

Wholehearted

By Sister Michelle D. Craig

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We should be followers of Jesus who are joyful and wholehearted in our own personal journey of discipleship.

Section I (Russell)

Sometimes, it helps to know what to expect.

Near the end of His ministry, Jesus told His Apostles that hard times would come. But He also said, “See that ye be not troubled.”¹ Yes, He would leave, but He would not leave them alone.² He would send His Spirit to help them remember, stand fast, and find peace. The Savior fulfills His promise to be with us, His disciples, but we must continually look to Him to help us recognize and enjoy His presence.

Christ’s disciples have always encountered hard times.

A dear friend of mine sent me an old article from the *Nebraska Advertiser*, a Midwestern United States newspaper, dated July 9, 1857. It read: “This morning early a company of Mormons passed through on their journey to Salt Lake. Women (not very delicate to be sure) dragging hand carts like beasts, one [woman] tumbled down in this black mud which caused a slight halt in the procession, little children trudged along in their [strange] foreign dress looking as determined as their mothers.”³

I’ve thought a lot about this mud-drenched woman. Why was she pulling alone? Was she a single mother? What gave her the inner strength, the grit, the perseverance to make such a wrenching journey through mud, pulling all her possessions in a handcart to an unknown desert home—at times being mocked by observers?⁴

President Joseph F. Smith spoke of the inner strength of these pioneer women, saying: “Could you turn one of these women away from their convictions in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? Could you darken their minds as to the mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith? Could you blind them with reference to the divine mission of Jesus Christ, the Son of God? No, never in the world could you do it. Why? Because they knew it. God revealed it to them, and they understood it, and no power on earth could turn them from what they knew to be that truth.”⁵

Brothers and sisters, to be such men and women is the call of our day—disciples who dig deep to find the strength to keep pulling when called to walk through the wilderness, disciples with convictions that have been revealed to us by God, followers of Jesus who are joyful and wholehearted in our own personal journey of discipleship. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we believe and can grow in three important truths.

Russell's Thoughts:

Micah's Thoughts:

Two big themes I picked up in this first section:

1. The true Saints of God always experience persecution (sometimes even from other members within the church)

and

2. Mocking from the Great and Spacious building

There are some scriptures that actually tie these two concepts together... the first of which needed to make such a tie Sister Craig actually provides as reference 4:

1 Nephi 8:27

27 And it was filled with people, both old and young, both male and female; and their manner of dress was exceedingly fine; and they were in the attitude of mocking and pointing their fingers towards those who had come at and were partaking of the fruit.

The great and spacious building vs the those actually partaking of the fruit of the tree- the tree representing the love of God, even the Son of God. Those huddled around the tree it is safe to say are "one with Christ" while those in the great and spacious building have other motives, desires, and unities.

Doctrine and Covenants 38

23 But, verily I say unto you, teach one another according to the office wherewith I have appointed you;

24 And let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practise virtue and holiness before me.

25 And again I say unto you, let every man esteem his brother as himself.

26 For what man among you having twelve sons, and is no respecter of them, and they serve him obediently, and he saith unto the one: Be thou clothed in robes and sit thou here; and to the other: Be thou clothed in rags and sit thou there—and looketh upon his sons and saith I am just?

27 Behold, this I have given unto you as a parable, and it is even as I am. I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine.

28 And again, I say unto you that the enemy in the secret chambers seeketh your lives.

So what are the desires of the great and spacious building? How can we identify the enemy in the secret chambers seeking our lives? Seeking our destruction?

1 Nephi 13

6 And it came to pass that I beheld this great and abominable church; and I saw the devil that he was the founder of it.

7 And I also saw gold, and silver, and silks, and scarlets, and fine-twined linen, and all manner of precious clothing; and I saw many harlots.

8 And the angel spake unto me, saying: Behold the gold, and the silver, and the silks, and the scarlets, and the fine-twined linen, and the precious clothing, and the harlots, are the desires of this great and abominable church.

