



**Elder Neil L. Andersen**  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

## Is Anything Too Hard for the Lord?

*"With men [it] is impossible; but with God all things are possible"*  
(Matthew 19:26).

**M**y dear brothers and sisters and young friends, I bring you the love and greeting of President Thomas S. Monson, the First Presidency, and the Quorum of the Twelve. I especially express my appreciation to the youth and young single adults—here today—who have demonstrated their faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ, through accepting the challenge of turning their hearts more directly toward those who came before them, or, as the scriptures say, turning their hearts toward their fathers.

One of the most magnificent doctrines of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ is that every man, woman, and child who has ever lived on the earth—every person who has breathed the air of this world—will have the opportunity to clearly understand and to accept or reject the life, teachings, and ordinances of the Savior. How amazing! No one will be set aside or coerced; no one will be forgotten!

To bring the ordinances of the gospel to every living soul is not an assignment for the faint of heart. This work is advancing on both sides of the veil and will continue through the 1,000 years of the

Millennium. The Lord has invited each of us to be a part of it, and He has given us the tools and the ability to assist Him in "hastening His work of salvation."

How vast is the work before us? It will touch every person who has ever lived. How many have lived upon the earth? We honestly do not know. One scientist estimated that the number may be as large as 100 billion (See Carl Haub, "How Many People Have Ever Lived on Earth?" Population Reference Bureau, last modified Oct. 2011, prb.org).

Let me try to demonstrate to you 100 billion people.

Sometimes just your family can seem like a lot of people. But that is nothing compared to the unexpected visit from the extended family. The simple visit of relatives could seem small if you follow it with a full-blown family reunion of 100 people. We could fit 50 family reunions into a soccer field. That's 5,000 people all standing next to one another celebrating their families.

Now imagine 1,000 soccer fields full of people. Seeing the fields from an airplane, they would now cover the area of a small city, but

there would still be only 5 million people.

It will take 20,000 cities like this—20,000—to finish gathering all 100 billion of our brothers and sisters. Standing tightly one against the other, it would require the geography twice the size of Switzerland to assemble them all together.

These are our brothers and sisters; they are not just colors on a map. We must come to know them, organize them, and take their names to the temple.

Looking at this scope of what is before us, someone might say: "It is impossible. No one can do that." I remind you of these words of scripture: "With men [it] is impossible; but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). "With God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

Remember, this is the holy work of the Lord. Jesus Christ, under the direction of His Father, created this earth. And He did not create only one. He created more than we can count. Our Heavenly Father declared: "Worlds without number have I created . . . and by the Son I created them" (Moses 1:33).

Before the Savior's birth, a prophet recorded: "For behold, the time cometh, and is not far distant, that with power, the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay. . . . And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning. . . . And . . . he cometh . . . that salvation might come unto the children of men even through faith on his



name” (Mosiah 3:5, 8, 9).

Through the visit of angels and the power of God, the gospel was restored in our days, and this sacred work of providing ordinances for our ancestors was begun. With your generation, the work will be accelerated. One day, with the help of heaven, the work will be completed. How will we do it? We will advance this glorious work as we have always pursued the work of God—one son or daughter at a time, one child of God at a time—until all the work is finished. “With God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). “Is any thing too hard for the Lord?” (Genesis 18:14). You are a special generation.

God promised Abraham that “in [his] seed . . . all the families of the earth [would] be blessed” (Abraham 2:11). You are the heirs to the Abrahamic covenant, the righteous lineage through which God is blessing the earth (See Romans 9:7–8). You have been baptized into the covenant, and as believers are, as the Apostle Paul described, “children of the promise” (Romans 9:8).

You have been chosen to live in the final years preceding the Savior’s return to earth. We do not know the exact day or year of His coming, but we can readily see the signs that precede His triumphal return.

You live in the time of the

restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ upon the earth. It is a glorious time to be alive, with blessings and opportunities past generations could not have imagined. You live in a time of temples and technology (“Find Our Cousins” [RootsTech 2014, Feb. 8, 2014]). Across the earth there are now 146 temples. Eighty-five percent of Church members live within 200 miles of a temple. Technology allows us blessings never before seen. It has been only two years that we have been able to see our family trees online, and thus, more readily find those who have come before us.

One of your blessings is Joseph Smith’s promise that you are to become saviors “on mount Zion” (Obadiah 1:21). “But how are they to become saviors on Mount Zion?” he asked rhetorically. “By building their temples, erecting their baptismal fonts, and going forth and receiving all the ordinances, baptisms, confirmations, washings, anointings, ordinations and sealing powers upon their heads, in behalf of all their progenitors who are dead, and redeem them that they may come forth in the first resurrection and be exalted to thrones of glory with them; and herein is the chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers” (Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 6:365–66).

You, more than any other

generation before you, are turning your hearts to your fathers, and in return, I promise you they will turn their hearts toward you. The divine responsibility to offer the ordinances of salvation to those who once lived upon the earth but did not receive them will continue to grow in the years ahead and will blossom in the Millennium.

This may seem an unusual work for those who do not understand it, but the Apostle Peter spoke of it centuries ago. Peter said: “For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit” (1 Peter 4:6). President Joseph F. Smith said it this way, “Through our efforts in their behalf their chains of bondage will fall from them, and the darkness surrounding them will clear away, that light may shine upon them and they shall hear in the spirit world of the work that has been done for them by their children here, and will rejoice with you in your performance of these duties” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 247). Each individual name is important. No one is to be neglected or forgotten. We go forward remembering this scripture: “By small and simple things are great things brought to pass; and small means in many instances doth confound the wise . . . and [bring] about the salvation of many souls” (Alma 37:6–7). With God nothing shall be impossible—one precious person, one distinct son or daughter at a time.

Have you ever climbed a large mountain? President Monson once said, “We must plunge into this work, and we must prepare for some uphill climbing. This is not an easy task, but the Lord has placed it upon you, and He has placed it upon me” (Thomas S. Monson, “Hastening the Work,” *Ensign*, June 2014, 4). Like President Monson said, offering ordinances to those who have not been given the opportunity is like climbing a mountain. It takes effort. It is not easy. At times it seems like there is more

than we can do. But as we climb to the summit, helping our ancestors one step at a time, we see vistas we could not have imagined from the valley floor. We receive reassurance about our place in eternity. We see that we are part of a great family, many coming before us and others following us. Elder Richard G. Scott said it this way, "This work is a spiritual work, a monumental effort of cooperation on both sides of the veil, where help is given in both directions" (Richard G. Scott, "The Joy of Redeeming the Dead," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 95). We come to know like never before that life continues after this life. We feel the righteous influence of our ancestors upon us.

Just like climbing a mountain, this work requires stamina, patience, and diligence. As with anything important, there will be discouragement, disappointment, and setbacks, but there will be glimpses of eternity never before imagined. As you do your best, you will feel your abilities grow, and your desire to advance this work will increase.

The temple is literally the house of the Lord, and it is in His house that He has authorized sacred covenants and ordinances. For you who are young, it will only be a few short years before you enter the temple to accept these covenants and promises for yourself, and to be endowed with "power from on high" (D&C 109:35). In the world in

which you live, the House of the Lord is essential and central to you remaining spiritually strong. The Lord has said, "My disciples shall stand in holy places, and shall not be moved" (D&C 45:32). This is who we are and who we want to be.

Last year we challenged those attending RootsTech "to set a personal goal to help prepare as many names for the temple as baptisms you perform in the temple." Our challenge read: "Prepare as many names for the temple as baptisms you perform in the temple."

Tens of thousands have accepted this challenge. We have received many stories about the blessings that have come from being "saviors on Mount Zion."

The challenge of last year was "Prepare as many names for the temple as baptisms you perform in the temple." This year let's add eight words to the temple challenge: "Prepare as many names for the temple as baptisms you perform in the temple, and help someone else to do the same."

To state the challenge one more time in a different way: Accept the challenge, accomplish the challenge, and share the challenge.

