

Elder Ulisses Soares

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Only by accepting the Savior's invitation to "come and see" and to abide in Him — by "immersing ourselves in the scriptures, rejoicing in them, learning His doctrine, and striving to live the way He lived" — can individuals come to know Him and discern His truths as His disciples. This requires calling upon God and bringing His gospel to the center of a person's life. "Our actions must reflect what we learn and teach."



For those experiencing sadness, agony or regret because of family members or friends who have distanced themselves from the Lord, "please know that they are not totally lost because the Lord knows where they are and is watching over them. Remember, they are His children too."

It may be hard to understand why some people take different paths, but as the parable of the prodigal son teaches, "We should never give up on them but preserve our relationships. Never reject or misjudge them. Just love them."

Remember ... "always, that hope is an important part of the gospel plan," and that the teachings of the gospel of Christ have the power to transform hearts.

Sister Becky Craven

Young Women general presidency

Happiness is found in carefully living the gospel established by Jesus Christ. Like a train on a track that cannot swerve, "we too are on a track, a covenant path we committed to when we were baptized as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."



"We can rationalize all we want, but the fact is, there is not a right way to do the wrong thing."

The Mutual theme for 2019 is taken from John 14:15: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

"If we love [the Lord] as we claim, can't we show that love by being a little more careful in living His commandments?"

One can consider how careful he or she is in Sabbath-day worship, prayer, scripture study, temple worship, modesty in dress, ministering and language.

Temptation and casualness can cause one to fall into the darkness of the world and away from the covenant path, but President Russell M. Nelson has urged all to return to the covenant path quickly. "How grateful I am for the gift of repentance and for the power of the Savior's Atonement."

Elder Brook P. Hales

General Authority Seventy

Because of God's perfect love "He blesses us not only according to our desires and needs but also according to his infinite wisdom."



The Father is aware of His children and their needs and will help them. However, Father in Heaven may answer earnest petitions in different ways.

Sometimes divine help is granted in the moment it is asked for. In other situations, worthy desires are not granted in the way hoped, "for our ultimate benefit."

For example, Joseph the son of Jacob was envied and hated by his brothers who sold him as a slave into Egypt. "If ever a person might have felt that his prayers were not answered in the way he had hoped, it could have been Joseph." In reality, his apparent misfortune resulted in great blessings to him and saved his family from starvation as he became a trusted leader in Egypt.

And sometimes "the answer to prayer that we so righteously, desperately and earnestly seek is not given in this life."

God's children have the assurance that He will resolve their concerns, injustices and disappointments in His own way and in His own time. "I know that God hears our prayers. I know that as an all-knowing, loving Father, He answers our prayers perfectly, according to His infinite wisdom, and in ways that will be to our ultimate benefit and blessing."

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Pondering the Savior's commission "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19), "I wrestled with the question, 'How can we, as members and disciples of Christ, best fulfill that great commission in our daily lives?'"



"Today I invite you to ponder that same question in your heart and mind."

Five "guilt-free" things anyone can do to participate in the Savior's great commission to help gather Israel: First, draw close to God.

Second, fill your heart with love for others.

Third, strive to walk the path of discipleship.

Fourth, share what is in your heart.

And fifth, trust the Lord to work His miracles.

"His gospel and His Church are an important part of your life and of who you are and what you do.

Therefore, invite others to come and see and come and help, and God will do His saving work, and they will come and stay."

When sharing, "stand as witnesses" in word and deed, in person and online and in ways that seem natural and normal.

Bishop W. Christopher Waddell

Presiding Bishopric

In the fall of 2017, Bishop Waddell's older brother Mike was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.



Mike had not regularly attended Church in almost 50 years — but he began studying the scriptures and eventually began meeting with the missionaries. He received his patriarchal blessing and, just hours before his death, received the Melchizedek Priesthood.

During a time of need, Mike was ministered to by caring priesthood leaders, friends and relatives. None judged — they simply ministered like the Savior.

"For some, change may come sooner, for others perhaps beyond the veil. However, we must remember that it is never too late and no one has ever wandered so far from the path that they are beyond the reach of the infinite Atonement of Jesus Christ, which is limitless in its duration and scope."

It isn't necessary for someone to be suffering from a life-threatening disease to be in need of ministering service.