And now, how do we tie the great and spacious building to the mocking of the true followers of Christ?

Alma 1

16 Nevertheless, this did not put an end to the spreading of priestcraft through the land; for there were many who loved the vain things of the world, and they went forth preaching false doctrines; and this they did for the sake of riches and honor.

19 But it came to pass that whosoever did not belong to the church of God began to persecute those that did belong to the church of God, and had taken upon them the name of Christ.

20 Yea, they did persecute them, and afflict them with all manner of words, and this because of their humility; because they were not proud in their own eyes, and because they did impart the word of God, one with another, without money and without price.

5 Now this was a great trial to those that did stand fast in the faith; nevertheless, they were steadfast and immovable in keeping the commandments of God, and they bore with patience the persecution which was heaped upon them.

26 And when the priests left their labor to impart the word of God unto the people, the people also left their labors to hear the word of God. And when the priest had imparted unto them the word of God they all returned again diligently unto their labors; and the priest, not esteeming himself above his hearers, for the preacher was no better than the hearer, neither was the teacher any better than the learner; and thus they were all equal, and they did all labor, every man according to his strength.

27 And they did impart of their substance, every man according to that which he had, to the poor, and the needy, and the sick, and the afflicted; and they did not wear costly apparel, yet they were neat and comely.

I will beat this drum as loud as I can for as long as I can for this is the great and spacious building... this is the unity we lack... this is the charity we must have or we are nothing... this is the primary interpretation, this is our “the other sheep that are not of this fold must mean the Gentiles!”, etc. etc. etc.

We have to cleanse first in the inner vessel, and how can we do that if we still cannot honesty, clearly, and accurately identify what the great and spacious building is, what true charity looks like, what unity in Christ actually look like, etc. etc.

Section II (Denae read by Mason)

First, We Can Keep Our Covenants, Even When It Is Not Easy

When your faith, your family, or your future are challenged—when you wonder why life is so hard when you are doing your best to live the gospel—remember that the Lord told us to expect troubles. Troubles are part of the plan and do not mean you’ve been abandoned; they are part of what it means to be His.⁶ He was, after all, “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.”⁷

I am learning that Heavenly Father is more interested in my *growth* as a disciple of Jesus Christ than He is with my *comfort*. I may not always want it to be that way—but it is!

Living in convenience does not bring power. The power we need to withstand the heat of our day is the *Lord’s* power, and His power flows through our covenants with Him.⁸ To lean in with our faith when facing strong headwinds—to sincerely strive each day to *do* what we covenanted with the Savior we would *do*, even and especially when we are tired, worried, and wrestling with troubling questions and issues—is to gradually receive His light, His strength, His love, His Spirit, His peace.

The point of walking the covenant path is to approach the Savior. *He* is the point, not our perfect progress. It is not a race, and we must not compare our journey to others’. Even when we stumble, He is there.

Denae’s Thoughts:

Sister Craig references a talk by Elder M. Russell Ballard:

"Somehow we need to instill in our hearts the powerful testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ like unto that of our pioneer forefathers. Remember when Nauvoo fell in September of 1846 and the unbearable conditions of the Saints in the poor camps. When word reached Winter Quarters, Brigham Young immediately called the brethren together. After explaining the situation and reminding them of the covenant made in the Nauvoo Temple that no one who wanted to come, no matter how poor, would be left behind, he gave them this remarkable challenge:

“Now is the time for labor,” he said. “Let the fire of the covenant which you made in the House of the Lord, burn in your hearts, like flame unquenchable” (Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 28 Sept. 1846, 5; emphasis added). Within a few days, in spite of near-destitute conditions at Winter Quarters, many wagons were rolling eastward to rescue the Saints in the poor camps along the Mississippi River.

We often hear of the suffering and the sacrifice those early Saints endured, and we ask ourselves, How did they do it? What was it that gave them such strength? Part of the answer

lies in President Young's powerful words. Those early Latter-day Saints had made covenants with God, and those covenants burned like unquenchable fire in their hearts.

