

Our Purpose

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By Micah Thomas English

Member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

My dear brethren and sisters, we must prepare to redeem Zion.

Elder Uchtdorf taught “*Understanding the why of the gospel ... will help us to see the divine purpose of all of this. The what of [the gospel] teaches us what to do. The why inspires our souls. The what informs, but the why transforms.*”¹

Is it any wonder then that so many children ask their parents “Why? Why? Why?” the “why” not only satisfies curiosity about the world around us, it “inspires our souls”, meaning it gives purpose and meaning for action.

Elder David A. Bednar taught “*Taking action is the exercise of faith. ... Faith is a principle—the principle—of action and of power. True faith is focused in and on the Lord Jesus Christ and always leads to action.*”²

¹ “The Why of Priesthood Service” in 2012

² See “Seek Learning by Faith” [address to Church Educational System religious educators, Feb. 3, 2006], [lds.org/media-library](https://www.lds.org/media-library)

Is it any wonder then that as President Nelson taught “[*Our personal*] mountains will vary, and yet the answer to each of [*our*] challenges is to increase [*our*] faith. That takes work. Lazy learners and lax disciples will always struggle to muster even a particle of faith.

*To do anything well requires effort. Becoming a true disciple of Jesus Christ is no exception. Increasing [*our*] faith and trust in [*the Savior*] takes effort.”³*

So, learning the “why” inspires our soul, it arouses our faculties and invites us to act in faith. Even if such actions of faith start off as simply an experiment upon the Lord’s words, or in other words, an exercise of simply a particle of faith- those actions, or faith, can and will grow from a mustard seed into a mustard tree when properly cared for and nurtured.⁴ But how do we learn “the whys” of life and what is the most important “why”?

John the beloved answers the second half of that when he taught, “*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*”⁵ King Benjamin in The Book of Mormon further expounds on this when he taught his sons that without that knowledge, “*we must have suffered in ignorance, even at this present time, not knowing the mysteries of God.*”⁶

Knowing this is “life eternal” and without such a knowledge life would be simply suffering in ignorance. So that brings back the second part of that question, “where do we learn these whys from?”

In the Lectures on Faith we read the following questions, “*What testimony have men, in the first instance, that there is a God? What excited the ancient saints to seek diligently after a knowledge of the glory of God, his perfections and attributes? How do men obtain a knowledge of the glory of God, his perfections and attributes?*”

The Lecture then answers, “*Human testimony, and human testimony **only**, [*and the*] credence they gave to the testimony of their fathers.*”

The Lecture then further asks, “*Is the knowledge of the existence of God a matter of mere tradition, founded upon **human testimony alone**, until a person receives a manifestation of God to themselves?*”

It answers, “*It is.*”⁷

It is by human testimony and human testimony **alone** that the seed gets planted in the mind to excite Saints to diligently seek after more knowledge. Preach My Gospel further teaches us, “*Rarely, if ever, should [*we*] talk to people or teach them without extending an invitation to do*

³ Christ Is Risen; Faith in Him Will Move Mountains, By President Russell M. Nelson, April 2021

⁴ Alma 32

⁵ John 17:3

⁶ Mosiah 1:3

⁷ Lectures on Faith, Lecture Two, Questions 144-147:

something that will strengthen their faith in Christ.... If [we] do not invite people to make commitments, [we] are not asking them to repent and come to Christ. ... Be bold and confident as you invite people to make commitments.⁸ ... Boldness shows your faith that obedience to the Lord's commandments brings blessings. ... People will not likely change unless they are invited to do so."⁹

Brothers and Sisters that is the focus of my talk today- to share with you truth, pure truth, with the Spirit of testimony, with the invitation that you will act upon my words, my testimony, and search out more pure knowledge on this subject. Jesus is the Christ, Joseph Smith is His prophet, The Book of Mormon is the Word of God, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord's only true and living church on the face of the planet¹⁰, as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints we should all know this personally and be able to stand on our own- and those that don't have that testimony should "call upon the Lord and cease not until they obtain it".¹¹ My talk instead focuses on the most important "why" for us as Saints after coming to this knowledge- the purpose for us being here, even being reserved for this time.¹²

Brothers and Sisters do you know what kept the Saints of old "inspired"? Do you know what kept the Prophets of old "excited"? Joseph Smith Jr., the Prophet head of this the last and greatest dispensation gave us that answer when he taught,

