

Be True to God and His Work

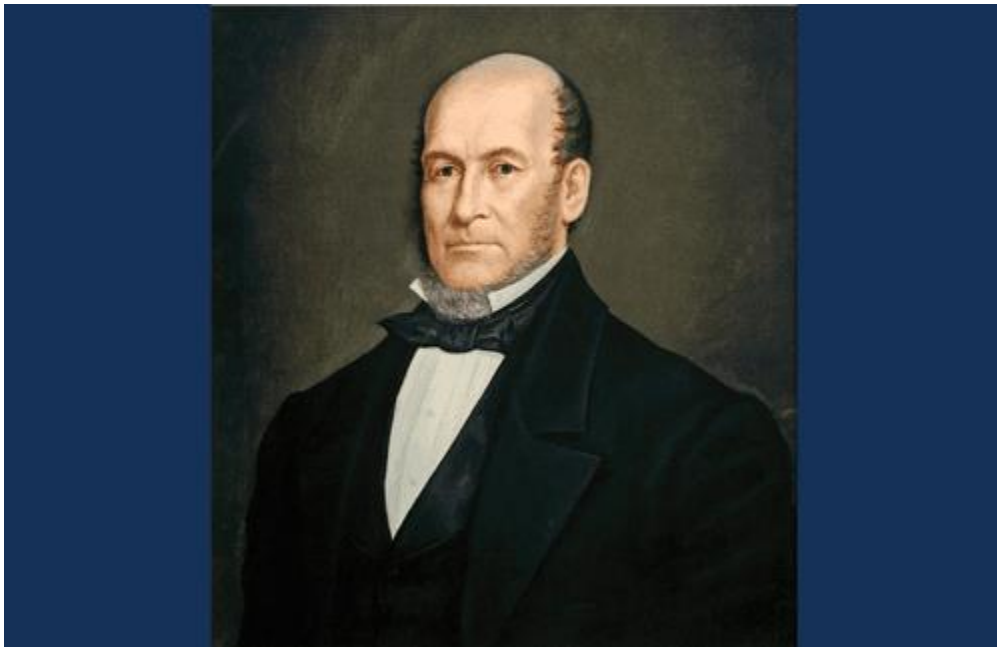
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We all need to seek our own testimony of Jesus Christ, bridle our passions, repent of our sins, and be true to God and His work.

Section I (Mason)

Last October, I was assigned, along with President M. Russell Ballard and Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, to visit the United Kingdom, where all three of us served as young missionaries. We had the privilege of teaching and testifying, as well as reliving early Church history in the British Isles, where my great-great-grandfather Heber C. Kimball and his associates were the first missionaries.¹

President Russell M. Nelson, teasing us about this assignment, noted that it was unusual to assign three Apostles to visit the area where they had served as missionaries in their youth. He acknowledged that all desire to be assigned to visit their original mission. With a big smile on his face, he succinctly explained the precedent that if there is another set of three Apostles who served in the same mission over 60 years ago, then they also may receive a similar assignment.



In preparation for that assignment, I reread the *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, written by his grandson Orson F. Whitney, who later was called to the apostleship. This volume was given to me by my precious mother when I was almost seven years old. We were preparing to attend the dedication of the This Is the Place Monument on July 24, 1947, by President George Albert Smith.² She wanted me to know more about my ancestor Heber C. Kimball.

This book contains a profound statement attributed to President Kimball that has significance for our day. Before sharing the statement, let me provide a little background.

While the Prophet Joseph Smith was incarcerated in Liberty Jail, Apostles Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball had the responsibility, under terribly adverse circumstances, of overseeing the evacuation of the Saints from Missouri. The evacuation was required in large part because of the extermination order issued by Governor Lilburn W. Boggs.³

Almost 30 years later Heber C. Kimball, then in the First Presidency, reflecting on this history with a new generation, taught, “Let me say to you, that many of you will see the time when you will have all the trouble, trial and persecution that you can stand, and plenty of opportunities to show that you are *true to God and His work*.”⁴

Heber continued: “To meet the difficulties that are coming, it will be necessary for you to have a knowledge of the truth of this work for yourselves. The difficulties will be of such a character that the man or woman who does not possess this personal knowledge or witness will fall. If you have not got the testimony, live right and call upon the Lord and cease not [until] you [attain] it. If you do not you will not stand. ... The time will come when no man nor woman will be able to endure on borrowed light. Each will have to be guided by the light within himself. ... If you don’t have it you will not stand; therefore seek for the testimony of Jesus and cleave to it, that when the trying time comes you may not stumble and fall.”⁵

We each need a personal testimony of God’s work⁶ and the seminal role of Jesus Christ. The [76th section of the Doctrine and Covenants](#) refers to the three degrees of glory and compares the celestial glory to the sun. It then compares the terrestrial kingdom to the moon.⁷

It is interesting that the sun has its own light, but the moon is reflected light or “borrowed light.” Speaking of the terrestrial kingdom, [verse 79](#) states, “These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus.” We cannot obtain the celestial kingdom and live with God the Father on borrowed light; we need our own testimony of Jesus Christ and His gospel.

We live in a world where iniquity abounds⁸ and hearts turn from God because of the precepts of men.⁹ One of the most compelling examples in the scriptures of Heber C. Kimball’s concerns about seeking a testimony of God’s work and Jesus Christ is set forth in Alma’s counsel to his three sons—Helaman, Shiblon, and Corianton.¹⁰ Two of his sons had been *true to God and His work*. But one son had made some bad decisions. To me the greatest significance of Alma’s counsel is that he was imparting it as a father for the benefit of his own children.

Alma’s first concern, like Heber C. Kimball’s, was that each have a testimony of Jesus Christ and *be true to God and His work*.

Mason’s Thoughts

Elder Quentin L. Cooks words – Black

Mason’s words and thoughts – Blue

Scriptures – **Black & highlighted yellow**

Quotes from Prophets & Apostles – **Purple**

Quotes from LDS Student Manuals – **Green**

Reading through Elder Cook’s talk, three things pressed hard into my mind that I felt I should cover in Section I.

1. Difficulties Are Coming

It doesn’t take long to find a scripture, quote, or a conference talk where a Prophet, or an Apostle are warning the Saints about the difficult times that are ahead. Due to the ever-increasing iniquities of this world and as a direct result of our own actions, Our Father in Heaven has no choice but to straighten out His people that they may become wise to His workings and Power and learn to be obedient.

The Prophet Abinadi’s words to King Noah is a great example in the Book of Mormon of how we bring our own consequences upon ourselves when we don’t listen to a prophet’s warning voice.

Mosiah 11: 21-24

21 And except they repent and turn to the Lord their God, behold, I will deliver them into the hands of their enemies; yea, and they shall be brought into “bondage; and they shall be afflicted by the hand of their enemies.

22 And it shall come to pass that they shall “know that I am the Lord their God, and am a “jealous God, visiting the iniquities of my people.

23 And it shall come to pass that except this people repent and turn unto the Lord their God, they shall be brought into bondage; and none shall “deliver them, except it be the Lord the Almighty God.

24 Yea, and it shall come to pass that when they shall “cry unto me I will be “slow to hear their cries; yea, and I will suffer them that they be smitten by their enemies.

From the Book of Mormon Student Manual. “The failure of the people of Noah to hearken to Abinadi’s first warning (see Mosiah 11:21) led to a more serious warning when he returned two years later. The consequence became that they would be in bondage, and if they did not repent they would be destroyed (see Mosiah 12:1–2, 8). **This is often the case in life—when we put off obedience or delay following the prophet, we bring more serious consequences upon ourselves.**”

Let’s look at a few quotes from modern Prophet’s counseling and warning us of what is to come.

“To the world I say: These are the last days. **They are days of trouble and sorrow and desolation. They are days when Satan dwells in the hearts of ungodly men, when iniquity abounds, and when the signs of the times are being shown forth.**

And there is no cure for the ills of the world except the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.
(Counsel to the Saints and to the World - By President Joseph Fielding Smith)

“We have some tight places to go before the Lord is through with this church and the world in this dispensation, which is the last dispensation, which shall usher in the coming of the Lord. The gospel was restored to prepare a people ready to receive him. The power of Satan will increase; we see it in evidence on every hand. **There will be inroads within the Church. ... We will see those who profess membership but secretly are plotting and trying to lead people not to follow the leadership that the Lord has set up to preside in this church.**

(President Harold B. Lee, In Conference Report, Oct. 1970, p. 152.)

“I am optimistic about the future... But I am also not naive about the days ahead... 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.**

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 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.**” (President Russell M. Nelson – Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives)

Though we will be faced with trials, difficulties, and struggles, we can prepare now to ease the burdens, stand strong, and know when to make the right sacrifices at the right times. We can look forward to witnessing the mighty workings of the Lord and be ready to help and choose to jump into action when called upon.

In this Quote by President Faust, I would really like you to listen and think to yourselves in what way am I seeing these things in practice today? Am I actively taking part in this? Or am I actively fighting against it? Ask yourselves where is the line that I won't cross?

“There are so many shades of right and wrong that **each of you has to decide where the line will be.** I strongly urge you that if there is any question in your minds or hearts about whether your personal conduct is right or wrong, don't do it. Each of us has moral agency, and the gift of the Holy Ghost will sharpen our impressions of what is right and wrong, true and false. **It is the responsibility of the prophets of God to teach the word of God, not to spell out every jot and tittle of human conduct.** If we are conscientiously trying to avoid not only evil but the very appearance of evil, **we will act for ourselves and not be acted upon.**”

There have always been two great competing forces in the world. These began before the world was created. These opposing forces are the forces of good and evil. Between these two powerful forces each of us is caught in a tug of war. In simple terms, that which is good comes from God, and that which is evil comes from the devil.³ **You can't have it both ways and find true happiness;** some have tried, but in the long run all have failed. If you think can have it both ways, you are only deceiving yourselves. It doesn't work that way. It never has. It never will.

...everything has a price. There is a price to pay for success, fulfillment, accomplishment, and joy. There are no freebies. **If you don't pay the price that is needed for success, you will pay the price of failure. Preparation, work, study, and service are required** to achieve and find happiness. **Disobedience and lack of preparation carry a terrible price tag.** As priesthood holders of this Church, **part of the price we need to pay is by living differently from the world. We are the possessors and custodians of these commanding powers which can and do roll back the power of Satan on the earth.** With all my heart I urge you to please help us **push back the world.** We must stand against the wind. **Sometimes we must be unpopular and simply say, "This is not right!"**

I also believe that in the future the opposition from Satan will be both more subtle and more open. While in some ways it may be more blatant, **it will be masked with greater sophistication and cunning.** We will need greater spirituality to perceive all the forms of evil and greater strength to resist it." (James E. Faust – The Devil's Throat)

As I read through this quote the messages and warnings from the Book of Mormon leapt right out at me. What is filling our world with iniquity and is the cause of our difficult times right now is immorality, pride, dishonesty (you can also add secret combinations), idolatry, and priestcraft. The messages can't be any clearer. We have examples of fallen civilizations, and masses of the Lord's righteous people who found themselves in states of carnality, laziness, and apostasy because they kept falling victim to these traps laid out by the Devil and his minions. We have seen and heard the warnings time and time again, yet some still fall short. We don't understand it because we've become comfortable with the world's facades. And we are using our most productive time in our mortal probation to wax fat in iniquity and secure our future plans of cashing in our inheritances for summer cottages in Babylon!

If you try to convince yourself that priestcraft is not an issue today, then may I suggest reading back through President Faust's words then following it up with these quotes. Priestcraft is so dangerous because it starts subtle. Like an untreated infection, it can go unnoticed at first and may not be detected until too much damage has been done. It is best to know how to discern against it, stay away from it, and lift up a warning voice against it for others to steer clear. I will lift up my voice of warning and proclaim that you must lay out quickly that line that you will not cross. And make sure that line stays clear of false doctrines and priestcrafts. If you are taking part in it, stop now and repent for time is running out. For you do not want to be caught on the wrong side of that line. There is no time left for hesitation, focus on repentance and course correction.

"If you cross to the devil's side of the line one inch, you are in the tempter's power, and if he is successful, you will not be able to think or even reason properly, because you will have lost the spirit of the Lord."¹ (President George Albert Smith - *Sharing the Gospel with Others*, sel. Preston Nibley (1948), 43.)

"By and by we find the people departing from the principles of truth, from the laws of the Gospel, repudiating the fear of God, grieving his Holy Spirit and incurring his displeasure." (President John Taylor – JoD 17:33)

"Some may serve for hope of earthly reward. Such a man or woman might serve in Church positions or in private acts of mercy in an effort to achieve prominence or *cultivate contacts that would increase income or aid in acquiring wealth*. Others might serve in order to obtain worldly honors, prominence, or power. The scriptures have a word for *gospel service* "*for the sake of riches and honor*"; it is "priestcraft." Alma 1:16 Nephi said, "Priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion." (2 Ne. 26:29) In these latter days, we are commanded to "seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion." (D&C 6:6) Unfortunately, not all who accomplish works under that heading are really intending to build up Zion or strengthen the faith of the people of God. Other motives can be at work. *Service that is ostensibly unselfish but is really for the sake of riches or honor surely comes within the Savior's condemnation* of those who "outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ... are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." Matt. 23:28 Such service earns no gospel reward." (Elder Dallin H. Oaks – Why Do We Serve)

Now if we go back just a moment to Elder Cook's talk where he is Quoting Heber C. Kimball.

"Let me say to you, that many of you will see the time when you will have all the trouble, trial and persecution that you can stand, and plenty of opportunities to show that you are *true to God and His work*."⁴

When we speak out and warn others against issues such as professed half truths, twisted doctrines for follower gains or those trying to prove a lie as truth, we are being true to God and His work. It is frustrating seeing professed Latter-Day Saints spread misinformation and lies about those who are truly trying to carry out the Lord's work. In a time of hastening the work, backsliding is not an option. This is a miraculous and blessed work that we should all be taking joy in and striving to do together as Saints of Jesus Christ. The opportunities to show we are true to the work can come daily. We should be anxiously engaged in it. The persecution will come, but it is expected and should not catch those who are true disciples of Jesus Christ and Watchmen off guard.

2. Gain Knowledge of the Truth of This Work for Yourself

It is of great importance to Gain our own understandings of the doctrine as it is taught correctly. That we may stand on our own two feet ready to build and defend the kingdom and stand as disciples of Jesus Christ by upholding his laws and doctrines in the manor he has tasked us to do. As we gain knowledge, we increase protection for ourselves and others as it becomes clearer to us how to remain free of Babylon's lies and free from the captivity that comes with sin.

"A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge, for if he does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge, and consequently more power than many men who are on the earth. Hence it needs revelation to assist us, and give us knowledge of the things of God." (Prophet Joseph Smith - History of the Church, 5:588.)

President Joseph F. Smith said, "One fault to be avoided by the Saints, young and old, is the tendency to live on borrowed light [and] to permit ... the light within them to be reflected, rather than original" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], p. 87).

“We have been sent here to work out our individual salvation through the tests and challenges of daily life. We cannot do that by relying heavily upon the borrowed light of someone else’s testimony. As we receive inspiration when we hear prophets, leaders, and peers bear their testimonies, those spiritual feelings should further enhance our desire to strengthen our own convictions. (Donald L. Staheli of the Seventy, *Securing our Testimonies*. GC 2004)

“The time will come when no man nor woman will be able to endure on borrowed light. Each will have to be guided by the light within himself. ...

“If you don’t have it you will not stand; therefore seek for the testimony of Jesus and cleave to it, that when the trying time comes you may not stumble and fall.” (Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967, p. 450.)

D&C 88

63 “Draw ^bnear unto me and I will draw near unto you; ^cseek me diligently and ye shall ^dfind me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

To gain knowledge of the truth and of the work that is currently unfolding in our dispensation, we must honestly seek after Christ, and yearn to follow after Him. He will by the power of the Holy Ghost open our minds to such an understanding that will be given the eyes to see and the ears to hear Him.

“The words of Christ will profoundly touch hearts and open the eyes of those who do not yet see Him. On the road to Emmaus, two disciples walked with Jesus. They were sad and did not comprehend that the Savior had triumphed over death. In their grief, they did not recognize that the living Christ was walking with them. Though Jesus “expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself,” they still did not recognize Him as the resurrected Savior until they sat and broke bread with Him. Then did their “eyes” open. As we—or our friends, associates, and neighbors—feast and break bread with Him, our eyes of understanding will open. When 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 (see [Luke 24:27–32](#)). This will be true for all of us. (Elder Takashi Wada Of the Seventy - Feasting upon the Words of Christ)

“There is nothing easy or automatic about becoming such powerful disciples. Our focus must be riveted on the Savior and His gospel. It is mentally rigorous to strive to look unto Him in every thought. But when we do, our doubts and fears flee.” (Russell M. Nelson, “Drawing the Power of Jesus Christ into Our Lives,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 41.)