Sometimes we are tempted to let our lives be governed more by convenience than by covenant. It is not always convenient to live gospel standards and stand up for truth and testify of the Restoration. It usually is not convenient to share the gospel with others. It isn't always convenient to respond to a calling in the Church, especially one that stretches our abilities. Opportunities to serve others in meaningful ways, as we have covenanted to do, rarely come at convenient times. But there is no spiritual power in living by convenience. The power comes as we keep our covenants. As we look at the lives of these early Saints, we see that their covenants were the primary force in their lives. Their example and testimony were powerful enough to influence generation after generation of their children." (Elder M. Russell Ballard, Like a Flame Unquenchable, April 1990)

Just like the pioneers, there are countless examples of faithful people in the scriptures who kept their covenants during times of hardship. What about the sons of Mosiah? They endured many afflictions as they served as missionaries, but their reward was eternal. Ammon described it this way:

Alma 26:23 Now do ye remember, my brethren, that we said unto our brethren in the land of Zarahemla, we go up to the land of Nephi, to preach unto our brethren, the Lamanites, and they laughed us to scorn?

24 For they said unto us: Do ye suppose that ye can bring the Lamanites to the knowledge of the truth? Do ye suppose that ye can convince the Lamanites of the incorrectness of the traditions of their fathers, as stiffnecked a people as they are; whose hearts delight in the shedding of blood; whose days have been spent in the grossest iniquity; whose ways have been the ways of a transgressor from the beginning? Now my brethren, ye remember that this was their language.

25 And moreover they did say: Let us take up arms against them, that we destroy them and their iniquity out of the land, lest they overrun us and destroy us.

26 But behold, my beloved brethren, we came into the wilderness not with the intent to destroy our brethren, but with the intent that perhaps we might save some few of their souls.

27 Now when our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back, behold, **the Lord comforted us**, and said: Go amongst thy brethren, the Lamanites, and **bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success.**

28 And now behold, we have come, and been forth amongst them; and we have been patient in our sufferings, and we have suffered every privation; yea, we have traveled from house to

house, relying upon the mercies of the world—not upon the mercies of the world alone but upon the mercies of God.

29 And we have entered into their houses and taught them, and we have taught them in their streets; yea, and we have taught them upon their hills; and we have also entered into their temples and their synagogues and taught them; and we have been cast out, and mocked, and spit upon, and smote upon our cheeks; and we have been stoned, and taken and bound with strong cords, and cast into prison; **and through the power and wisdom of God we have been delivered again.**

30 And we have suffered all manner of afflictions, and all this, that perhaps we might be the means of saving some soul; and we supposed that our joy would be full if perhaps we could be the means of saving some.

31 Now behold, we can look forth and see the fruits of our labors; and are they few? I say unto you, Nay, they are many; yea, and we can witness of their sincerity, because of their love towards their brethren and also towards us.

35 Now have we not reason to rejoice? Yea, I say unto you, **there never were men that had so great reason to rejoice as we**, since the world began; yea, and **my joy is carried away**, even unto boasting in my God; for he has all power, all wisdom, and all understanding; he comprehendeth all things, and he is a merciful Being, even unto salvation, to those who will repent and believe on his name.

The growth and joy of Ammon is overwhelmingly evident in his words. This is what happens when we turn to the Lord through covenants and strive our best to keep them. Ammon was able to withstand his trials and have success because he had access to the Savior's power:

Alma 26:12 Yea, I know that I am nothing; as to my strength I am weak; therefore I will not boast of myself, but **I will boast of my God, for in his strength I can do all things**; yea, behold, many mighty miracles we have wrought in this land, for which we will praise his name forever.