"The building up of Zion is a cause that has interested the people of God in every age; it is a theme upon which prophets, priests and kings have dwelt with peculiar delight; they have looked forward with joyful anticipation to the day in which we live; and fired with heavenly and joyful anticipations they have sung and written and prophesied of this our day; but they died without the sight; we are the favored people that God has made choice of to bring about the Latter-day glory; it is left for us to see, participate in and help to roll forward the Latter-day glory, "the dispensation of the fulness of times, when God will gather together all things that are in heaven, and all things that are upon the earth," "even in one," when the Saints of God will be gathered in one from every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue, when the Jews will be gathered together into one, the wicked will also be gathered together to be destroyed, as spoken of by the prophets; the Spirit of God will also dwell with His people, and be withdrawn from the rest of the nations, and all things whether in heaven or on earth will be in one, even in Christ. The heavenly Priesthood will unite with the earthly, to bring about those great purposes; and whilst we are thus united in one common cause, to roll forth the kingdom of God, the heavenly Priesthood are not idle spectators, the Spirit of God will be showered down from above, and it will dwell in our midst. The blessings of the Most High will rest upon our tabernacles, and our name will be handed down to future ages; our children will rise up and call us blessed; and generations yet

⁸ Alma 38:12

⁹ Preach My Gospel, Chapter 11: How Do I Help People Make and Keep Commitments?

¹⁰ The Book of Mormon, Introduction, Final Paragraph

¹¹ 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

¹² Ezra Taft Benson, In His Steps, BYU Devotional Address, 3/79.

unborn will dwell with peculiar delight upon the scenes that we have passed through, the privations that we have endured; the untiring zeal that we have manifested; the all but insurmountable difficulties that we have overcome in laying the foundation of a work that brought about the glory and blessing which they will realize; a work that God and angels have contemplated with delight for generations past; that fired the souls of the ancient patriarchs and prophets; a work that is destined to bring about the destruction of the powers of darkness, the renovation of the earth, the glory of God, and the salvation of the human family.”¹³

All other dispensations ended in apostasy¹⁴ and the prophets of those dispensations knew it would end thus, but all were motivated, all were filled with fire and with heavenly and joyful anticipations as they sung looking at this, the last dispensation of the fullness of times.¹⁵

Joseph Smith, the prophet head of this, the last and greatest dispensation warned us:

*"For without Zion, and a place of deliverance, we must fall; because the time is near when the sun will be darkened, and the moon turn to blood, and the stars fall from the heaven, and the earth reel to and fro. Then, if this is the case, and if we are not sanctified and gathered to the places God has appointed, with all our former professions and our great love for the Bible, **we must fall; we cannot stand; we cannot be saved;** for God will gather out his Saints from the Gentiles, and then comes desolation and destruction, and none can escape except the pure in heart who are gathered. "¹⁶*

Is it any wonder then, that President Benson made it very clear to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1989, “My dear brethren and sisters, we **must** prepare to redeem Zion.”¹⁷

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’ Articles of Faith are the core fundamental doctrines and beliefs of our church, and the tenth states:

*“We believe in the literal gathering of Israel **and** in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) **will be built** upon the American continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.”¹⁸*

In the Doctrine and Covenant student manuals that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints produces we read:

The Lord explained that the Saints would have to “wait for a little season” before Zion would be redeemed (D&C 105:9, 13; see also D&C 100:13; 103:4). Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–

¹³ Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Four 1839-42, p.231

¹⁴ Preach My Gospel, Chapter 1 The Message of the Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Section: Heavenly Father Reveals His Gospel in Every Dispensation

¹⁵ Doctrine and Covenants 121; 27,31, 41

¹⁶ Joseph Smith the Prophet (TPJS, pp. 70-7)

¹⁷ President Ezra Taft Benson, “Beware of Pride”, 1989

¹⁸ Pearl of Great Price, Articles of Faith, Article 10

1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught about what Church members need to do during that “little season” before Zion is redeemed:

“A little season—how long will it last? Will it be two hundred years? or three hundred? Though the day of the Second Coming is fixed, the day for the redemption of Zion depends upon us. After we as a people live the law of the celestial kingdom; after we gain the needed experience and learn our duties; after we become by faith and obedience as were our fellow saints in the days of Enoch; after we are worthy to be translated, if the purposes of the Lord should call for such a course in this day—then Zion will be redeemed, and not before.