“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.”¹²

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!”**¹³

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,¹⁴ and regular time committed to temple and family history work.

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.**” (President Russell M. Nelson – Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives)

“When you reach up for the Lord’s power in your life with the same intensity that a drowning person has when grasping and gasping for air, power from Jesus Christ will be yours. When the Savior knows you truly want to reach up to Him—when He can feel that the greatest desire of your heart is to draw His power into your life—you will be led by the Holy Ghost to know exactly what you should do.”²¹

When you spiritually stretch beyond anything you have ever done before, then His power will flow into you.²²

The gospel of Jesus Christ is filled with His power, which is available to every earnestly seeking daughter or son of God. It is my testimony that when we draw His power into our lives, both He and we will rejoice.” (President Russell M. Nelson – Drawing the Power of Jesus Christ into Our Lives)

3. Remain Valiant in the Testimony of Jesus Christ

What should be a principal goal in our lives right now is to build our personal faith in our Savior Jesus Christ. With the daily down spiraling conditions of our world, we must increase and deepen our conversion to, and strengthen our faith in, Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and His Atonement. The willingness to be obedient and to sacrifice comes by increasing our daily efforts. When we strengthen ourselves, we are obligated to strengthen our fellow brothers and sisters. A testimony of Jesus Christ is a lifelong process, it is a continuous quest filled with opportunities to serve, preach, defend, work, and save. As Elder Ballard said recently in a social media post “When we defend the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, we are defending Jesus Christ.” And when we are serving our Savior by willingly participating in His work, He has promised to be among those of us who are serving.

Luke 22:27

27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

“Nevertheless, spiritual light rarely comes to those who merely sit in darkness waiting for someone to flip a switch. It takes an act of faith to open our eyes to the Light of Christ. Spiritual light cannot be discerned by carnal eyes. Jesus Christ Himself taught, “I am the light which shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not.”³ For “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”⁴ (Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf – The Hope of God’s Light)

In this next quote, President Benson teaches us the power that one can have in remaining Valiant in their testimonies of Jesus Christ. And I feel it sums up the last few paragraphs of Section I perfectly.

“A testimony of Jesus is to know that the laws which He prescribed as His doctrine are true and then to abide by these laws and ordinances.

To possess a testimony of Jesus is to know that He voluntarily took upon Himself the sins of all mankind in the Garden of Gethsemane, which caused Him to suffer in both body and spirit and to bleed from every pore. All this He did so that we would not have to suffer if we would repent. (See D&C 19:16, 18)

To possess a testimony of Jesus is to know that He came forth triumphantly from the grave with a physical, resurrected body. And because He lives, so shall all mankind.

To possess a testimony of Jesus is to know that God the Father and Jesus Christ did indeed appear to the Prophet Joseph Smith to establish a new dispensation of His gospel so that salvation may be preached to all nations before He comes.

To possess a testimony of Jesus is to know that the Church which He established in the meridian of time and restored in modern times is, as the Lord has declared, “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth.” D&C 1:30

To possess a testimony of Jesus is to receive the words of His servants, the prophets, for as He has said, “whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.” D&C 1:38 A testimony of Jesus means that you accept the divine mission of Jesus Christ, embrace His gospel, and do His works; it means you accept the prophetic mission of Joseph Smith and his successors.

Speaking of those who will eventually receive the blessings of the celestial kingdom, the Lord said to Joseph Smith: “They are they who received the testimony of Jesus and believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he has given.” D&C 76:51 These are they who are valiant in their testimony of Jesus, who, as the Lord has declared “overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.” D&C 76:53

“Those who are just and true”! What an apt expression for one valiant in the testimony of Jesus. **They are courageous in defending truth and righteousness. These are members of the Church who magnify their callings in the Church pay their tithes and offerings, live morally clean lives, sustain their Church leaders by word and action, keep the Sabbath as a holy day, and obey all the commandments of God.**

To these the Lord has promised that “all thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, shall be revealed and set forth upon all who have endured *valiantly* for the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Concerning those who will receive the terrestrial, or lesser, kingdom, the Lord said, **“These are they who are *not* valiant in the testimony of Jesus;** wherefore, they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God.” Not to be valiant in one’s testimony is a tragedy of eternal consequence. These are members who know this latter-day work is true, but who fail to endure to the end. Some may even hold temple recommends, but do not magnify their callings in the Church. **Without valor, they do not take an affirmative stand *for* the kingdom of God. Some seek the praise, adulation, and honors of men; others attempt to conceal their sins; and a few criticize those who preside over them.**

One who rationalizes that he or she has a testimony of Jesus Christ but cannot accept direction and counsel from the leadership of His church is in a fundamentally unsound position and is in jeopardy of losing exaltation.

There are some who want to expose the weaknesses of Church leaders in an effort to show that they, too, are subject to human frailties and error like unto themselves.

I testify to you the truthfulness of this message shared today. I know that we are currently living in a time prophesied by prophets ancient and modern, a time where Satan is also performing some of his mightiest and cunning works among God’s people. Borrowed light testimonies will not be enough. In some instances, life long acquired testimonies haven’t been enough. But what really matters is the foundations of our testimonies and that they are properly and firmly built upon Jesus Christ and His Gospel truths. Darkness is spreading, and it is becoming so thick among the souls of men that it is becoming increasingly difficult to see the truth. It has caused a spiritual and moral blindness and deafness to fall upon many. It is contagious, it is poisonous. It can cause a spiritual fatigue among those who are not aware of it, and eventually lead to a spiritual death. And the remedy is not something that can be purchased for \$9.99 a month. The remedy is a willingness to be obedient to the Lord and his chosen servants. The remedy is a willingness to sacrifice our carnal desires and securities, tossing all manner of iniquity out of our way and seek after Jesus Christ. The remedy is Peace that will come when Jesus Christ reigns personally upon this earth.

“Among some people in the world it is popular to be a Christian; and among another class it is not popular; but it is popular with me to be a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and then it is popular for me to do the will of the Holy Spirit. All this enjoyment of the good things of heaven and earth will come by a separation of the righteous and the wicked. There was a time when an eruption took place in heaven, and Michael and his armies arose, Rev. 12:7-

9 D&C 88:112-115 and cast out the rebellious portion of the angels from heaven. Don't you think they got tired of contention, and broils, and tumults? Yes, so they universally agreed to cast it out. We will get tired of it too, in these last days, and we will make a separation between Saint and Sinner. The Sectarian priests have written and preached about forty years ago, and have proved to their readers, and to their hearers, that there would be a separation, and the sheep would be placed on the right hand and the goats on the left; Matt. 25:33 I suppose the goats mean those that are not good for much, they bear no wool." Heber C. Kimball - JOD 2:105

I know that if we choose to separate ourselves from those who seek to do evil and gather with those who seek to do good, we will remain Valiant in our testimonies. We will be prepared for difficult times, we will continue to gain the knowledge and the truth necessary to stand up, push the world aside and prepare a place for the Savior to come and reign personally upon the Earth. I know that Zion will be redeemed and if we will remain true to God and to the work that he has in store for us to do we can take part in it. I leave this with you in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Micah's Thoughts:

The biggest reason why I really wanted to look at this talk again was because of this quote shared in this first section. It's such an interesting quote on so many levels that one could do, I believe, a talk just on that. Now that an apostle has read it at General Conference it only adds to the mystique and intrigue on this subject. The only other quote that I think generates more intrigue in me is that of Joseph Smith's quote "a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all worldly things will never generate the faith necessary unto life and salvation"- both for similar reasons. Both are quotes that have profound doctrinally and prophetic natures to them, both have the author of the quote called into question, both have the things surrounding the quote called into question and both taken in their fullness are amazing. So what am I getting at?

First that quote from "Joseph Smith"- that quote is only found in the Lectures on Faith- the Lectures on Faith being a topic of debate because members don't want to accept what's in them as doctrinal, there is debate on if Joseph Smith should be credited with them, etc., etc., but yet despite that members, apostles and even prophets continue to quote "a religion that does not require..." as being true doctrine, as well as it being a quote from Joseph Smith Jr. I put forth if that quote is doctrinal and it is from Joseph Smith, shouldn't we look at the words surrounding it and likewise take them seriously? On what grounds do we have to take this single line out of the Lectures on Faith, say it is from Joseph Smith and that it is true, while claiming the rest is false and it's not even from Joseph Smith? It is one of those fascinating subjects because you get to really see how principled and honest vs. unprincipled and hypocritical Saints' minds and spiritual foundations are built. The Lectures on Faith are a wealth of knowledge, and it is a crying shame that members aren't principled are/or honest when dealing with them.