May we cling to our covenants, finding strength in the Savior as we endure all that is asked of us, just as He did. We cannot expect to receive all that He will inherit unless we are willing to endure our challenges in the manner that He did. May we be one of those spoken of in Revelation:

Revelation 7:13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

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

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

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

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Micah's Thoughts:

I love that Sister Craig's first reference in this section was to Revelation chapter 7, 13-17... Which Denae actually finished her section with! And she used it in the context of "this is happening right now and will continue"... Why is that important? It means that the 7th seal hasn't been opened yet in heaven, or at least according to Sister Craig, or at least means Sister Craig is extremely confused... I'd personally go with the former for an explanation, but I suppose people can judge accordingly... Sister Craig references a talk by Elder M. Russell Ballard that Denae quoted from- I love the quote from President Brigham Young "those early Latter-day Saints had made covenants with God, and those covenants burned like unquenchable fire in their hearts." And also Elder Ballard's additions later in the talk when he said:

Brothers and sisters, we need to instruct one another and instill deeper faith in our hearts to fortify ourselves with the courage to keep the commandments in a world of ever-increasing wickedness. We need to become so deeply converted to the gospel of Christ *that the fire of the covenant will burn in our hearts like flame unquenchable*. And with that kind of faith we will do what is necessary to remain true and worthy. (M. Russell Ballard, "Like a Flame Unquenchable," *Ensign*, May 1999)

Jeremiah 20

7 ¶ O LORD... thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me.

8 For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily.

9 Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But *his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.*

Isaiah 62

1 For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.

2 And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.

3 Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

4 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called Delightful, and thy land Union; for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.

5 ¶ For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy God marry thee; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.

6 I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence,

7 And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

(18-20) Isaiah 62. How Is the Latter-day Union of God and His People Symbolized?

Once again Isaiah referred to the Old and New Jerusalems. Both are to possess “righteousness” that will “go forth as brightness” and offer salvation “as a lamp that burneth” (Isaiah 62:1). Zion is to be called by a “new name” (v. 2), the New Jerusalem, and the Old Jerusalem shall “no more be termed Forsaken” nor “Desolate” (v. 4). Once again Zion shall be married to the Lord. This symbol represents her return to spiritual righteousness, for “as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall [our] God rejoice over [Jerusalem’s restoration]” (v. 5).

(18-21) Isaiah 62:4–5. Why Will the Lord Call Israel “Hephzi-bah” and “Beulah”?

The words that Isaiah used to describe this latter-day condition of Zion are important. *Hephzi-bah* means “delightful” in Hebrew and may refer to Jerusalem and Zion’s latter-day righteousness. *Beulah* means “union” (see Isaiah 62:4). A marriage is once again the symbol of unity, but this time the marriage is not of the people and God but of the land and God.

According to the Doctrine and Covenants, there will come a time when “the land of Jerusalem and the land of Zion shall be turned back into their own place, and the earth shall be like as it was in the days before it was divided” (D&C 133:24). In the days of Peleg the earth was divided into continents (see Genesis 10:25), but before that time it was all united in one land mass. The joining of the continents once again can be likened to a union or a marriage that is both *hephzi-bah* and *beulah*, that is, delightful and united. The lands, like a man and woman in holy wedlock, will be sealed by the authority of the one officiating (see JST, Isaiah 62:4–5).

Section III (Marlene read by Antonia)

Second, We Can Act in Faith

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we understand that faith in Him requires action—especially in hard times.⁹

Many years ago, my parents decided to recarpet the house. The night before the new carpet arrived, my mom asked my brothers to remove furniture and rip out bedroom carpets so the new carpet could be installed. My then seven-year-old sister, Emily, was already asleep. So, while she slept, they quietly removed all the furniture from her room, except the bed, and then tore out the carpet. Well, like older brothers sometimes do, they decided to pull a prank. They removed the rest of her belongings from the closet and off the walls, leaving the room bare. Then they wrote a

note and tacked it to the wall: “Dear Emily, we moved. We’ll write in a few days and tell you where we are. Love, your family.”