“‘This cannot be brought to pass until mine elders are endowed with power from on high. For behold, I have prepared a great endowment and blessing to be poured out upon them, inasmuch as they are faithful and continue in humility before me’ [D&C 105:11–12]. As of this time the ordinances of the house of the Lord had not been revealed, and the endowment of power from on high received through them was needed in the heavenly work that lay ahead. ‘Therefore it is expedient in me that mine elders should wait for a little season, for the redemption of Zion’ [D&C 105:13]. And so we wait, wondering the while how long the ‘little season’ is destined to last. As to its length, we cannot say. This much only do we know: the ‘little season’ is the appointed period of preparation for the Latter-day Saints. In it we must attain the same spiritual stature enjoyed by those who built the original Zion. Then and then only will we build our latter-day City of Holiness” (A New Witness for the Articles of Faith [1985], 616).¹⁹

Despite the Saints’ expulsion from Jackson County, Missouri, the Lord reaffirmed that “Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered” (D&C 101:17). Although the stakes of Zion have spread over the face of the earth, “the center place,” Jackson County, continues to be designated by the Lord as the location for the city of New Jerusalem (see D&C 57:1–3; 101:17, 20–21).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “There is no occasion for uncertainty or anxiety about the building up of Zion—meaning the New Jerusalem—in the last days. The Lord once offered his people the chance to build that Zion from which the law shall go forth to all the world. They failed. Why? Because they were unprepared and unworthy, as is yet the case with those of us who now comprise the kingdom. When we as a people are prepared and worthy, the Lord will again command us and the work will go forward—on schedule, before the Second Coming, and at the direction of the President of the Church. Until then, none of us need take any personal steps toward gathering to Missouri or preparing for a landed-inheritance there. Let us, rather, learn the great concepts involved and make ourselves worthy for any work the Lord may lay upon us in our day and time. Some things must yet precede the building up of Jackson County” (A New Witness for the Articles of Faith [1985], 586).²⁰

What is it that must proceed the redemption of Zion? Nephi saw all these things and was personally taught by an angel about these things, said he:

¹⁹ Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual 105:9–13. “Wait for a little season for the redemption of Zion”

²⁰ Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual 101:17–21. “Zion and her stakes will be established”

“And it came to pass that when the angel had spoken these words, he said unto me: Rememberest thou the covenants of the Father unto the house of Israel? I said unto him, Yea

And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb, and upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory.”²¹

President Nelson recently referenced these verses and taught:

*“We live in the day that **“our forefathers have awaited with anxious expectation.”** We have front-row seats to witness live what the prophet Nephi saw only in vision, that “the power of the Lamb of God” would descend “upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory.”*

You, my brothers and sisters, are among those men, women, and children whom Nephi saw. Think of that!”²²

The prophet of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has identified that one of the prerequisites for the redemption of Zion is currently in process, we should “think [on] that!”

The Lord taught Moroni of another prerequisite:

“For the Lord said unto me: They shall not go forth unto the Gentiles until the day that they shall repent of their iniquity, and become clean before the Lord.

And in that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are

Come unto me, O ye Gentiles, and I will show unto you the greater things, the knowledge which is hid up because of unbelief.

Come unto me, O ye house of Israel, and it shall be made manifest unto you how great things the Father hath laid up for you, from the foundation of the world; and it hath not come unto you, because of unbelief.

Behold, when ye shall rend that veil of unbelief which doth cause you to remain in your awful state of wickedness, and hardness of heart, and blindness of mind, then shall the great and marvelous things which have been hid up from the foundation of the world from you—yea, when ye shall call upon the Father in my name, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, then shall ye

²¹ 1 Nephi 14; 8-14

²² President Nelson, Hear Him, Apr 2020 Sunday Morning Session

know that the Father hath remembered the covenant which he made unto your fathers, O house of Israel.

And then shall my revelations which I have caused to be written by my servant John be unfolded in the eyes of all the people. Remember, when ye see these things, ye shall know that the time is at hand that they shall be made manifest in very deed.”²³

President Nelson challenged us:

*“My dear brothers and sisters, my call to you this Easter morning is to **start today** to increase your faith. Through your faith, Jesus Christ will increase your ability to move the mountains in your life, even though your personal challenges may loom as large as Mount Everest.”²⁴*

President Brigham Young taught:

*“Some may ask why we did not tarry at the Center Stake of Zion, when the Lord planted our feet there? We had eyes, but we did not see; we had ears, but we did not hear; we had hearts that were devoid of what the Lord required of his people; consequently we could not abide what the Lord revealed to us. We had to go from there to gain an experience. Can you understand this? I think there are some here who can. **If we could have received the words of life and lived according to them**, when we were first gathered to the Center Stake of Zion, we never would have been removed from that place. **But we did not abide the law the Lord gave to us**. We are here to gain an experience, and we cannot increase in that any faster than our capacities will admit. Our capacities are limited, though sometimes we could receive more than we do, but we will not. Preach the riches of eternal life to a congregation, and when the eyes and affections of that congregation are like the fool's eyes, to the ends of the earth, it is like throwing pearls before swine. If I can actually reach your understandings, you will know just what I know, and see just what I see in regard to what I may say.”²⁵*

My dear brethren and sisters, we must prepare to redeem Zion. We **must** prepare to redeem Zion, for without Zion and a place of deliverance we must fall, we cannot be saved. We need to obtain faith as the Brother of Jared²⁶ and then we will be among those whom Nephi saw as the Power of the Lamb descends upon the Saints worldwide. Brothers and Sisters this is our purpose, this is why you and I were born at this time in this dispensation, this is our calling.

The Lord promised Enoch:

“...the heavens shall be darkened, and a veil of darkness shall cover the earth; and the heavens shall shake, and also the earth; and great tribulations shall be among the children of men, but my people will I preserve;

And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men; and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a

²³ Ether 4: 6-7, 13-16

²⁴ President Nelson, Christ Is Risen; Faith in Him Will Move Mountains

²⁵ Brigham Young, May 15 1864 Journal of Discourses 10:290

²⁶ Micah English's paper "Faith as the Brother of Jared"

flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem.”²⁷

And Elder Henry B. Eyring promised the sisters in 2020:

“You sisters, your daughters, your granddaughters, and the women you have nurtured will be at the heart of creating that society of people who will join in glorious association with the Savior. You will be an essential force in the gathering of Israel and in the creation of a Zion people who will dwell in peace in the New Jerusalem.”²⁸

This is our calling, our promise, but it is our job to make that calling and election sure.²⁹ The Lord teaches us:

*“There has been a day of calling, but the time has come for a day of choosing; and let those be chosen that are worthy. And it shall be manifest unto my servant, by the voice of the Spirit, those that are chosen; and they shall be sanctified; And **inasmuch as they follow the counsel which they receive**, they shall have power after many days to accomplish all things pertaining to Zion.”³⁰*

and then the Lord warns us:

“Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn...”³¹

Brothers and Sisters my commitment to you today is the same commitment, with the same promise, given by President Nelson:

*“As you study your scriptures during the next six months, I encourage you to make a list of all that the Lord has promised He will do for covenant Israel. I think you will be astounded! Ponder these promises. Talk about them with your family and friends. Then live and watch for these promises **to be fulfilled in your own life.**”³²*

I know that as you truly feast upon the Words of Christ³³ and develop that faith as the Brother of Jared, you will be among those who rend the veil of unbelief³⁴ and will be among those chosen to redeem Zion and build the New Jerusalem of our Christ. I know as you study these things you will be astounded, but more than that, I know as you feast upon those Words with the Spirit of

²⁷ Moses 7: 61-62

²⁸ Elder Eyring Sisters in Zion, Oct 2020

²⁹ Bruce R. McConkie, April 1957 GC, The Fulness of Salvation

³⁰ Doctrine and Covenants 105: 35-37

³¹ Doctrine and Covenants 121: 34-40

³² President Nelson Let God Prevail, Oct 2020 Sunday Morning Session

³³ 2 Nephi 32

³⁴ Doctrine and Covenants 84: 53-59, President Ezra Taft Benson Ensign, May 1986, pp. 5, 78.

Christ you will obtain a confirmation of the truthfulness of those words. My dear brethren and sisters, we must prepare to redeem Zion, for it will be fulfilled in our lives. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen!