

ASIA AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Clean Hands and a Pure Heart

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In his talk “Keeping the Temple Holy,” President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) urged us to “Keep [the Lord’s] House holy!”¹ He explained in quite some detail the questions we have to answer when we go through temple recommend interviews. These questions, in a way, are the standards we have to meet when we want to go to the house of the Lord. We must prove worthy and obey the commandments before we can enter the house of the Lord.

Yet, another set of high standards for us to strive for in order to enter into the house of the Lord was proclaimed by King David when he declared: “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?”

“He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

“He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

“This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob” (Psalms 24:3–6).

Here King David set forth several standards for those who seek to “ascend into the hill of the Lord” and to “stand in His holy place,” i.e. seek to enter the Lord’s temple:

First, we must have clean hands. We learn from James to “cleanse your hands, ye sinners” (James 4:8). This clearly indicates to us that to have clean hands, we have to repent of our sins and have our hands made clean before we can enter into the house of the Lord.

Nephi further illustrated that this cleansing process is only made possible through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and that only through Him can we be saved from our sins. He taught: “And men are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil. And the law is given unto men. And by the law no flesh is justified; or, by the law men are cut off. Yea, by the temporal law they were cut off; and also, by the spiritual



law they perish from that which is good, and become miserable forever.

“Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth.

“Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered” (2 Nephi 2:5–7).

Therefore, only those who repent of their sins and who come unto Christ with “a broken heart and a contrite spirit” will be accepted into the house of the Lord.

Second, we need to have a pure heart.

James further taught, “purify your hearts, ye double minded” (James 4:8) and also, “let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

“For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

“A double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:6–8). Therefore, unless we are pure in heart and unwavering in our faith, we shall not receive anything of the Lord. These verses also clarify that to have a pure heart means we are to

purify our heart and single our eye and mind to the glory of God.

The Lord also warned us of not being double minded when He taught, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24).

Satan knows our weakness well and has waged war on us with temptations of this world to drag us away from the straight and narrow path. He assaults us not only with evil or immoral things, but often times with seemingly good and worthy things that we may be pacified and lulled away into carnal security (see 2 Nephi 28:21); or, with a sense of doing good and righteous things when we only have time to do the better or the best things in life that have impact on our eternal well-being. He assaults us with cool and fancy modern technologies; seemingly meaningful and interesting data, information, and knowledge; even with healthy entertainment, outdoor activities, fine dining and hobbies. These seemingly good and harmless things in life can easily consume our time, energy, resources and passion so he can “leadeth [us] by the neck with a flaxen cord, until he bindeth [us] with his strong cords forever” (2 Nephi 26:22).

Third, we are not to “lift up [our] soul unto vanity” (Psalm 24:4).

Even our Savior was tempted with the vanity of this world after He had fasted forty days when the devil offered Him all kingdoms of the world

and the glory of them (see Matthew 4:8–10). The devil knows how vulnerable we can be when it comes to the glory of the world: wealth, power, and fame. Time and time again we are warned not to covet the treasures of this world:

“But wo unto the rich, who are rich as to the things of the world. For because they are rich they despise the poor, and they persecute the meek, and their hearts are upon their treasures; wherefore, their treasure is their god. And behold, their treasure shall perish with them also” (2 Nephi 9:30).

“For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

“And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition” (1 Timothy 6:7–9).

Fourth, we are not to swear deceitfully.

This means we should not lie or bear false witness or make false promises or commitments we cannot or do not intend to keep. This particularly means we should not make covenants in the house of the Lord and not live up to what we have covenanted to do therein.

It is relatively easy to make covenants with God in the house of the Lord. Yet, without dedicated effort and firm commitment, it is rather difficult to fulfill our duties or things we have promised to do

after we make the covenants. The Lord cannot bless us if we do not fulfill our part of the obligation in the covenant. But once we have fulfilled our part, the Lord is bound to bless us: “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (D&C 82:10).

Once we can meet the high standards set forth by King David, we shall, as promised, receive blessings from the Lord and the righteousness of His salvation (see Psalm 24:5).

We can become as one of those mentioned in the Book of Revelation: “And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

“And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

“Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

“For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” (Revelation 7:13–17).

Then we shall be recognized by our Savior as “the generation of them that seek him” (Psalm 24:6).

And as we do as He has invited: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7), we shall be blessed with the utmost blessing of: “and the days will come that you shall see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall

be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will” (D&C 88:68). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTE

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Keeping the Temple Holy,” *Ensign*, May 1990, 50; lds.org/general-conference/1990/04/keeping-the-temple-holy.

LOCAL NEWS

The Most Holy Place of Worship on Earth

By Wilson Peter, New Delhi, India

Having been born and raised in a Catholic Christian family, I was very much engaged in religious works and always read the Holy Bible. I am blessed with a wonderful family of two beautiful children, Vishal and Vaishali, and my lovely wife, Sunita. Being a father, I desired that my children get their education from a Catholic missionary school so they may learn more about Christ and never get distracted from the path of the Lord.

My family and I joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New Delhi, India, in June 2003 through one of my friend’s reference. We are very grateful to him and his family that they shared the restored gospel with us and showed us the true Church. Before joining this Church, we were very much surrounded by worldly temptations and unable to follow the commandments

which our Heavenly Father has given to all of us for our safety and benefits.

We still remember that day when we were in our family scripture study and I read from the Old Testament about King Solomon and how he loved the Lord so much that he built up a giant temple—a house of the Lord, a holy sanctuary—where sacred ceremonies and ordinances of the gospel were performed; a place where the Lord visits and we can feel His presence. It is the most holy of any place of worship on earth.

We could hardly even imagine that one day we would visit the temple as a family, but the Lord made this dream come true. Because of our worthiness, He prepared a way for us to receive His blessings. It was my wife’s dream to go to the temple and be sealed together as a family. This came true in 2008. But to

make it happen, we all had to sacrifice a lot. We started working extra hours to save enough funds for our temple trip. I started finding more clients for my work and my wife started giving extra time in her work. Sacrificing together eventually brought our family closer, and it helped us stretch ourselves beyond our limits further than we ever thought we could. Also, by watching us, my son started working in call centers and my daughter started saving her pocket money so that they both could also contribute to the family temple fund. And ultimately, the Lord blessed our sincere efforts by letting us visit His holy house to be sealed for time and all eternity.

Worthiness is so important in preparing to worship in the temple. If we are not worthy, we will not be permitted to even enter the holy house of the Lord. We had to go through multiple rounds of temple interviews, which helped us prepare well. There was a



senior missionary couple, Elder and Sister Crookston, who told us that if we wanted to visit the temple soon, then we should put pictures of temples in the rooms where we spend most of our time. We hung pictures of the Hong Kong China Temple in all of our rooms, and whenever we would see those pictures, it strengthened our faith more and made us more goal oriented.

Preparation is also as important as worthiness. Another senior missionary couple, Elder and Sister Pulla, who served in the India New Delhi Mission, prepared us to feel the presence of the Lord in the temple. As a teacher enlightens the future of the students by helping them gain wisdom, similarly they educated us to understand the things we would need to do in the temple. They too sacrificed a lot just to help us prepare well. Sometimes they had to travel a long way to teach us and sometimes even on empty stomachs on Sundays. They made us feel the Spirit in every single class and helped us to gain firm testimonies of the temple. At the same time, our mission president and branch president put in their efforts to prepare us for the temple by their righteous examples.

A day before our flight, our youngest daughter had an accident as her finger got into a table fan and the blades cut her finger. Her finger bled profusely and she was suffering from severe pain. We immediately took her to the nearby hospital and there she got stitches on her finger. Satan tried us in many ways, but we never let

down our faith for the temple visit. We kept on stepping forward.

The day when we all first entered into the temple was one of the most memorable days of our whole lives. Words cannot express how much excitement, peace, and joy we felt. I was sealed to my wife in the temple with proper authority and we were all sealed together as a family for time and eternity. We spent most of our time in the temple performing sacred ordinances because we waited for this time for many years and now wanted to utilize it as much as we could. The leaders and the missionary couples in the temple were very good and supportive. They helped us in performing the ordinances in the right manner. My son performed around 200 baptisms for the dead. We also got a chance to meet with the members who traveled

from different countries and to share our testimonies with them. The six days, August 11–16, 2014, that we got to spend in the Hong Kong Temple were so marvelous and unforgettable. On the early Sabbath morning of August 17, 2014, we reached our home and took a small nap. After that we went to our home branch and bore our testimonies of the temple in sacrament meeting. The words of our branch president were, “Today, I can feel the brightness from your family.” That brightness is the brightness of the temple which made us glow. As we strive to remain worthy and righteous in keeping our covenants, we can keep the same brightness with us throughout our lives. We know that one day we will have a temple in India as well.

My dear brothers and sisters, we together as a family have been blessed with so many blessings after going to the temple. One of the blessings which we have received is my son, Elder Peter (Vishal), is serving his mission in the India Bangalore Mission. We as his parents are so blessed that our son is able to have the opportunity that we missed. We know that the sacred ordinances which we performed in the temple are true and that the temple covenants are for eternity and cannot be broken here on earth. We would encourage you all to prepare yourselves to enter the house of the Lord and feel His Spirit which we have felt. We leave this strong testimony in the sacred name of our savior Jesus Christ, amen. ■



Our Testimony of the Temple—Chaprayil Family

By John Chaprayil, New Delhi, India

John Chaprayil: In 2008 one of our family friends introduced us to the missionaries and we began as a family to investigate the Church. We were a family of three at that time: me, John; my wife, Silvy; and our son, Emmanuel. The people who introduced the gospel to us were Suku Thankappan and his wife. Their life influenced our family.

As we studied the truth, we became closer to Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. We also learned about the Book of Mormon, which helped us come close to the Lord. After we were baptized, we became missionaries within our branch. We would go with the missionaries to help more people have the same spiritual experiences we had. In 2010 our son served as a branch missionary in New Delhi and later he served as a full-time missionary in the India Bangalore Mission. We felt blessed by Heavenly Father; He bestowed great blessings upon our lives. In 2013 our son was married to another active member of the Church, Lavanya. They planned to go to temple and be sealed, but due to a passport issue it took a bit longer. We all applied for passports, and we received them. We then planned to go as a family to the temple. We departed on February 24, 2015. It was a wonderful experience to go together. Emmanuel and Lavanya and my wife and I were sealed. We also

did temple work for our ancestors. We felt like this effort reached heaven.

“God’s work is very wonderful,” we thought to ourselves as we arrived in Hong Kong. We felt we arrived on the day that Heavenly Father wanted us to arrive. We were sealed the day we arrived. We had the chance to meet an Apostle, Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and his wife, as they were in Hong Kong at that time. My son met his mission president, Elder Randy D. Funk, and his wife, Sister Funk. We attended a devotional with them. We also met the temple president and matron, President and Sister Wong. The temple is a place of grace and blessings. We felt so peaceful and blessed. We love this Church and we love temple work. I know that Heavenly Father lives and loves us. I know that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can gain salvation. Joseph Smith restored this Church. Thomas S. Monson is our living prophet and revelator; he is leading and guiding this Church in this dispensation. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Sister Boka Lavanya: I take this opportunity to share our experience of going to the temple. It is really a great pleasure for us to attend temple. When I joined the Church, I used to pay attention to words like *gratitude for the gospel*, *temple covenants*, and *eternal marriage*. These words remain

engraved in my mind. Since joining Church I have learned about increasing my faith and being strong in gospel from Church leaders. It is really a great pleasure to serve in Church callings. I used to learn many things from Primary children. I love children. I need to thank the Visakhapatnam India District presidency for giving me opportunity to serve as district Primary president.

Since getting married I had tried getting a passport, but I did not receive one. Then one Church member (Adari Chinna) helped me to get a birth certificate and passport. Right after I received my passport, we started our preparation for the temple. Meanwhile, we started to immerse ourselves in the gospel more by reading the temple preparation book, holding family home evening, and reading general conference talks. While reading general conference talks, one quote touched our hearts which our beloved Apostle, Elder Ballard, said: “Every council . . . should be working together on ways to be more effective in preparing our members to be worthy to enjoy all the blessings of the Church and especially the blessings of the temple” (“Are We Keeping Pace?” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 7). Having patience, following the commandments, and developing Christlike attributes had prepared us to go to the temple. My husband used to give me good commitments and challenges—he promised

me while dating that he would take me to temple. I used to have the desire to go on mission, which my parents did not permit but my husband said, “We will serve as a missionary couple.” That impressed me a lot. But I am thankful for my parents because they allowed me to get married to a member of the Church. When I am discouraged in my life, my husband tells me every time that “if we place a little more patience in the



The Chaprayil Family

process and greater amount of faith in the Lord, our challenges will find their way toward successful conclusions.” Then I would feel comforted in my heart. As we try to do what the Savior wants us to do, the quiet goodness of our lives will strengthen, comfort, and inspire our family members, neighbors, and friends.

Finally, without further trials we reached temple. When we entered

the temple, we felt that we were in heaven with angels surrounding us. When we were getting ready to receive our endowments, all of our memories were refreshed during the course of the endowment session, and we forgot all our worldly things. After the session we felt that there is a great purpose to do in this life, that is nothing but missionary work, to bring the gospel into people’s life.

I still feel that I made the right decision to marry a Church member, especially a returned missionary. If I had not married a Church member, I might have been a less-active member by now. When my husband and I were getting sealed in temple, we felt that our relationship should not break, but that we should love and share all the memories and be together for eternity. When we were performing proxy baptism for our ancestors, we felt that our whole family was enjoying the Lord’s kingdom. I saw my in-laws’ faces—they were so happy, and I felt happy the whole time. After finishing all the proxy baptisms, we felt that we were on the correct path. Day by day, during our endowment sessions we learned new things. We felt that we made the right decision to go to temple. We had the opportunity to attend a devotional in Hong Kong during our temple visit and we saw our beloved Apostle, Elder Ballard, and the Asia Area Presidency. My husband especially was very happy to see his mission president. While

returning home from temple, we carried all the cherished moments from temple, the devotional, and the beautiful Hong Kong buildings.

Brothers and sisters, going to temple is easy, but after coming back we will have so many temptations which will make us want to break our relationship with our spouse. We may even feel to leave the gospel and be attracted toward worldly things. That’s why we need to listen to general conference talks and apply those principles in our lives and listen to the promptings of the Holy Ghost. Making choices consistent with eternal truths will help us develop righteous characters, increase our faith, and give us strength to resist temptations. We need to seek Heavenly Father’s help every day, and only then will we be qualified to be led by the Spirit to choose the correct path. It will warn us of temptations we might not otherwise recognize.

In the temple we make eternal covenants with our Father in Heaven. We make promises to Him, and in return He makes extraordinary promises to us. So next time you go to temple, whether for yourself or your kindred dead, please pay attention to the promises God makes to you, His daughters and His sons. In every part of temple, the hallowed halls of God’s house are filled with comforting covenants, personal and intimate assurance of His eternal love. We encourage everyone to join together to do your part to prepare every family,

adult, youth, and child to ultimately be worthy to receive every temple blessing the gospel provides.

We really enjoyed the Lord's Spirit by going to the temple, and we hope to visit again soon. We know the gospel is true; it is the hope of the world. We know Jesus died for our sins and Joseph Smith restored the gospel. We sustain our living prophet, Thomas S. Monson, and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Seventies, who are chosen by God to lead and guide us in this last dispensation. We bear testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

I Love Institute

By Nelapati Kishore, Kakinada Branch, India Rajahmundry District

There are so many ways that we can learn the gospel in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I took advantage of every opportunity to enlarge my understanding of the gospel. One of the ways I learned, shared, and acted upon the gospel was by giving priority to institute. I was baptized in this Church on September 23, 2007. I started to attend institute class in 2008. I continue to attend institute because I love to attend institute classes.

Institute is the place where "knowledge of the gospel will be increased, faith will be strengthened, and you will enjoy wonderful associations

and friendships with those of your own kind" (Gordon B. Hinckley, "Of Missions, Temples, and Stewardship," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 54).

I feel love when I go to institute; I feel welcomed; and I feel I am a child of God. I enjoy the institute every time I attend.

I learned from institute how important it is to obey God's commandments; to maintain reverence in the Church; to fulfill Church callings, to give time, talents, and resources for God's service; to heed the counsels from the prophet of God; to proclaim the gospel; to pay tithes and fast offerings; and to serve a mission. By attending institute I learned all these things and many more things that have helped me walk on the right path, which will lead me to live with our Heavenly Father after this life. Institute will help us know the gospel in depth, which will help us to prepare for missionary service and marriage in the temple of the Lord.

"The objective of Institute is to help young adults understand and rely on the teachings and Atonement of Jesus Christ, qualify for the blessings of the temple, and prepare themselves, their families, and others for eternal life with their Heavenly Father" ("The Objective of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion," institute.lds.org). So friends, make a priority to attend institute class as our prophet encouraged each one of us to do. Think of it—friends will be made, the Spirit will be felt, and faith will be strengthened.

I promise you that as you participate in institute and study the scriptures diligently, your power to avoid temptations and receive the direction of the Holy Ghost in all you do will be increased. That is the promise I leave with you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

God Provides

By Ramesh Turala, Madinaguda Second Ward, Hyderabad India Stake

One day I had a strong impression to update my resume online. I immediately acted on it. Three days later I got a call for an interview on the following Saturday and again two days later, on Monday.

I went to the office and was fired. It was really a hard situation for me, as three of my family members depended on me, but I did not panic or get worried. I immediately started to work on getting a new job. I knew



Ramesh Turala
with his wife
and daughter

that everything was for my good (see D&C 122:7), and I trusted in the Lord that He would definitely help me with the situation.

I attended the interview and after one round of interviews, I was hired. It all happened in a week. I won't say this all happened because of my talent but rather because of my faith in God.

I know my Father in Heaven is mindful of my needs as I have seen His mighty hand is always there for me. I always look back and say I am not worthy of the blessings I have received. God has blessed me with many wonderful things. I know I am not alone in this world. God provides me everything in terms of spiritual and temporal blessings. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

I Kept God First

By **Jyothi, Madinaguda Second Ward, Hyderabad India Stake**

Last month was very special to me and to my family. I was “first” in my office. I never expected that I would be awarded “first,” even though I always desired to be in one of the top four positions. I received the award for “most dedicated and honest worker” in the whole office. I got this because of Heavenly Father's grace. I know I am a weak person, but I was able to achieve this feat because I kept God first in my life.

I fulfilled my calling and did my visiting teaching no matter whatever the condition was; because of this I received the award in my office. My mother is my companion in visiting teaching. As I paid tithing with a willing heart, God blessed our home with peace and joy. We got all the basic things we needed, and even more than that.

One day when I was going home from my office, my friend told me she would drop me off. I said OK. I always sit on one side of her scooter when she drives. I heard in my heart a voice asking me to stop the scooter and sit on two sides. To be honest, I ignored it. A second time again the Spirit prompted me to sit on two sides. Again I ignored it. The third time I again felt the Spirit, I listened to it and sat on both sides. Later I understood that if I had not done so I would have met with a painful accident. I was saved because of the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost.

I am grateful to my Heavenly Father for the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. Jesus Christ is my best friend. I mean it! I am very grateful to my Heavenly Father for the wonderful gospel in my life. I am very grateful to Jesus Christ for choosing me and my family to be a part of this gospel. I am very grateful to God that after 11 years my relatives came and stayed with us, which we all enjoyed a lot. I am very grateful for my parents who are great examples to me. I know Heavenly Father has a plan for each one of us. God loves us all



Sister Jyothi

so much; more than we can imagine. God blesses us according to His time.

I know the Book of Mormon is the true word of God. I am grateful for my Bishop Raju who sends SMS messages daily regarding scriptures which really motivate us. When we put God first, everything will be added unto us. I felt this strongly when I received the award. When I got the award I remembered a scripture from Matthew 6:33, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” I know The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true Church upon the whole face of the earth. I say this in name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■