The next morning when Emily did not come for breakfast, my brothers went to find her—there she was, sad and alone behind a closed door. Emily reflected on this experience later: “I was crushed. But what would have happened if I had just opened the door? What would I have heard? What would I have smelled? I would have known I was not alone. I would have known I really was loved. The thought never even crossed my mind to do something about my situation. I just gave up and stayed in my closet crying. And yet if I had simply opened the door.”¹⁰

My sister made an assumption based on what she saw, but it wasn’t a reflection of the way things actually were. Isn’t it interesting that we, like Emily, can become so weighed down in sadness or hurt or discouragement or worry or loneliness or anger or frustration that it doesn’t even occur to us to simply do something, to open the door, to act with faith in Jesus Christ?

The scriptures are filled with examples of men and women, disciples of Christ, who, when facing the impossible, simply acted—who got up in faith and walked.¹¹

To lepers who sought healing, Christ said: “Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, *as they went*, they were cleansed.”¹²

They went to show themselves to the priests as if they had already been healed, and in the process of acting, they were.

I also want to say if the thought of taking action amid your pain feels impossible, please let your action be to reach out for help—to a friend, a family member, a Church leader, a professional. This can be a first step to hope.

Marlene’s Thoughts:

Faith - Bible Dictionary

Faith is a principle of action and of power, and by it one can command the elements, heal the sick, and influence any number of circumstances when occasion warrants (Jacob 4:4–7). Even more important, by faith one obtains a remission of sins and eventually can stand in the presence of God.

Jacob 4:4-7

4 For, for this intent have we written these things, that they may know that we knew of Christ, and we had a hope of his glory many hundred years before his coming; and not only we ourselves had a hope of his glory, but also all the holy prophets which were before us.

5 Behold, they believed in Christ and worshiped the Father in his name, and also we worship the Father in his name. And for this intent we keep the law of Moses, it pointing our souls to him; and for this cause it is sanctified unto us for righteousness, even as it was accounted unto Abraham in the wilderness to be obedient unto the commands of God in offering up his son Isaac, which is a similitude of God and his Only Begotten Son.

6 Wherefore, we search the prophets, and we have many revelations and the spirit of prophecy; and having all these witnesses we obtain a hope, and our faith becometh unshaken, insomuch

that we truly can command in the name of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea.

7 Nevertheless, the Lord God showeth us our weakness that we may know that it is by his grace, and his great condescensions unto the children of men, that we have power to do these things.

Elder Bednar- 2011 MTC Christmas Day Missionary Devotional

In Ether 3 We find the Brother of Jared. He is concerned that there is no light in the barges. He prayed to find out what to do to get light and in essence God says to him, “well, what do you propose?” That’s a very instructive episode. If you just pray and ask, and sit and wait, you may be waiting a long time before you get an answer. In most instances, you have to go with a proposal and seek confirmation of the proposal, not just sit and wait for heaven to tell you what to do.

Marlene - Some people get hung up here and they say, “Well, I don’t want to instruct the Lord what to do. I want to follow His will. I want to know His will for me.” And these are all correct statements but the confusion here is that Jared did not instruct the Lord. The Lord asked Jared what he would have him do and then Jared went to God with a proposal. Jared did not just go to the Lord and say, “Lord, illuminate our boats.” Now God may or may not ask us what we would do, but coming to Him with a plan is not instructing the Lord, **if**, we are seeking His will and instruction in response to our plan. He may let us know that our plan is no good and that we need to rethink it. He may let us know that some things need to be modified. When the Lord approves your plan, you have moved forward in faith, you become a co-creator with Him, and you have been instructed of the Lord and discovered His will for you.

Continuing from Elder Bednar’s talk, “”So the Brother of Jared says, “well, I could fashion these stones and if you touch them then they would be illuminated and we could use those and put them in the barges and have light.””

Marlene - How on earth did Jared dream up this idea? Did it come from watching his campfire burn as suggested in the Living Scripture videos?, which I do love by the way. That was a good quick visual way to communicate that he pondered on the idea but just as Jacob expressed in Jacob 4:4-7, **they “searched the prophets” who had a faith of these things**. The Brother of Jared also looked back and searched the prophets. In Genesis 6:16, the Lord is teaching Noah how to build the ark and He says, “A **window** shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above.”