This pattern is not uncommon in the scriptures. Let me give you an example from the very early chapters of the Book of Mormon: In the account of Lehi's dream, a man "dressed in a white robe" (1 Nephi 8:5) approached Lehi and asked him to follow. Lehi accepted

the challenge and found himself in "a dark and dreary wilderness" (1 Nephi 8:4). After fervent prayer that he might be rescued from his many hours of darkness, Lehi saw a large field and at last "a tree, whose fruit was desirable to make one happy" (1 Nephi 8:10). He went forward and ate of the fruit. The fruit was sweeter than anything he had ever tasted. This fruit is symbolic of the love of God. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). It is symbolic of the goodness of the Father and the divine Atonement of the Son. The fruit filled his "soul with exceedingly great joy" (1 Nephi 8:12).

Lehi had accepted the challenge. He had accomplished the challenge. But this was not enough. He immediately wanted his family to eat of the fruit with him. He looked for his family members. He saw them at the head of the river "as if they knew not whither they should go" (1 Nephi 8:14). Lehi did the thing that any one of us would do having tasted of the delicious fruit. He bid his family to come and enjoy it with him. As we taste of the love of God, of the marvelous blessing of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and of His Atonement, we desire to share this love with others.

Likewise, once we have accepted the challenge to assist in the redeeming of those who have gone before us, and have tasted of the goodness of the fruit of meeting that challenge, it is only natural that we would want to share the challenge with others and help them enjoy the delicious fruit with us.

Accept the challenge, accomplish the challenge, and share the challenge.

Elder Samuel Hepworth is serving a two-year mission in Chile. Before he left for Chile, he decided that he would set a personal goal to help prepare as many names for the temple as baptisms he performed in the temple.

At first he thought there was no way he would be able to do

# #TempleChallenge

Accept the Challenge

Accomplish the Challenge

Share the Challenge





it, because he went to the temple once a week and was baptized for thirty people each time. He didn't think he could find that many names, but he knew he had to try. What he discovered were many names waiting to be found. Finding and taking his own family names to the temple meant a lot more to him. The Spirit was a lot stronger.

Sam then challenged his friend, Lauren Hatch, to accept the challenge. She was worried because she didn't know how to do family history. "Then I'll teach you!" Sam said.

Sam not only accepted the challenge for himself, he also shared the challenge and helped others.

Again, let me share with you the challenge of this year's RootsTech: "Prepare as many names for the temple as baptisms you perform in the temple and help someone else to do the same."

Accept the challenge. Accomplish the challenge. Share the challenge.

This past year, President Monson said, "There are millions upon millions of spirit children of our Heavenly Father who never heard the name of Christ before dying and going into the spirit world. But now they have been

taught the gospel and are awaiting the day when you and I will do the research necessary to clear the way so that we can go into the house of the Lord and perform [sacred ordinances that they are unable to perform for themselves].

"My brothers and sisters, I testify that the Lord will bless us as we accept and respond to this challenge" (Thomas S. Monson, "Hastening the Work," *Ensign*, June 2014, 5).

My young brothers and sisters, as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, I invoke a blessing upon you. As you accept this challenge and as you teach it to others, I promise you that you will feel the beautiful link that binds us together as families through the generations. You will feel a happiness for those who accept your sacred offering. Your hearts will truly be turned to your fathers, and you will feel their hearts turned toward you. You will feel purpose and strength that will help you to avoid the temptations that surround you. You will better see the unseen, the eternal things that the world does not see. As you add this work to your righteous life, the gift of the Holy Ghost will be a stronger influence upon you. Your belief in and appreciation for the Savior will increase. You will

better understand the power of His Atonement, and you will be safeguarded from the distractions that can so easily pull you from His commandments.

I testify that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Is anything too hard for the Lord? No, this work is possible because He took upon Himself our sins, our difficulties, our pains and sufferings. Through our repentance and our choices, and the repentance and choices of those who have come before us, we may be saved with them in the kingdom of our Heavenly Father. I leave you my love and blessing as you unselfishly contribute to this holy and redeeming work. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

THE CHURCH OF  
**JESUS CHRIST**  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS