suffering a heart attack a few days earlier.

2 We had a wonderful visit, and he seemed to be improving. He was even breathing on his own, which was a good sign.

3 That evening, however, the Spirit spoke to my heart and mind that I should return to the hospital on Sunday. During the Sunday morning session of

general conference, that strong impression returned. I felt that I should skip lunch and hurry to Elder Hales’s bedside as soon as the morning session ended, which I did.

4 When I arrived, I could see that Elder Hales had taken a serious turn for the worse. Sadly, he passed away 10 minutes after I arrived, but I am thankful that I was at his side with his sweet wife, Mary, and their two sons when he departed this life.

5 How grateful I am that the whisperings of the Holy Ghost prompted me to do something I might not have done otherwise. And how grateful I am for the reality of revelation and that the heavens are once again open.

6 This year our focus for personal and classroom study will be the Doctrine and Covenants. These “divine revelations and inspired declarations” can bless all who study them and act on their divine directives. They invite “all people everywhere to hear the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ,”^b for truly “the voice of the Lord is unto all men”.^c

Danger, Darkness, Deception

7 Physical and spiritual tempests are a part of life on the earth, as the COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us. Of the time prior to His Second Coming, the Savior predicted days of great tribulation. He said, “There shall be

a Ether 12:41.
 b Introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants
 c Doctrine and Covenants 1:2

famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places".^d

8 Compounding such tribulation is the increasing darkness and deception that surround us. As Jesus told His disciples, "Iniquity shall abound" before His return.^e

9 Satan has marshaled his forces and is raging against the work of the Lord and those of us engaged in it. Because of the increasing dangers we face, our need for divine guidance has never been greater, and our efforts to hear the voice of Jesus Christ—our Mediator, Savior, and Redeemer—have never been more urgent.

10 As I said shortly after I was called as President of the Church, the Lord is ready to reveal His mind to us. That is one of His greatest blessings to us.^f

11 In our day, He has promised, "If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge".^g

12 I know He will respond to our pleadings.

How We Hear Him

13 Knowing how the Spirit speaks is essential today. To receive personal revelation, to find answers, and to receive protec-

tion and direction, we remember the pattern the Prophet Joseph Smith set for us.

14 First, we immerse ourselves in the scriptures. Doing so opens our minds and hearts to the Savior's teachings and truths. The words of Christ "tell [us] all things what [we] should do",^h especially in these days of uncertainty and upheaval.

15 Next we pray. Prayer requires initiative, so we humble ourselves before God, find a quiet place where we can regularly go, and pour out our hearts to Him.

16 The Lord says, "Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you".ⁱ

17 Drawing near to the Lord brings comfort and encouragement, hope and healing. So, we pray in His name about our worries and our weaknesses, our longings and our loved ones, our callings and our questions.

18 Then we listen.

19 If we will stay on our knees for a while after we finish our prayer, thoughts, feelings, and direction will come into our mind. Recording those impres-

d Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:29

e Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:30

f See Russell M. Nelson, "Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives," Liahona, May 2018, 94.

g Doctrine and Covenants 42:61

h 2 Nephi 32:3

i Doctrine and Covenants 88:63

sions will help us remember what actions the Lord would have us take.

20 As we repeat this process, we will, in the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, “grow into the principle of revelation.”^a

Worthy to Receive Revelation

21 Refining our ability to recognize the whisperings of the Holy Ghost and increasing our capacity to receive revelation requires worthiness. Worthiness does not require perfection, but it requires that we strive for increased purity.

22 The Lord expects daily effort, daily improvement, daily repentance. Worthiness brings purity, and purity qualifies us for the Holy Ghost. As we take “the Holy Spirit for [our] guide”,^b we qualify for personal revelation.

23 If something is stopping us from opening the door to heavenly direction, we may need to repent. Repentance allows us to open the door so we can hear the voice of the Lord more frequently and clearly.

24 “The standard is clear,” taught Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “If something we think, see, hear, or do distances us from the Holy Ghost, then we should stop

thinking, seeing, hearing, or doing that thing. If that which is intended to entertain, for example, alienates us from the Holy Spirit, then certainly that type of entertainment is not for us. Because the Spirit cannot abide that which is vulgar, crude, or immodest, then clearly such things are not for us.”^c

25 When we couple increased purity and obedience with fasting, diligent seeking, study of the scriptures and the words of living prophets, and temple and family history work, the heavens will open. The Lord, in turn, will fulfill His promise: “I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind”.^d

26 We may need to be patient, but God will speak to us in His own way and in His own time.

A Spirit of Understanding

27 Job declared, “There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding”^e. In this new year, I encourage you to take the necessary steps to hear the Lord better and more often so that you can receive the enlightenment He wants to give you.

28 Before Elder Hales’s passing that October day in 2017, he prepared a short talk for general conference that he was unable

A series of horizontal lines on the right side of the page, likely for writing notes. There are approximately 25 lines visible.

^a Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 132.

^b Doctrine and Covenants 45:57

^c David A. Bednar, “That We May Always Have His Spirit to Be with Us,” Liahona, May 2006, 30.

^d Doctrine and Covenants 11:13

^e Job 32:8

to give. In that talk, he wrote, “Our faith prepares us to be in the presence of the Lord.”^a

29 When we receive revelation, we spend time in the presence of God as He reveals His mind, will, and voice unto us.^b May we put our faith into action, calling upon Him, living worthy of His promised inspiration, and acting on the guidance we receive.

CHAPTER 55

The Peace and Hope of Easter - Delivered as a video on his social media accounts March 28, 2021.

A Dramatic and Unexpected Event
 DURING several decades of Church service, I have seen some unforgettable moments while traveling. One occurred several years ago while flying to a university president’s inauguration, where I was to offer the invocation. It was a short flight in a small two-engine plane. We were halfway to our destination when the right engine suddenly exploded, spewing flaming fuel all over the right side of the plane. The propellers stopped. The plane was on fire, careening to the earth in a spiral dive. I expected to die.

2 Miraculously, the dive extinguished the fire. The pilot was able to restore power to the other engine and make a safe landing. And I actually made it to the inauguration on time.

3 Throughout the dramatic, unexpected experience, I was surprisingly calm. My entire life flashed before me. While approaching what seemed to be certain death, I was at peace. I knew that my family would be well cared for. And I knew that my wife and I were sealed to each other eternally and our children were sealed to us. Because of my faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to His commandments, I knew that life beyond the grave was certain and joyful. Thanks to the Lord, I knew that we would all be together again. I was at peace, ready to meet my Maker.

4 Gratefully, I survived and can now relate that experience.

5 For the past year, we have all been dealing with dramatic and unexpected events.

6 Amid such uncertainty, there is only one way to feel at peace—that real peace that passes all understanding. That peace is found in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Easter Is about Peace and Hope

7 When He suffered for our sins and weaknesses, died on the cross, and rose again, the Savior rewrote humanity’s story. Because of Him, we do not have to deal with our frailties, sins, and fears alone. Because of Him, death is not the end. Resurrection will come to all who have ever lived. Because of Him, families can be together forever.

a In Neil L. Andersen, “The Voice of the Lord,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 125
 b see Doctrine and Covenants 68:4

Because of Him, guilt becomes peace, regret becomes relief, and despair becomes hope. We are given second chances, clean slates, and new beginnings. Because of Jesus Christ, we celebrate Easter. And Easter is all about peace and hope.

8 During that first Easter season two millennia ago, the Lord suffered unspeakable agony in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross as He took upon Himself the sins and pains of all humankind. There in the garden bearing the Hebrew name of Gethsemane—meaning “oil press”—olives had been beaten and pressed to provide oil and food. There at Gethsemane, the Lord “suffered the pain of all men, that all ... might repent and come unto him”.^c He took upon Himself the weight of the sins of all humankind, bearing its massive load that caused Him to bleed from every pore.

9 He was betrayed by the one He had called friend. He was arrested, scourged, mocked, and crucified. Upon the cross, the Savior of the world was lifted up. He gave His life as part of His atoning sacrifice. His subsequent Resurrection, His triumphant victory over the grave, is recorded in the holy scriptures: “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept”.^d

10 A proclamation given by angelic messengers near an empty tomb—“He is not here: for he is risen”^e—declared that the Lord Jesus Christ had overcome death through His Atonement and Resurrection. He lives. And because He lives, we too can know “peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come”.^f

11 The Savior Himself has taught that this great sacrifice was for a purpose: “For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent”.^g Because the Savior offered Himself as the infinite Atonement, you and I have the opportunity—the privilege—to be forgiven when we repent. We can also turn to Him for healing of our hearts, for strength when we are weak, and for help to do things we simply cannot do on our own.

Remembering the Palms of His Hands

12 On this Palm Sunday, I invite you to make this coming week truly holy not just by remembering the palms that were waved to honor the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem, but by remembering the palms of His hands.

13 According to Isaiah, the Savior promised that He will never forget you, saying, “Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands”.^h Such scriptures

c Doctrine and Covenants 18:11
d 1 Corinthians 15:20
e Matthew 28:6
f Doctrine and Covenants 59:23
g Doctrine and Covenants 19:16
h Isaiah 49:16

A series of horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the 13 numbered paragraphs on the page.

teach much about the mission and ministry of the Lord.

An Invitation to Act

14 Now, after all that Jesus Christ did for you, I invite you to do something this week to follow His teachings. You might make your prayers more earnest. You could forgive someone or help a friend in need. You can start today on a new spiritual quest.

15 This Easter, I encourage you to focus on the Savior. If you are looking for a place to worship, please join with us. On Easter Sunday, the worldwide general conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will be filled with Christ-centered messages and music. We will gather virtually to worship our Redeemer. Please join with us. Invite your friends!

16 Jesus Christ lives! As our resurrected and atoning Savior, He stands ready to help us grow from the dramatic, unexpected events in our lives. At this Easter season, let us worship and praise Him for the peace, hope, light, and truth He brings to us.

CHAPTER 56

Welcome Message - Delivered in the Saturday Morning Session of the April 2021 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters and friends throughout the world, I offer my personal wel-

come to this general conference. We gather as a great global family desiring to worship our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Thank you for joining with us.

2 This last year has been one for the record books. No doubt we have each learned things we did not know previously. Some lessons that I knew before have been written on my heart in new and instructive ways.

3 For example, I know for sure that the Lord directs the affairs of His Church. He said, "I will show [you] that I am able to do mine own work."^a

4 Often, my counselors and I have watched through tearbrimmed eyes as He has interceded in extremely challenging circumstances after we had done our best and could do no more. We do indeed stand all amazed.

5 I also understand better now what He meant when He said, "Behold, I will hasten my work in its time."^b Over and over again I have rejoiced as He has directed and executed the hastening of His work—even during a global pandemic.

6 My dear brothers and sisters, the strength of the Church lies in the efforts and ever-growing testimonies of its members. Testimonies are best cultivated in the home. During this past year, many of you have dramatically

a 2 Nephi 27:21.

b Doctrine and Covenants 88:73. See also *Becoming More Worthy by Removing Debris from Our Lives*.

increased the study of the gospel in your homes. I thank you, and your children will thank you.

7 The huge project to renovate the Salt Lake Temple continues. From my office I have a front-row seat to watch the work taking place on the temple plaza.

8 As I have watched workers dig out old tree roots, plumbing, wiring, and a leaky fountain, I have thought about the need for each of us to remove, with the Savior's help, the old debris in our lives.

9 The gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of repentance.^a Because of the Savior's Atonement, His gospel provides an invitation to keep changing, growing, and becoming more pure. It is a gospel of hope, of healing, and of progress. Thus, the gospel is a message of joy! Our spirits rejoice with every small step forward we take.

10 Part of the gathering of Israel, and a very important part, is the charge for us as a people to be worthy and willing to help prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord.

11 As we listen to the messages that have been carefully prepared by our leaders under the direction of the Holy Ghost, I invite you to pray to identify the debris you should remove from your life so you can become more worthy.

12 I love you, my dear brothers and sisters, and testify that our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son know and love you individually. They stand ready to assist you in every step forward you take. Welcome to general conference and to the privilege of hearing the voice of the Lord. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 57

What We Are Learning and Will Never Forget - Delivered in the Priesthood Session of the April 2021 General Conference.

MY dear brethren, I have looked forward to this virtual meeting with you. The last time we held a priesthood session of general conference was in April 2019. Much has happened in the past two years! Some of you have lost loved ones. Others have lost jobs, livelihood, or health. Still others have lost a sense of peace or hope for the future. My heart goes out to each one of you who has suffered these or other losses. I pray constantly that the Lord will comfort you. As you continue to let God prevail in your life, I know that He is just as optimistic about your future as He has ever been.

2 Amid the losses we have experienced, there are also some things we have found. Some have found deeper faith in our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Many have found a fresh perspective on life—even

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

a See Doctrine and Covenants 13:1.

an eternal perspective. You may have found stronger relationships with your loved ones and with the Lord. I hope you have found an increased ability to hear Him and receive personal revelation. Difficult trials often provide opportunities to grow that would not have come in any other way.

3 Think back on the past two years. How have you grown? What have you learned? You might initially wish you could go back to 2019 and stay there! But if you look at your life prayerfully, I believe you will see many ways in which the Lord has been guiding you through this time of hardship, helping you to become a more devoted, more converted man—a true man of God.

4 I know the Lord has great and marvelous plans for us—individually and collectively. With compassion and patience, He says:

5 “Ye are little children, and ye have not as yet understood how great blessings the Father hath ... prepared for you;

6 “And ye cannot bear all things now; nevertheless, be of good cheer, for I will lead you along.”^b

7 My dear brothers, I testify that He has been, and is, indeed leading us along, as we seek to hear Him. He wants us to grow and

to learn, even through—perhaps especially through—adversity.

8 Adversity is a great teacher. What have you learned in the past two years that you always want to remember? Your answers will be unique to you, but may I suggest four lessons I hope we have all learned and will never forget.

Lesson 1: The Home Is the Center of Faith and Worship

9 Often when the Lord warns us about the perils of the last days, He counsels thus: “Stand ye in holy places, and be not moved.”^c These “holy places” certainly include the Lord’s temples and meetinghouses. But as our ability to gather in these places has been restricted in varying degrees, we have learned that one of the holiest of places on earth is the home—yes, even your home.

10 Brethren, you bear the priesthood of God. “The rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven.”^d You and your family have received priesthood ordinances. It is “in the ordinances [of the priesthood that] the power of godliness is manifest.”^e That power is available to you and your family in your own home as you keep the covenants you have made.^f

b Doctrine and Covenants 78:17–18.

c Doctrine and Covenants 87:8; see also Matthew 24:15; Doctrine and Covenants 45:31–33; 101:21–22.

d Doctrine and Covenants 121:36.

e Doctrine and Covenants 84:20.

f See John 4:20–23; Alma 32:9–16.

11 Just 185 years ago, this very day, April 3, 1836, Elijah restored the keys of the priesthood that allow our families to be sealed together forever. That is why it felt so good to administer the sacrament in your home. How do you think it affected your family members to see you—their father, grandfather, husband, son, or brother—administer this holy ordinance? What will you do to retain that sacred feeling in your family?

12 You may feel that there is still more you need to do to make your home truly a sanctuary of faith. If so, please do it! If you are married, counsel with your wife as your equal partner in this crucial work. There are few pursuits more important than this. Between now and the time the Lord comes again, we all need our homes to be places of serenity and security.^g

13 Attitudes and actions that invite the Spirit will increase the holiness of your home. Equally certain is the fact that holiness will vanish if there is anything in your behavior or environment that offends the Holy Spirit, for then “the heavens withdraw themselves.”^h

14 Have you ever wondered why the Lord wants us to make our homes the center of gospel learning and gospel living? It is not just to prepare us for, and help us through, a pandemic. Present restrictions on gathering will eventually end. However, your commitment to make your home your primary sanctuary of faith should never end. As faith and holiness decrease in this fallen world, your need for holy places will increase. I urge you to continue to make your home a truly holy place “and be not moved”ⁱ from that essential goal.

Lesson 2: We Need Each Other

15 God wants us to work together and help each other. That is why He sends us to earth in families and organizes us into wards and stakes. That is why He asks us to serve and minister to each other. That is why He asks us to live in the world but not be of the world.^j We can accomplish so much more together than we can alone.^k God’s plan of happiness would be frustrated if His children remained isolated one from another.

g See Alma 50:4.

h Doctrine and Covenants 121:37.

i Doctrine and Covenants 87:8; emphasis added.

j See John 17:15–16.

k As an example, in 2020, the Church made donations to support more than 1,000 COVID-19 relief efforts around the globe. These efforts were made far more effective because we partnered with other humanitarian organizations, including Convoy of Hope, Feeding America, Partnership with Native Americans, the Salvation Army, the United Way, and the World Food Programme (see “2020 Year in Review,” Newsroom, Dec. 21, 2020, newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org). We extend our reach and our influence for good by working together.

16 The recent pandemic has been unique in that it has affected everyone in the world at essentially the same time. While some have suffered more than others, we have all been challenged in some way. Because of this, our common trial has the potential to help unite God’s children as never before. So, I ask, has this shared trial drawn you closer to your neighbors—to your brothers and sisters across the street and around the world?

17 In this regard, the two great commandments can guide us: first, to love God and, second, to love our neighbor.¹ We show our love by serving.

18 If you know of anyone who is alone, reach out—even if you feel alone too! You do not need to have a reason or a message or business to transact. Just say hello and show your love. Technology can help you. Pandemic or not, each precious child of God needs to know that he or she is not alone!

Lesson 3: Your Priesthood Quorum Is Meant for More Than Just a Meeting

19 During the pandemic, Sunday quorum meetings were canceled for a time. Some quorums are now able to meet virtually. Nevertheless, the work that the Lord has given to priesthood quorums was never meant to be confined to a meeting. Meetings

are only a small part of what a quorum is meant for and what it can do.

20 My brethren of the Aaronic Priesthood and elders quorums, expand your vision of why we have quorums. How does the Lord wish you would use your quorum to accomplish His work—now? Seek revelation from the Lord. Humble yourself! Ask! Listen! If you have been called to lead, counsel as a presidency and with quorum members. Whatever your priesthood office or calling, let God prevail in your commitment as a member of your quorum and in your service. Experience with joy the righteousness you will bring to pass as you are “anxiously engaged in a good cause.”^m Quorums are in a unique position to accelerate the gathering of Israel on both sides of the veil.

Lesson 4: We Hear Jesus Christ Better When We Are Still

21 We live in a time prophesied long ago, when “all things shall be in commotion; and surely, men’s hearts shall fail them; for fear shall come upon all people.”ⁿ That was true before the pandemic, and it will be true after. Commotion in the world will continue to increase. In contrast, the voice of the Lord is not “a voice of a great tumultuous noise, but ... it [is] a still voice of perfect mildness, [like] a whisper, and it [pierces] even to the

1 See Mark 12:30–31.
 m See Doctrine and Covenants 58:27–28.
 n Doctrine and Covenants 88:91.

very soul.”^a In order to hear this still voice, you too must be still!^b

22 For a time, the pandemic has canceled activities that would normally fill our lives. Soon we may be able to choose to fill that time again with the noise and commotion of the world. Or we can use our time to hear the voice of the Lord whispering His guidance, comfort, and peace. Quiet time is sacred time—time that will facilitate personal revelation and instill peace.

23 Discipline yourself to have time alone and with your loved ones. Open your heart to God in prayer. Take time to immerse yourself in the scriptures and worship in the temple.

24 My dear brethren, there are many things the Lord wants us to learn from our experiences during this pandemic. I have listed only four. I invite you to make your own list, consider it carefully, and share it with those you love.

25 The future is bright for God’s covenant-keeping people.^c The Lord will increasingly call upon His servants who worthily hold the priesthood to bless, comfort, and strengthen mankind and to help prepare the world and its

people for His Second Coming. It behooves each of us to measure up to the sacred ordination we have received. We can do this! I so testify, with my expression of love for each of you, my beloved brethren, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 58

Christ Is Risen; Faith in Him Will Move Mountains - Delivered in the Sunday Morning Session of the April 2021 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters, I am grateful for the privilege of speaking with you on this Easter Sunday.^d The atoning sacrifice and Resurrection of Jesus Christ changed each of our lives forever. We love Him and gratefully worship Him and our Heavenly Father.

2 During the past six months, we have continued to grapple with a global pandemic. I marvel at your resilience and spiritual strength in the face of illness, loss, and isolation. I pray constantly that, through it all, you will feel the Lord’s unfailing love for you. If you have responded to your trials with a stronger discipleship, this past year will not have been in vain.

a Helaman 5:30; see also 1 Kings 19:12; 3 Nephi 11:3.

b See Psalm 46:10; Doctrine and Covenants 101:16.

c See Doctrine and Covenants 82:14.

d In some parts of the world, people use a unique and special way of exchanging greetings on Easter morning. In their local language, the greeter will say, “Christ is risen!” The greeted person then responds, “Truly! He is risen!” For example, the exchange of Easter greetings by Russian speakers begins with “Христос воскрес” (Christ is risen [resurrected!]), answered by “Воистину! воскрес!” (Truly! He is risen!).

Horizontal lines for writing notes on the right side of the page.

3 This morning, we have heard from Church leaders who come from every populated continent on earth. Truly, the blessings of the gospel are for every race, language, and people. The Church of Jesus Christ is a global church. Jesus Christ is our leader.

4 Thankfully, even a pandemic has not been able to slow the onward march of His truth. The gospel of Jesus Christ is exactly what is needed in this confused, contentious, and weary world.

5 Each of God's children deserves the opportunity to hear and accept the healing, redeeming message of Jesus Christ. No other message is more vital to our happiness—now and forever.^e No other message is more filled with hope. No other message can eliminate contention in our society.

6 Faith in Jesus Christ is the foundation of all belief and the conduit of divine power. According to the Apostle Paul, "Without faith it is impossible to please [God]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."^f

7 Everything good in life—every potential blessing of eternal

significance—begins with faith. Allowing God to prevail in our lives begins with faith that He is willing to guide us. True repentance begins with faith that Jesus Christ has the power to cleanse, heal, and strengthen us.^g

8 "Deny not the power of God," the prophet Moroni declared, "for he worketh by power, according to the faith of the children of men."^h It is our faith that unlocks the power of God in our lives.

9 And yet, exercising faith can seem overwhelming. At times we may wonder if we can possibly muster enough faith to receive the blessings that we so desperately need. However, the Lord put those fears to rest through the words of the Book of Mormon prophet Alma.

10 Alma asks us simply to experiment upon the word and "exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if [we] can no more than desire to believe."ⁱ The phrase "particle of faith" reminds me of the Lord's biblical promise that if we "have faith as a grain of mustard seed," we shall be able to "say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto [us]."^j

e See Mosiah 2:41.

f Hebrews 11:6. Lectures on Faith states that faith "is the first great governing principle which has power, dominion, and authority over all things" ([1985], 5).

g See Matthew 11:28–30; Alma 7:12–13; Ether 12:27.

h Moroni 10:7; emphasis added.

i Alma 32:27; emphasis added.

j Matthew 17:20, emphasis added; see also Helaman 12:9, 13.

11 The Lord understands our mortal weakness. We all falter at times. But He also knows of our great potential. The mustard seed starts small but grows into a tree large enough for birds to nest in its branches. The mustard seed represents a small but growing faith.^k

12 The Lord does not require perfect faith for us to have access to His perfect power. But He does ask us to believe.

13 My dear brothers and sisters, my call to you this Easter morning is to start today to increase your faith. Through your faith, Jesus Christ will increase your ability to move the mountains in your life,^l even though your personal challenges may loom as large as Mount Everest.

14 Your mountains may be loneliness, doubt, illness, or other personal problems. Your mountains will vary, and yet the answer to each of your challenges is to increase your faith. That takes work. Lazy learners and lax disciples will always struggle to muster even a particle of faith.

15 To do anything well requires effort. Becoming a true disciple of Jesus Christ is no exception. Increasing your faith and trust in Him takes effort. May I offer five suggestions to help you develop that faith and trust.

16 First, *study*. Become an engaged learner. Immerse yourself in the scriptures to understand better Christ’s mission and ministry. Know the doctrine of Christ so that you understand its power for your life. Internalize the truth that the Atonement of Jesus Christ applies to you. He took upon Himself your misery, your mistakes, your weakness, and your sins. He paid the compensatory price and provided the power for you to move every mountain you will ever face. You obtain that power with your faith, trust, and willingness to follow Him.

17 Moving your mountains may require a miracle. Learn about miracles. Miracles come according to your faith in the Lord. Central to that faith is trusting His will and timetable—how and when He will bless you with the miraculous help you desire. Only your unbelief will keep God from blessing you with miracles to move the mountains in your life.^m

18 The more you learn about the Savior, the easier it will be to trust in His mercy, His infinite love, and His strengthening, healing, and redeeming power. The Savior is never closer to you than when you are facing or climbing a mountain with faith.

k See Doctrine and Covenants 78:17–18. The reward for putting off the natural man is to become “a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord” (Mosiah 3:19).

l See 1 Nephi 7:12.

m See Mormon 9:19–21; Ether 12:30.

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the numbered paragraphs on the left.

19 Second, choose to *believe* in Jesus Christ. If you have doubts about God the Father and His Beloved Son or the validity of the Restoration or the veracity of Joseph Smith’s divine calling as a prophet, choose to believeⁿ and stay faithful. Take your questions to the Lord and to other faithful sources. Study with the desire to believe rather than with the hope that you can find a flaw in the fabric of a prophet’s life or a discrepancy in the scriptures. Stop increasing your doubts by rehearsing them with other doubters. Allow the Lord to lead you on your journey of spiritual discovery.

20 Third, *act* in faith. What would you do if you had more faith? Think about it. Write about it. Then receive more faith by doing something that requires more faith.

21 Fourth, *partake of sacred ordinances* worthily. Ordinances unlock the power of God for your life.^o

22 And fifth, *ask* your Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, for help.

23 Faith takes work. Receiving revelation takes work. But “every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”^p God knows what will help your faith grow. Ask, and then ask again.

24 A nonbeliever might say that faith is for the weak. But this assertion overlooks the power of faith. Would the Savior’s Apostles have continued to teach His doctrine after His death, at the peril of their lives, if they had doubted Him?^q Would Joseph and Hyrum Smith have suffered martyrs’ deaths defending the Restoration of the Lord’s Church unless they had a sure witness that it was true? Would nearly 2,000 Saints have died along the pioneer trail^r if they did not have faith that the gospel of Jesus Christ had been restored? Truly, faith is the power that enables the unlikely to accomplish the impossible.

25 Do not minimize the faith you already have. It takes faith to join the Church and remain faithful. It takes faith to follow prophets rather than pundits

n See 2 Nephi 33:10–11.

o See Doctrine and Covenants 84:20.

p Matthew 7:8.

q Without the power of faith, would Abinadi have suffered death by fire for refusing to deny what he knew to be true? (see Mosiah 17:7–20). Without that power, would Ether have hidden in the cavity of a rock (see Ether 13:13–14) and Moroni endured years of loneliness (see Moroni 1:1–3) when their lives could have been much more comfortable if they had only denounced what they believed?

r See Melvin L. Bashore, H. Dennis Tolley, and the BYU Pioneer Mortality Team, “Mortality on the Mormon Trail, 1847–1868,” *BYU Studies*, vol. 53, no. 4 (2014), 115.

and popular opinion. It takes faith to serve a mission during a pandemic. It takes faith to live a chaste life when the world shouts that God’s law of chastity is now outmoded. It takes faith to teach the gospel to children in a secular world. It takes faith to plead for the life of a loved one and even more faith to accept a disappointing answer.

26 Two years ago, Sister Nelson and I visited Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, and Tahiti. Each of those island nations had experienced heavy rains for days. Members had fasted and prayed that their outdoor meetings would be protected from the rain.

27 In Samoa, Fiji, and Tahiti, just as the meetings began, the rain stopped. But in Tonga, the rain did not stop. Yet 13,000 faithful Saints came hours early to get a seat, waited patiently through a steady downpour, and then sat through a very wet two-hour meeting.

28 We saw vibrant faith at work among each of those islanders—faith sufficient to stop the rain and faith to persevere when the rain did not stop.

29 The mountains in our lives do not always move how or when we would like. But our faith will always propel us forward. Faith always increases our access to godly power.

30 Please know this: if everything and everyone else in the world whom you trust should fail, Jesus Christ and His Church will never fail you. The Lord never slumbers, nor does He sleep.^s He “is the same yesterday, today, and [tomorrow].”^t He will not forsake His covenants,^u His promises, or His love for His people. He works miracles today, and He will work miracles tomorrow.^v

31 Faith in Jesus Christ is the greatest power available to us in this life. All things are possible to them that believe.^w

32 Your growing faith in Him will move mountains—not the mountains of rock that beautify the earth but the mountains of misery in your lives. Your flourishing faith will help you turn challenges into unparalleled growth and opportunity.

33 On this Easter Sunday, with my deep feelings of love and gratitude, I declare my witness that Jesus Christ is indeed risen. He is risen to lead His Church. He is risen to bless the lives of all of God’s children, wherever they live. With faith in Him, we can move the mountains in our lives. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

s See Psalm 121:4.
t Mormon 9:9.
u See Isaiah 54:10; 3 Nephi 22:10.
v See Mormon 9:10–11, 15.
w See Mark 9:23.

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the text on the left.

CHAPTER 59

COVID-19 and Temples - Delivered in the Sunday Afternoon Session of the April 2021 General Conference.

MY beloved brothers and sisters, we have truly had a spiritual feast. How grateful I am for the prayers, messages, and music of the entire conference. Thanks to each of you for joining with us, wherever you are.

2 Early last year, because of the COVID-19 pandemic and our desire to be good global citizens, we made the difficult decision to close all temples temporarily. During the ensuing months, we have felt inspired to reopen temples gradually through a very cautious approach. Temples are now being opened in four phases, adhering strictly to local government regulations and safety protocols.

3 For temples in phase 1, qualified couples who have previously received their own endowments can be sealed as husband and wife.

4 For temples in phase 2, all ordinances for the living are performed, including one's own endowment, the sealing of husband and wife, and the sealing of children to parents. We have recently amended provisions of phase 2 and allow our youth, new members, and others with a limited-use recommend to participate in proxy baptisms for their ancestors.

5 For temples in phase 3, those with scheduled appointments may participate not only in ordinances for the living but also in all proxy ordinances for deceased ancestors.

6 Phase 4 is a return to full, regular temple activity.

7 We are grateful for your patience and devoted service during this changing and challenging period. I pray that your desire to worship and serve in the temple burns more brightly now than ever.

8 You may be wondering when you will be able to return to the temple. Answer: Your temple will be open when local government regulations allow it. When the incidence of COVID-19 in your area is within safe limits, your temple will be reopened. Do all you can to bring COVID numbers down in your area so that your temple opportunities can increase.

9 Meanwhile, keep your temple covenants and blessings foremost in your minds and hearts. Stay true to the covenants you have made.

10 We are building now for the future! Forty-one temples are presently under construction or renovation. Just last year, despite the pandemic, ground was broken for 21 new temples!

11 We want to bring the house of the Lord even closer to our

members, that they may have the sacred privilege of attending the temple as often as their circumstances allow.

12 As I announce our plans to construct 20 more temples, I ponder and praise pioneers—past and present—whose consecrated lives have helped to make this history today. A new temple will be built in each of the following locations: Oslo, Norway; Brussels, Belgium; Vienna, Austria; Kumasi, Ghana; Beira, Mozambique; Cape Town, South Africa; Singapore, Republic of Singapore; Belo Horizonte, Brazil; Cali, Colombia; Querétaro, Mexico; Torreón, Mexico; Helena, Montana; Casper, Wyoming; Grand Junction, Colorado; Farmington, New Mexico; Burley, Idaho; Eugene, Oregon; Elko, Nevada; Yorba Linda, California; and Smithfield, Utah.

13 Temples are a vital part of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in its fulness. Ordinances of the temple fill our lives with power and strength available in no other way. We thank God for those blessings.

14 As we close this conference, we again express our love for you. We pray that God will shower His blessings and watchcare upon each of you. Together we are engaged in His sacred service. With courage, let us all press on in the glorious work of the Lord! For this I pray in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 60

Pure Truth, Pure Doctrine, and Pure Revelation - Delivered in the Saturday Morning Session of the October 2021 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters, welcome to general conference! What a joy it is to be with you! You have been on my mind almost constantly during the past six months. I have prayed about you and for you. During recent weeks I have prayed intently that this conference would be a time of revelation and reflection for all who seek those blessings.

2 We are delighted to be speaking to you from the Conference Center once again. Most of the seats remain empty, but the presence of some members of the Tabernacle Choir is a wonderful step forward. We welcome you all to this largely virtual conference, wherever you are.

3 We are still dealing with the ravages of COVID-19 and its variants. We thank you for following our counsel and the advice of medical experts and government officials in your own communities.

4 We convene each general conference as directed by the Lord.^a The format has varied over the years. When I was much younger, conference lasted three or four days. Later, conference was reduced to two days. Every message—then and now—is the result of earnest prayer and much spiritual preparation.

a See Doctrine and Covenants 20:61, 64, 67; 26:1.

5 The General Authorities and General Officers of the Church who speak will focus their messages on our Savior, Jesus Christ, His mercy, and His infinite redeeming power. There has never been a time in the history of the world when knowledge of our Savior is more personally vital and relevant to every human soul. Imagine how quickly the devastating conflicts throughout the world—and those in our individual lives—would be resolved if we all chose to follow Jesus Christ and heed His teachings.

6 In that spirit, I invite you to listen for three things during this conference: pure truth, the pure doctrine of Christ, and pure revelation. Contrary to the doubts of some, there really is such a thing as right and wrong. There really is absolute truth—eternal truth. One of the plagues of our day is that too few people know where to turn for truth.^a I can assure you that what you will hear today and tomorrow constitutes pure truth.

7 The pure doctrine of Christ is powerful. It changes the life of everyone who understands it and seeks to implement it in his or her life. The doctrine of Christ helps us find and stay on the covenant path. Staying on that narrow but well-defined path will ultimately qualify us to receive all that God has.^b Nothing could be worth more than all our Father has!

8 Finally, pure revelation for the questions in your heart will make this conference rewarding and unforgettable. If you have not yet sought for the ministering of the Holy Ghost to help you hear what the Lord would have you hear during these two days, I invite you to do so now. Please make this conference a time of feasting on messages from the Lord through His servants. Learn how to apply them in your life.

9 This is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We are His covenant people. The Lord declared that He would hasten His work in its time,^c and He is doing so at an ever-increasing pace. We are privileged to participate in His holy work.

10 I invoke a blessing upon all who are seeking greater light, knowledge, and truth. I express my love for each of you, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 61

The Temple and Your Spiritual Foundation - Delivered in the Sunday Morning Session of the October 2021 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters, I am grateful to be with you this morning to share the feelings of my heart.

2 As you know, we are performing major renovations on the

a See Doctrine and Covenants 123:12.

b See Ether 4:14; Doctrine and Covenants 78:17–18; 84:38.

c See Doctrine and Covenants 88:73.

historic Salt Lake Temple. This complex project includes major reinforcement of its original foundation, which has served well for more than a century. But this temple must stand much longer. In late May, I inspected the progress on this massive project. I thought you would appreciate seeing what my wife Wendy and I saw. I think you'll see why the hymn "How Firm a Foundation"^d has come to have new meaning for us.

Video from the site of the Salt Lake Temple renovation

3 "We are looking at the original foundation of the Salt Lake Temple. I am standing in an area beneath what was the Garden Room. As I examine the craftsmanship of this entire building, I marvel at what the pioneers accomplished. I am totally in awe when I consider that they built this magnificent temple with only tools and techniques available to them more than a century ago.

4 "These many decades later, however, if we examine the foundation closely, we can see the effects of erosion, gaps in the original stonework, and varying stages of stability in the masonry.

5 "Now as I witness what modern engineers, architects, and construction experts can do to

reinforce that original foundation, I am absolutely amazed. Their work is astonishing!

6 "The foundation of any building, particularly one as large as this one, must be strong and resilient enough to withstand earthquakes, corrosion, high winds, and the inevitable settling that affects all buildings. The complex task of strengthening now underway will reinforce this sacred temple with the foundation that can and will stand the test of time."

7 We are sparing no effort to give this venerable temple, which had become increasingly vulnerable, a foundation that will withstand the forces of nature into the Millennium. In like manner, it is now time that we each implement extraordinary measures—perhaps measures we have never taken before—to strengthen our personal spiritual foundations. Unprecedented times call for unprecedented measures.

8 My dear brothers and sisters, these are the latter days. If you and I are to withstand the forthcoming perils and pressures, it is imperative that we each have a firm spiritual foundation built upon the rock of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.^e

9 So I ask each of you, how firm

d See "How Firm a Foundation," Hymns, no. 85.

e So that "when the devil [sends] forth his mighty [wind], ... it shall have no power over [us] ... because of the rock upon which [we] are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall" (Helaman 5:12; emphasis added).

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the numbered text blocks on the left.

is your foundation? And what reinforcements to your testimony and understanding of the gospel are needed?

10 The temple lies at the center of strengthening our faith and spiritual fortitude because the Savior and His doctrine are the very heart of the temple. Everything taught in the temple, through instruction and through the Spirit, increases our understanding of Jesus Christ. His essential ordinances bind us to Him through sacred priesthood covenants. Then, as we keep our covenants, He endows us with His healing, strengthening power.^f And oh, how we will need His power in the days ahead.

11 We have been promised that “if [we] are prepared [we] shall not fear.”^g This assurance has profound implications today. The Lord has declared that despite today’s unprecedented challenges, those who build their foundations upon Jesus Christ, and have learned how to draw upon His power, need not succumb to the unique anxieties of this era.

12 Temple ordinances and covenants are ancient. The Lord instructed Adam and Eve to pray, make covenants, and offer sacrifices.^h Indeed, “whenever the Lord has had a people on the earth who will obey His word, they have been commanded to build temples.”ⁱ The standard works are replete with references to temple teachings, clothing, language, and more.^j Everything we believe and every promise God has made to His covenant people come together in the temple. In every age, the temple has underscored the precious truth that those who make covenants with God and keep them are children of the covenant.

13 Thus, in the house of the Lord, we can make the same covenants with God that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob made. And we can receive the same blessings!

14 Temples have been part of this dispensation from its earliest days.^k Elijah committed the keys of sealing authority to Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple. The fulness of the

f See Doctrine and Covenants 109:15, 22.

g Doctrine and Covenants 38:30; see also Doctrine and Covenants 10:55.

h See Moses 5:5–6.

i Bible Dictionary, “Temple.”

j For example, see Exodus 28; 29; Leviticus 8. The tabernacle of Moses was known as a “tent of the testimony” (Numbers 9:15) and a “tabernacle of testimony” (Exodus 38:21). Solomon’s temple was destroyed in 587 BC, a few years after Lehi’s family left Jerusalem. The restoration of this temple by Zerubbabel took place some 70 years later. It was then damaged by fire in 37 BC. Herod expanded the temple in about 16 BC. Then this temple, known by Jesus, was destroyed in AD 70. Nephi had temple-like experiences by going “into the mount off” to pray (1 Nephi 18:3) and later, in the Americas, built a temple “after the manner of the temple of Solomon,” though it was less ornate (see 2 Nephi 5:16).

k See Doctrine and Covenants 88:119; 124:31.

priesthood was restored in the Nauvoo Temple.¹

15 Until his martyrdom, Joseph Smith continued to receive revelations that furthered the restoration of the endowment and sealing ordinances.^m He recognized, however, that further refinement was needed. After administering the endowment to Brigham Young in May 1842, Joseph told Brigham, “This is not arranged right, but we have done the best we could under the circumstances in which we are placed, and I wish you to

take this matter in hand and organize and systematize all these ceremonies.”ⁿ

16 Following the Prophet’s death, President Young oversaw the completion of the Nauvoo Temple^o and later built temples in the Utah Territory. At the dedication of the lower stories of the St. George Temple, Brigham Young vigorously declared the urgency of vicarious temple work when he said, “When I think upon this subject, I want the tongues of seven thunders to wake up the people.”^p

1 See Doctrine and Covenants 110:13–16; 124:28. The cornerstone for the Nauvoo Temple was laid on April 6, 1841, just a few months after Joseph Smith received the revelation to build it. The Nauvoo Temple had augmented functions. For example, the Lord explained that a baptismal font was needed for the Saints to be baptized for those who were dead (see Doctrine and Covenants 124:29–30).

m See Doctrine and Covenants 131; 132. Doctrine and Covenants 128 contains an epistle Joseph Smith wrote to the Saints concerning baptism for the dead. There he declared that the salvation of the dead “is necessary and essential to our salvation, ... [for] they without us cannot be made perfect—neither can we without our dead be made perfect” (verse 15).

n Joseph Smith, in *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846* (2018), 454.

o “Church Historian George A. Smith concluded that 5,634 brothers and sisters received their endowment in the partially completed Nauvoo Temple in December 1845 and January 1846. Sealings of couples continued on through Feb. 7, [1846,] by which time more than 2,000 couples had been united by the priesthood for time and eternity” (Bruce A. Van Orden, “Temple Finished before Exodus,” *Deseret News*, Dec. 9, 1995, deseret.com; see also Richard O. Cowan, “Endowments Bless the Living and Dead,” *Church News*, Aug. 27, 1988, thechurchnews.com).

p “What do you suppose the fathers would say if they could speak from the dead? Would they not say, ‘We have lain here thousands of years, here in this prison house, waiting for this dispensation to come’? ... Why, if they had the power the very thunders of heaven would be in our ears, if we could but realize the importance of the work we are engaged in. All the angels in heaven are looking at this little handful of people, and stimulating them to the salvation of the human family. ... When I think upon this subject, I want the tongues of seven thunders to wake up the people” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1954], 403–4).

17 From that time forward, temple ordinances were gradually refined. President Harold B. Lee explained why procedures, policies, and even the administration of temple ordinances continue to change within the Savior's restored Church. President Lee said: "The principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ are divine. Nobody changes the principles and [doctrine] of the Church except the Lord by revelation. But methods change as the inspired direction comes to those who preside at a given time."^q

18 Consider how administering the sacrament has changed over the years. In earlier days, the water of the sacrament was offered to the congregation in one large vessel. Everyone drank from it. Now we use individual disposable cups. The procedure changed, but the covenants remain the same.

19 Ponder these three truths:

1. The Restoration is a process, not an event, and will continue until the Lord comes again.
2. The ultimate objective of the gathering of Israel^r is to bring the blessings of the temple to God's faithful children.

3. As we seek how to accomplish that objective more effectively, the Lord reveals more insights. The ongoing Restoration needs ongoing revelation.

20 The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have often asked the Lord if there are better ways to take the blessings of the temple to His faithful children. We seek guidance regularly on how to ensure worldwide accuracy and consistency of temple instruction, covenants, and ordinances despite differences in language and culture.

21 Under the Lord's direction and in answer to our prayers, recent procedural adjustments have been made. He is the One who wants you to understand with great clarity exactly what you are making covenants to do. He is the One who wants you to experience fully His sacred ordinances. He wants you to comprehend your privileges, promises, and responsibilities. He wants you to have spiritual insights and awakenings you've never had before. This He desires for all temple patrons, no matter where they live.

22 Current adjustments in tem-

q Harold B. Lee, "God's Kingdom—a Kingdom of Order," *Ensign*, Jan. 1971, 10. See also a statement made by President Wilford Woodruff in 1896; he declared: "I want to say, as the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, that we should now go on and progress. We have not [gotten] through with revelation. ... President [Brigham] Young, who followed President Joseph Smith, led us here. He organized these temples and carried out the purposes of his calling and office. ... He did not receive all the revelations that belong to this work; neither did President Taylor, nor has Wilford Woodruff. There will be no end to this work until it is perfected" (The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, sel. G. Homer Durham [1946], 153–54).

r See 3 Nephi 29:8–9.

ple procedures, and others that will follow, are continuing evidence that the Lord is actively directing His Church. He is providing opportunities for each of us to bolster our spiritual foundations more effectively by centering our lives on Him and on the ordinances and covenants of His temple. When you bring your temple recommend, a contrite heart, and a seeking mind to the Lord's house of learning, He will teach you.

23 Should distance, health challenges, or other constraints prohibit your temple attendance for a season, I invite you to set a regular time to rehearse in your mind the covenants you have made.

24 If you don't yet love to attend the temple, go more often—not less. Let the Lord, through His Spirit, teach and inspire you there. I promise you that over time, the temple will become a place of safety, solace, and revelation.

25 If it were possible for me to speak one-on-one with every young adult, I would plead with you to seek a companion with whom you can be sealed in the temple. You may wonder what

difference this will make in your life. I promise it will make all the difference! As you marry in the temple and return repeatedly, you will be strengthened and guided in your decisions.

26 If I could speak with each husband and wife who have still not been sealed in the temple, I would plead with you to take the necessary steps to receive that crowning, life-changing ordinance.^s Will it make a difference? Only if you want to progress forever and be together forever. Wishing to be together forever will not make it so. No other ceremony or contract will make it so.^t

27 If I could speak to each man or woman who longs for marriage but has not yet found his or her eternal companion, I would urge you not to wait until marriage to be endowed in the house of the Lord. Begin now to learn and experience what it means to be armed with priesthood power.

28 And to each of you who has made temple covenants, I plead with you to seek—prayerfully and consistently—to understand temple covenants and ordinances.^u Spiritual doors will open. You will learn how to part the

s See Doctrine and Covenants 131:2, 4.

t See Doctrine and Covenants 132:7.

u Elder John A. Widtsoe wrote: "To the man or woman who goes through the temple, with open eyes, heeding the symbols and the covenants, and making a steady, continuous effort to understand the full meaning, God speaks his word, and revelations come. The endowment is so richly symbolic that only a fool would attempt to describe it; it is so packed full of revelations to those who exercise their strength to seek and see, that no human words can explain or make clear the possibilities that reside in temple service. The endowment which was given by revelation can best be understood by revelation" (in Archibald F. Bennett, *Saviors on Mount Zion* [Sunday School manual, 1950], 168).

Horizontal lines for writing, consisting of 20 lines on the page.

veil between heaven and earth, how to ask for God’s angels to attend you, and how better to receive direction from heaven. Your diligent efforts to do so will reinforce and strengthen your spiritual foundation.

29 My dear brothers and sisters, when renovations on the Salt Lake Temple are completed, there will be no safer place during an earthquake in the Salt Lake Valley than inside that temple.

30 Likewise, whenever any kind of upheaval occurs in your life, the safest place to be spiritually is living inside your temple covenants!

31 Please believe me when I say that when your spiritual foundation is built solidly upon Jesus Christ, you have no need to fear. As you are true to your covenants made in the temple, you will be strengthened by His power. Then, when spiritual earthquakes occur, you will be able to stand strong because your spiritual foundation is solid and immovable.

32 I love you, dear brothers and sisters. These truths I know: God, our Heavenly Father, wants you to choose to come home to Him. His plan of eternal progression is not complicated, and it honors your agency. You are free to choose who you will be—and with whom you will be—in the world to come!

33 God lives! Jesus is the Christ! This is His Church, restored to help you fulfill your divine des-

tiny. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 62

Make Time for the Lord - Delieverd in the Sunday Afternoon Session of the October 2021 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters, for two days we have been well taught by servants of the Lord who have sought diligently to know what He would have them say.

2 We have been given our charge for the next six months. Now the question is, how will we be different because of what we have heard and felt?

3 The pandemic has demonstrated how quickly life can change, at times from circumstances beyond our control. However, there are many things we can control. We set our own priorities and determine how we use our energy, time, and means. We decide how we will treat each other. We choose those to whom we will turn for truth and guidance.

4 The voices and pressures of the world are engaging and numerous. But too many voices are deceptive, seductive, and can pull us off the covenant path. To avoid the inevitable heartbreak that follows, I plead with you today to counter the lure of the world by making time for the Lord in your life—each and every day.

5 If most of the information you get comes from social or other

tures. They were spoken by angels near an empty tomb. They declared that the Lord Jesus Christ had overcome sin and death through His Atonement, culminating in His glorious Resurrection.

3 I want you to know that the Atonement of Jesus Christ is for *you*! His life's mission was for you! His sacrificial death was for you! And His Resurrection is for you! Sometimes it can be easy to feel that Jesus Christ did all of this for someone else. But I testify that He did it for you.

4 This is the message of the first Easter morning: God so loved the world that He sent His Only Begotten Son to help us. And His Son, Jesus Christ, gave His life for us.

5 Jesus Christ's sacrifice affects the whole world—including *you*.

Foretold and Foreshadowed

6 From the very beginning, God taught people about the Savior. He sent an angel to instruct Adam and Eve, "Thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore".^f From that day to the time of Jesus Christ, people sacrificed animals to help them look forward to the sacrifice that the Son of God would later make.

7 In addition, Jesus Christ's Atonement had been foretold long before He was born in Beth-

lehem. Prophets had prophesied of it for many generations.

*His Infinite Atonement
and Resurrection*

8 We cannot truly understand all that Jesus Christ did for us. We cannot grasp how great His suffering was and how far-reaching the effects of His sacrifice are. But you can feel the effects of His Atonement every day.

9 At Gethsemane and on the cross, He "suffered the pain of all men, that all ... might repent and come unto him".^g He took upon Himself the weight of the sins of all people. Bearing such a massive load caused Him to bleed from every pore.^h

10 Later He was beaten and whipped. A crown of sharp thorns was thrust upon His head. Then He was forced to carry His own cross to Calvary, where the agony of the Atonement was completed as He was nailed to that cross and made to suffer unbearable pain. He did the will of His Father. He suffered and gave up His life.

11 Just as He and His prophets had foretold, He rose from the grave on the third day. He became the first to be resurrected. Because of Him, all who have ever lived will receive the gift of resurrection. Thanks to Him, each body will be restored to its perfect frame.

12 The Savior paid the price for our sins and transgressions. Be-

^f Moses 5:8

^g Doctrine and Covenants 18:11

^h see Luke 22:44; Doctrine and Covenants 19:18

24 As you pray and study with purpose, you can learn how His mission blesses you. And the Holy Ghost can teach and testify to you of the eternal significance of His Atonement.

25 I thank God for His Son, Jesus Christ. He is “the resurrection, and the life”.^a He lives. With all my heart, I love Him, and I testify of Him. I testify that He is the Son of the living God. Jesus is the Christ—our Savior and Redeemer.

CHAPTER 64

Preaching the Gospel of Peace - Delivered in the Saturday Morning Session of the April 2022 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters, welcome to general conference! I have looked forward to this day with great anticipation. I pray for you *every day*. I have also prayed that this conference will be a time of spiritual rejuvenation for each one of you.

2 Since last conference, difficulties in the world have continued. The global pandemic still affects our lives. And now the world has been rocked by a conflict that is raining terror on millions of innocent men, women, and children.

3 Prophets have foreseen our day, when there would be wars

and rumors of wars and when the whole earth would be in commotion.^b As followers of Jesus Christ, we plead with leaders of nations to find peaceful resolutions to their differences. We call upon people everywhere to pray for those in need, to do what they can to help the distressed, and to seek the Lord’s help in ending any major conflicts.

4 Brothers and sisters, the gospel of Jesus Christ has never been needed more than it is today. Contention violates everything the Savior stood for and taught. I love the Lord Jesus Christ and testify that His gospel is the *only* enduring solution for peace. His gospel is a gospel of peace.^c

5 His gospel is the *only* answer when many in the world are stunned with fear.^d This underscores the urgent need for us to follow the Lord’s instruction to His disciples to “go ... into *all* the world, and preach the gospel to *every* creature.”^e We have the sacred responsibility to share the power and peace of Jesus Christ with all who will listen and who will let God prevail in their lives.

6 Every person who has made covenants with God has promised to care about others and serve those in need. We can demonstrate faith in God and always be ready to respond to those who ask about “the hope

a John 11:25
b See Doctrine and Covenants 88:91
c See Doctrine and Covenants 27:16
d See Luke 21:26
e Mark 16:15, emphasis added; see also Matthew 28:19

everything the Lord Jesus Christ stands for and teaches.

3 None of us can control nations or the actions of others or even members of our own families. But we can control ourselves. My call today, dear brothers and sisters, is to end conflicts that are raging in *your* heart, *your* home, and *your* life. Bury any and all inclinations to hurt others—whether those inclinations be a temper, a sharp tongue, or a resentment for someone who has hurt you. The Savior commanded us to turn the other cheek,^c to love our enemies, and to pray for those who spitefully use us.^d

4 It can be painfully difficult to let go of anger that feels so justified. It can seem impossible to forgive those whose destructive actions have hurt the innocent. And yet, the Savior admonished us to “forgive all men.”^e

5 We are followers of the Prince of Peace. Now more than ever, we need the peace only He can bring. How can we expect peace to exist in the world when we are not *individually* seeking peace and harmony? Brothers and sisters, I know what I’m suggesting is not easy. But followers of Jesus Christ should set the example for all the world to follow. I plead with you to do all you can to end *personal* conflicts that are currently raging in your hearts and in your lives.

6 May I underscore this call to action by discussing a concept I

was reminded of recently while watching a basketball game.

7 In that game, the first half was a seesaw battle, back and forth. Then, during the last five seconds of the first half, a guard on one team made a beautiful three-point shot. With only one second left, his teammate stole the inbound pass and made another basket at the buzzer! So that team went into the locker room four points ahead with a palpable surge of momentum. They were able to carry that momentum into the second half and win the game.

8 *Momentum* is a powerful concept. We all have experienced it in one form or another—for example, in a vehicle that picks up speed or with a disagreement that suddenly turns into an argument.

9 So I ask, what can ignite *spiritual momentum*? We have seen examples of both positive and negative momentum. We know followers of Jesus Christ who became converted and grew in their faith. But we also know of once-committed believers who fell away. Momentum can swing either way.

10 We have never needed *positive* spiritual momentum more than we do now, to counteract the speed with which evil and the darker signs of the times are intensifying. Positive spiritual momentum will keep us moving forward amid the fear and un-

c See 3 Nephi 12:39

d See 3 Nephi 12:44

e Doctrine and Covenants 64:10; see also verse 9

19 How important is repentance? Alma taught that we should “preach nothing save it were repentance and faith on the Lord.”ⁱ Repentance is required of every accountable person who desires eternal glory.^j There are no exceptions. In a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord chastised early Church leaders for not teaching the gospel to their children.^k Repenting is the *key* to progress. Pure faith keeps us moving forward on the covenant path.

20 Please do not fear or delay repenting. Satan delights in your misery. Cut it short. Cast his influence out of your life! Start today to experience the joy of putting off the natural man.^l The Savior loves us always but *especially* when we repent. He promised that though “the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed ... *my kindness* shall not depart from thee.”^m

21 If you feel you have strayed off

the covenant path too far or too long and have no way to return, that simply is not true.ⁿ Please contact your bishop or branch president. He is the Lord’s agent and will help you experience the joy and relief of repenting.

22 Now, a caution: Returning to the covenant path does *not* mean that life will be easy. This path is rigorous and at times will feel like a steep climb.^o This ascent, however, is designed to test and teach us, refine our natures, and help us to become saints. It is the *only* path that leads to exaltation. One prophet^p described the “blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven ... [and] dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness.”^q

23 Walking the covenant path, coupled with daily repentance,

i Mosiah 18:20

j See Moses 6:50, 57

k See Doctrine and Covenants 93:40–48

l See Mosiah 3:19

m Isaiah 54:10, emphasis added; see also 3 Nephi 22:10. Kindness is translated from the Hebrew term *hesed*, a powerful word with deep meaning that encompasses kindness, mercy, covenant love, and more.

n It is possible to make restitution for some sins but not others. If one person abuses or assaults another, or if one takes the life of another, full restitution cannot be made. The sinner in those cases can only do so much, and a large balance is left owing. Because of the Lord’s willingness to forgive a balance due, we can come to Him regardless of how far we have strayed. When we sincerely repent, He will forgive us. Any balance owing between our sins and our ability to make full restitution can be paid only by applying the Atonement of Jesus Christ, who can make a gift of mercy. His willingness to forgive our balance due is a priceless gift.

o See 2 Nephi 31:18–20

p The Nephite prophet King Benjamin

q Mosiah 2:41

fuels positive spiritual momentum.

24 My third suggestion: **Learn about God and how He works.**

25 One of our greatest challenges today is distinguishing between the truths of God and the counterfeits of Satan. That is why the Lord warned us to “pray always, ... that [we] may conquer Satan, and ... *escape the hands of the servants of Satan* that do uphold his work.”^r

26 Moses provided an example of how to discern between God and Satan. When Satan came tempting Moses, he detected the deception because he had just had a face-to-face interaction with God. Moses quickly realized who Satan was and commanded him to depart.^s When Satan persisted, Moses knew how to call upon God for more help. Moses received divine strength and rebuked the evil one *again*, saying, “Depart from me, Satan, for this one God only will I worship.”^t

27 We should *follow* that example. Cast Satan’s influence out of your life! Please do not follow him down to his “gulf of misery and endless wo.”^u

28 With frightening speed, a tes-

timony that is not nourished daily “by the good word of God”^v can crumble. Thus, the antidote to Satan’s scheme is clear: we need daily experiences worshipping the Lord and studying His gospel. I plead with you to let God prevail in your life. Give Him a fair share of your time. As you do, notice what happens to your positive spiritual momentum.

29 Suggestion number 4: **Seek and expect miracles.**

30 Moroni assured us that “God has not ceased to be a God of miracles.”^w *Every* book of scripture demonstrates how willing the Lord is to intervene in the lives of those who believe in Him.^x He parted the Red Sea for Moses, helped Nephi retrieve the brass plates, and restored His Church through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Each of these miracles took time and may not have been exactly what those individuals originally requested from the Lord.

31 In the same way, the Lord will bless *you* with miracles *if* you believe in Him, “doubting nothing.”^y Do the spiritual work to seek miracles. Prayerfully ask God to help you exercise that kind of faith. I promise that you

r Doctrine and Covenants 10:5; emphasis added

s See Moses 1:16; see also verses 1–20

t Moses 1:20

u Helaman 5:12

v Moroni 6:4

w Mormon 9:15; see also verse 19

x John the Apostle declared that he recorded the Savior’s miracles so “that [we] might believe that Jesus is the Christ” (John 20:31).

y Mormon 9:21

can experience for yourself that Jesus Christ “giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.”^a Few things will accelerate your spiritual momentum more than realizing the Lord is helping you to move a mountain in your life.

32 Suggestion number 5: End conflict in your personal life.

33 I repeat my call to end the conflicts in *your* life. Exercise the humility, courage, and strength required both to forgive and to seek forgiveness. The Savior has promised that “if [we] forgive men their trespasses, [our] heavenly Father will also forgive [us].”^b

34 Two weeks from today we celebrate Easter. Between now and then, I invite you to seek an end to a personal conflict that has weighed you down. Could there be a more fitting act of gratitude to Jesus Christ for His Atonement? If forgiveness presently seems impossible, plead for power through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ to help you. As you do so, I promise personal peace and a burst of spiritual momentum.

35 When the Savior atoned for all mankind, He opened a way that those who follow Him can have access to His healing, strengthening, and redeeming power. These spiritual privileges are available to all who seek to hear Him and follow Him.

36 My dear brothers and sisters, with all the pleadings of my heart, I urge you to get on the covenant path and stay there. Experience the joy of repenting daily. Learn about God and how He works. Seek and expect miracles. Strive to end conflict in your life.

37 As you act on these pursuits, I promise you the ability to move forward on the covenant path with increased momentum, despite whatever obstacles you face. And I promise you greater strength to resist temptation, more peace of mind, freedom from fear, and greater unity in your families.

38 God lives! Jesus is the Christ! He lives! He loves us and will help us. Of this I testify in the sacred name of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 66

Now Is The Time - Delieverd in the Sunday Afternoon Session of the April 2022 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters, this conference has been historic in many ways. We have been blessed by the prayers, messages, and music. We have been inspired by servants of the Lord.

2 We have received important direction for the future. My prayer is that the Spirit has spoken to you directly about things the Lord would have *you* do.

a Isaiah 40:29

b Matthew 6:14

Tennessee; Cleveland, Ohio; Wichita, Kansas; Austin, Texas; Missoula, Montana; Montpelier, Idaho; and Modesto, California.

11 These 17 temples will bless countless lives on both sides of the veil. I love you, my dear brothers and sisters. More important, the Lord loves you. He is your Savior and your Redeemer. He leads and guides His Church. May we be a people worthy of the Lord, who said, "Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God."^a

12 For this I pray in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 67

Choices for Eternity - Delieverd as a Worldwide Devotional for Young Adults May 15, 2022.

MY dear brothers and sisters, Sister Nelson and I have looked forward to this evening for months now. My wife, Wendy, is a woman of great faith and wisdom. I commend her teachings to you.

2 How wonderful it is to meet with you on the anniversary of the Restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood. As you know, on May 15, 1829, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery knelt in a secluded spot in the woods near Joseph and Emma's home in Harmony, Pennsylvania. Sister Nelson and I have been to that grove of sugar maples.

3 This grove became sacred when John the Baptist conferred the Aaronic Priesthood upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

4 Later, Peter, James, and John restored the Melchizedek Priesthood in the same general area.

5 In September 2015, I dedicated that Priesthood Restoration Site. Of all the previous assignments I had then received, that was the most significant to me. That site commemorates the restoration of priesthood authority and keys to man upon the earth. Those and other keys were needed to lead the restored Church of Jesus Christ and make it possible for us to perform and receive essential ordinances, including sealing families together for eternity. That day of dedication was a singular moment in my life!

6 Now, this is a singular time in *your* life. There won't be another quite like it. You are establishing priorities and patterns that will dramatically affect not just your mortal life but also your eternal life.

7 Let us talk about life. That is something with which I have had a little experience. I grew up during a Great Depression. I was a teenager during World War II. I have had several brushes with death. I have been to six continents many times and have yet to meet a people or culture that I did not find inspiring.

a Jeremiah 30:22

our postmortal possibilities. We know that our Father's house has many mansions.^g We know that God loves His children so much that, as President Dallin H. Oaks has taught, "*all the children of God*"—with the fewest of exceptions—will "wind up in a kingdom of *glory*."^h Just think of it! Our Father created kingdoms of *glory*—testial, terrestrial, and celestial—to provide a glorious place for His children.

16 My purpose tonight is to make sure that your eyes are wide open to the truth that this life really is the time when you get to decide what kind of life *you* want to live forever. Now is your time "to prepare to meet God."ⁱ

17 Mortal lifetime is hardly a nanosecond compared with eternity. But, my dear brothers and sisters, what a crucial nanosecond it is! During this life we get to choose which laws we are willing to obey—those of the celestial kingdom, or the terrestrial, or the testial^j—and, therefore, in which kingdom of glory we will live forever.

18 Every righteous choice that you make here will pay huge dividends now. But righteous choices in mortality will pay un-

imaginable dividends eternally. If you choose to make covenants with God and are faithful to those covenants, you have the promise of "glory added upon [your head] for ever and ever."^k

19 These truths ought to prompt your ultimate sense of FOMO—or fear of missing out. You have the potential to reach the celestial kingdom. The ultimate FOMO would be missing out on the celestial kingdom, settling for a lesser kingdom because here on earth you chose only to live the laws of a lesser kingdom.

20 The adversary, of course, does not want you even to think about tomorrow, let alone eternal life. But please don't be uninformed or naïve about the opportunities and challenges of mortality. In that spirit, you need to understand three fundamental truths that will help you prepare your future course:

- First, know the truth about who you are.
- Second, know the truth about what Heavenly Father and His Son have offered you.
- And third, know the truth related to your conversion.

21 I will speak to each of these three points.

g See John 14:2; Joseph Smith Translation, 1 Corinthians 15:40 (in 1 Corinthians 15:40, footnote a); Doctrine and Covenants 76:89–98; 131:1.

h Dallin H. Oaks, "Divine Love in the Father's Plan," *Liahona*, May 2022, 101

i See Alma 12:24; 34:32.

j See Doctrine and Covenants 88:22–24

k Abraham 3:26

29 Now, let us turn the question to you. *Who are you?*

30 First and foremost, you are a child of God.

31 Second, as a member of the Church, you are a child of the covenant. And third, you are a disciple of Jesus Christ.

32 Tonight, I plead with you not to *replace* these three paramount and unchanging identifiers with any others, because doing so could stymie your progress or pigeonhole you in a stereotype that could potentially thwart your eternal progression.

33 For example, if you are identified mainly as an American, those who are not Americans may think, "I know everything there is to know about you" and attribute erroneous beliefs to you.

34 If you identify yourself by your political affiliation, you will instantly be categorized as having certain beliefs—though I don't know anyone who believes everything that their preferred political party presently embraces.

35 We could go on and on, rehearsing the constraints of various labels that we put on ourselves or that other people place upon us.

36 Some might label me as an "old man." But I'm a lot younger than Adam was—and Noah too.^o Ageism, racism, national-

ism, sexism, and a host of other "isms" are universally limiting.

37 How tragic it is when someone believes the label another person has given them. Imagine the heartache of a child who is told, "You are dumb." Identifiers and labels are powerful!

38 The adversary rejoices in labels because they divide us and restrict the way we think about ourselves and each other. How sad it is when we honor labels more than we honor each other.

39 Labels can lead to judging and animosity. Any *abuse* or *prejudice* toward another because of nationality, race, sexual orientation, gender, educational degrees, culture, or other significant identifiers is offensive to our Maker! Such mistreatment causes us to live beneath our stature as His covenant sons and daughters!

40 There are various labels that may be very important to you, of course. Please do not misunderstand me. I am not saying that other designations and identifiers are not significant. I am simply saying that no identifier should *displace*, *replace*, or *take priority over* these three enduring designations: "child of God," "child of the covenant," and "disciple of Jesus Christ."

41 Any identifier that is not compatible with these three basic designations will ultimately let you down. Other labels will disappoint you in time because

^o Adam died at age 930 (see Genesis 5:5); Noah died at age 950 (see Genesis 9:29)

they do not have the power to lead you toward eternal life in the celestial kingdom of God.

42 Worldly identifiers will *never* give you a vision of who you can ultimately become. They will never affirm your divine DNA or your unlimited, divine potential.

43 Because there is a grand plan of salvation authored by Heavenly Father, does it not stand to reason that you also have a divine destiny?^p

44 Make no mistake about it: Your potential is divine. With your diligent seeking, God will give you glimpses of who you may become.

45 So who are you? First and foremost, you are a child of God, a child of the covenant, and a disciple of Jesus Christ. As you embrace these truths, our Heavenly Father will help you reach your ultimate goal of living eternally in His holy presence.

46 Second: Know the truth about what God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, have offered you.

47 In short, They have offered you everything!

48 Heavenly Father’s plan for His children allows us to live where and how He lives and ultimately to become more and more like Him. His plan literally makes the richest blessings of all eternity available to us, including the potential for us to become “joint-heirs with Christ.”^q

49 God knows all and sees all. In all of eternity, no one will ever know you or care about you more than He does. No one will ever be closer to you than He is. You can pour out your heart to Him and trust Him to send the Holy Ghost and angels to care for you. He demonstrated His ultimate love when He sent His Only Begotten Son to die for you—to be your Savior and your Redeemer!

50 Through His Atonement, the Lord Jesus Christ overcame the world.^r Therefore, He is “mighty to ... cleanse [you] from all unrighteousness.”^s He will deliver you from your most excruciating circumstances in His own way and time.^t As you come unto Him in faith, He

p President Orson Hyde (1805–78), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said that “we understood things better [in the premortal world] than we do in this lower world.” He continued, surmising about promises we likely made there: “It is not impossible that we signed the articles thereof with our own hands, which articles may be retained in the archives above, to be presented to us when we rise from the dead, and be judged out of our own mouths, according to that which is written in the books” (“Remarks,” *Deseret News*, Dec. 21, 1859, 322)

q Romans 8:17

r See John 16:33; Doctrine and Covenants 50:41

s Alma 7:14

t The Lord is mighty to deliver us just as He delivered Nephi from the clutches of Laban (see 1 Nephi 4:3)

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the text on the left.

will guide, preserve, and protect you. He will heal your broken heart and comfort you in your distress.^u He will give you access to His power. And He will make the impossible in your life become possible.

51 Jesus Christ is the only enduring source of hope, peace, and joy for you. Satan can never replicate any of these. And Satan will never help you.

52 On the other hand, God's work and His glory is to bring about the "immortality and eternal life of man."^v God will do everything He can, short of violating your agency, to help you not miss out on the greatest blessings in all eternity.

53 God has a special love for each person who makes a covenant with Him in the waters of baptism.^w And that divine love deepens as additional covenants are made and faithfully kept. Then at the end of mortal life, precious is the reunion of each covenant child with our Heavenly Father.^x

54 He also cares *deeply* that all His children have an opportunity to hear the glad tidings of the restored gospel. Heavenly Father has sent His children to earth for more than six millennia. Most of these people have not yet received the ordinances

that would qualify them for eternal life. That is why temples are so significant. That is why the gathering of Israel on both sides of the veil is *the* most important cause on earth today. You, my dear colleagues in this holy work, have an essential role in this gathering, and I thank you for it.

55 This now leads me to my third point.

56 **Know the truth related to your conversion.** The truth is that you must own your own conversion. No one else can do it for you.

57 Now, may I invite you to consider a few questions? Do you want to feel peace about concerns that presently plague you? Do you want to know Jesus Christ better? Do you want to learn how His divine power can heal your wounds and weaknesses? Do you want to experience the sweet, soothing power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ working in your life?

58 Seeking to answer these questions will require effort—much effort. I plead with you to take charge of your testimony. Work for it. Own it. Care for it. Nurture it so that it will grow. Feed it truth. Don't pollute it with the false philosophies of unbelieving men and women

u See Luke 4:18; Alma 7:10–12

v Moses 1:39

w In the Hebrew language of the Old Testament, the word for God's covenant love is hesed

x See Psalm 116:15

and then wonder why your testimony is waning.

59 Engage in daily, earnest, humble prayer. Nourish yourself in the words of ancient and modern prophets. Ask the Lord to teach you how to hear Him better. Spend more time in the temple and in family history work.

60 As you make your testimony your highest priority, watch for miracles to happen in your life.

61 If you have questions—and I hope you do—seek answers with the fervent desire to believe. Learn all you can about the gospel and be sure to turn to truth-filled sources for guidance. We live in the dispensation when “nothing shall be withheld.”^y Thus, in time, the Lord will answer all our questions.

62 In the meantime, immerse yourself in the rich reservoir of revelation we have at our fingertips. I promise that doing so will strengthen your testimony, even if some of your questions are not yet answered. Your sincere questions, asked in faith, will *always* lead to greater faith and more knowledge.

63 If friends and family should step away from the Church, continue to love them. It is not for you to judge another’s choice any more than you deserve to be

criticized for staying faithful.

64 Now, please hear me when I say: Do not be led astray by those whose doubts may be fueled by things you cannot see in their lives. Most of all, let your skeptical friends see how much you love the Lord and His gospel. Surprise their doubting hearts with your believing heart!

65 As you take charge of your testimony and cause it to grow, you will become a more potent instrument in the hands of the Lord. You will be “inspired by a better cause”^z—the cause of Jesus Christ!

66 There is nothing happening on this earth more important than gathering Israel *for Him*. Let your Heavenly Father know that you want to help. Ask Him to put you to work in this glorious cause. And then stand back and marvel at what happens when you let God prevail in your life.

67 My dear young friends, I love you. I thank you. I believe in you. As the Lord’s prophet, I bless you to know the truth about who you are and to treasure the truth about what your glorious potential really is. I bless you to take charge of your own testimony. And I bless you to have the desire and strength to keep your covenants.

y Doctrine and Covenants 121:28

z Alma 43:45: “For they were not fighting for monarchy nor power but they were fighting for their homes and their liberties, their wives and their children, and their all, yea, for their rites of worship and their church.”

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the text on the left.

68 As you do, I promise that you will experience spiritual growth, freedom from fear, and a confidence that you can scarcely imagine now. You will have the strength to have a positive influence far beyond your natural capacity. And I promise that your future will be more exhilarating than anything you can presently believe.

69 I so bless you and again express my gratitude and love for you in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 68

Washington D.C. Temple Dedicatory Prayer - Delivered on Sunday August 14, 2022.

O God, our Eternal Father, in the name of Thy Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, we humbly bow before Thee to rededicate this, the Washington D.C. Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

This magnificent house of the Lord was first dedicated 48 years ago by Thy noble servant President Spencer W. Kimball. It was then the 18th temple to be built in this dispensation. To preserve it for future generations, it has now been beautifully renovated and remodeled. We are grateful for all who participated in the arduous task of preserving and renewing this temple. Please bless them for their caring craftsmanship and faith.

2 As we offer this prayer of rededication, we pray that the spirit of President Kimball’s his-

toric dedicatory prayer may be included in this prayer.

3 On that sacred occasion, President Kimball gratefully recalled: “Thou didst cause this land to be ... settled by people who founded a great nation with an inspired constitution guaranteeing freedom in which there could come the glorious restoration of the gospel and the Church of thy Beloved Son.”

4 Now, our Holy Father, we express thanks for that freedom and for this land. We express thanks also for sacred ordinances performed and covenants made in this temple since its dedication in 1974. Thy Spirit has blessed these hallowed halls for Thy purposes, which, as President Kimball prayed, have opened “the doors . . . for the multitudes who are waiting in the spirit world.”

5 Dear Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for Thy Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. His Atonement has enabled Thy great plan for the blessings of immortality and eternal life for Thy children.

6 We are thankful that Thou didst appear with Thy Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to the Prophet Joseph Smith to open the heavens and restore the fulness of Thy gospel for the blessing of Thy children. We express our deep gratitude for the restoration of priesthood keys and authority, additional scriptures, and all blessings now available to us.

7 Today, we are ever grateful for the free exercise of religion guaranteed by the inspired Constitution of the United States of America. We are grateful for that Constitution and for the leaders of this great nation, past, present, and future. Please bless them with a desire to do what is right.

8 We are mindful of the many ambassadors and diplomats who come to this great city from many nations of the world. We pray that Thou wilt bless them and all Thy children with a desire to seek Thee and keep Thy commandments. Please bless Thy children of the covenant to be beacons of spiritual light and righteousness to the entire world.

9 Our Father, we express gratitude for the many friends, members, and missionaries who have labored so diligently to establish the Church of Thy Beloved Son throughout the world.

10 We are grateful for faithful tithe payers who have consecrated their means to the building of Thy kingdom on the earth. Bless them and their posterity with a deep desire to stay on the covenant path that leads them and their families back to Thy holy presence.

11 We pray that all who enter these sacred precincts may have a deep desire to worship here. Please bless them with the spirit of Elijah, that they may continue to turn their hearts to their ancestors, that essential ordinanc-

es may be performed for them. Bless them also with revelation, with guidance for their families and personal lives, with a sense of peace, and with ever-increasing faith.

12 Now, Holy Father, in the name of Thy Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and with the authority of the holy Melchizedek Priesthood, we rededicate and consecrate unto Thee and Thy Son this, the Washington D.C. Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We ask Thee to accept this house as our offering to Thee and Thy Son as a place worthy of Thy holy habitation. And we ask Thee to bless all who enter herein to feel of Thy presence and to know of Thy love.

13 We rededicate the grounds upon which this temple stands. We rededicate its foundation, footings, and spires. We rededicate its altars and interior rooms, including the baptistry, endowment rooms, sealing rooms, assembly room, celestial room, and administrative areas and support systems. We rededicate the beautiful grounds, trees, shrubs, and all systems required to maintain the beauty of this sacred place.

14 Please thwart any unwelcome force that might harm this holy house. Please preserve it from any natural disaster or evil intent. Make it a refuge for all who enter its precincts. Please bless all who step onto these grounds, for whatever purpose, to feel Thy presence and to leave with

Horizontal lines for writing, consisting of 20 lines.

a renewed sense of hope and an increased desire to draw close to Thee and Thy Son.

15 We ask Thee to bless the temple presidency, the matron, her assistants, and all who offer their consecrated service within this holy house. Bless all who serve in this temple that they may act with love and kindness. Bless all who enter here to gain a greater sense of the glorious future that awaits those who keep the commandments of God. May the sanctifying influence of Thy Holy Spirit be ever present in all sacred ordinances that will be performed herein.

16 Father in Heaven, on this day of rededication, we also rededicate our lives to Thee and Thy work as we serve Thee and our kin on both sides of the veil. May we be found worthy of the great blessings that Thou hast promised us, including those Thou hast already poured out upon Thy Church and upon Thy covenant children. We so offer this prayer of rededication and praise Thy holy name forever, in the sacred name of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 69

Ephraim, Utah Temple Site Ground-breaking Remarks and Dedicatory Prayer - Delivered on August 29, 2022.

I felt sorry for you as you were being cooked in the oven out there. And we were in the shade. And then we got some help, a little heavenly help. This isn't the

first time I've seen this kind of thing. So, my dear brothers and sisters, Wendy and I are really grateful for this opportunity to be with you. And we thank the choir for their beautiful number. Thanks for your practicing and perfecting your presentation.

2 We're thankful to be with Elder and Sister Walter Gonzalez. Zulma and Walter have been dear friends for a long time. This is his last official assignment, and I told him he couldn't do it alone. We wanted to be part of it. And we're very pleased to be with Elder and Sister Kevin Duncan, who carries a huge load as the Executive Director of the Temple and Family History Executive Council.

3 Well, gratefully, we recognize the presence of Spencer J. Cox, the governor of the state of Utah. John Scott, the mayor of Ephraim and other state, county and city officials. We thank each of you for attending this groundbreaking ceremony today. Ephraim and the Greater Sanpete Valley have a rich history. The very first latter-day Saints entered this valley in the fall of 1849.

4 A year later, the settlement that they established was named Manti. The name coming, of course, from the Book of Mormon, as well as the other towns around. As you drive through these towns, you think you're going through the Book of Mormon again.

5 In 1877, the first stake in this valley was organized. It was

named the Sanpete Stake. The first stake president was Knute Peterson and he relatives of Canute Peterson here. Raise your hand.

6 Well, I thought I'd find more, but do your genealogy and find out. The Sanpete Stake Academy was founded in Ephraim in 1888. It also functioned as a latter-day saint grade school. It struggled financially for years. Around the turn of the century, Lorenzo Snow, who was by then president of the church, authorized a 2,000 dollar donation to the school.

7 In gratitude, the name of the school was changed to Snow Academy to honor President Snow, as well as his friend and fellow church leader Erastus Snow. In 1932, Snow became a state college. Both the physical campus and the student body have grown considerably since then. We are most grateful for the faculty staff and students of that institution. How we love our youth!

8 Well, the Manti Temple is the jewel of this valley. President Brigham Young offered the prayer of dedication of the site for that temple in 1877 as he was returning home from the dedication of the Saint George Temple. The public dedicatory services for the Manti Temple were held 11 years later. Lorenzo's Snow gave the dedicatory prayer.

9 The history of this area includes my own family. My dear mother was born in Ephraim,

a short ways away from where we stand today. My father was born in Manti. Three of my four grandparents were born in Ephraim. All eight of my great grandparents lived in Ephraim. All were converts to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in their native countries of England, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. I don't think they could even talk to each other.

10 The Manti Temple was closed for renovation in 1981 and rededicated in 1985 by President Gordon Hinckley. It was my privilege to participate with him in those sacred ceremonies. In March 1985, I was given the assignment to divide the Manti Utah Stake. Two stakes were created: the Ephraim Stake and the Snow College Student Stake.

11 I remember calling Lee R Barton to preside over the Manti Stake. Any of his relatives here? Oh, good. I called Joseph C Nielsen to preside over the Ephraim Stake. Any of his relatives here? I called Alan P Jacobsen to be the President of the Snow College Stake. Any of his family here? That's been 37 years ago. So, time changes things. I remember ordaining Wilbur W Cox as a Stake Patriarch. Wilbur and his wife Nora have now departed this life. Dear friends, it is nice to know that our esteemed governor, Spencer J. Cox, is related to Wilbur through the governor's paternal line. I got your genealogy here if you need it.

12 Well, we are here today because of a recent event. Short-

Horizontal lines for writing.

ly after the April 2021 General Conference, I received a very clear instruction that the Manti Utah temple should be preserved and that a temple should be built in Ephraim, Utah. That news was shared quickly here and throughout the world. Today, we will begin the work by breaking ground for another temple in this unique historic valley. Now I invite you to join with me in prayer as I offer the dedicatory prayer on this special site.

Dedicatory Prayer

13 Our Beloved Father in Heaven, we thank thee for this inspiring and important event. We express our love for thee. We are grateful for thy love for us as thy covenant people. We thank thee for thy great plan of happiness.

14 We thank thee for the gift of thy beloved Son; His mission and ministry. He is our Savior and Redeemer. His atonement has enabled us to return to thee with our companions and families. For these heavenly possibilities, we are deeply grateful. We love thy Son and revere Him as our advocate with thee, our Holy Father. We thank you for the restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in its fullness, through the Prophet Joseph Smith. We thank thee oh God, for that Prophet. We thank thee for the Book of Mormon, The Doctrine and Covenants, other sacred scriptures, the restoration of priesthood authority, and the reality of continuing revelation from thee to thy servants and to thy faithful children. We thank the

for faithful members throughout the world whose tithing finances the building and maintenance of all of thy temples.

15 Now, invoking the keys of the Holy Priesthood, we hereby dedicate and consecrate this site for the building of a house of the Lord; the Ephraim, Utah Temple. Dear Father, as we open this ground, we ask thee to bless this site and hallow it. We pray that the construction of this temple may be accomplished to accommodate thy divine purposes.

16 We pray for thy protection upon all who will work on this project. May no harm or accident befall them. We pray that all who labor on this project will feel the importance of this great and sacred edifice, as it will house sacred ordinances and covenants of eternal significance. We pray that thou wilt thwart the efforts of any who might approach this site with ill intent.

17 Beloved Father, we are deeply grateful for our ancestors. They have laid a foundation of faith that undergirds our spiritual strength. May we learn who they are, find their qualifying information and bless their lives with sacred rites offered vicariously in this holy house. Each temple stands as a symbol of Jesus Christ, our mediator with thee our Heavenly Father. Each temple stands as a sign of our faith in life after death, and as a sacred step toward eternal exaltation for us and our families.

18 Please bless thy children here

that they may prepare to enter this holy house, make covenants with thee, and receive essential ordinances and blessings of this temple. Please bless the parents to teach their children about the Holy Temple. Please bless the leaders to help prepare men, women and youth to participate in proxy ordinances here. May the building of this Ephraim, Utah temple be a wonderful time of preparation in the lives of all who live within these precincts.

19 May they literally become thy covenant people. As we dedicate this ground, we rededicate ourselves to thee and to thy beloved Son. Humbly, we offer this prayer in the sacred name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER 70

The Everlasting Covenant - Published in the October 2022 Liahona Magazine. This message was also delivered at a general conference leadership meeting on March 31, 2022.

IN this world torn by wars and rumors of wars, the need for truth, light, and the pure love of Jesus Christ is greater than ever. The gospel of Christ is glorious, and we are blessed to study it and live according to its precepts. We rejoice in our opportu-

nities to share it—to testify of its truths wherever we are.

2 I have spoken frequently about the importance of the Abrahamic covenant and the gathering of Israel. When we embrace the gospel and are baptized, we take upon ourselves the sacred name of Jesus Christ. Baptism is the gate that leads to becoming joint heirs to all the promises given anciently by the Lord to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their posterity.^a

3 “The new and everlasting covenant”^b and the Abrahamic covenant are essentially the same—two ways of phrasing the covenant God made with mortal men and women at different times.

4 The adjective *everlasting* denotes that this covenant existed even before the foundation of the world! The plan laid out in the Grand Council in Heaven included the sobering realization that we would all be cut off from God’s presence. However, God promised that He would provide a Savior who would overcome the consequences of the Fall. God told Adam after his baptism:

5 “Thou art after the order of him who was without beginning

a See Russell M. Nelson, “Children of the Covenant,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 34.

b The new and everlasting covenant is the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It includes all ordinances and covenants necessary for our salvation (see Doctrine and Covenants 66:2). It is “new” whenever the Lord renews or restores it, and it is “everlasting” because it does not change. See also Doctrine and Covenants 132:6

Horizontal lines for writing, consisting of 20 evenly spaced lines extending across the right side of the page.

of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity.

6 “Behold, thou art one in me, a son of God; and thus may all become my sons”.^c

7 Adam and Eve accepted the ordinance of baptism and began the process of being one with God. They had entered the covenant path.

8 When you and I also enter that path, we have a new way of life. We thereby create a relationship with God that allows Him to bless and change us. The covenant path leads us back to Him. If we let God prevail in our lives, that covenant will lead us closer and closer to Him. All covenants are intended to be binding. They create a relationship with everlasting ties.

A Special Love and Mercy

9 Once we make a covenant with God, we leave neutral ground forever. God will not abandon His relationship with those who have forged such a bond with Him. In fact, all those who have made a covenant with God have access to a special kind of love and mercy. In the Hebrew language, that covenantal love is called *hesed* (חסד).^d

10 *Hesed* has no adequate English equivalent. Translators of the King James Version of the Bible must have struggled with

how to render *hesed* in English. They often chose “lovingkindness.” This captures much but not all the meaning of *hesed*. Other translations were also rendered, such as “mercy” and “goodness.” *Hesed* is a unique term describing a covenant relationship in which both parties are bound to be loyal and faithful to each other.

11 A celestial marriage is such a covenant relationship. A husband and wife make a covenant with God and with each other to be loyal and faithful to each other.

12 *Hesed* is a special kind of love and mercy that God feels for and extends to those who have made a covenant with Him. And we reciprocate with *hesed* for Him.

13 Because God has *hesed* for those who have covenanted with Him, He will love them. He will continue to work with them and offer them opportunities to change. He will forgive them when they repent. And should they stray, He will help them find their way back to Him.

14 Once you and I have made a covenant with God, our relationship with Him becomes much closer than before our covenant. Now we are bound together. Because of our covenant with God, He will never tire in His efforts to help us, and we will never ex-

c Moses 6:67–68

d A comprehensive discussion regarding *hesed* and the everlasting covenant is found in Kerry Muhlestein, *God Will Prevail: Ancient Covenants, Modern Blessings, and the Gathering of Israel* (2021)

handmaid, Hagar, to be Abram’s wife also, in accordance with the Lord’s direction. Hagar gave birth to Ishmael.^l Abram loved Ishmael, but he was not to be the child through whom the covenant would pass.^m

21 As a blessing from God, and in response to Sarai’s faith,⁶ she conceived in her advanced years so that the covenant would pass through *her* son, Isaac.ⁿ He was born in the covenant.

22 God gave Sarai and Abram new names—*Sarah* and *Abraham*.^o The bestowal of those new names marked the beginning of a new life and a new destiny for this family.

23 Abraham loved both Ishmael and Isaac. God told Abraham that Ishmael would be multiplied and become a great nation.^p At the same time, God made it clear that the everlasting covenant would be established through Isaac.^q

24 All who accept the gospel become part of the lineage of Abraham. In Galatians we read:

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

“... Ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise”.^r

25 Thus, we can become heirs to the covenant either by birth or by adoption.

26 Isaac and Rebekah’s son Jacob was born in the covenant. In addition, he chose to enter of his own accord. As you know, Jacob’s name was changed to *Israel*,^s meaning “let God prevail” or “one who prevails with God.”^t

27 In Exodus we read that “God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob”.^u God told the children of Israel, “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me”.^v

28 The phrase “peculiar treasure” was translated from the

l The Hebrew term Ishmael means “God heareth” (Bible Dictionary, “Ishmael”).
 m See Genesis 11:29–30; 16:1, 3, 11; Doctrine and Covenants 132:34.
 n see Genesis 17:19
 o see Genesis 17:5, 15
 p see Genesis 17:20
 q see Genesis 17:19
 r Galatians 3:27–29
 s see Genesis 32:28
 t see Genesis 32:28
 u Exodus 2:24
 v Exodus 19:5

37 But there is even more—much more. There is a huge need to spread the gospel to people on the other side of the veil. God wants everyone, on both sides of the veil, to enjoy the blessings of His covenant. The covenant path is open to all. We plead with everyone to walk that path with us. No other work is so universally inclusive. For “the Lord is merciful unto all who will, in the sincerity of their hearts, call upon his holy name”.^{aa}

38 Because the Melchizedek Priesthood has been restored, covenant-keeping women and men have access to “all the *spiritual* blessings” of the gospel.^{ab}

39 At the dedication of the Kirtland Temple in 1836, under the direction of the Lord, Elijah appeared. His purpose? “To turn ... the children to the fathers”.^{ac} Elias also appeared. His purpose? To commit to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery “the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed”.^{ad} Thus, the Master conferred upon Jo-

seph Smith and Oliver Cowdery priesthood authority and the right to convey the unique blessings of the Abrahamic covenant to others.^{ae}

40 In the Church, we travel the covenant path both individually and collectively. Just as marriages and families share a unique *lateral* bond that creates a special love, so does the new relationship formed when we bind ourselves by covenant *vertically* to our God!

41 This may be what Nephi meant when he said that God “loveth those who will have him to be their God”.^{af} This is exactly why, as part of the covenant, a special mercy and love—or *hesed*—is available to all who enter this binding and intimate relationship with God, even “to a thousand generations”.^{ag}

42 Making a covenant with God changes our relationship with Him forever. It blesses us with an extra measure of love and mercy.^{ah} It affects who we are and how God will help us become what we can become. We are promised

aa Helaman 3:27

ab Doctrine and Covenants 107:18; emphasis added

ac Doctrine and Covenants 110:15

ad Doctrine and Covenants 110:12

ae See Russell M. Nelson, “Thanks for the Covenant” (Brigham Young University devotional, Nov. 22, 1988), 4, speeches.byu.edu.

af 1 Nephi 17:40

ag Deuteronomy 7:9

ah “Every covenant with God is an opportunity to draw closer to him. To anyone who reflects for a moment on what they have already felt of the love of God, to have that bond made stronger and that relationship closer is an irresistible offer” (Henry B. Eyring, “Making Covenants with God” [Brigham Young University fireside, Sept. 8, 1996], 3, speeches.byu.edu).

and Manasseh,^a was given the responsibility to lead in the gathering of Israel, to prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord.

51 In such a timeless *hesed* relationship, it is only natural that God wants to gather Israel. He is our Heavenly Father! He wants each of His children—on both sides of the veil—to hear the message of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

A Path of Love

52 The covenant path is a path of love—that incredible *hesed*, that compassionate caring for and reaching out to each other. Feeling that love is liberating and uplifting. The greatest joy you will ever experience is when you are consumed with love for God and for all His children.

53 Loving God more than anyone or anything else is the condition that brings true peace, comfort, confidence, and joy.

54 The covenant path is all about our relationship with God—our *hesed* relationship with Him. When we enter a covenant with God, we have made a covenant with Him who will always keep His word. He will do everything He can, without infringing on our agency, to help us keep ours.

55 The Book of Mormon begins and ends with reference to this

everlasting covenant. From its title page to the closing testimonies of Mormon and Moroni, the Book of Mormon makes reference to the covenant.^b “The coming forth of the Book of Mormon is a sign to the entire world that the Lord has commenced to gather Israel and fulfill the covenants He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”^c

56 My dear brothers and sisters, we have been called at this pivotal time in the history of the earth to teach the world about the beauty and power of the everlasting covenant. Our Heavenly Father trusts us implicitly to do this great work.

CHAPTER 71

What Is True? - Delieverd in the Saturday Morning Session of the October 2022 General Conference.

MY beloved brothers and sisters, thanks to all for this inspiring session! Since our conference last April, we have witnessed many world events, ranging from the heartbreaking to the sublime.

2 We are delighted with reports of large youth conferences being held throughout the world.^d At these conferences, our noble youth are learning that no matter what happens in their lives, their greatest strength comes from the Lord.^e

a see Genesis 41:50–52; 46:20

b see Mormon 5:20; 9:37

c Russell M. Nelson, “The Future of the Church: Preparing the World for the Savior’s Second Coming,” *Liahona*, Apr. 2020, 9.

d Known as For the Strength of Youth, or FSU, conferences

e The guidebook *For the Strength of Youth* has recently been revised.

3 We rejoice that more temples are being built across the world. With the dedication of each new temple, additional godly power comes into the world to strengthen us and counteracts the intensifying efforts of the adversary.

4 Abuse constitutes the influence of the adversary. It is a grievous sin.^f As President of the Church, I affirm the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ on this issue. Let me be perfectly clear: any kind of abuse of women, children, or anyone is an abomination to the Lord. He grieves and I grieve whenever anyone is harmed. He mourns and we all mourn for each person who has fallen victim to abuse of any kind. Those who perpetrate these hideous acts are not only accountable to the laws of man but will also face the wrath of Almighty God.

5 For decades now, the Church has taken extensive measures to protect—in particular—children from abuse. There are many aids on the Church website. I invite you to study them.^g These guidelines are in place to protect the innocent. I urge each of us to be alert to anyone who might be in danger of being abused and to act promptly to protect them. The Savior will not tolerate abuse, and as His disciples, neither can we.

6 The adversary has other disturbing tactics. Among them

are his efforts to blur the line between what is true and what is not true. The flood of information available at our fingertips, ironically, makes it increasingly difficult to determine what is true.

7 This challenge reminds me of an experience Sister Nelson and I had when we visited a dignitary in a country where relatively few people have heard of Jesus Christ. This dear aging friend had recently been quite ill. He told us that during his many days in bed, he often stared at the ceiling and asked, “What is true?”

8 Many on earth today “are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it.”^h Some would have us believe that truth is relative—that each person should determine for himself or herself what is true. Such a belief is but wishful thinking for those who mistakenly think they will not also be accountable to God.

9 Dear brothers and sisters, God is the source of all truth. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints embraces all truth that God conveys to His children, whether learned in a scientific laboratory or received by direct revelation from Him.

10 From this pulpit today and tomorrow, you will continue to

f See Matthew 18:6; Doctrine and Covenants 121:34–37.
g See abuse.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
h Doctrine and Covenants 123:12

Handwritten lines for notes, consisting of multiple horizontal lines extending across the right side of the page.

hear truth. Please make notes of thoughts that catch your attention and those that come into your mind and stay in your heart. Prayerfully ask the Lord to confirm that what you have heard is true.

11 I love you, my dear brothers and sisters. I pray that this conference will provide the spiritual feast you are seeking. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 72

Overcome the World and Find Rest - Delieverd in the Sunday Morning Session of the October 2022 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters, I am grateful to greet you on this glorious Sabbath morning. You are constantly on my mind. I marvel at the way you spring into action whenever you see others in need. I stand amazed at the faith and testimony you demonstrate again and again. I weep over your heartaches, disappointments, and worries. I love you. I assure you that our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, love you. They are intimately aware of your circumstances, your goodness, your needs, and your prayers for help. Again and again, I pray for you to feel Their love for you.

2 Experiencing Their love is vi-

tal, as it seems that we are accosted daily by an onslaught of sobering news. You may have had days when you wished you could don your pajamas, curl up in a ball, and ask someone to awaken you when the turmoil is over.

3 But, my dear brothers and sisters, so many wonderful things are ahead. In coming days, we will see the *greatest* manifestations of the Savior’s power that the world has *ever* seen. Between now and the time He returns “with power and great glory,”^a He will bestow countless privileges, blessings, and miracles upon the faithful.

4 Nonetheless, we are presently living in what surely is a most complicated time in the history of the world. The complexities and challenges leave many people feeling overwhelmed and exhausted. However, consider a recent experience that might shed light on how you and I can find rest.

5 During the recent open house of the Washington D.C. Temple, a member of the open house committee witnessed an insightful interchange as he escorted several prominent journalists through the temple. Somehow a young family became attached to this media tour. One reporter kept asking about the “journey” of a temple patron as he or

a Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:36: “Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.”

she moves through the temple. He wanted to know if the temple journey is symbolic of the challenges in a person's journey through life.

6 A young boy in the family picked up on the conversation. When the tour group entered an endowment room, the boy pointed to the altar, where people kneel to make covenants with God, and said, "Oh, that's nice. Here is a place for people to *rest* on their temple journey."

7 I doubt that the boy knew just how profound his observation was. He likely had no idea about the direct connection between making a covenant with God in the temple and the Savior's stunning promise:

8 "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you *rest*."

9 "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; ... and ye shall find *rest* unto your souls."

10 "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."^b

11 Dear brothers and sisters, I grieve for those who leave the Church because they feel membership requires too much of them. They have not yet discovered that making and keeping covenants actually makes life easier! Each person who makes covenants in baptismal fonts and

in temples—and keeps them—has increased access to the power of Jesus Christ. Please ponder that stunning truth!

12 The reward for keeping covenants with God is heavenly power—power that strengthens us to withstand our trials, temptations, and heartaches better. This power eases our way. Those who live the higher laws of Jesus Christ have access to His higher power. Thus, covenant keepers are entitled to a special kind of *rest* that comes to them through their covenantal relationship with God.

13 Before the Savior submitted Himself to the agony of Gethsemane and Calvary, He declared to His Apostles, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have *overcome the world*."^c Subsequently, Jesus entreated each of us to do the same when He said, "I *will* that ye should *overcome* the world."^d

14 Dear brothers and sisters, my message to you today is that because Jesus Christ overcame this fallen world, and because He atoned for each of us, you too can overcome this sin-saturated, self-centered, and often exhausting world.

15 Because the Savior, through His infinite Atonement, redeemed each of us from weakness, mistakes, and sin, and because He experienced every

b Matthew 11:28–30; emphasis added.

c John 16:33; emphasis added

d Doctrine and Covenants 64:2; emphasis added

pain, worry, and burden you have ever had,^e then as you truly repent and seek His help, you can rise above this present precarious world.

16 You can overcome the spiritually and emotionally exhausting plagues of the world, including arrogance, pride, anger, immorality, hatred, greed, jealousy, and fear. Despite the distractions and distortions that swirl around us, you can find true *rest*—meaning relief and peace—even amid your most vexing problems.

17 This important truth prompts three fundamental questions:

18 First, what does it mean to overcome the world?

19 Second, how do we do it?

20 And third, how does overcoming the world bless our lives?

21 What does it mean to overcome the world? It means overcoming the temptation to care more about the things of this world than the things of God. It means trusting the doctrine of Christ more than the philosophies of men. It means delighting in truth, denouncing deception, and becoming “humble followers of Christ.”^f It means choosing to refrain from any-

thing that drives the Spirit away. It means being willing to “give away” even our favorite sins.^g

22 Now, overcoming the world certainly does not mean becoming perfect in this life, nor does it mean that your problems will magically evaporate—because they won’t. And it does *not* mean that you won’t still make mistakes. But overcoming the world does mean that your resistance to sin will increase. Your heart will soften as your faith in Jesus Christ increases.^h Overcoming the world means growing to love God and His Beloved Son more than you love anyone or anything else.

23 How, then, do we overcome the world? King Benjamin taught us how. He said that “the natural man is an enemy to God” and remains so forever “*unless* he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord.”ⁱ Each time you seek for and follow the promptings of the Spirit, each time you do anything good—things that “the natural man” would not do—you are overcoming the world.

24 Overcoming the world is not an event that happens in a day or two. It happens over a life-

e See Alma 7:11–13

f 2 Nephi 28:14

g See the account of King Lamoni’s father in Alma 22, especially Alma 22:18

h See Mosiah 5:7

i Mosiah 3:19; emphasis added

charge of your own testimony of Jesus Christ and His gospel. Work for it. Nurture it so that it will grow. Feed it truth. Don't pollute it with false philosophies of unbelieving men and women. As you make the continual strengthening of your testimony of Jesus Christ your highest priority, watch for miracles to happen in your life.^m

31 My plea to you this morning is to find *rest* from the intensity, uncertainty, and anguish of this world by *overcoming* the world through your covenants with God. Let Him know through your prayers and your actions that you are serious about overcoming the world. Ask Him to enlighten your mind and send the help you need. Each day, record the thoughts that come to you as you pray; then follow through diligently. Spend more time in the temple, and seek to understand how the temple teaches you to rise above this fallen world.ⁿ

32 As I have stated before, the gathering of Israel is the *most* important work taking place on earth today. One crucial element of this gathering is preparing a people who are able, ready, and worthy to receive the Lord when He comes again, a people who have already chosen Jesus Christ over this fallen world, a people who rejoice in their agency to

live the higher, holier laws of Jesus Christ.

33 I call upon you, my dear brothers and sisters, to become this righteous people. Cherish and honor your covenants above all other commitments. As you let God prevail in your life, I promise you greater peace, confidence, joy, and yes, *rest*.

34 With the power of the holy apostleship vested in me, I bless you in your quest to overcome this world. I bless you to increase your faith in Jesus Christ and learn better how to draw upon His power. I bless you to be able to discern truth from error. I bless you to care more about the things of God than the things of this world. I bless you to see the needs of those around you and strengthen those you love. Because Jesus Christ overcame this world, you can too. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 73

Focus on the Temple - Delieverd in the Sunday Afternoon Session of the October 2022 General Conference.

DEAR brothers and sisters, during these five magnificent sessions of general conference, we have once again experienced that the heavens are open! I pray that you have recorded your

^m See Russell M. Nelson, "Choices for Eternity" (worldwide devotional for young adults, May 15, 2022), broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org

ⁿ President David O. McKay said that in the temple we take a "step-by-step ascent into the Eternal Presence" (in Truman G. Madsen, *The Temple: Where Heaven Meets Earth* [2008], 11)

impressions and will follow through with them. Our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, stand ready to help you. I urge you to increase your efforts to seek Their help.

2 Recently, Sister Nelson and I had the opportunity to preview the new season 4 of the *Book of Mormon Videos* series.^o We were inspired by them! May I show you a brief excerpt from the scene depicting the Savior’s appearance to the Nephites.

3 It is significant that the Savior chose to appear to the people at the temple. It is His house. It is filled with His power. Let us never lose sight of what the Lord is doing for us now. He is making His temples more accessible. He is accelerating the pace at which we are building temples. He is increasing our ability to help gather Israel. He is also making it easier for each of us to become spiritually refined. I promise that increased time in the temple will bless your life in ways nothing else can.

4 We currently have 168 operating temples and 53 new temples under construction and another 54 in the preconstruction design phase!^p I am pleased to announce our plans to build a new temple in each of the following locations: Busan, Korea; Naga,

Philippines; Santiago, Philippines; Eket, Nigeria; Chiclayo, Peru; Buenos Aires City Center, Argentina; Londrina, Brazil; Ribeirão Preto, Brazil; Huehuetenango, Guatemala; Jacksonville, Florida; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Prosper, Texas; Lone Mountain, Nevada; and Tacoma, Washington.

5 We are also planning to build multiple temples in selected large metropolitan areas where travel time to an existing temple is a major challenge. Therefore, I am pleased to announce four additional locations near Mexico City where new temples will be built in Cuernavaca, Pachuca, Toluca, and Tula.

6 My dear brothers and sisters, may you focus on the temple in ways you never have before. I bless you to grow closer to God and Jesus Christ every day. I love you. May God be with you until we meet again, I pray in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 74

The Light of Jesus Christ: A Christmas Message - Delivered on YouTube December 18, 2022.

EVERY year, regardless of our current circumstances, we can find renewed hope and joy as we remember the blessing that

o These new videos will be available in many languages on Gospel Library and other channels. Episodes will be published on a weekly basis beginning today after conference.

p As of October 1, 2022, four more temples are being renovated (St. George Utah, Manti Utah, Salt Lake, and Columbus Ohio), and three are awaiting dedication (Hamilton New Zealand, Quito Ecuador, and Belém Brazil).

Horizontal lines for writing notes on the right side of the page.

came into the world that first Christmas night.

2 More than 2,000 years ago, the Savior of all humankind humbly came to earth as a precious baby.

3 I marvel at the increased goodwill and human kindness that always emerge during this sacred season. As we commemorate the birth of Him who is the light of the world, new light is kindled in each of us. Today, we need His light — the light of Jesus Christ — more than ever. We need men and women who reflect His light by being peacemakers — willing to reason with others rather than to contend with them.

4 I rejoice when I see young men and women willing to befriend those who feel excluded. Friends reflect His light when they mourn with those who mourn, and bring relief to those who are suffering. We need more wise men and women who seek the Lord, who serve the Lord, who reflect His light.

5 As we follow Jesus Christ, we can make this a better world.

6 So, this Christmas season, will you let your light shine? Amid all the hustle and bustle of gifts and gatherings, will you let your life reflect the light and love of Jesus Christ? With the dawning of each day, could you identify someone who needs your light? Reach out to that person by phone, video chat, or send a text or a note. Perform a quiet act of service to help someone nearby. Bring a new friend into your

circle. Help someone turn to the Savior and find enduring peace and divine rest.

7 There is no better way to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ than by lifting, loving and serving others. The world needs the light of Jesus Christ. And the world needs your light.

8 God be thanked for loving us enough to send His Only Begotten Son. Jesus Christ changed the world for each of us with His atoning sacrifice. He is the light of the world. He is the light we need to hold up. He is the light that fills us with good will toward all people.

9 I love the Lord Jesus Christ and testify that He lives. As we celebrate His birth in Bethlehem, let us emulate His life of loving kindness. May you and your loved ones be filled with His light and joy, now and always.

10 I express my gratitude for you and offer my best wishes for you to have a very merry Christmas.

CHAPTER 75

Patient, Persistent, and Prayerful - Delivered on social media January 1, 2023.

FOR me, deep-sea fishing has been infrequent but instructive. Success requires patience, persistence, and prayer.

2 As we begin this new year and make resolutions to improve things in our lives, these three requisites for successful fishing can help us.

3 First, be patient. As with fishing, real change requires time—and often a lot of time. It is tempting to expect immediate results and then become disappointed when things don’t work out exactly as planned. This may be why the Apostle Paul counseled us to “run with patience the race that is set before us”.^a

4 Second, be persistent. Keep at it, even when things get difficult. Push through the tough times, and realize that even small victories mean you are having success. The Savior “waxed strong in spirit”^b as He grew older. We too can wax strong in spirit and in our talents and habits if we persevere.

5 Third, be prayerful. Call upon God for the strength you need as you labor diligently to become a better version of yourself—a better disciple of Jesus Christ, a brighter light in the world. For “they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint”.^c

6 Happy New Year, my dear friends. May the Lord bless us all as we endeavor to become more like Him.

CHAPTER 76

Jesus Christ Is Our Savior - Published in the April 2023 Liahona Magazine.

I witness that through His Resurrection and the Restoration of His gospel, Jesus Christ opened to all the opportunity of passing through the veil into His Father’s presence.

2 “Why weepest thou?” the resurrected Savior asked Mary Magdalene as she stood outside the empty tomb.

3 “Sir,” she replied, “if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.”

4 “Mary,” Jesus said.

5 “Rabboni,” she replied as she recognized the Master.^d

6 From the Savior’s appearance to Mary to His appearances to His Apostles in the upper room,^e 500 brethren at once,^f the multitude numbering 2,500 in the land Bountiful,^g and Joseph Smith in our day,^h His Resurrection is one of the most carefully documented events in human history.

7 It is also the most important event in all of history.

a Hebrews 12:1

b Luke 2:40

c Isaiah 40:31

d See John 20:15–16

e see Luke 24:36–43

f see 1 Corinthians 15:6

g see 3 Nephi 11:7–17

h See, for example, Joseph Smith—History 1:17; Doctrine and Covenants 76:22–24

8 During His earthly ministry, Jesus Christ raised from the dead a widow's son,ⁱ the daughter of Jairus,^j and His friend Lazarus.^k Then, as His mortal ministry ended, and through power granted Him by God the Father, *Jesus raised Himself.*

9 "Destroy this temple," he had said of His body, "and in three days *I will raise it up*".^l

10 "Therefore doth my Father love me," He had also declared, "because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

11 "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. *I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.* This commandment have I received of my Father".^m

12 The Savior's Resurrection was the ultimate triumph, the ultimate miracle,ⁿ wrought of foreordination, indescribable agony, and divine power from on high. Through that incomprehensible power—made operable through the love, omniscience, and omnipotence of His Father—Jesus Christ became "the firstfruits"^o of the Resurrection.

What the Resurrection Means for Us

13 I am grateful I was home that Saturday in 2005. My first wife, Dantzel, and I had completed our household chores and decided to relax for a few minutes. We sat on the couch, held hands, and began watching a program on television.

14 Within a few moments, Dantzel suddenly and unexpectedly slipped peacefully into eternity. My efforts to revive her proved fruitless. Shock and sorrow overwhelmed me. My best friend of nearly 60 years was gone.

15 Ten years earlier, I had lost a daughter to cancer. Emily was only 37 years old. In 2019, I lost a second precious daughter to that dread disease. Wendy was only 67.

16 At those times of loss, how grateful I was for my testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. In His victory over the grave, we see the promise of our own resurrection.

17 "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth",^p the Savior declared following His Resurrection. That power includes the keys of the Resurrection. I know He will use those

i see Luke 7:11–15

j see Mark 5:38–42

k see John 11:39–44

l John 2:19; emphasis added

m John 10:17–18; emphasis added

n See Howard W. Hunter, "An Apostle's Witness of the Resurrection," *Ensign*, May 1986, 16.

o 1 Corinthians 15:23

p Matthew 28:18

keys to raise Dantzel, Emily, and Wendy, just as He will use those keys to raise the rest of the human family.

18 For God’s children, resurrection means that aging, deterioration, and decay will be done away. “This mortal shall put on immortality”,^q and “the spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form”.^r

19 Resurrection also makes possible another reuniting—the reuniting of families. We live together in love, so we weep when a loved one dies.^s But like Mary Magdalene, we can have our tears of sorrow turn into tears of joy as we anticipate the future from the perspective of an eternal family.

20 Because of the Resurrection, our tears of sorrow can turn into tears of joy as we anticipate the future from the perspective of an eternal family.

21 Through the new and everlasting covenant of the gospel, we marry for time and eternity in the temple. As we honor the covenants we make there and contemplate the Lord’s promises to His covenant people, we lose our fear of death. Instead, we look forward in joyful anticipation to reentering God’s presence with our loved ones.

22 Celestial marriage is the covenant of exaltation. Those so married, the Lord promises, “shall come forth in the first resurrection ... and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, ... to their exaltation and glory in all things”.^t

23 The purposes of the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement converge in the temples. The world needs this comforting knowledge. That is why we gather Israel.

Prepare for Your Eternal Future
24 The departure of Dantzel and my daughters reminds me of an important truth: “This life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors”.^u

25 Throughout her life, Dantzel prepared to return to her heavenly home. She knew that her time on earth was precious. She lived each day as if it were her last.

26 Job asked, “If a man die, shall he live again?”.^v Because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, the answer to Job’s question is an unequivocal yes! We *will* be resurrected. The question each of us must answer is this: “Will I be ready to live in the presence of God *after* my resurrection?”

q Mosiah 16:10
r Alma 11:43
s see Doctrine and Covenants 42:45
t Doctrine and Covenants 132:19
u Alma 34:32
v Job 14:14

27 Some of God's children live as though they are not planning on dying. Others live as if they will face no accountability for their actions. Are we making decisions for eternity or for today only? We cannot set our priorities on the temporal things of this world and be prepared for the eternal things of the next world.

28 Some of us will live long lives; some of us will live short lives. Long or short, our days are numbered. Death is a necessary part of our eternal progression and the fulness of joy that awaits faithful Saints. When we understand our existence from an eternal perspective, we understand that death is a merciful part of the plan of salvation. It is the gateway back to God's presence.

29 Death is premature only if we are unprepared to meet God. So, we must prepare.

30 We prepare by keeping our focus on the Savior and His gospel.

31 We prepare by exercising faith, applying "the atoning blood of Christ"^w through repentance, being baptized, and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost.

32 We prepare by being endowed and sealed in the holy temple.

33 We prepare by placing reason over appetite, caring for our body so that we can "present it pure before God in the celestial kingdom."^x

34 We prepare by developing Christlike attributes and loving God and our neighbor.^y

35 We prepare by honoring our covenants, letting God prevail in our lives, gathering Israel on both sides of the veil, and enduring to the end of our days.

An Apostolic Witness

36 At the death of the Savior, the earth quaked, the rocks rent, the graves opened, and the veil of the temple at Jerusalem "was rent in twain from the top to the bottom".^z

37 The veil separated the Holy of Holies, which symbolized God's presence, from the rest of the temple. Only on the Day of Atonement could the presiding high priest pass through the veil and sprinkle the blood of a sin offering to atone for the sins of all Israel.

38 When Jesus Christ shed His blood, He performed the final, "infinite atonement"^{aa} and fulfilled the law. The rending of the temple veil symbolized that the Great High Priest had passed through the veil of death, would soon enter the presence of His

w Mosiah 4:2

x Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 211.

y see Matthew 22:37-40

z Matthew 27:51; see also Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45

aa 2 Nephi 9:7

forever in God’s presence—is a possibility for all who qualify. The unchanging truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ can guide you to all that the Savior has in store for you now and in your future.

Remember Who You Are

8 With all you are doing now, never forget who you are. You are a son or daughter of God with unlimited, divine potential. Your spirit came to earth in a physical body. Together, your spirit and body are a living soul capable of experiencing mortality in ways that would not be possible otherwise.^a Your task is to let your true identity as a child of God shape the decisions you make now and for eternity.

*Understand the Future
of Your Soul*

9 Eventually the time will come when you will die. Your body and spirit will be separated and, in that state, “cannot receive a fulness of joy”.^b But thanks to Jesus Christ, you will be resurrected. You cannot help it—you *will* be resurrected!

10 Your body will be perfectly restored, never to be separated from your spirit again. You will then be an eternal soul. But will your soul be worthy of the celestial kingdom? *You* decide by choosing in this life to follow Jesus Christ and receive the gifts He offers. The scriptures teach

that we will “enjoy that which [we] are *willing* to receive.” Sadly, some will not be “willing to enjoy that which they *might* have received”.^c

11 What are *you* willing to receive and enjoy? Will you receive the peace and joy that come from earnestly seeking and following Jesus Christ? Will you rejoice in the hope of eternal life and “in him who is the giver of [that] gift”?^d If your answer is “Yes!” you will want to accept these gifts and the other gifts Jesus Christ has given so willingly to you and to all who will *receive* them.

Seek the Blessing of Repentance

12 In this life you will sometimes fall into temptation and sin. When this happens, the Savior lovingly offers you the ability to change. It’s called repentance. Satan wants you to see repentance as something negative that should be avoided and to fear that there is no way back from sin. This is simply not true.

13 There is *always* a way back. Jesus Christ is the way. You are never beyond His reach. He stands with open arms ready and willing to heal, cleanse, purify, and sanctify you. As you turn to the Savior and take steps to repent, you will feel just how much He loves you. He will forgive you and change your heart. Thanks to Jesus Christ, you can

a see Doctrine and Covenants 88:15

b Doctrine and Covenants 93:34

c Doctrine and Covenants 88:32; emphasis added

d Doctrine and Covenants 88:33

do better and *be* better each day!

*Gain the Strength to
Endure to the End*

14 At times you will experience sorrow and suffering. Through these difficult moments, the Savior can strengthen you to endure to the end, as He did.

15 Jesus willingly took upon Himself *all* your sin and pain and endured *all* your anguish and suffering. Through it all, He was not a quitter. He suffered deeply because He loves you deeply! ^e He gave up His life, and three days later, He overcame death and became the first to be resurrected.

16 Because the Savior endured to the end, He has power to strengthen you. He said, “Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life”.^f

Look to Your Savior

17 I am optimistic about your future. You have *so much* to look forward to! As you come unto Jesus Christ in faith, you can approach your future with confidence.

18 In a coming day, you will stand before the Savior to be judged. In that moment, you will be overwhelmed with joy to be in His holy presence. You will struggle to find words to thank Him for His infinite, perfect love and atoning sacrifice that makes

it possible for you to live with Him and your family forever.

19 Jesus Christ is *your* Savior. I invite you to look to Him and make Him the center of your life. He will bring you meaning and hope and make the impossible become possible to you. With Him by your side, amazing achievements and experiences you can scarcely imagine now may be yours.

20 Because of Him, a wonderful and exhilarating future, both here and hereafter, is before you!

CHAPTER 78

Peacemakers Needed - Delivered in the Sunday Morning Session of the April 2023 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters, it is a joy to be with you. During these past six months, you have been constantly on my mind and in my prayers. I pray that the Holy Ghost will communicate what the Lord wants you to hear as I speak to you now.

2 During my surgical internship many years ago, I assisted a surgeon who was amputating a leg filled with highly infectious gangrene. The operation was difficult. Then, to add to the tension, one of the team performed a task poorly, and the surgeon erupted in anger. In the middle of his tantrum, he threw his scalpel loaded with germs. It landed in *my* forearm!

Lined writing area for notes, consisting of horizontal lines extending across the right side of the page.

e see 1 Nephi 19:9–10
f 3 Nephi 15:9

3 Everyone in the operating room—except the out-of-control surgeon—was horrified by this dangerous breach of surgical practice. Gratefully, I did not become infected. But this experience left a lasting impression on me. In that very hour, I promised myself that *whatever* happened in *my* operating room, I would *never* lose control of my emotions. I also vowed that day never to throw anything in anger—whether it be scalpels or words.

4 Even now, decades later, I find myself wondering if the contaminated scalpel that landed in my arm was any more toxic than the venomous contention that infects our civic dialogue and too many personal relationships today. Civility and decency seem to have disappeared during this era of polarization and passionate disagreements.

5 Vulgarity, faultfinding, and evil speaking of others are all too common. Too many pundits, politicians, entertainers, and other influencers throw insults constantly. I am greatly concerned that so many people seem to believe that it is completely acceptable to condemn, malign, and vilify *anyone* who does not agree with them. Many seem eager to damage another's reputation with pathetic and pithy barbs!

6 Anger never persuades. Hostility builds no one. Contention

never leads to inspired solutions. Regrettably, we sometimes see contentious behavior even within our own ranks. We hear of those who belittle their spouses and children, of those who use angry outbursts to control others, and of those who punish family members with the "silent treatment." We hear of youth and children who bully and of employees who defame their colleagues.

7 My dear brothers and sisters, this should not be. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are to be examples of how to interact with others—*especially* when we have differences of opinion. One of the easiest ways to identify a *true follower* of Jesus Christ is how compassionately that person treats other people.

8 The Savior made this clear in His sermons to followers in both hemispheres. "Blessed are the peacemakers," He said.^g "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."^h And then, of course, He gave the admonition that challenges each of us: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."ⁱ

9 Before His death, the Savior commanded His Twelve Apostles to love one another as He

g Matthew 5:9; see also 3 Nephi 12:9. The Savior's promise to peacemakers is that they will "be called the children of God."

h Matthew 5:39; see also 3 Nephi 12:39.

i Matthew 5:44; see also 3 Nephi 12:44.

had loved them.^j And then He added, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”^k

10 The Savior’s message is clear: His *true* disciples build, lift, encourage, persuade, and inspire—no matter how difficult the situation. True disciples of Jesus Christ are peacemakers.^l

11 Today is Palm Sunday. We are preparing to commemorate the most important and transcendent event ever recorded on earth, which is the Atonement and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the best ways we can honor the Savior is to become a peacemaker.^m

12 The Savior’s Atonement made it possible for us to overcome *all* evil—including contention. Make no mistake about it: contention *is* evil! Jesus Christ declared that those who have “the spirit of contention” are not of Him but are “of the devil, who is the father of contention, and [the devil] stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another.”ⁿ Those who foster contention are taking a page out of Satan’s playbook, whether they realize it or not. “No man can serve two masters.”^o We cannot support Satan with our verbal assaults and then think

that we can still serve God.

13 My dear brothers and sisters, how we treat each other really matters! How we speak to and about others at home, at church, at work, and online really matters. Today, I am asking us to interact with others in a higher, holier way. Please listen carefully. “If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy”^p that we can say about another person—whether to his face or behind her back—that should be *our* standard of communication.

14 If a couple in your ward gets divorced, or a young missionary returns home early, or a teenager doubts his testimony, they do not need your judgment. They need to experience the pure love of Jesus Christ reflected in your words and actions.

15 If a friend on social media has strong political or social views that violate everything you believe in, an angry, cutting retort by you will not help. Building bridges of understanding will require much more of you, but that is exactly what your friend needs.

16 Contention drives away the Spirit—every time. Contention reinforces the false notion that

j See John 13:34.

k John 13:35.

l See Moroni 7:3–4.

m See Mosiah 3:19.

n 3 Nephi 11:29. John the Revelator saw in vision that the devil would come to earth “having great wrath” (Revelation 12:12).

o 3 Nephi 13:24.

p Articles of Faith 1:13.

Horizontal lines for notes or reflections.

confrontation is the way to resolve differences; but it never is. Contention is a choice. Peacemaking is a choice. You have your agency to choose contention or reconciliation. I urge you to *choose* to be a peacemaker, now and always.^q

17 Brothers and sisters, we can literally change the world—one person and one interaction at a time. How? By modeling how to manage honest differences of opinion with mutual respect and dignified dialogue.

18 Differences of opinion are part of life. I work every day with dedicated servants of the Lord who do not always see an issue the same way. They know I want to hear their ideas and honest feelings about everything we discuss—*especially* sensitive issues.

19 My two noble counselors, President Dallin H. Oaks and President Henry B. Eyring, are exemplary in the way they express their feelings—*especially* when they may differ. They do so with pure love for each other. Neither suggests that he knows best and therefore must rigorously defend his position. Neither evidences the need to compete with the other. Because each is filled with charity, “the pure love of Christ,”^r our de-

liberations can be guided by the Spirit of the Lord. How I love and honor these two great men!

20 Charity is the antidote to contention. Charity is the spiritual gift that helps us to cast off the natural man, who is selfish, defensive, prideful, and jealous. Charity is the principal characteristic of a true follower of Jesus Christ.^s Charity defines a peacemaker.

21 When we humble ourselves before God and pray with *all* the energy of our hearts, God will grant us charity.^t

22 Those blessed with this supernal gift are long-suffering and kind. They do not envy others and are not caught up in their own importance. They are not easily provoked and do not think evil of others.^u

23 Brothers and sisters, the pure love of Christ is the answer to the contention that ails us today. Charity propels us “to bear one another’s burdens”^v rather than heap burdens upon each other. The pure love of Christ allows us “to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things”^w—*especially* in tense situations. Charity allows us to demonstrate how men and women of Christ speak and act—*especially* when under fire.

q See Moroni 7:3–4.

r Moroni 7:47.

s See Moroni 7:48.

t See Moroni 7:48.

u See Moroni 7:45; see also 1 Corinthians 13:4–5.

v Mosiah 18:8.

w Mosiah 18:9.

room for prejudice, condemnation, or contention of any kind.

30 My dear brothers and sisters, the best is yet to come for those who spend their lives building up others. Today I invite you to examine your discipleship within the context of the way you treat others. I bless you to make any adjustments that may be needed so that your behavior is ennobling, respectful, and representative of a true follower of Jesus Christ.

31 I bless you to replace belligerence with beseeching, animosity with understanding, and contention with peace.

32 God lives! Jesus is the Christ. He stands at the head of this Church. We are His servants. He will help us to become His peacemakers. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 79

The Answer Is Always Jesus Christ - Delivered in the Sunday Afternoon Session of the April 2023 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters, we have been spiritually fed during these last two days. The choir music was superb. Those who have spoken have been instruments for the Lord. I pray that you will seek for the Holy Ghost to guide you in your study as you contemplate the truths

taught from this pulpit. They have truly been heaven sent.

2 One week from today is Easter Sunday. It is *the* most important religious observance for followers of Jesus Christ. The main reason we celebrate Christmas is because of Easter. The *Come, Follow Me* lesson this week will prompt you to study the Savior’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem, His cleansing of the temple, His suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane, His Crucifixion, His glorious Resurrection, and His subsequent appearances to His followers.^a

3 Savor these sacred verses and find every way you can to thank our Heavenly Father for sending us His Only Begotten Son.^b Because of Jesus Christ, we can repent and be forgiven of our sins. Because of Him, each of us will be resurrected.

4 I also invite you to study again the account of the Savior’s appearance to the Nephites in the Americas, as recorded in 3 Nephi. Not long before that appearance, His voice was heard among the people, including these words of supplication:

5 “Will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?”

6 “... Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and

a See Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families: New Testament 2023, 57–60.

b See John 3:16.

whosoever will come, him will I receive.”^c

7 Dear brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ extends that same invitation to you today. I plead with you to come unto Him so that He can heal *you!* He will heal you from sin as you repent. He will heal you from sadness and fear. He will heal you from the wounds of this world.

8 Whatever questions or problems you have, the answer is always found in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Learn more about His Atonement, His love, His mercy, His doctrine, and His restored gospel of healing and progression. Turn to Him! Follow Him!

9 Jesus Christ is the reason we build temples. Each is His holy house. Making covenants and receiving essential ordinances in the temple, as well as seeking to draw closer to Him there, will bless your life in ways no other kind of worship can. For this reason, we are doing all within our power to make the blessings of the temple more accessible to our members around the world. Today, I am grateful to announce our plans to build a new temple in each of the following locations:

- Retalhuleu, Guatemala
- Iquitos, Peru
- Teresina, Brazil
- Natal, Brazil

- Tuguegarao City, Philippines
- Iloilo, Philippines
- Jakarta, Indonesia
- Hamburg, Germany
- Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada
- San Jose, California
- Bakersfield, California
- Springfield, Missouri
- Charlotte, North Carolina
- Winchester, Virginia
- Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

10 My dear brothers and sisters, I bear witness that Jesus Christ directs the affairs of His Church. I testify that following Him is the only way to enduring happiness. I know that His power is descending upon His covenant-keeping people, who are “armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory.”^d I so testify, with my love and blessing for each of you, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 80

Forgiving Others: An Easter Message - Published on YouTube April 2, 2023.

AS we approach Easter, my thoughts have lingered on one of the last moments of the Savior’s mortal ministry. As He was being crucified on Calvary’s cross, The Redeemer of all mankind uttered these timeless words:

2 “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”^e

c 3 Nephi 9:13–14.
d 1 Nephi 14:14.
e Luke 23:34

3 How is it possible in His time of excruciating agony for Jesus Christ to ask his Father to forgive His tormentors? And yet, on the cross, Jesus did exactly that. He practiced what He had preached. He taught us to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us, and even to pray for those who spitefully use us.

4 I know from firsthand experience that forgiveness blesses both the forgiver and the forgiven. Three children born to Ruth and Jimmy Hatfield suffered from congenital heart disease. They sought my help as a heart surgeon for their two daughters, Laural Ann and Gay Lynn.

5 I was heartbroken when both girls died after I had operated on them. Understandably, Ruth and Jimmy were shattered. And they blamed me.

6 For almost six decades, I was haunted by this situation. I grieved for the Hatfields and tried to establish contact with them several times, but without success.

7 A few years ago, I reached out again to the Hatfield family. Much to my relief, this time, they were willing to meet with me.

8 On bended knee, I poured out my heart to them. The Spirit of the Lord prevailed. They forgave me. And it proved to be a turning point in their lives and in mine.

9 Now I treasure the friendship I share with the Hatfields. Just think about their courage and humility! They were willing to let go of old hurts. The Spirit of forgiveness released them from burdens they had carried for nearly 60 years.

10 There is nothing easy about forgiving those who have disappointed us, hurt us, cheated us, or spread false rumors about us. However, not forgiving others is poison for us. Grudges weigh us down. Angry disagreements separate us. Animosity and hatred can divide families.

11 And yet, the Savior's counsel is clear:

12 ..."if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you..."^f

13 Forgiving others does not mean condoning sinful or criminal behavior. And it certainly does not mean staying in abusive situations.

14 But, when we choose to forgive others, we allow the Lord to remove the poison from our souls. We permit him to soothe and soften our hearts, so we can see others, especially those who have wronged us, as children of God, and as our brothers and sisters.

15 Every Easter, we rejoice in the Resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ. He is the epitome of forgiveness.

16 My dear friends, I invite you prayerfully to consider if there is someone whom you should forgive. Will you free yourself from a grudge you may be harboring?

17 I can think of no more fitting way to honor the Lord Jesus Christ this Easter. I promise that as you forgive, the Savior will relieve you of anger, resentment and pain. The Prince of Peace will bring you peace.

18 Jesus Christ is risen! He loves you! And because of Him, you can experience the joy and miracle of forgiveness.

CHAPTER 81

Fulfilling Our Commission As Disciples of Jesus Christ - Published on YouTube and Facebook June 22, 2023.

THE Lord declared two millennia ago, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost".^a

2 That commandment is still in force, made vital again by the Savior's coming to the earth, under the direction of God the Father, to the Prophet Joseph Smith to restore the gospel of Jesus Christ in its fullness and to reestablish His Church.

3 As members of the The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we have the sacred and covenant responsibility to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and

bless the lives of all of God's children.

4 I am pleased to announce the release of the second edition of Preach My Gospel. It carries the subtitle A Guide to Sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

5 This new edition comes at a time when the world is rapidly changing and reflects a sensitivity to many of those changes. It contains some of the best instruction I have ever seen to help people accept the Lord's invitation to come unto Him.

6 Each and every time we share the gospel with others, we are fulfilling our commission as disciples of the Lord. His light is needed now more than ever. In our spiritually darkening world, the need is even greater to "go ... into all the world, and preach [His] gospel".^b

7 I invite you to enjoy the enrichment to your own testimony that the updated Preach My Gospel manual can provide. You will sense the privilege it is to assist our Father in Heaven in his holy work.

8 As you study and apply the teachings from Preach My Gospel second edition, from the scriptures, and from living prophets, you will be blessed. Your own testimony will be enriched. Your capacity to share the Savior's gospel will increase.

a Matthew 28:19
b Doctrine and Covenants 112:28

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

9 I know that God lives. Jesus is the Christ. This is His Church. We are His covenant people, called to assist in His work.

10 I so testify with my expression of love for each of you, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 82

Think Celestial! - Delivered in the Sunday Afternoon Session of the October 2023 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters, I am deeply grateful to speak with you today. At my age, each new day brings wonderful as well as challenging surprises. Three weeks ago, I injured the muscles of my back. So, while I have delivered more than 100 general conference addresses standing, today I thought I would do so sitting. I pray that the Spirit will carry my message into your hearts today.

2 I recently celebrated my 99th birthday and thus commenced my 100th year of living. I am often asked the secret to living so long. A better question would be "What have I learned in nearly a century of living?"

3 Time today does not allow me to answer that question fully, but may I share one of the most crucial lessons I have learned.

4 I have learned that Heavenly Father's plan for us is *fabulous*, that what we do in this life really matters, and that the Savior's Atonement is what makes our Father's plan possible.^a

5 As I have wrestled with the intense pain caused by my recent injury, I have felt even deeper appreciation for Jesus Christ and the incomprehensible gift of His Atonement. Think of it! The Savior suffered "pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind"^b so that He can comfort us, heal us, rescue us in times of need.^c Jesus Christ described His experience in Gethsemane and on Calvary: "Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore."^d My injury has caused me to reflect again and again on "the greatness of the Holy One of Israel."^e During my healing, the Lord has manifested His divine power in peaceful and unmistakable ways.

6 Because of Jesus Christ's infinite Atonement, our Heavenly Father's plan is a perfect plan! An understanding of God's fabulous plan takes the mystery out of life and the uncertainty out of our future. It allows each of *us* to choose *how* we will live here on earth and *where* we will live forever. The baseless notion that we should "eat, drink, and be mer-

a See John 6:38
b Alma 7:11
c See Alma 7:12
d Doctrine and Covenants 19:18
e 2 Nephi 9:40

13 When you make choices, I invite you to take the long view—an eternal view. Put Jesus Christ first because your eternal life is dependent upon your faith in Him and in His Atonement.^l It is also dependent upon your obedience to His laws. Obedience paves the way for a joyful life for you today and a grand, eternal reward tomorrow.

14 When you are confronted with a dilemma, think celestial! When tested by temptation, think celestial! When life or loved ones let you down, think celestial! When someone dies prematurely, think celestial. When someone lingers with a devastating illness, think celestial. When the pressures of life crowd in upon you, think celestial! As you recover from an accident or injury, as I am doing now, think celestial!

15 As you focus on thinking celestial, expect to encounter opposition.^m Decades ago, a professional colleague criticized me for having “too much temple” in me, and more than one supervisor penalized me because of my faith. I am convinced, however, that thinking celestial enhanced my career.

16 As you think celestial, your heart will gradually change. You will want to pray more often and more sincerely. Please don’t let your prayers sound like a shopping list. The Lord’s perspective

transcends your mortal wisdom. His response to your prayers may surprise you and will help you to think celestial.

17 Consider the Lord’s response to Joseph Smith when he pleaded for relief in Liberty Jail. The Lord taught the Prophet that his inhumane treatment would give him experience and be for his good.ⁿ “If thou endure it well,” the Lord promised, “God shall exalt thee on high.”^o The Lord was teaching Joseph to think celestial and to envision an eternal reward rather than focus on the excruciating difficulties of the day. Our prayers can be—and should be—living discussions with our Heavenly Father.

18 As you think celestial, you will find yourself avoiding *anything* that robs you of your agency. *Any* addiction—be it gaming, gambling, debt, drugs, alcohol, anger, pornography, sex, or even food—offends God. Why? Because your obsession becomes your god. You look to *it* rather than to *Him* for solace. If you struggle with an addiction, seek the spiritual and professional help you need. Please do not let an obsession rob you of your freedom to follow God’s fabulous plan.

19 Thinking celestial will also help you obey the law of chas-

l The scriptures repeatedly testify that the gift of eternal life is only possible through the merits, mercy, and grace of the Savior Jesus Christ (see, for example, Moroni 7:41; see also 2 Nephi 2:6–8, 27).

m See 2 Nephi 2:11

n See Doctrine and Covenants 122:7

o Doctrine and Covenants 121:8

tity. Few things will complicate your life more quickly than violating this divine law. For those who have made covenants with God, immorality is one of the quickest ways to lose your testimony.

20 Many of the adversary’s most relentless temptations involve violations of moral purity. The power to create life is the *one privilege* of godhood that Heavenly Father allows His mortal children to exercise. Thus, God set clear guidelines for the use of this living, divine power. Physical intimacy is *only* for a man and a woman who are married to each other.

21 Much of the world does not believe this, but public opinion is not the arbiter of truth. The Lord has declared that no unchaste person will attain the celestial kingdom. So when you make decisions regarding morality, please think celestial. And if you have been unchaste, I plead with you to repent. Come unto Christ and receive His promise of *complete* forgiveness as you fully repent of your sins.^p

22 As you think celestial, you will view trials and opposition in a new light. When someone you love attacks truth, think ce-

lestial, and don’t question *your* testimony. The Apostle Paul prophesied that “in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.”^q

23 There is no end to the adversary’s deceptions. Please be prepared. Never take counsel from those who do not believe. Seek guidance from voices you can trust—from prophets, seers, and revelators and from the whisperings of the Holy Ghost, who “will show unto you *all* things what ye should do.”^r Please do the spiritual work to increase your capacity to receive personal revelation.^s

24 As you think celestial, your faith will increase. When I was a young intern, my income was \$15 a month. One night, my wife Dantzel asked if I was paying tithing on that meager stipend. I was not. I quickly repented and began paying the additional \$1.50 in monthly tithing.

25 Was the Church any different because we increased our tithing? Of course not. However, becoming a full-tithe payer changed *me*. That is when I learned that paying tithing is all about faith, not money. As I became a full-tithe payer, the

p See Isaiah 1:16–18; Doctrine and Covenants 58:42–43

q 1 Timothy 4:1. The next verse continues, “Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (verse 2). Paul also declared that all who “live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12).

r 2 Nephi 32:5; emphasis added. If we will ask, we may “receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge” (Doctrine and Covenants 42:61).

s See Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” Ensign or Liahona, May 2018, 96.

Horizontal lines for writing notes on the right side of the page.

windows of heaven began to open for me. I attribute several subsequent professional opportunities to our faithful payment of tithes.^a

26 Paying tithing requires faith, and it also *builds* faith in God and His Beloved Son.

27 Choosing to live a virtuous life in a sexualized, politicized world builds faith.

28 Spending more time in the temple builds faith. And your service and worship in the temple will help you to think celestial. The temple is a place of revelation. There you are shown how to progress toward a celestial life. There you are drawn closer to the Savior and given greater access to His power. There you are guided in solving the problems in your life, even your most perplexing problems.

29 The ordinances and covenants of the temple are of eternal significance. We continue to build more temples to make these sacred possibilities become a reality in each of your lives. We are grateful to announce our plans to build a temple in each of the following 20 locations:

- Savai'i, Samoa
- Cancún, Mexico
- Piura, Peru
- Huancayo, Peru
- Viña del Mar, Chile

- Goiânia, Brazil
- João Pessoa, Brazil
- Calabar, Nigeria
- Cape Coast, Ghana
- Lunda, Angola
- Mbuji-Mayi, Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Laoag, Philippines
- Osaka, Japan
- Kahului, Maui, Hawaii
- Fairbanks, Alaska
- Vancouver, Washington
- Colorado Springs, Colorado
- Tulsa, Oklahoma
- Roanoke, Virginia
- Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

30 The Lord is directing us to build these temples to help us think celestial. God lives. Jesus is the Christ. His Church has been restored to bless all of God's children. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 83

Connect to Christ's Power - Delivered in Worldwide Day of Testimony broadcast October 22, 2023.

MY dear young friends thank you for attending this most memorable meeting. I think about you and pray for you often.

2 In our meetings of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the 12 Apostles, we counsel together about how we can best help you. We care about you deeply.

^a This is not to imply a cause-and-effect relationship. Some who never pay tithing attain professional opportunities, while some who pay tithing do not. The promise is that the windows of heaven will be opened to the tithe payer. The nature of the blessings will vary.

us an alcoholic drink. We politely declined. A few minutes later, he again offered us a drink. Again, we declined. When he approached us a third time, the man was livid! He warned me that if I did not take that drink he would make life mighty miserable for me.

12 We did not take that drink because we had made a promise to God. We kept our promise. And the chief resident kept his. He was responsible for scheduling operations for interns. He assigned me to assist in the longest and most difficult operations. However, assisting with difficult operations day after day made me a better surgeon.

13 Keeping the Word of Wisdom actually propelled me forward in my surgical career.

14 Through your continuing faith and obedience, the Lord will increase your ability to move mountains in your life, just as He did with me.

15 Prayerfully ask God to help you exercise stronger faith. Faith in our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, combined with daily repentance, will increase your access to godly power.

16 Recently I was impressed with a young woman your age who is doing just that. In every prayer, even when she asks a blessing at family meal time, she prays, "Please forgive for our sins and help us to become better people."

17 If perhaps you feel you have strayed off the covenant path too far or too long, let me assure you that is not true. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, your future can be bright, even brilliant. Speak with your parents and your bishop or branch president. They will help you to get on the path of progress once again. Please come back to the joy and safety of the covenant path. We need you with us.

18 Your ultimate success will come as you yoke yourself to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. I know that life without God is a life filled with fear. I also know that life *with* God is a life filled with peace, joy, and power. Resolve to live your life with God.

19 My dear young people, our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, are ready to bless you. They will not forsake you. You can do all things through Christ. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 84

Come, Let Us Adore Him - Delivered in the First Presidency Christmas Devotional December 3, 2023.

MY dear brothers and sisters, what a joy it is to commence another Christmas season when we commemorate the birth of our Savior and Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 It is a sacred event *every* time a child is born. Watch the reaction

of one of our great-grandsons as he holds his baby brother for the first time.

3 It is no wonder that on that most holy night more than 2,000 years ago near the little town of Bethlehem, heavenly hosts sang for joy! An angel taught shepherds this magnificent truth:

4 “Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

5 “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”^a

6 And now, my dear brothers and sisters, “Come, let us adore Him.”^b

7 As with many of you, Christmas has changed for me over the years. My childhood memories are etched on the backdrop of the Great Depression of the 1930s. Money was scarce. Gifts were particularly precious.

8 My parents made Christmas magical for me and my siblings. Each year we became a “sub-for-Santa” family for another family. We prepared appropriate gifts and delivered them on Christmas Eve. As we drove away from their home, their waving hands and tearful faces brought us the true joy of giving.

9 I loved the music of Christmas

then—and still do. Every year, Sister Nelson and I love listening to and singing along with Handel’s *Messiah*. I love the Hebraic meaning of the word *hallelujah*. It literally means “praise to the Lord God Jehovah.”^c Words sung in this oratorio not only apply to the birth of the Lord but to His millennial reign:

*For unto us a child is born,
Unto us a son is given:
And the government shall be upon
his shoulder:
And his name shall be called Won-
derful, Counsellor,
The mighty God,
The everlasting Father,
The Prince of Peace.*^d

10 It was during my young adult years that I began to gain a deep testimony of God the Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. I came to know for myself that Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary, who was a “precious and chosen vessel.”^e I knew that He really is the Son of God^f and the central figure in *all* human history.

11 Just think about the incomprehensible magnitude of what Jesus Christ accomplished—all according to the will of His Father! Jesus was already a God when He condescended to come to earth to complete the most crucial feat for each of us. A feat that was literally lifesaving and life-changing. A feat that not one of us could do for ourselves.

a Luke 2:10–11

b “Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful,” Hymns, no. 202; emphasis added.

c *Messiah* was written for Easter and first performed on April 13, 1742.

d Isaiah 9:6; see also 2 Nephi 19:6.

e Alma 7:10.

f See 1 Nephi 11:18.

12 The Savior “suffer[ed] pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind”^g so that He would know “according to the flesh how to succor [us] according to [our] infirmities.”^h

13 During the past few months, I have learned a lot more about pain and its refining influence. My heart has been drawn out to our Savior as I have tried to imagine the extent of His suffering. My mortal mind simply cannot comprehend how He took upon Himself *all* the pains, *all* the sins, *all* the anguish, and *all* the afflictions of *everyone* who has ever lived!

14 In the most supreme act of compassion that defies mortal understanding or description, the Savior submitted Himself to unparalleled spiritual and physical agony.

15 We revere the Babe of Bethlehem precisely because He later offered the incomprehensible, infinite sacrifice in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross of Calvary. This offering redeems each of us as we choose to repent and follow Him. Then, as His crowning act on earth, He rose from the tomb on the third day, granting each one of us the unprecedented blessing of resurrection and life after death.

16 At this season, we often happily sing or say, “We wish you

a merry Christmas.” My dear brothers and sisters, the wish of my heart for each of you tonight has several components. Actually, it is not my *wish* for you; it is my *prayer* for you at this sacred Christmas time.

17 First, I pray that you will feel the deep, eternal love our Savior has for you personally. Jesus Christ has known you since the premortal realm. He knows and sees you *now*. He sees your joys and your sorrows. He has experienced each of them.

18 He has perfect compassion for your struggles and rejoices every time you press forward in righteousness, during good times and bad.

19 I pray that you will gain your own personal witness that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He is filled with godly power, and that because of His grand atoning sacrifice, you never need to feel that you must *face* life’s difficult challenges alone. As you earnestly ask, seek, and knock,ⁱ you have constant access to His power to help you, to strengthen you, and to heal you.^j

20 I pray that you will take full advantage of the Savior’s Atonement by repenting daily, making your life increasingly pure, and seeking heavenly guidance in all that you do. In other words, I pray for you to experience the joy of always thinking celestial.

g Alma 7:11.

h Alma 7:12.

i See 3 Nephi 14:7.

j See 3 Nephi 9:13.

3 Sisters, you have a divine endowment that allows you literally to change lives! This is particularly true as we are anxiously engaged in the divine mandate to gather Israel. *Anytime* we help *anyone* find the covenant path and stay on it, we are helping to gather Israel. No one does this better than you do—as mothers, leaders, teachers, sisters, and friends. You are preparing future generations of the Lord’s Church and the world!

4 Recently, we learned of a little three-year old girl who awakened from her nap. To entertain her, her brother brought her one stuffed animal after another. But what finally brought her comfort and joy? Her very own copy of the Book of Mormon! This little girl watches her mother read from the Book of Mormon every day. She wanted to be like her mother!

5 It is simply not possible to quantify the life-refining influence of covenant women of God. I love my Brethren, and I cherish the privilege of working with them. However, the two people on earth who have influenced me most are my wife Dantzel, mother of our 10 children, who passed away suddenly at age 78, and, for the past 18 years, my wonderful wife Wendy.

6 During my recent strenuous recovery from a fall, Wendy

has cared for me tirelessly both physically and spiritually. She has done it in ways no one else could. The enormous influence that Dantzel and Wendy have had on me cannot be overstated. They have changed my life! They have made my life more complete.

7 Women have been at the center of our Heavenly Father’s plan from the beginning. God’s plan of salvation was dependent upon the heroic actions of two valiant women—Eve,^g “the mother of all living,”^h and Mary,ⁱ the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ.

8 Sisters, please never underestimate the extraordinary power within you to influence others for good. It is a gift with which our Heavenly Father has endowed *every covenant woman*. As a covenant daughter of God, you have receptivity to the Spirit and an enhanced moral compass that give you the capacity to receive personal revelation and to discern truth from error. In saying this, I do not absolve men from distinguishing right from wrong or from doing the spiritual work to receive revelation. However, *if* the world should ever lose the moral rectitude of its women, the world would never recover.^j

9 Sisters, we need your voices teaching the doctrine of Christ. We need your ability as women to detect deception and to

g See Moses 4:6–14.

h Genesis 3:20; see also Moses 4:26.

i See 1 Nephi 11:13–21; Alma 7:10.

j See Russell M. Nelson, “Spiritual Treasures,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2019, 76–79.

Wilt Thou protect this building and its surroundings from the elements and from anyone who might approach these sacred precincts with evil intent? Please bless the surrounding grounds, the shrubbery, flowers and all that will beautify this sacred sector of Sanpete Valley.

5 Our beloved Father, please bless the present and future temple presidencies, the matrons and their assistants. Please bless all faithful workers who will serve in any way. We pray for all who enter and patronize this temple, that they may receive sacred blessings and remain worthy and faithful to their covenants made here. We pray also that this may be a house of peace, a house of comfort and a house of personal revelation for all who enter these doors worthily. We ask Thee to bless those who seek to understand the power with which they are endowed here to receive knowledge from on high.

6 For all these blessings, and all else that Thou seest fit to grant unto us and unto these sacred premises, we humbly pray. Most gratefully, we offer this prayer of rededication in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

CHAPTER 87

Rejoice in the Gift of Priesthood Keys - Delivered in the Sunday Afternoon Session of the April 2024 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters, today is an historic day for President Dallin H. Oaks and me. It was 40 years ago, on April 7, 1984, when we were sustained to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.^a We have rejoiced in each and every general conference since then, including this one. We have once again been blessed with a sacred outpouring of the Spirit. I hope you will repeatedly study the messages of this conference throughout the coming months.

2 When I was born,^b there were six functioning temples in the Church—one each in St. George, Logan, Manti, and Salt Lake City, Utah; as well as in Cardston, Alberta, Canada; and Laie, Hawaii. Two earlier temples had functioned briefly in Kirtland, Ohio, and Nauvoo, Illinois. As the body of the Church moved west, the Saints were forced to leave those two temples behind.

3 The Nauvoo Temple was destroyed by an arsonist's fire. It was rebuilt and then dedicated by President Gordon B. Hinckley.^c The Kirtland Temple was

a I filled the vacancy in the Quorum of the Twelve left by the January 11, 1983, death of Elder LeGrand Richards. Elder Oaks filled that which was left by the January 11, 1984, death of Mark E. Petersen.

b September 9, 1924.

c The dedication of the rebuilt Nauvoo Illinois Temple by President Gordon B. Hinckley occurred on June 27, 2002, the 158th anniversary of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith.

desecrated by enemies of the Church. Later the Kirtland Temple was acquired by Community of Christ, which has owned it for many years.

4 Last month we announced that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has purchased the Kirtland Temple, along with several significant historic sites in Nauvoo. We greatly appreciate the cordial and mutually beneficial discussions we had with leaders from Community of Christ that led to this agreement.

5 The Kirtland Temple has unusual significance in the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Several events that took place there had been prophesied for millennia and were essential for the Lord's restored Church to fulfill its latter-day mission.

6 The most important of these events occurred on Easter Sunday, April 3, 1836.^d On that day, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery experienced a *series* of remarkable visitations. First, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared. The Prophet recorded that the Savior's "eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his

voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters."^e

7 During this visitation, the Lord affirmed His identity. He said, "I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father."^f

8 Jesus Christ then declared that He had accepted the temple as *His* house and made this stunning promise: "I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house."^g

9 This significant promise applies to *every* dedicated temple today. I invite you to ponder what the Lord's promise means for you personally.

10 Following the Savior's visitation, Moses appeared. Moses conferred upon Joseph Smith the keys for the gathering of Israel and the return of the ten tribes.^h

11 When this vision closed, "Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham" to Joseph.ⁱ

12 Then Elijah the prophet appeared. His appearance fulfilled Malachi's promise that before the Second Coming, the Lord would send Elijah to "turn the heart of the fathers to the chil-

d Just one week after the Prophet Joseph Smith dedicated the Kirtland Temple.

e Doctrine and Covenants 110:3.

f Doctrine and Covenants 110:4.

g Doctrine and Covenants 110:7.

h See Doctrine and Covenants 110:11.

i Doctrine and Covenants 110:12. This was a perpetuation of the promise the Lord had made to Abraham thousands of years earlier (see Genesis 18:18; 1 Nephi 15:18).

dren, and the heart of the children to their fathers.”^j Elijah conferred the keys of the sealing power upon Joseph Smith.^k

13 The significance of these keys being returned to the earth by three heavenly messengers under the direction of the Lord cannot be overstated. Priesthood keys constitute the authority and power of presidency. Priesthood keys govern how the priesthood of God may be used to bring about the Lord’s purposes and bless all who accept the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

14 It is important to note that prior to the organization of the Church, heavenly messengers had conferred the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods upon the Prophet Joseph and had given him keys of both priesthoods.^l These keys gave Joseph Smith authority to organize the Church in 1830.^m

15 Then in the Kirtland Temple in 1836, the conferral of these three additional priesthood keys—namely, keys of the gathering of Israel, keys of the gospel of Abraham, and keys of the sealing power—was essential. These keys authorized Joseph Smith—and all succeeding Presidents of the Lord’s Church—to gather Is-

rael on both sides of the veil, to bless all covenant children with the blessings of Abraham, to place a ratifying seal on priesthood ordinances and covenants, and to seal families eternally. The power of these priesthood keys is infinite and breathtaking.

16 Consider how *your* life would be different if priesthood keys had not been restored to the earth.ⁿ Without priesthood keys, you could not be endowed with the power of God.^o Without priesthood keys, the Church could serve only as a significant teaching and humanitarian organization but not much more. Without priesthood keys, none of us would have access to essential ordinances and covenants that bind us to our loved ones eternally and allow us eventually to live with God.

17 Priesthood keys distinguish The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from any other organization on earth. Many other organizations *can* and *do* make your life better here in mortality. But no other organization *can* and *will* influence your life after death.^p

18 Priesthood keys give us the authority to extend all of the blessings promised to Abra-

j See Malachi 4:5–6.

k See Doctrine and Covenants 110:13–16.

l See Doctrine and Covenants 13; 27:7–8, 12.

m See Doctrine and Covenants 20:1–4.

n When the Lord told Joseph Smith that this dispensation is the time when “nothing shall be withheld” (Doctrine and Covenants 121:28), it was because these priesthood keys had been returned to the earth.

o See Doctrine and Covenants 95:8; 109:22.

p See Doctrine and Covenants 132:45–46.

worship in the temple will have the power of God and angels having “charge over them.”^t How much does it increase your confidence to know that, as an endowed woman or man armed with the power of God, you do not have to face life alone? What courage does it give you to know that angels really will help you?

26 Finally, we are promised that “no combination of wickedness” will prevail over those who worship in the house of the Lord.^u

27 Understanding the spiritual privileges made possible in the temple is vital to each of us today.

28 My dear brothers and sisters, here is my promise. Nothing will help you *more* to hold fast to the iron rod^v than worshipping in the temple as regularly as your circumstances permit. Nothing will protect you *more* as you encounter the world’s mists of darkness. Nothing will bolster your testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Atonement or help you understand God’s magnificent plan *more*. Nothing will soothe your spirit *more* during times of pain. Nothing will open the heavens *more*. Nothing!

29 The temple *is* the gateway to the greatest blessings God has in store for each of us, for the temple is the only place on earth

where we may receive *all* of the blessings promised to Abraham.^w That is why we are doing all within our power, under the direction of the Lord, to make the temple blessings more accessible to members of the Church. Thus, we are pleased to announce that we plan to build a new temple in each of the following 15 locations:

- Uturoa, French Polynesia
- Chihuahua, Mexico
- Florianópolis, Brazil
- Rosario, Argentina
- Edinburgh, Scotland
- Brisbane, Australia south area
- Victoria, British Columbia
- Yuma, Arizona
- Houston, Texas south area
- Des Moines, Iowa
- Cincinnati, Ohio
- Honolulu, Hawaii
- West Jordan, Utah
- Lehi, Utah
- Maracaibo, Venezuela

30 My dear brothers and sisters, I testify that this is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He stands at its head. We are His disciples.

31 Let us *rejoice* in the restoration of priesthood keys, which make it possible for you and me to enjoy *every* spiritual blessing we are *willing* and worthy to receive. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

t Doctrine and Covenants 109:22.

u See Doctrine and Covenants 109:24–26.

v Meaning the word of God.

w See Doctrine and Covenants 110:12; 132:29–30.

CHAPTER 88

A Pattern for Unity in Jesus Christ - Published in the October 2024 Lia-hona and For The Strength of Youth Magazines.

WE live in an age when a surging tide of discord and disputation is spreading across the globe. Aided by technology and abetted by people whose hearts have waxed cold, these divisive forces threaten to fill our hearts with contempt and corrupt our communication with contention. Communal ties are breaking. Wars are raging.

2 Against this backdrop, true followers of Jesus Christ yearn for peace and actively seek to build a different kind of society—one that is founded on the teachings of Jesus Christ. To this end, the Lord has charged us to “be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine”.^a Indeed, unity is a hallmark of the true Church of Jesus Christ.

3 How do we work against the forces of division and contention? How do we achieve unity?

4 Fortunately, 4 Nephi in the Book of Mormon gives us an example. This chapter briefly records the way the people lived after the Savior had visited them, taught them, and established His Church among them. This account shows how these people achieved a blissful and peaceful unity, and it gives us a

pattern we can follow to attain this same unity ourselves.

Conversion

5 In 4 Nephi 1:1, we read: “The disciples of Jesus had formed a church of Christ in all the lands round about. And [people] did come unto them, and did truly repent of their sins.”

6 We unite around the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As each person learns about Jesus Christ, His gospel, and His Church, the Holy Ghost witnesses of the truth to each person’s heart. Each of us can then accept the Savior’s invitation to have faith in Him and follow Him by repenting.

7 Thus begins an individual’s journey of conversion—away from selfish and sinful desires and toward the Savior. He is the foundation of our faith. And as each of us looks unto Him in every thought,^b He becomes a unifying force in our lives.

Covenants

8 The record in 4 Nephi goes on to state that those who came to the Church and repented of their sins “were baptized in the name of Jesus; and they did also receive the Holy Ghost”.^c They had entered into a covenant—a special, binding relationship—with God.

9 When we make and keep covenants, we take the Lord’s name

a Doctrine and Covenants 38:27
b see Doctrine and Covenants 6:36
c 4 Nephi 1:1

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the text on the left.

upon us as individuals. In addition, we take His name upon us as a people. All who make covenants and strive to keep them become the Lord's people, His special treasure.^d Thus, we travel the covenant path both individually and collectively. Our covenant relationship with God gives us a common cause and a common identity. As we bind ourselves to the Lord, He helps us to have our "hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another".^e

10 Our covenant relationship with God gives us a common cause and a common identity.

*Fairness, Equality, and
Helping the Poor*

11 The account in 4 Nephi continues: "There were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another.

12 "And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift".^f

13 In our temporal dealings, the Lord wants us to be fair and just to one another and not to de-

fraud or take advantage of one another.^g As we grow closer to the Lord, we "will not have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably, and to render to every man according to that which is his due".^h

14 The Lord has also commanded us to care for the poor and needy. We should "impart of [our] substance" to help them, according to our ability to do so, without judging them.ⁱ

15 Each of us is to "esteem his brother as himself".^j If we are to be the Lord's people and be unified, not only must we treat one another as equals, but we must also truly view one another as equals and feel in our hearts that we are equal—equal before God, of equal worth and equal potential.

Obedience

16 The next lesson from 4 Nephi comes in this simple expression: "They did walk after the commandments which they had received from their Lord and their God".^k

17 The Lord had taught these people His doctrine, given them commandments, and called servants to administer to them. One

d see Exodus 19:5

e For more about the meaning and blessings of making covenants with God, see Russell M. Nelson, "The Everlasting Covenant," *Liahona*, Oct. 2022, 4–11. See also Mosiah 18:21

f 4 Nephi 1:2–3

g see 1 Thessalonians 4:6

h Mosiah 4:13

i see Mosiah 4:21–27

j Doctrine and Covenants 38:24

k 4 Nephi 1:12

27 The labels that had divided the people for hundreds of years receded before a more enduring and ennobling identity. They viewed themselves—and everyone else—according to their relationship with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

28 Diversity and differences can be good and significant to us. But our most important identities are those related to our divine origin and purpose.

29 First and foremost, each of us is a child of God. Second, as a member of the Church, each of us is a child of the covenant. And third, each of us is a disciple of Jesus Christ. I urge all of us not to allow any other identifier to “displace, replace, or take priority over these three enduring designations.”^a

Be One

30 God has invited all to come unto Him. There is room for everyone. We may differ in our cultures, politics, ethnicities, tastes, and many other ways. But as we unite in Jesus Christ, such differences fade in their significance and are superseded by our overriding desire to be one—so that we may be His.

31 Take to heart the lessons taught in 4 Nephi. As each of us

strives to incorporate these essential elements of unity into our lives, it may be said of us, as it was of them, “Surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God”.^b

CHAPTER 89

The Lord Jesus Christ Will Come Again - Delivered in the Sunday Afternoon Session of the October 2024 General Conference.

MY dear brothers and sisters, I am grateful that the Lord has blessed me to speak with you.

2 In this conference, the Lord has spoken to us through His servants. I urge you to study their messages. Use them as a litmus test of what is true and what is not during the next six months.

3 The preservation and renovation of the Salt Lake Temple and other areas on Temple Square have been underway for nearly five years. Present projections indicate that this work will be completed by the end of 2026. We are grateful for all who are working on this massive project.

4 During the last six months, we have dedicated or rededicated nine temples in five countries.^c Between now and the end of the

a Russell M. Nelson, “Choices for Eternity” (worldwide devotional for young adults, May 15, 2022), Gospel Library.

b 4 Nephi 1:16

c Manti Utah Temple rededication (President Russell M. Nelson, April 21); Urdaneta Philippines Temple (President Dallin H. Oaks, April 28); Puebla Mexico Temple (Elder Gerrit W. Gong, May 19); Taylorsville Utah Temple (Elder Gerrit W. Gong, June 2); Cobán Guatemala Temple (Elder Dale G. Renlund, June 9); Salta Argentina Temple (Elder D. Todd Christofferson, June 16); Layton Utah Temple (Elder David A. Bednar, June 16); Pittsburgh Pennsylvania Temple (Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf, September 15); Mendoza Argentina Temple (Elder Ronald A. Rasband, September 22).

12 Brothers and sisters, now is the time for you and for me to prepare for the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ.^k Now is the time for us to make our discipleship our highest priority. In a world filled with dizzying distractions, how can we do this?

13 Regular worship in the temple will help us. In the house of the Lord, we focus on Jesus Christ. We learn of Him. We make covenants to follow Him. We come to know Him. As we keep our temple covenants, we gain greater access to the Lord's strengthening power. In the temple, we receive protection from the buffetings of the world. We experience the pure love of Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father in great abundance! We feel peace and spiritual reassurance, in contrast to the turbulence of the world.

14 *Here is my promise to you: Every sincere seeker of Jesus Christ will find Him in the temple. You will feel His mercy. You will find answers to your most vexing questions. You will better comprehend the joy of His gospel.^l*

15 I have learned that the most crucial question we each must answer is this: To whom or to what will I give my life?

16 My decision to follow Jesus Christ is the most important decision I have ever made. During medical school, I gained a testimony of the divinity of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Since then our Savior has been the rock upon which I have built my life.^m That choice has made all the difference! That decision has made so many other decisions easier. That decision has given me purpose and direction. It has also helped me weather the storms of life. Let me share two examples:

17 First, when my wife Dantzel unexpectedly passed away, I could not reach any of our children. There I was, alone, devastated, and crying out for help. Gratefully, through His Spirit, the Lord taught me why my dear Dantzel had been taken home. With that understanding, I was comforted. Over time, I was better able to cope with my grief. Later, I married my beloved wife Wendy. She was a central part of my second example.

18 When Wendy and I were on assignment in a distant land, armed robbers put a gun to my head and pulled the trigger. But the gun did not fire. Throughout that experience, both of our lives were threatened. Yet Wendy and I felt an undeniable peace. It was the peace "which passeth all understanding."ⁿ

k See Alma 34:32.

l You may feel to say, as did Ammon, "Who can glory too much in the Lord? ... Behold, ... I cannot say the smallest part which I feel" (Alma 26:16).

m See Helaman 5:12.

n Philippians 4:7.

19 Brothers and sisters, the Lord will comfort you too! He will strengthen you. He will bless you with peace, even amidst chaos.

20 Please listen to this promise of Jesus Christ to you: "I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up."^o

21 There is no limit to the Savior's capacity to help you. His incomprehensible suffering in Gethsemane and on Calvary was for you! His infinite Atonement is for you!

22 I urge you to devote time each week—for the rest of your life—to increase your understanding of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. My heart aches for those who are mired in sin and don't know how to get out. I weep for those who struggle spiritually or who carry heavy burdens alone because they do not understand what Jesus Christ did for them.

23 Jesus Christ took upon Himself *your* sins, *your* pains, *your* heartaches, and *your* infirmities.^p You do not have to bear them alone! He will forgive you as you repent. He will bless you with what you need.^q He will heal your wounded soul.^r As

you yoke yourself to Him, your burdens will feel lighter.^s If you will make and keep covenants to follow Jesus Christ, you will find that the painful moments of your life are temporary. Your afflictions will be "swallowed up in the joy of Christ."^t

24 It is neither too early nor too late for you to become a devout disciple of Jesus Christ. Then you will experience fully the blessings of His Atonement. You will also be more effective in helping to gather Israel.

25 My dear brothers and sisters, in a coming day, Jesus Christ will return to the earth as the millennial Messiah. So today I call upon you to rededicate your lives to Jesus Christ. I call upon you to help gather scattered Israel and to prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord. I call upon you to talk of Christ, testify of Christ, have faith in Christ, and rejoice in Christ!^u

26 Come unto Christ and "offer your whole [soul]" to Him.^v This is the secret to a life of joy!

27 The best is yet to come, my dear brothers and sisters, because the Savior is coming again! The best is yet to come because the Lord is hastening His work. The best is yet to come as we ful-

o Doctrine and Covenants 84:88.
p See Alma 7:11–12; see also Luke 4:18.
q See Alma 7:12.
r See Psalm 147:3; Jacob 2:8.
s See Mosiah 24:14.
t Alma 31:38.
u See 2 Nephi 25:26.
v Omni 1:26.

Horizontal lines for writing, corresponding to the text on the left.

ly turn our hearts and our lives to Jesus Christ.

28 I bear my solemn witness that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I am His disciple. I am honored to be His servant. At His Second Coming, "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." That day will be filled with joy for the righteous!

29 Through the power of the sacred priesthood keys I hold, I declare this truth to you and to all the world! In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.