Footnote **Window**

Takes us to two places. First, right back to the story of the Brother of Jared, and to the Hebrew word Tsohar, which reads that some rabbis believed this word to have been a precious stone that shone in the dark.

Marlene – This leaves us to consider the possibility that Noah also had stones that shone in the dark just as the Brother of Jared did.

Ether 3:4-6

4 And I know, O Lord, that thou hast all power, and can do whatsoever thou wilt for the benefit of man; therefore touch these stones, O Lord, with thy finger, and prepare them that they may shine forth in darkness; and they shall shine forth unto us in the vessels which we have prepared, that we may have light while we shall cross the sea.

5 Behold, O Lord, thou canst do this. We know that thou art able to show forth great power, which looks small unto the understanding of men.””

Marlene- Pay attention to the wording the Brother of Jared used here. Not only did the Brother of Jared move forward in faith to create a plan, but his plan was formed around the testimony that he had of God. Then in accordance with that testimony, he stated his plan and then stated his testimony explaining how it is that he knew his plan with work. “I know thou hast all power, and can do whatsoever thou wilt for the benefit of man...Behold Lord, thou canst do this. We know thou art able to show forth great power.”

This gives new meaning to having a testimony and to frequently sharing our testimony. Can we move forward in faith if we don't have a testimony? Or can we move forward in faith if we don't know what our testimony is? Or can we move forward in faith if we can't put words to our testimony? Our testimonies enable us and give us the power to move forward in faith. It enables us and gives us the power to create plans that we can then take to the Lord because we have an understanding or knowledge as to who God is, what his capabilities are, and what His motives are.

Ether 3:6

6 And it came to pass that when the brother of Jared had said these words, behold, the Lord stretched forth his hand and touched the stones one by one with his finger.

Returning to Elder Bednar, “” Question, why touch the stones one by one? Why not just go *snap* and all sixteen illuminate at once? Notice, that at the end of that sentence, there's a period. The Lord stretched forth His finger and touched the stones one by one, period. “. And the veil was taken from off the eyes of the brother of Jared, and he saw the finger of the Lord;””

“Have you ever seen the pictures where it shows the finger of the Lord touching the stones? Now, this is just a Dave Bednar opinion, but “that can't be right”. It's a nice painting but doctrinally I don't think it can be right. The brother of Jared prays, sixteen stones, they're illuminated one by one. Does he see the finger of the Lord touch the first one? No. The Lord stretched forth His hand, touched the stones one by one with His finger, period. And the next sentence says, “and the veil was taken.” I want you to imagine the sixteen stones. The Brother of Jared is mustering all the faith he has, pleading with all of his heart. The finger of the Lord touches the stone but he can't see it yet. You receive no witness until after the trail of your faith. If you saw the finger on the first stone, no trail of your faith. So it would contradict correct principles. The finger of the Lord touches the stone and it's illuminated. What would you do if you were the Brother of Jared? Wouldn't you go, “Wow!”? What does that do to your faith? It's not a sign, you don't get faith through signs. It would be evidence of things not seen. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. You didn't see the finger but now you're getting the evidence. That's an entire cycle that's described in Alma 32. Simply have a

desire to believe. Experiment upon the word. Exercise your faith. And when you begin to feel the swelling motions, you'll begin to say within yourself, "this is a good seed"

So you go through another episode, a second Alma 32 and the second stone is illuminated. You're "wow's" not quite as surprising now. It wasn't a lack of faith, you just recognize that it is right. Third one, fourth one, I don't know at which point but at some point along the way, hasn't your faith been confirmed by evidence and now your evidence produces pure knowledge? And as that is increasing, the Lord can no longer withhold Himself and at some point along the way, you see the finger of the Lord.

Marlene - Do we understand that all of us have been given the tools to experience this someday? Think of the temple. The experience of the Brother of Jared is a type for what we are being prepared for. To have faith enough to leave the safety of our room as Sister Craig explained. To have faith enough to go to the Lord with a plan. To have faith enough to carry out that plan and see the evidences of the Lord's hand. To have faith enough to have a pure knowledge of those evidences that the Lord will manifest to us over and over again as we continue to move forward. Until that bright day when the Lord can no longer withhold himself from you and me too, as Elder Bednar expressed, "see the finger of the Lord."

Sister Craig- The scriptures are filled with examples of men and women, disciples of Christ, who, when facing the impossible, simply acted—who got up in faith and walked.¹¹

To lepers who sought healing, Christ said: "Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, *as they went*, they were cleansed."¹²

They went to show themselves to the priests as if they had already been healed, and in the process of acting, they were.

I also want to say if the thought of taking action amid your pain feels impossible, please let your action be to reach out for help—to a friend, a family member, a Church leader, a professional. This can be a first step to hope.

Marlene – Here I want to reference Matthew 14, John 6, and Mark 6; Christ walks on the water. I would like to focus on Peter in this instance.

Peter was a fisherman who was ordained by Jesus Christ as one of the apostles. He worked hand in hand with Christ through His ministry and saw first hand the many miracles Christ performed. Peter saw Christ heal lepers, He healed Peter's mother-in-law, calmed the storm at the Sea of Galilee, commanded a legion of devils to depart into a herd of swine, healed a man who was paralyzed, healed a woman who touched His clothing, raised the daughter of Jairus, healed two blind men, healed a man on the Sabbath by the pool of Bethesda, and many others.

Then we come to Matthew 14. Christ had just heard of the beheading of His cousin John the Baptist and He went by boat to a desert place to be alone. A great multitude of people who had also seen His many miracles, followed him by foot to the dessert place. In the midst of the storm that was the death of His cousin John, Christ, full of compassion, healed the sick of the

multitude. When evening came, the disciples suggested that the multitude leave to go buy food but again, in the midst of one of the stormiest times for Christ up to that point, He calmed the multitude, not only by teaching and healing them, but then by miraculously feeding them.

After the multitude of 5,000 were fed, Christ instructed the disciples to get into the boat and row out to the other side while He sent the multitude away and went up into the mountain to pray.

By the fourth watch, the disciples having rowed all night, the wind and waves of the sea became boisterous. Here is where Christ comes down from the mountain and begins to walk out to the boat across the stormy sea.

Now, it's interesting that only Matthew, in his telling of Christ walking on the water also tells about Peter walking on the water. Neither John nor Mark include this in their account. In Mark 6:51-52 we read, "And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened."

The twelve disciples had ALL just seen the miracle of the loaves and fishes feeding the 5,000 and neither John nor Mark recounts Peter walking on water. Only that they were amazed beyond measure. If we compare this to the Brother of Jared and what Elder Bednar spoke of him seeing the stones light up, "So you go through another episode, a second Alma 32 and the second stone is illuminated. You're "wow's" not quite as surprising now. It wasn't a lack of faith, you just recognize that it is right. Third one, fourth one, I don't know at which point but at some point along the way, hasn't your faith been confirmed by evidence and now your evidence produces pure knowledge?" If we compare Peter to the Brother of Jared, to walk on water, he would have had to have considered the miracle of the loaves and NOT have had his heart hardened.

Matthew 14:24-33

24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary

25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

Yes, we see Peter's weakness come out. We see that when the wind was strong, he became afraid. But not only did he turn to the Lord in that moment, **BUT he also had the faith in the first place, to get out of the boat.**

Elder Jeffery R. Holland of this account stated, “This scriptural account reminds us that the first step in coming to Christ—or his coming to us—may fill us with something very much like sheer terror. It shouldn’t, but it sometimes does. One of the grand ironies of the gospel is that the very source of help and safety being offered us is the thing from which we may, in our mortal shortsightedness, flee. For whatever the reason, I have seen investigators run from baptism, I have seen elders run from a mission call, I have seen sweethearts run from marriage, and I have seen young couples run from the fear of families and the future. Too often too many of us run from the very things that will bless us and save us and soothe us. Too often we see gospel commitments and commandments as something to be feared and forsaken” (“Come unto Me” [Brigham Young University fireside, Mar. 2, 1997], 8; speeches.byu.edu).