"Those needs come in a variety of shapes, sizes and conditions. ... However, like my brother Mike, no one is too far gone ... it's never too late ... for the Savior's loving reach."

President Henry B. Eyring

First Presidency

On April 6, 1830, in the Whitmer family home in Fayette, New York, the Prophet Joseph Smith officially organized the restored Church under the direction of the Lord. The event brought together a small group of people in the home where they felt the Holy Ghost and were in a "holy place."



"That miraculous feeling is what we all want in our homes. ... My purpose today is to teach what I know of how we can qualify for that feeling more often and invite it to last longer in our families. As you know from experience, that is not easy to do."

Contention, pride and sin have to be kept at bay. Even good people eventually face a spiritual decline if they don't protect the things that make a strong family.

"Building faith in Jesus Christ is the beginning of reversing any spiritual decline in your family and in your home. That faith is more likely to bring repentance than your preaching against each symptom of spiritual decline."

Five principles — growing in faith, praying with love, teaching early repentance, cultivating the missionary spirit and visiting the temple — help families feel and keep the Spirit in their homes.

President M. Russell Ballard

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

While worldly troubles and external forces such as poverty, war and natural disasters can cause pain and struggles in this mortal life, those who strive to follow Christ “can find peace, joy and happiness.”



Father in Heaven simply asks all to “do the very best we can each day.” If a person can do that, “you will come to realize that your Heavenly Father knows you and that He loves you. And when you know that – really know it – your life will have real purpose and meaning, and you will be filled with joy and peace.”

The Lord’s “work and glory” is to “bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of [men and women].” And while sin and transgression “dim the light of Christ in our lives,” the “true, pure, simple gospel” of Christ is the “saving doctrine of Christ” which is available to all God’s children.

Inspired changes implemented in the last several months have been introduced to simplify and return focus to “[preaching] the first principles of the gospel – faith, repentance, baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost and enduring to the end.” Repetition and practice by learning and teaching these basic principles can reveal additional light and understanding to those who seek it.

Elder Mathias Held

General Authority Seventy

Light and understanding come through the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Ghost.



Elder Held and his wife, Sister Irene Held, learned that truth after being contacted by the missionaries 31 years ago. “We read in the scriptures and came to understand the crucial importance of Jesus Christ as our Savior and Redeemer.”

The Helds recognized the fruits of the gospel in the actions of the Latter-day Saints they met at Church. They were happy people who placed Christ and their families at the center of their lives.

They continued their studies and liked everything they learned about the Church. But they held off baptism because “we wanted to know everything.”

“But, even in our indecision, the Lord was patiently preparing us, He was molding us, and He was helping us to discover that we should learn to discern the truth not only through our rational minds but also through the very still and small voice of the Spirit, which speaks especially to our hearts.”

By studying the Book of Mormon’s guiding words, they decided to be baptized.

“We learned that we can fully trust in a loving Heavenly Father.”

Elder Neil L. Andersen

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The question “What is truth?” can be answered a million different ways depending on the knowledge and perspective used. And in a world of “information and opinion overload,” many people choose to believe that truth is simply a matter of personal perspective.



But with the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, it becomes clear that “there are some things that are completely and absolutely true. These eternal truths are the same for every son and daughter of God.”

Truth is a knowledge of things past, present and future and expands far beyond the perspective offered by a single point in time. “Truth shows us the way to eternal life, and it comes only through our Savior, Jesus Christ. There is no other way.”

The restoration of the gospel provides a way to “learn and know essential spiritual truths” through the study of holy scriptures, personal prayer, individual experiences, the counsel of prophets and apostles, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Only through “the perspective eye of faith” can the spiritual truths of God be revealed and “bring us a clear spiritual perspective of truth necessary for our journey here on earth.”

Elder Takashi Wada

General Authority Seventy

Feasting upon the scriptures (2 Nephi 32:3) is not just reading them. “It should bring us real joy and build our relationship with the Savior.”



Three blessings come from feasting upon the words of Christ:

First, the words of Christ can help “increase [our] spiritual capacity to receive revelation,” as President Russell M. Nelson has taught, and be a safe guide through life.

Second, when individuals struggle with their own identity and lack of self-esteem, the “pleasing word of God” (Jacob 2:8) in the scriptures will help them know who they really are and give them strength beyond their own.