Pivoting to this quote from President Kimball, members, apostles and even prophets have quoted this from Heber, mostly focusing around the test, the test, the test, and obtaining a testimony, etc. But the quote in its entirety contains a few other items.

"An army of Elders will be sent to the four quarters of the earth to search out the righteous and warn the wicked of what is coming. All kinds of religions will be started and miracles performed that will deceive the very elect if that were possible. Our sons and daughters must live pure lives

so as to be prepared for what is coming. After a while the Gentiles will gather by the thousands to this place, and Salt Lake City will be classed among the wicked cities of the world. A spirit of speculation and extravagance will take possession of the Saints, and the results will be financial bondage. Persecution comes next and all true Latter-day Saints will be tested to the limit. Many will apostatize and others will be still not knowing what to do. Darkness will cover the earth and gross darkness the minds of the people. The judgments of God will be poured out on the wicked to the extent that our Elders from far and near will be called home, or in other words the gospel will be taken from the Gentiles and later on carried to the Jews. The western boundary of the State of Missouri will be swept so clean of its inhabitants that as President Young tells us, when you return to that place, there will not be left so much as a yellow dog to wag his tail. Before that day comes, however, the Saints will be put to a test that will try the integrity of the best of them. The pressure will become so great that the more righteous among them will cry unto the Lord day and night until deliverance comes...

[For] the time is coming when we will be mixed up in these now peaceful valleys to that extent that it will be difficult to tell the face of a Saint from the face of an enemy to the people of God. Then, brethren, look out for the great sieve, for there will be a great sifting time, and many will fall; for I say unto you there is a test, a Test, a TEST coming, and who will be able to stand? This church has before it many close places through which it must pass before the work of God is crowned with victory. To meet the difficulties that are coming it will be necessary for you to have knowledge of the truth of this work for yourselves. The difficulties will be of such character that the man or woman who does not possess this personal knowledge or witness will fall. If you have not got the testimony, live right and call upon the Lord and cease not 'till you obtain it. If you do not, you will not stand... Then the Prophet Joseph and others will make their appearance and those who have remained faithful will be selected to return to Jackson County, Missouri and take part in the building of that beautiful city, the New Jerusalem."

- Elder Heber C. Kimball (May 1868, in Deseret News, 23 May 1931; see also Conference Report, Oct. 1930, p. 58-59; Orson F. Whitney, Life of Heber C. Kimball, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1945, p. 446, Smith, Robert W. and Elisabeth A., Scriptural and Secular Prophecies Pertaining to The Last Days, Ninth Edition, Pyramid Press, SLC, UT, 1947, pp. 134-138; Deseret News, May 23, 1931; W. Cleon Skousen, Prophecy and Modern Times, pp. 31-33, An Army of Elders, May 1868, Heber C. Kimball Reported by his son J. Golden Kimball, CR October 1930, p. 58. See also Prophetic Sayings of Heber C. Kimball to Sister Amanda H. Wilcox)

The same questions would apply to this wonderful quote. If we are to take the test, the test, the test, and gaining a testimony section seriously then shouldn't we take the whole thing seriously? And if we acknowledge the quote exists and that it was said by Heber, why do we still refer hear people refer to the yellow dog as being a myth- that Brigham Young actually never said that? Are we calling Heber a liar in one sentence (the one we don't like) and then turning around and saying the next sentences are prophetic in nature? It's a fascinating topic considering how absolutely dynamite the Lectures on Faith and these quotes from Heber C. Kimball are.

If the quote is prophetic and important in nature and timely as apparently Elder Cook believes so with him sharing it at General Conference, there are a few other things mentioned in that quote that people might want to pay attention to. Such as,

1. The wheat and tares situation in the Church
2. The redemption of Zion
3. The return of Joseph Smith

4. Jackson County Missouri specifically mentioned

Those who want to claim that “yellow dog” is a myth, that Missouri is no longer a thing, those who want to say Joseph Smith isn’t coming back to lead in these events, etc., have no principled legs to stand on supporting or using other parts of this quote.

The next thing I would draw attention to is that Elder Cook said that one’s testimony is central to them obtaining the Celestial Kingdom. I remind people that their testimony of Jackson County determines whether or not they will be in Jackson County and people lose their minds- but an apostle reminds members that their testimony is required for entry into the Celestial Kingdom and no one bats an eyelid. We are not talking about having a testimony of the Savior as being entirely believing in his role as the Savior, for the Lord Himself said “many will say in that day Lord, Lord, have we not testified in thy name?” and James taught to those that said they believed in the Lord “Thou believest there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble; thou hast made thyself like unto them, not being justified. (**James 2:19 JST**)

Hebrews 11:

6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

So we have to have a testimony and faith in the promises of God or we will never please God and receive those blessings. And we cannot gain such a testimony and display such faith in something that we know nothing about. Ergo, it is very important to study the promises made to the house of Israel.

Doctrine and Covenants 101

11 Mine indignation is soon to be poured out without measure upon all nations; and this will I do when the cup of their iniquity is full.

12 And in that day all who are found upon the watch-tower, or in other words, all mine Israel, shall be saved.

13 And they that have been scattered shall be gathered.

If you understood and had a testimony that:

1. "The time is soon coming when those who obey the Lord will be separated from those who do not" (President Nelson)

2. "The daughters and granddaughters you have raised will take part in building the society that makes up the New Jerusalem" (President Eyring)

3. "We will live to see what Nephi saw only in vision that the power of the Lamb descended" and that "we are among those whom Nephi saw" (President Nelson)

and

4. "that only those found upon the watch-tower will be saved" (D&C 101)

What would you teach/preach? What would be your focus?

"Be part of the force gathering Israel on both sides of the veil, and please, do it now... time is running out." (President Nelson)

Funny thing that, I feel like I've heard those words recently...

Section II (Dani)

In Alma's remarkable teaching to his son Helaman, he makes a profound promise that those who "put their trust in God shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions, and shall be lifted up at the last day."¹¹

While Alma had received a manifestation where he saw an angel, this is rare. Impressions made by the Holy Ghost are more typical. These impressions can be equally as important as angelic manifestations. President Joseph Fielding Smith taught: "Impressions on the soul that come from the Holy Ghost are far more significant than a vision. When Spirit speaks to spirit, the imprint upon the soul is far more difficult to erase."¹²

This leads us to Alma's counsel to his second son, Shiblon. Shiblon was righteous, like his brother Helaman. The counsel I want to emphasize is [Alma 38:12](#), which reads in part, "See that ye bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love."

Bridle is an interesting word. When we ride a horse, we use the bridle to guide it. A good synonym might be to direct, control, or restrain. The Old Testament tells us we shouted for joy when we learned we would have physical bodies.¹³ The body is not evil—it is beautiful and essential—but some passions, if not used properly and appropriately bridled, can separate us from *God and His work* and adversely impact our testimony.

Let's talk about two passions in particular—first, anger, and second, lust.¹⁴ It is interesting that both left unbridled or uncontrolled can cause great heartache, diminish the influence of the Spirit, and separate us from God and His work. The adversary takes every opportunity to fill our lives with images of violence and immorality.

In some families, it is not uncommon for an angry husband or wife to hit a spouse or a child. In July, I participated in a United Kingdom All-Party Parliamentary forum in London.¹⁵ Violence

against women and youth was highlighted as a significant worldwide problem. In addition to violence, others have engaged in verbal abuse. The proclamation on the family tells us those “who abuse spouse or offspring ... will one day stand accountable before God.”¹⁶

President Nelson strongly emphasized this yesterday morning.¹⁷ Please make up your mind that regardless of whether your parents did or did not abuse you, you will not physically or verbally or emotionally abuse your spouse or children.

In our day one of the most significant challenges is contention and verbal abuse related to societal issues. In many cases anger and abusive language have replaced reason, discussion, and civility. Many have abandoned the admonition of the Savior’s senior Apostle, Peter, to seek Christlike qualities such as temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity.¹⁸ They have also abandoned the Christlike quality of humility.

In addition to controlling anger and bridling other passions, we need to lead pure moral lives by controlling our thoughts, language, and actions. We need to avoid pornography, evaluate the appropriateness of what we are streaming in our homes, and avoid every form of sinful conduct.

Dani’s Thoughts:

I’d like to go back to footnote 6 first. Elder Cook has three references there:

See [Moses 1:39](#); see also “The Work of Salvation and Exaltation,” section [1.2](#) in *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ChurchofJesusChrist.org. We come unto Christ and assist in God’s work by living the gospel of Jesus Christ, caring for those in need, inviting all to receive the gospel, and uniting families for eternity. See also [Doctrine and Covenants 110](#), which sets forth the keys that were given for the work of salvation.

D&C 110 tells us of the vision Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery experienced in the Kirtland temple. Christ is first, then Moses, Elias, and Elijah return and commit the various keys to Joseph Smith.

D&C 110: 16

Therefore, the ^a[keys](#) of this ^b[dispensation](#) are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful ^c[day](#) of the Lord is near, even at the doors.

In the introduction to the Doctrine & Covenants:

“In the revelations, one hears the tender but firm voice of the Lord Jesus Christ, speaking anew in the dispensation of the fulness of times; and the

work that is initiated herein is preparatory to His Second Coming, in fulfillment of and in concert with the words of all the holy prophets since the world began.”

Pres. Nelson has recently said:

“As I have stated before, the gathering of Israel (keys committed by Moses) 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.”

One reason we are tasked with the work of salvation of exaltation, and why all of these keys were restored is because these are the latter-days! We are trying to prepare a people ready for the Lord. Being ready for the Lord means we have been gathered back into His fold, we have made covenants with God at baptism and in the temple through priesthood ordinances that have been restored. Now, we are being *true to God and His work* by keeping those covenants. This is helpful to keep in mind as Elder Cook talks about *God’s work* and what that entails.

Going back to this section.

Elder Cook quotes from Alma 36: 3. The footnote for *trials* in that verse takes you to Romans 8: 28:

28 And we know that all things work together for ^agood to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

All of Romans chapter 8 can be connected with the counsel Alma gives to Helaman. I will highlight a few verses that I was particularly drawn to.

Romans 8: 16-18

16 The Spirit itself beareth ^awitness with our ^bspirit, that we are the ^cchildren of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; ^aheirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we ^bsuffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

18 For I reckon that the ^asufferings of this present time *are* not worthy to be compared with the ^bglory which shall be revealed ^cin us.

Joseph Smith (TPJS, p. 347):

“These are the first principles of consolation. How consoling to the mourners when they are called to part with a husband, wife, father, mother, child, or dear relative, to know that, although the earthly tabernacle is laid down and dissolved, they shall rise again to dwell in everlasting burnings in immortal glory, not to sorrow, suffer, or die any more; but they shall be heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. What is it? To inherit the same power, the same glory and the same exaltation, until you arrive at the station of a God, and ascend the throne of eternal power, the same as those who have gone before.

New Testament Institute Student Manual (Ch. 36: Romans 4-8)

When Paul declared that we must “suffer with Christ,” he did not mean that we would suffer what the Savior did as part of His atoning sacrifice, but rather that we would go through our own suffering with Him (see Matthew 11:28–30). Elder Keith R. Edwards of the Seventy explained that approaching suffering in this way allows us to know the Savior better:

“We can learn spiritual lessons if we can approach suffering, sorrow, or grief with a focus on Christ. Anciently Paul wrote that our suffering may give us an opportunity to know the Savior better. Paul wrote to the Romans:

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.’ [Romans 8:16–17.]

“Now, lest anyone go looking for hardship and suffering, that is not what is taught. Rather, it is the attitude with which we approach our hardships and trials that allows us to know the Savior better. ...

“As we are called upon to endure suffering, sometimes inflicted upon us intentionally or negligently, we are put in a unique position—if we choose, we may be allowed to have new awareness of the suffering of the Son of God. ...

“... We can have a greater appreciation for that which He did, and we can feel His spirit succoring us, and we can know the Savior in a very real sense” (“That They Might Know Thee,” Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2006, 99–101).

Continuing with v. 29

JST, Romans 8:29–30. Compare [Romans 8:29–30](#)

Jesus Christ sanctifies the righteous in preparation for their salvation.

29 For *him* whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to *his own* image, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover, *him* whom he did predestinate, *him* he also called; and *him* whom he called, *him* he also *sanctified*; and *him* whom he *sanctified*, *him* he also glorified.

Joseph Smith (TPJS, p. 365):

“Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was. I suppose I was ordained to this very office in that Grand Council.”

Bruce R. McConkie (*God Foreordains His Prophets and His People, April 1974*):

“All those who receive the Melchizedek Priesthood in this life were, as Alma teaches, “called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God,” because they were among the noble and great in that premortal sphere. (Alma 13:3)

And Paul says that through this law of foreordination, which he calls the doctrine of election, there came to the whole house of Israel “the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.” (Romans 9: 4) He says that the faithful members of the Church, those “that love God” and “are called according to his purpose,” are foreordained “to be conformed to the image of his Son,” to be “joint-heirs with Christ,” and to have eternal life in our Father’s kingdom. (Romans 8: 17, 28)

He says also of members of the Church that God “hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love,” and that we were foreordained to become the children of Jesus Christ by adoption, thus gaining a “forgiveness of sins” in this life and an inheritance of eternal glory in the life to come.

New Testament Institute Student Manual

In [Romans 8:29–30](#), the Greek term translated as *predestinate* means “to appoint beforehand” and refers to the foreordination some people receive, based on

God's foreknowledge, to follow Jesus Christ and become like Him (see also [Ephesians 1:3–4](#); [1 Peter 1:2](#)). "Foreordination does not guarantee that individuals will receive certain callings or responsibilities. Such opportunities come in this life as a result of the righteous exercise of agency, just as foreordination came as a result of righteousness in the premortal existence" ("Foreordination," *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* [2004], [69](#); see also [Alma 13:3–4](#)).

For those of us who have chosen God and His work, even through our trials, troubles, and afflictions—we can find comfort and strength knowing that God knew us in our premortal existence. And because we chose to follow Him before we came to earth and we are choosing to follow Him now while we are here, God will bless us with glory we cannot even begin to comprehend. (Romans 8: 18)

I think this is a great quote by Pres. Wilford Woodruff tying together how we cannot fail doing God's work, with the work that is needed for the last days:

"Now this Zion of God has been before his face from before the foundation of the world, and it is no more going to fail in the latter days than any of the purposes of God are going to fail, D&C 76:3 hence I look upon this work as the work of God, and it makes no difference to the Lord Almighty, nor to his Saints, what the world may think or do about it, or what course they may pursue with regard to it; they cannot stop its progress, because it is the work of God." (JD 14: 31, *The Work of God, Etc.*)

Establishing Zion on the earth will be one of the crowning moments of God's work in these latter-days!

Now, Elder Cook goes on to discuss Alma 38: 12.

Book of Mormon Institute Student Manual Ch. 31: Alma 36-39

A bridle is the headgear used on a horse. It includes reins and a bit, which give the rider control.

Elder Bruce C. Hafen of the Seventy and his wife Marie explained that a bridle was meant to direct, not destroy, desires and passions: "Is self-denial wise because something is wrong with our passions, or because something is right with our passions? Alma taught his son: 'See that ye bridle all your passions, *that ye may be filled with love.*' ([Alma 38:12](#); emphasis added.) He did not say eliminate or

even suppress your passions, but *bridle* them—harness, channel, and focus them. Why? Because discipline makes possible a richer, deeper love” (*The Belonging Heart* [1994], 302).

Hymn 336 *School Thy Feelings*

1. School thy feelings, O my brother;

Train thy warm, impulsive soul.

Do not its emotions smother,

But let wisdom’s voice control.

School thy feelings; there is power

In the cool, collected mind.

Passion shatters reason’s tower,

Makes the clearest vision blind.

School thy feelings, O my brother;

Train thy warm, impulsive soul.

Do not its emotions smother,

But let wisdom’s voice control.

2. School thy feelings; condemnation

Never pass on friend or foe,

Though the tide of accusation

Like a flood of truth may flow.

Hear defense before deciding,

And a ray of light may gleam,

Showing thee what filth is hiding

Underneath the shallow stream.

School thy feelings, O my brother;

Train thy warm, impulsive soul.

Do not its emotions smother,

But let wisdom’s voice control.

Elder Cook specifically talks about anger and lust. His words that I want to focus on:

“It is interesting that both left unbridled or uncontrolled can cause great heartache, diminish the influence of the Spirit, and separate us from God and His work.”

JST, Ephesians 4:26. Compare [Ephesians 4:26](#)

Unrighteous anger is sin.

26 *Can ye be angry, and not sin?* let not the sun go down upon your wrath;

Unrighteous anger is a sin. However, if there is unrighteous anger, is there such a thing as righteous anger?

Brigham Young (JD 5: 226, *The United States' Administration, Etc.*)

“I do not often get angry; but when I do, I am *righteously* angry; and the bosom of the Almighty burns with anger towards those scoundrels; and they shall be consumed, in the name of Israel's God.”

In this discourse, Brigham Young is talking about the government's plans to send troops to Utah on unsubstantiated pretenses. Later in that same talk he says:

“Do not be angry. I will permit you to be as angry as I am. Do not get so angry that you cannot pray: do not allow yourselves to become so angry that you cannot feed an enemy—even your worst enemy, if an opportunity should present itself. There is a *wicked anger*, and there is a [p. 229a] *righteous anger*. The Lord does not suffer wicked anger to be in his heart; but there is anger in his bosom, and he will hold a controversy with the nations, Jer. 25:31 and will sift them, Isa. 30:28 and no power can stay his hand.”

“I would like this people to have faith enough to turn away their enemies. I have prayed fervently about this matter; for it has been said that the troops would come: but I have said that, if my faith will prevent it, they shall not come. If God will turn them whithersoever he will, so that they do not come here, I shall be perfectly satisfied. But another man steps up, and says to the one that prays for our enemies to be turned away, “Brother, you are a coward; damn them, let them come, for I want fight to them.” Herein you perceive a conflict in our faith; and that should not be. If there was a perfect union of our faith, our enemies could never cross the Rocky Mountains; or, if they undertook to come some other way, they never could cross the Sierra Nevada Mountains, nor the Basin Rim, on our north, nor the deserts at the south. But, says one, “I want to fight.” Do all such persons know that they are not right? If they will examine their hearts, they will find a *wicked anger* and a malice there; and they cannot get into the kingdom of God with those feelings.

Learn to control yourselves; learn to be in the hands of God as clay in the hands of the potter; Jer. 18:6 and if he will turn our enemies away, praised be his name. But if it should become a duty to take the sword, let us do it [p. 229b] manfully and in the strength of Israel's God."

So, our unbridled anger as a result of not being able to "school our feelings" is what leads to sin. As the hymn above said, we need to "let wisdom's voice control." I think Brigham Young gave a great example of the difference between unrighteous anger and being level-headed with righteous anger.

The advice that Alma gave to his sons can be advice that we can turn to as well, specifically in this time period, so close to the return of our Savior. I will finish with more of Pres. Woodruff's quote:

"For as the Lord God Almighty lives, so true will the work, the foundation of which has been laid in these latter days, increase and continue until its consummation is effected, and the great Zion of God is established in beauty, power and glory, and the dominion of the kingdom of our God extends over the whole earth." (JD 14: 31, *The Work of God, Etc.*)

Be true to God and His work brothers and sisters! In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen!

Micah's Thoughts:

Mosiah 27:25. Being Born Again

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) gave us an important reminder as we seek to be born again and become like our Savior Jesus Christ:

"We must be careful, as we seek to become more and more godlike, that we do not become discouraged and lose hope. Becoming Christlike is a lifetime pursuit and very often involves growth and change that is slow, almost imperceptible. The scriptures record remarkable accounts of men whose lives changed dramatically, in an instant, as it were: Alma the Younger, Paul on the road to Damascus, Enos praying far into the night, King Lamoni. Such astonishing examples of the power to change even those steeped in sin give confidence that the Atonement can reach even those deepest in despair.

"But we must be cautious as we discuss these remarkable examples. Though they are real and powerful, they are the exception more than the rule. For every Paul, for every Enos, and for every King Lamoni, there are hundreds and thousands of people who find the process of repentance much more subtle, much more imperceptible. Day by day they move closer to the

Lord, little realizing they are building a godlike life. They live quiet lives of goodness, service, and commitment. They are like the Lamanites, who the Lord said 'were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and they knew it not.' (3 Ne. 9:20; italics added.)" ("A Mighty Change of Heart," Ensign, Oct. 1989, 5).

For additional information on the subject of being born again and experiencing a mighty change of heart, refer to the commentary for Mosiah 5:2 (see page 144), Alma 5:12–14 (see page 178), and Alma 36:17–21 (see page 234).

-Book of Mormon Student Manual

"A parent may whip a child, and justly, too, because he stole an apple; whereas if the child had asked for the apple, and the parent had given it, the child would have eaten it with a better appetite; there would have been no stripes; all the pleasure of the apple would have been secured, all the misery of stealing lost.

This principle will justly apply to all of God's dealings with His children. Everything that God gives us is lawful and right; and it is proper that we should enjoy His gifts and blessings whenever and wherever He is disposed to bestow; but if we should seize upon those same blessings and enjoyments without law, without revelation, without commandment, those blessings and enjoyments would prove cursings and vexations in the end, and we should have to lie down in sorrow and wailings of everlasting regret. But in obedience there is joy and peace unspotted..."

-Joseph Smith, TPJS, p.256

Section III (Josline)

This brings us to Alma's counsel to his son Corianton. Unlike his brothers, Helaman and Shiblon, Corianton engaged in moral transgression.

Because Corianton had engaged in immorality, it was necessary for Alma to teach him about repentance. He had to teach him the seriousness of sin and then how to repent.¹⁹

So Alma's preventive counsel was to bridle passions, but his counsel for those who have transgressed was to repent. President Nelson gave members profound counsel on repentance at the April 2019 general conference. He made it clear that daily repentance is integral to our lives. "Repentance is not an event; it is a process. It is the key to happiness and peace of mind," he taught. "Daily repentance is the pathway to purity, and purity brings power."²⁰ If Corianton had done what President Nelson counseled, he would have repented as soon as he had begun to entertain impure thoughts. Major transgressions would not have occurred.

The concluding counsel that Alma gave to his sons is some of the most important doctrine in all the scriptures. It relates to the Atonement wrought by Jesus Christ.

Alma testified that Christ would take away sin.²¹ Without the Savior's Atonement, the eternal principle of justice would require punishment.²² Because of the Savior's Atonement, mercy can prevail for those who have repented, and it can allow them to return to the presence of God. We would do well to ponder this wonderful doctrine.

None can return to God by his or her own good works alone; we all need the benefit of the Savior's sacrifice. All have sinned, and it is only through the Atonement of Jesus Christ that we can obtain mercy and live with God.²³

Alma also gave wonderful counsel to Corianton for all of us who have gone through or will go through the repentance process, regardless of whether the sins are small or as severe as those committed by Corianton. [Verse 29 of Alma 42](#) reads, "And now, my son, I desire that ye should let these things trouble you no more, and only let your sins trouble you, with that trouble which shall bring you down unto repentance."

Corianton heeded Alma's counsel and both repented and served honorably. Because of the Savior's Atonement, healing is available to all.

In Alma's day, in Heber's day, and certainly in our day, we all need to seek our own testimony of Jesus Christ, bridle our passions, repent of our sins, and find peace through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and be true to God and His work.

In a recent talk and again this morning, President Russell M. Nelson said it this way: "I plead with you to take charge of your testimony of Jesus Christ. Work for it. Own it. Care for it. Nurture it so that it will grow. Then watch for miracles to happen in your life."²⁴

I am grateful that we will now hear from President Nelson. I testify that President Nelson is the Lord's prophet for our day. I love and treasure the marvelous inspiration and guidance we receive through him.

As an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, I bear my sure witness of the Savior's divinity and the reality of His Atonement in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Footnotes:

1. See Ronald K. Esplin, "[A Great Work Done in That Land](#)," *Ensign*, July 1987, 20: "On June 13, Elder Kimball, Orson Hyde, Joseph Fielding, and Heber's friend Willard Richards left Kirtland for England. In New York, on June 22, Canadians Isaac Russell, John Goodson, and John Snyder joined them. The seven missionaries then booked passage for Liverpool on the *Garrick*." (See Heber C. Kimball papers, 1837–1866; Willard Richards journals and papers, 1821–1854, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.)

2. The This Is the Place Monument, located on the east side of Salt Lake City, Utah, at the mouth of Emigration Canyon, commemorates the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the Saints into the Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847. The monument features statues of Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Wilford Woodruff.

3. Between 8,000 and 10,000 Latter-day Saints fled Missouri in early 1839 to escape violent acts of vigilantes and mobs. Under the direction of Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, a committee was formed to collect supplies, assess needs, and establish routes for the grueling 200-mile (320-km) winter exodus to Illinois. Compassionate residents of the town of Quincy provided temporary refuge for the suffering Saints by way of shelter and food. (See *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in*

the Latter Days, vol. 1, [The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846](#) [2018], 375–77; William G. Hartley, “The Saints’ Forced Exodus from Missouri,” in Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Kent P. Jackson, eds., *Joseph Smith: The Prophet and Seer* [2010], 347–89.)

4. In Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball: An Apostle, the Father and Founder of the British Mission* (1945), 449; emphasis added.

5. In Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 450.

6. See [Moses 1:39](#); see also “The Work of Salvation and Exaltation,” section [1.2](#) in *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ChurchofJesusChrist.org. We come unto Christ and assist in God’s work by living the gospel of Jesus Christ, caring for those in need, inviting all to receive the gospel, and uniting families for eternity. See also [Doctrine and Covenants 110](#), which sets forth the keys that were given for the work of salvation.

7. See also [1 Corinthians 15:40–41](#).

8. See [Doctrine and Covenants 45:27](#).

9. See [Doctrine and Covenants 45:29](#).

10. Alma was the son of Alma the prophet. He was the chief judge of the nation and high priest and prophet. He experienced a miraculous conversion as a young man.

11. [Alma 36:3](#).

12. Joseph Fielding Smith, “The First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve,” *Improvement Era*, Nov. 1966, 979.

13. See [Job 38:7](#).

14. See [Alma 39:9](#). Alma instructs Corianton, “Go no more after the [lust] of your eyes.”

15. All-Party Parliamentary Group, Parliamentary sessions, Tuesday, July 5, 2022, “Preventing Violence and Promoting Freedom of Belief.”

16. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” ChurchofJesusChrist.org; see also Patrick Kearon, “[He Is Risen with Healing in His Wings: We Can Be More Than Conquerors](#),” *Liahona*, May 2022, 37–39.

17. See Russell M. Nelson, “[What Is True?](#),” *Liahona*, Nov. 2022, 29.

18. See [2 Peter 1:5–10](#).

19. See [Alma 39:9](#).

20. Russell M. Nelson, “[We Can Do Better and Be Better](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 67, 68.

21. See [Alma 39:15](#).

22. See [Alma 42:16](#).

23. See [2 Nephi 25:23](#).

24. Russell M. Nelson, Facebook, Aug. 1, 2022, facebook.com/russell.m.nelson; Twitter, Aug. 1, 2022, twitter.com/nelsonrussellm; Instagram, Aug. 1, 2022, instagram.com/russellmnelson; see also “[Choices for Eternity](#)” (worldwide devotional for young adults, May 15, 2022), broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

Josline’s Thoughts:

No one since the fall of Adam is without sins from the following scriptures we can see how some things we might think are insignificant but in reality are sins. The scriptures also show that having faith in the Lord is of the utmost importance. Our example to the unbelievers is also important; our actions or inactions each day may cause us to sin because in that we may cause others to stumble and lost their ways to our Heavenly Father.

Romans 14:23

23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

1 Corinthians 8:12

12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

13 Wherefore, if meat ^amake my brother to ^boffend, I will ^ceat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

It is foolish to think that we are without sins. Instead of being prideful and walk with haughtiness, we should acknowledge our awful situation that we are all naturally sinners and learn from the scriptures what we should do to repent to be in good standing with our God if we really want to call ourselves Christians. We must also acknowledge that we can't stop sinning without the help of our Savior Jesus Christ. Through His atonement and His great love, we can be forgiven. But we must humble ourselves before Him.

Proverbs 28:13

13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

14 Happy *is* the man that ^afearneth alway: but he that ^bhardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

Elder Spencer V. Jones of the Seventy taught about the perils of trying to hide our sins and encouraged us to repent now:

“At times, consequences of sin may appear to be very subtle to the sinner. We may even convince ourselves ... that no one will be able to detect our sins and that they are well concealed. But always to our Heavenly Father and often to spiritually sensitive leaders, parents, and friends, our sins are glaringly apparent. ...

“‘When we undertake to cover our sins ... the heavens withdraw themselves; [and] the Spirit of the Lord is grieved’ (D&C 121:37). We lose our spiritual gifts. ...

“If the Spirit is pricking your heart to correct something in your life, know this: your soul is precious. Heavenly Father wants you to be part of His eternal family.

“I lovingly plead, ‘Do not procrastinate the day of your repentance’ (Alma 34:33). Start the process now. Remove the stench of sin with the remedy of repentance. Then, through the Atonement, the Savior can wash you clean” (“Overcoming the Stench of Sin,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2003, 88, 89).

Elder Cook on the third section talked about repentance, he quoted

Alma 39:9

9 Now my son, I would that ye should repent and forsake your sins, and go no more after the lusts of your eyes, but cross yourself in all these things; for except ye do this ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God. Oh, remember, and take it upon you, and cross yourself in these things.

As the scripture says, we must examine ourselves each day to recognize our faults and quickly repent. But we should be pre-disposed to submit ourselves to whatever affliction God would decide let us go through, because we need to be refined, Because He wants us to become as perfect as He is and wants us to succeed, chastisements are signs of His love like a father

discipline his sons and daughters, we must strive to not be phased by them. We must learn to have faith in Him and develop a great love for Him as one who sacrificed Himself to help us through this life to be able to obtain forgiveness from His/our Father in Heaven in order to be clean enough to stand before Him in the last days.

[Scripture Citation Index \(byu.edu\)](#) ”-1979-A:53, James E. Faust, The refiners Fire-

Into every life there come the painful, despairing days of adversity and buffeting. There seems to be a full measure of anguish, sorrow, and often heartbreak for everyone, including those who earnestly seek to do right and be faithful. The thorns that prick, that stick in the flesh, that hurt, often change lives which seem robbed of significance and hope. This change comes about through a refining process which often seems cruel and hard. In this way the soul can become like soft clay in the hands of the Master in building lives of faith, usefulness, beauty, and strength. For some, the refiner’s fire causes a loss of belief and faith in God, but those with eternal perspective understand that such refining is part of the perfection process.

In our extremities, it is possible to become born again, born anew, renewed in heart and spirit. We no longer ride with the flow of the crowd, but instead we enjoy the promise of Isaiah to be renewed in our strength and “mount up with wings as eagles

When we submit ourselves to our Heavenly Father, we must also realize that all people on earth are His children and He wants them all to come back to Him, if we know the doctrine of Christ and we want to be cleanse from sins, to repent, be baptized and find forgiveness and enjoy the peace that comes with it, we must also warn His other children, love them, wanting the best for them temporally and spiritually, that they may be pulled away from the grips of the adversary who hold them in bondage. Warning them and serving them will also help us in our quest for forgiveness

1 John 3:10–18

10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.

13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

Elder Cook quoted President Nelson talk "We Can Do Better and Be Better" [We Can Do Better and Be Better \(churchofjesuschrist.org\)](#) where the prophet quoted the following scriptures, D&C 6:9 which was repeated again on D&C 11:9, He also referred to many other scriptures regarding repentance

The prophet said:

"Does *everyone* need to repent?" The answer is yes.

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,³ who stands with open arms,⁴ hoping and willing to heal, forgive, cleanse, strengthen, purify, and sanctify us."

..Thus, when Jesus asks you and me to "repent,"⁶ 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

Doctrine and Covenants 6:9

9 Say nothing but repentance unto this generation; keep my commandments, and assist to bring forth my work, according to my commandments, and you shall be blessed. None can return to God by his or her own good works alone; we all need the benefit of the Savior's sacrifice. All have sinned, and it is only through the Atonement of Jesus Christ that we can obtain mercy and live with God.²³

Alma 37:33

33 Preach unto them repentance, and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ; teach them to humble themselves and to be meek and lowly in heart; teach them to withstand every temptation of the devil, with their faith on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Doctrine and Covenants 55:2

2 And then thou shalt be ordained by the hand of my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., to be an elder unto this church, to preach repentance and remission of sins by way of baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.

The prophet also referred to the scriptures:

3 Nephi 9:22

22 Therefore, whoso repenteth and cometh unto me as a little child, him will I receive, for of such is the kingdom of God. Behold, for such I have laid down my life, and have taken it up again; therefore repent, and come unto me ye ends of the earth, and be saved.

3 Nephi 27:19

19 And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.

The prophet continues by saying

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.

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.⁸ When we choose to repent, we choose to become more like Jesus Christ!²

We cannot change our ways if we don't deliberately choose to love our Savior and have faith in Him, as when we love we want to please and do whatever He wants us to do, because He loved us first, we should want to reciprocate that love the best we can, the way to do that is to obey His commandments and strive to live righteously to be as He is. We cannot be as He is if we cannot judge and discern right from wrong and truth from error to raise our voices and to condemn and reject evil

the prophet continues:

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 Lord. He is arming his minions with potent weapons to keep us from partaking of the joy and love of the Lord.¹⁰

27 And know ye that ye shall be judges of this people, according to the judgment which I shall give unto you, which shall be just. Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am.

Doctrine and Covenants 10:22

22 Satan stirreth them up, that he may lead their souls to destruction.

Moses 5:13

13 And Satan came among them, saying: I am also a son of God; and he commanded them, saying: Believe it not; and they believed it not, and they loved Satan more than God. And men began from that time forth to be carnal, sensual, and devilish.

Jude 1:17–21

17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

The prophet continues by saying:

“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 heaven. 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.¹² “

He also referred to another talk from him where he spoke about the Gospel Home Centered church supported [Repentance and Conversion \(churchofjesuschrist.org\)](http://churchofjesuschrist.org) where he said the following:

“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.

..

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.

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

My dear brothers and sisters, the assaults of the adversary are increasing exponentially, in intensity and in variety.³ 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.”

From the quote cited above we can see that he is urging us to attend the temple and to repent from neglecting to attend in a regular bases. He referred to the following scriptures:

Mosiah 4:29

29 And finally, I cannot tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin; for there are divers ways and means, even so many that I cannot number them.

Moroni 10:32

32 Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.

Alma 13:27

27 And now, my brethren, I wish from the inmost part of my heart, yea, with great anxiety even unto pain, that ye would hearken unto my words, and cast off your sins, and not procrastinate the day of your repentance;

This note below was written as an explanation for the scriptures he referred to of Alma 22:16 and Mormon 5:2 as if President Nelson wrote it himself.

We also remember the sinful people under the care of their concerned leader, Mormon, who wrote, “I was without hope, for I knew the judgments of the Lord which should come upon them; for they repented not of their iniquities, but did struggle for their lives without calling upon that Being who created them”

Mormon 5:2

2 But behold, I was without hope, for I knew the judgments of the Lord which should come upon them; for they repented not of their iniquities, but did struggle for their lives without calling upon that Being who created them.

On that talk he also said the following

“For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

“But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I.”²⁰ (D&C 19:17)

While the Lord insists on our repentance, most people don’t feel such a compelling need.²¹ They include themselves among those who try to be good. They have no evil intent.²² Yet the Lord is clear in His message that *all* need to repent—not only from sins of *commission* but from sins of *omission* as well. Such is the case in His warning to parents: “Inasmuch as parents have children in Zion ... that teach them *not* to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost ... , the sin be upon the heads of the parents.”²³

D&C 19:15–17

15 Therefore I command you to repent—repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not.

16 For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

Again President Nelson wrote the following when we check his footnote 21 and 22

In the minds of some people, the word *repent* also conjures up terms like *penalty* and *penalize*, which connote punishment. If they are not guilty of punishable sin, they may reason that they have no need to repent.

President Spencer W. Kimball said:

“There is a prevalent, perhaps subconscious, feeling that the Lord designed repentance only for those who commit murder or adultery or theft or other heinous crimes. This is of course not so. If we are humble and desirous of living the gospel we will come to think of repentance as applying to everything we do in life, whether it be spiritual or temporal in nature. Repentance is for every soul who has not yet reached perfection” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball*, 37). See also 1 John 1:8; Mosiah 4:29–30.

1 John 1:8

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Mosiah 4:29–30

29 And finally, I cannot tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin; for there are divers ways and means, even so many that I cannot number them.

30 But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not.

Doctrine and Covenants 68:25

25 And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, **the sin be upon the heads of the parents.**

The last quotes I wanted to share RE from Elders Oaks and Elder Neil A. Maxwell:

“Let us recall two scriptures: (1) ‘Repentance could not come unto men except there were a punishment’ ([Alma 42:16](#)); and (2) the Savior said that he had suffered these things for all, ‘that they might not suffer if they would repent; but if they would not repent they must suffer even as I’ ([D&C 19:16–17](#)).

“This obviously means that the unrepentant transgressor must suffer for his own sins. Does it also mean that a person who repents does not need to suffer at all because the entire punishment is borne by the Savior? That cannot be the meaning because it would be inconsistent with the Savior’s other teachings. What is meant is that the person who repents does not need to suffer ‘even as’ the Savior suffered for that sin. Sinners who are repenting will experience some suffering, but because of their repentance and the Atonement, they will not experience the full, ‘exquisite’ extent of eternal torment the Savior suffered” (“[Sin and Suffering](#),” *Ensign*, July 1992, 71–72). [Chapter 8: Doctrine and Covenants 19 \(churchofjesuschrist.org\)](#) Chapter 8: Doctrine and Covenants 19

Now, my brothers and sisters, let not Jesus' redemption for us stop at the immortalizing dimension of the Atonement, "the loosing of the bands of death" (Alma 11:41). Let us grasp the proffered gift of eternal life! **We will end up either choosing Christ's manner of living or His manner of suffering! It is either "suffer even as I" (D&C 19:16–17), or overcome "even as [He] ... overcame" (Rev. 3:21).** His beckoning command is to become "even as I am" (3 Ne. 27:27). The spiritually settled accept that invitation, and "through the atonement of Christ," they *become and overcome!* (see [Mosiah 3:18, 19](#)). [Overcome ... Even As I Also Overcame](#) ([churchofjesuschrist.org](#))

Brothers and Sisters, no matter what we choose to do, we cannot escape the consequences of it. We either both repent and hold on to the helm of Christ or we will suffer the consequences under the helm of Satan. We either live in freedom or being enslaved under the subtle chain of the adversary. I pray that we can open our eyes and recognise our wicked ways, humble ourselves, and sincerely repent as the Prophet said, and in all the scriptures God is asking us and practically begging us, His people, to turn back to Him with His infinite love and patience, to free ourselves from the chain of eternal misery caused by our rebellious ways under the power of Satan the puppet master. There is enough misery to go around in Babylon we don't want that to last eternally, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Micah's Thoughts:

Obedience is the act of obeying. The verb to obey comes from the Latin audire meaning "to hear."

- **President Russell M. Nelson** ("Obedience," Seminar for New Mission Presidents, June 25, 1998)

So to "Hear Him" means to "obey Him". But are we perfect in our obedience? The answer is no—which means we need to repent.

Repent from Sin

What does it mean to repent? We begin with a dictionary's definition that to repent is "to turn from sin ... to feel sorrow [and] regret." 13 [Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1987), "repent," 999.] To repent from sin is not easy. But the prize is worth the price. Repentance needs to be done one step at a time. Humble prayer will facilitate each essential step. As prerequisites to forgiveness, there must first be recognition, remorse, then confession. 14 [See 1 John 1:9 Mosiah 26:29 D&C 61:2 64:7 "By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them."

-**Russell M. Nelson** (Repentance and Conversion, April 2007)

The door opened and someone entered, but I didn't look up. As the door closed, I heard someone ask, "What are you looking at down there?" I recognized that voice—it was President Thomas S. Monson.

I quickly looked up and responded, "Oh, nothing." (I'm sure that clever response inspired confidence in my abilities!)

But he had seen my subdued countenance and my heavy briefcase. He smiled and lovingly suggested, while pointing heavenward, "It is better to look up!" As we traveled down one more level, he cheerfully explained that he was on his way to the temple. When he bid me farewell, his parting glance spoke again to my heart, "Now, remember, it is better to look up."

-Elder Carl B. Cook (It is Better to Look Up, Oct 2011)

"We cannot fully repent until we overcome any desire to hide our sins and embrace the Godly attribute of honesty."

-Neil L. Andersen (The Divine Gift of Forgiveness, Chapter 18)

Brothers and sisters, to "hear Him" is to obey him... To sin is to turn from God, to repent is to turn back to God... We will never turn without honesty... when we turn to God, let us remember where "God is"... "Remember, it is better to look up"... I pray we continue to "look up" and believe... That we have faith... My heart truly weeps within me when I hear people spiritualize away the words of Christ, my heart weeps at such lack of faith! And I am left to exclaim as the prophets of old, "when Christ comes, shall he find faith?!" I pray brothers and sisters, that we make ourselves amongst whom shout for joy and declare "Yea Lord! Ye shall find faith- IN US!"
In the name of Jesus Christ Amen