Third, followers of Christ can lift the lives of others through His words. A 4-year-old child’s Christlike act of sharing a hymnbook before a sacrament meeting helped prompt Elder Wada’s mother with a feeling of the need to be baptized.

“The words of Christ will profoundly touch hearts and open the eyes of those who do not yet see Him.” The disciples at Emmaus reflected on their time with the resurrected Savior; they said that their “hearts burned” within them while He opened the scriptures to them.

Elder David P. Homer

General Authority Seventy

In a world of competing voices – breaking news, tweets, blogs, podcasts – Heavenly Father makes it possible to hear and follow His voice.



“If we are diligent, He and His Son will give us the direction we seek, the strength we need, and the happiness we all desire.”

The popular voices of the day are not always best – and convenience rarely leads to things that matter.

“If we are not careful, the wrong voices can draw us away from the gospel center to places where faith is difficult to sustain, and we find little more than emptiness, bitterness and dissatisfaction.”

Most often, Heavenly Father sounds His voice through impressions given by the Holy Ghost.

“The Spirit speaks to different people in different ways, and He may speak to the same person in different ways at different times. As a result, learning the many ways He speaks to us is a lifelong quest.”

The Father’s voice can be found in many places. “We will find it when we pray, when we study the scriptures, and when we attend Church, engage in faithful discussions, or go to the temple. Surely, we will find it in conference this very weekend.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

By offering a sacrifice to God of a pure, unblemished lamb, the first male of the flock, Adam and his posterity “were expressing their understanding and their dependence upon the Atoning sacrifice of Jesus the Anointed One.”



Following Christ’s mortal ministry, “this Purest of All Pass-over Sheep” introduced the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper – “a more personal form of the ordinance that had been introduced just outside of Eden. There would still be an offering, it would still involve a sacrifice, but it would be with symbolism much deeper, much more introspective and personal than the bloodletting of a firstborn lamb.”

The sacrament should be the sacred focal point of Latter-day Saints’ Sunday worship experience. “We are to remember in as personal a way as possible that Christ died from a heart broken by shouldering entirely alone the sins and sorrows of the human family. Inasmuch as we contributed to that fatal burden, such a moment demands our respect. Thus, we are encouraged to come to our services early and reverently, dressed appropriately for participation in a sacred ordinance – the sacred ordinance.”

Elder Gary E. Stevenson

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

In team sports, plays are developed for certain situations and compiled into a playbook.

“In a similar way, we holders of the priesthood also have a team – a quorum – and a playbook – the holy scriptures and the words of modern prophets.”

Priesthood holders can create a playbook by identifying what temptations they are most vulnerable to and planning out how to respond to those temptations.

“Offensive strategies help strengthen testimonies and increase resolve to stay on the straight and narrow path. Examples include regular prayer, scripture study, Church and temple attendance, paying tithing and following the counsel found in the ‘For the Strength of Youth’ pamphlet.”

Defensive strategies include planning ahead for how to face temptation. “Know in advance the plays you will employ to strengthen your spirit and avoid the snares of the adversary.”

Recommended plays include praying every day, avoiding pornography and immoral social media content, remembering covenants, studying scriptures, serving others, researching family history and serving and strengthening others.



Elder Carl B. Cook

Presidency of the Seventy

When Andre Sebako first began meeting with the missionaries in his hometown of Mochudi, Botswana, there were no young men his age in the small branch. But the loving and tight-knit group of members welcomed him and helped him to stay active following his baptism by making him feel like he belonged and encouraging him to accompany the missionaries on their lessons.

They helped establish their branch and priesthood quorum as “a place where all ... are welcomed and valued.”

With the new home-centered focus, many members may be concerned about members of their congregations who come from “a family situation where the gospel is not studied and where there is not an environment of learning and living the gospel at home.”

But when there is limited support in the home, “priesthood quorums and other leaders and friends watch over and support each individual and family as needed.” That is the “Church-supported” part of the new focus.

In Andre’s small branch, the support of members and missionaries helped to keep him active and also helped to bring 11 other young men to Christ in just two years. Together, their Young Men priesthood quorum became known as “the Band of Brothers.”



Elder Kim B. Clark

General Authority Seventy

If Latter-day Saint priesthood bearers look unto Jesus Christ, He will bless them to be His elders in Israel – humble, meek, submissive, full of His love. “And we will bring the joy and blessings of His gospel and His Church to our families and our brothers and sisters on both sides of the veil.”

Living one’s covenants influences words and actions. “We live a covenant life full of simple everyday acts of faith that focus on Jesus Christ: prayer from the heart in His name, feasting on His word, turning to Him to repent of our sins, keeping His commandments, partaking of the sacrament and keeping His Sabbath holy, worshipping in His holy temple as often as we can and exercising His holy priesthood to serve God’s children.”

By looking unto Christ and feeling the flow of divine light and power, three miraculous things happen:

- 1) Seeing others as Jesus sees them and being blessed to love them as He loves them.
- 2) Using priesthood power – the authority and the power to act in the name of Jesus Christ.
- 3) Having the companionship of the Savior in all actions and efforts.



President Henry B. Eyring

First Presidency

One’s faith to sustain servants of God is often at the heart of happiness in life.

“You choose whether to sustain all whom the Lord calls – in whatever the Lord has called them. That choice happens in conferences all over the world. It has happened in this one. In such meetings, names of men and women – servants of God – are read and you are invited to raise your hand to sustain. You can withhold your sustaining vote, or you can pledge your sustaining faith.

“By raising your hand to sustain, you make a promise. You make a promise with God, whose servants these are, that you will sustain them.”

Keeping those promises requires faith and will bring eternal happiness.

Members across the world are generally loyal to each other and to those who preside over them.

“There are, however, improvements we could and must make. We could rise higher in our power to sustain each other. It will take faith and effort.”

Pray for leaders as they share their inspired messages. Listen for messages from their talks that will come as to personal prayers for help. “When the answers come, and I promise you they will, we will grow in our faith to sustain all the Lord’s servants.”



President Dallin H. Oaks

First Presidency

The present and the future will be happier by remaining conscious of the future.

“As we make current decisions, we should always be asking, ‘Where will this lead?’”

When one sees threats “creeping up on persons or things we love,” there is a choice to speak up or remain silent. “Where the consequences are immediate and serious, we cannot afford to do nothing. We must sound appropriate warnings or support appropriate preventive efforts while there is still time.”

When making decisions, always take the long view. “What is the effect on our future of the decisions we make in the present? Remember the importance of getting an education, studying the gospel, renewing our covenants by partaking of the sacrament and attending the temple.”

Every person is a child of God with a potential destiny of eternal life.

“Every other label, even including occupation, race, physical characteristics or honors, is temporary or trivial in eternal terms. Don’t choose to label yourselves or think of yourselves in terms that put a limit on a goal for which you might strive.”



President Russell M. Nelson

President of the Church

“When Jesus asks you and me to ‘repent,’ 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.”

To those moving along the covenant path, who have slipped or stepped from the covenant path or can’t even see the path, “I plead with you to repent. Experience the strengthening power of daily repentance – of doing and being a little better each day.”

Brethren are to identify what stops them from repenting. “And then change. Repent! All of us can do better and be better than ever before.”

The Lord needs men who put others’ welfare ahead of their own, who clearly hear the voice of the Spirit, who are sexually pure, who are eager to repent and who have a zeal to serve.

“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. ... And I bless you that as you make these efforts, you will experience miracles in your life.”



Elder Dale G. Renlund

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Blessings from God are neither earned nor pre-determined. Rather, “most blessings that God desires to give us require action on our part — action based on our faith in Jesus Christ. Faith in the Savior is a principle of action and of power.”

A pile of kindling wood contains an enormous amount of fuel and potential energy. But in order to be lit, a combustion reaction must ignite a flame. An act as small as the striking of a match can provide the needed spark to create a large flame, but only if applied to the fuel properly. In this sense, while blessings from heaven are not earned, “you do have to qualify for [them].”

“To receive a desired blessing from God, act with faith, striking the metaphorical match on which the heavenly blessing is contingent.”

Sometimes, all that is required to receive a blessing is to ask. Other times, “ongoing, repeated, faith-filled actions are required.”

“Small actions fuel our ability to walk along the covenant path and lead to the greatest blessings God can offer.” But sometimes, it is required to continue pushing and asking.

“Sometimes, we need to ‘be still’ ... and trust in [the Lord’s] timing.” But when the laws on which blessings are predicated are obeyed, the blessings will come, according to the timing of the Lord.



Sister Sharon Eubank

Relief Society general presidency

To those who feel paralyzed with grief, who are “just so tired,” who feel they don’t fit the “traditional mold,” who are splintering with questions or who feel they will never be good enough, Christ is the source of light, healing and rest.

“When tragedies overtake us, when life hurts so much that we can’t breathe, when we’ve taken a beating like the man on the road to Jericho and been left for dead, Jesus comes along and He pours oil into our wounds, He lifts us tenderly up, He takes us to an inn, He looks after us.”

Just as Christ made great efforts to reach out to all kinds of people — especially those who weren’t traditionally accepted in society — He continues to reach out to every person today.

To those who are weighed down and irritated with questions: “This isn’t the stage in our eternal development where we have all answers. But it is the stage where we develop our assurance (or sometimes hope) in the evidence of things not seen. Assurance comes in ways that aren’t always easy to analyze, but there is light in our darkness.”

What is the key to reconnecting to the power of Jesus Christ when one’s faith is flickering?

The answer: make Christ the center of life.



Elder Quentin L. Cook

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Charity, or the pure love of Christ, includes God’s eternal love for all His children. It plays an essential role in missionary work, temple and family history work and home-centered, Church-supported family religious observance.

“The emissaries of the Savior, most missionaries feel this kind of love, and when they do, their efforts are blessed. When members gain a vision of this kind of love, which is essential in assisting the Lord in His purpose, the Lord’s work will be accomplished.”

Members of the Church can show love for the Savior and their brothers and sisters by making simple invitations. The new Sunday meeting schedule is an excellent way to lovingly invite friends to come, see and feel a Church experience.

“I promise that lovingly performing ordinances for ancestors will strengthen and protect our youth and families in a world that is becoming increasingly evil.”

The emphasis on home-centered, Church-supported gospel study prepares eternal families and individuals to meet and live with God. When husband and wife “work together in love and righteousness their decisions are heaven-blessed.”

“Humility and love are the hallmark of those who seek the Lord’s will, especially for their families.”



Elder D. Todd Christofferson

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The Resurrection confirms the divinity of Jesus Christ and the reality of the Father.

Now is the time to prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord. When He comes, oppression and injustice will cease. Poverty and suffering will vanish. Even the pain and sorrow of death will be done away.

“The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is uniquely empowered and commissioned to accomplish the necessary preparations for the Lord’s Second Coming; indeed, it was restored for that purpose.

“Can you find anywhere else a people who embrace the present era as the prophesied ‘dispensation of the fullness of times’ in which God has purposed to ‘gather together in one all things in Christ?’”

So how can Latter-day Saints prepare for Christ’s return? “We can prepare ourselves as a people; we can gather the Lord’s covenant people; and we can help redeem the promise of salvation made to the fathers, our ancestors. All of this must occur in some substantial measure before the Lord comes again.”

A new Zion will receive the Lord at His return. Zion is the pure in heart, a people of one heart and one mind, dwelling in righteousness with no poor among them.



Brother Tad R. Callister

Outgoing Sunday School general president

The Savior’s Atonement can be looked at as a “series of divine events” that were “motivated by an incomprehensible love for each of us.” But its purpose is to “make it possible for us to return to God’s presence, become more like Him and have a fullness of joy.”

The Atonement of Christ overcame four obstacles to make these things possible: physical death, spiritual death, afflictions and infirmities, and weaknesses and imperfections.

Without the sacrifice of the Savior, a perfect being with infinite power who descended below all things, there could not be a balance between justice and mercy for the children of God. The Atonement of Jesus Christ is like a merciful, spiritual parachute, given to counteract the law of justice which, like gravity against a falling individual, would pull all humankind to an exacting and unforgiving end.

At times, faithful members who know of the power of the Atonement of Christ, unwittingly convert “an infinite atonement to a finite one that somehow falls short of their particular sin or weakness. But it is an infinite atonement because it encompasses and circumscribes every sin and weakness, as well as every abuse or pain caused by others.”



President Russell M. Nelson

President of the Church

Jesus Christ “invites us to take the covenant path back home to our Heavenly Parents and be with those we love.”

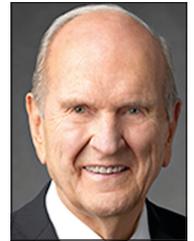
As president of Christ’s Church, “I plead with you who have distanced yourselves from the Church and with you who have not yet really sought to know that the Savior’s Church has been restored. Do the spiritual work to find out for yourselves, and please do it now. Time is running out.”

President Nelson spoke of “a tender separation three months ago” when his daughter, Wendy Nelson Maxfield, died of cancer.

“We miss our daughter greatly. However, because of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, we do not worry about her.”

The Savior Himself has “made it abundantly clear that while His Resurrection assures that every person who ever lived will indeed be resurrected and live forever, much more is required if we want to have the high privilege of exaltation. While salvation is an individual matter, exaltation is a family matter.”

God lives and Jesus is the Christ. “His Church and the fullness of His gospel have been restored to bless our lives with joy, here and hereafter.”



President Dallin H. Oaks

First Presidency

The atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ opens the door for all men to repent and return to the Lord.

“My message today is one of hope for all of us, including those who have lost their membership in the Church by excommunication or name removal. We are all sinners who can be cleansed by repentance.”

Repentance begins with the Savior – and it is a joy, not a burden.

“Repentance is an essential part of God’s plan. Because all would sin in our mortal experience and be cut off from God’s presence, man could not be saved without repentance.”

No one is exempt from the need to repent by forsaking sin and confessing them to the Lord and, where required, a mortal judge.

“We need to partake of the sacrament each Sabbath day. In that ordinance we make covenants and receive blessings that help us overcome all acts and desires that block us from the perfection our Savior invites us to achieve.”

All will be subject to a final judgment to determine if one has achieved a “mighty change of heart.” The judge will be the Savior, Jesus Christ. “To assure that we will be clean before God, we must repent before the final judgment.”

Repentance brings about the Lord’s assurance that one’s sins are cleansed and forgotten.



JEFFREY D. ALLRED, DESERET NEWS

Attendees sustain leaders during the Saturday afternoon session of the 189th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Conference Center in Salt Lake City on Saturday, April 6.

Elder Juan Pablo Villar

General Authority Seventy

When Ivan, the older brother of a 16-year-old Juan Pablo Villar, came home and announced he was going to serve a mission for the Church, into which he had been baptized just a year earlier, Juan Pablo felt admiration for him.

Months later, when Juan Pablo took the opportunity to visit his missionary brother, he was surprised by how different it was from what he imagined.

Not a member of the Church himself, Juan Pablo had no idea what to expect when it came to spending the day with a missionary. But during his single-day visit, he spent 10 hours following Ivan and his companion as they walked the streets greeting people, knocking on doors and teaching people about Jesus Christ.

Although the brother and his companion never taught Juan Pablo directly, “I gained more knowledge than in all my previous conversations with [my brother]. ... Looking back, I realize that my faith grew that day because my brother gave me the opportunity to put it in action. I exercised it as we read from the scriptures, looked for people to teach, bore testimony, served others and so on.”

Much like the muscles of the human body, faith requires exercise in order to grow and be used. The example of his brother helped facilitate accepting the invitation to follow Christ, be baptized and serve a mission.



Elder Gerrit W. Gong

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The Good Shepherd seeks, gathers and comes to His people.

“Our Good Shepherd calls us in His voice and in His name. He seeks, gathers and comes to His people. Through His living prophet and each of us, He invites all to find peace, purpose, healing and joy in the fullness of His restored gospel and on His covenant path. ...

“As we seek with real intent to follow Jesus Christ, inspiration comes to do good, to love God and to serve Him. As we study, ponder and pray; as we regularly renew sacramental and temple covenants; and as we invite all to come to His gospel and ordinances we are hearkening to His voice.”

In seeking and gathering individuals, the Savior reaches out to the one and to the ninety-and-nine, often at the same time. “As we minister, we acknowledge the ninety-and-nine who are steadfast and immovable, even while we yearn after the one who has strayed. Our Savior seeks and delivers us out of all places, from the four quarters of the earth. ...

“Today, our Savior desires that what we do and who we are becoming will invite others to come follow Him. Come find love, healing, connection and covenant belonging in Him, including in God’s holy temple, where sacred ordinances of salvation can bless all family members, thus gathering Israel on both sides of the veil.”



Elder David A. Bednar

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Each member of the Church has the responsibility to learn and live the Lord’s teachings and receive the ordinances of salvation and exaltation. Although everyone will need the help of Church leaders and teachers to press forward on the covenant path, “the ultimate responsibility for developing spiritual strength and stamina rests upon each one of us.”

With gospel learning becoming increasingly home-centered and Church-supported, the ultimate missionary training center is now in the home, as is the most instructive Sunday School classes, family history centers and temple preparation classes.

“Making our homes sanctuaries wherein we can ‘stand in holy places’ is essential in these latter days. And as important as home-centered and Church-supported learning is for our spiritual strength and protection today, it will be even more vital in the future.”

Many members are unsure about what appropriately can and cannot be said about the temple experience outside the temple.

The Church has provided many resources about initiatory ordinances, endowments, marriages and other sealing ordinances at temples.churchofjesuschrist.org. “Information is also available about following the Savior by receiving and honoring covenants to keep the law of obedience, the law of sacrifice, the law of the gospel, the law of chastity and the law of consecration.”



Elder Kyle S. McKay

General Authority Seventy

God's timing is different than man's. "Patience is key. Without it, we can neither develop nor demonstrate faith in God unto life and salvation."

But even as individuals "wait upon the Lord," there are blessings that can come immediately.

The immediate goodness of God can come to those who call upon Him with real intent and full purpose of heart, including those "who cry out in earnest desperation, when deliverance seems distant and suffering seems prolonged, even intensified."

The young Prophet Joseph Smith cried out in Liberty Jail, "O God, where art thou?" In response, Joseph was not immediately delivered, but the Lord provided immediate peace.

"God also gives immediate hope for eventual deliverance. No matter what, no matter where, in Christ and through Christ there is always hope smiling brightly before us. Immediately before us."

But, above all, God's love is immediate. "Even our sins, though they may separate us from His Spirit for a time, cannot separate us from the constancy and immediacy of His divine paternal love."



Elder Ronald A. Rasband

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

People have long built fortresses throughout history to keep the enemy outside. Such fortresses often included a guard tower where watchmen — like prophets — warned of danger and coming attacks.

"Our homes are fortresses against the evils of the world. In our homes we come unto Christ by learning to follow His commandments, by studying the scriptures and praying together and by helping one another stay on the covenant path."

The new emphasis on personal and family study in the home through the curriculum 'Come, Follow Me' is designed to "deepen our conversion and help us become more like Jesus Christ."

By living with faith in Christ, one can feel the peaceful presence of the Holy Ghost, who is a guide to truth and blessings.

"But remember, our homes are only as powerful as the spiritual strength of each one of us within the walls."

Christ's followers are at war with Satan, who knows his days are numbered. "For our protection we must build a fortress of spirituality and protection for our very souls, a fortress that will not be penetrated by the evil one."

Fortification from the Satan's evil efforts comes by being obedient, trusting the Lord, standing for truth, frequently renewing sacred covenants and living a life of integrity.



President Russell M. Nelson

President of the Church

With gratitude to the Lord for inspired conference messages that have instructed and edified, "seek to learn what the Lord is trying to teach you through His servants."

Conference has been a spiritual feast for all. "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. ...

"God's objective should be our objective. He wants His children to choose to return to Him, prepared, qualified, endowed, sealed and faithful to covenants made in holy temples."

Utah's "pioneer temples" will undergo renovation, followed by rededication. Details for the Salt Lake Temple and Temple Square will be announced on April 19; plans for the St. George temple were previously announced. Details for the Logan and Manti temples will come later.

New temples are to be built in Pago Pago, American Samoa; Okinawa City, Okinawa, Japan; Neiafu, Tonga; Tooele Valley, Utah; Moses Lake, Washington; San Pedro Sula, Honduras; Antofagasta, Chile; and Budapest, Hungary.



President Russell M. Nelson and his wife, Sister Wendy Nelson, and his counselors, President Dallin H. Oaks, left, and President Henry B. Eyring, right, leave the Conference Center following the priesthood session of the 189th Annual General Conference in Salt Lake City on Saturday, April 6.