Sister Craig talked about her sister being too scared to leave her room when she thought that her family had abandoned her. The situation she was in was horrible, but she feared an even worse situation if she left her room. So instead of moving forward in faith to leave a bad situation, she was content to stay where she was. How often do we do the same thing as Elder Holland stated. We too are in bad situations. We pray for help and relief but when the help comes, we fear that leaving the “safety” of where we currently are, even though it’s horrible, will be better than the unknown that we would be stepping out into. When Peter stepped out of the boat, did the waves and the wind calm? No! But to both Peter and Christ, the way before them was calm, until Peter became afraid. Then, when he called out for help, Christ reached down, pulled him up, and the sea was calmed. As long as Peter’s focus on remained on Christ, the way was clear and calm.

May we come to have faith as the Brother of Jared, to gain a perfect knowledge from the life experiences that God has and will give us. And may we come to have faith as Peter, who also leaned from the miracles he saw, did not have a hardened heart, but rather had faith enough get out of the boat. And I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Micah’s Thoughts:

This contrast between “feelings” and “actions” is really an important one! The problem is that we don’t know what the Holy Ghost is; we confuse it with feeling; the Holy Ghost is edification and actions (i.e. “pure intelligence”, i.e. “directions”), not feelings...

Preach My Gospel

4. How do I recognize and Understand the Spirit?

A Word of Caution

As you pray for inspiration, you should also confirm your feelings. For example, compare your decisions with the scriptures and the teachings of the living prophets. Be certain that the feelings are consistent with the assignment you have; for example, you will not receive revelation to tell a local bishop how he should perform in his calling. Discuss your decisions and conclusions with your companion, your district leader, or your mission president when appropriate.

President Howard W. Hunter offered this counsel: “Let me offer a word of caution. ... I think if we are not careful ... , we may begin to try to counterfeit the true influence of the Spirit of the Lord by unworthy and manipulative means. I get concerned when it appears that strong emotion or free-flowing tears are equated with the presence of the Spirit. Certainly the Spirit of the Lord can bring strong emotional feelings, including tears, but that outward manifestation ought not to be confused with the presence of the Spirit itself” (The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter [1997], 184). 🙌 The Spirit of the Lord always edifies. 🙌

END QUOTE PREACH MY GOSPEL

The Two Comforters (TPJS p. 149)

There are two Comforters spoken of. One is the Holy Ghost, the same as given on the day of Pentecost, and that all Saints receive after faith, repentance, and baptism. 🙌 This first Comforter or Holy Ghost has no other effect than pure intelligence. 🙌 It is more powerful in expanding the mind, enlightening the understanding, and storing the intellect with present knowledge, of a man who is of the literal seed of Abraham, than one that is a Gentile, though it may not have half as much visible effect upon the body; for as the Holy Ghost falls upon one of the literal seed of Abraham, it is calm and serene; and his whole soul and body are only exercised by the pure spirit of intelligence; while the effect of the Holy Ghost upon a Gentile, is to purge out the old blood, and make him actually of the seed of Abraham. That man that has none of the blood of Abraham (naturally) must have a new creation by the Holy Ghost. In such a case, there may be more of a powerful effect upon the body, and visible to the eye, than upon an Israelite, while the Israelite at first might be far before the Gentile in pure intelligence.

The Spirit of Revelation (TPJS p. 151)

The Spirit of Revelation is in connection with these blessings. A person may profit by noticing the first intimation of the spirit of revelation; for instance, when you feel 🙌 pure intelligence 🙌 flowing into you, it may give you sudden strokes of ideas, so that by noticing it, you may find it fulfilled the same day or soon; (i.e.,) those things that were presented unto your minds by the Spirit of God, will come to pass; and thus by learning the Spirit of God and understanding it, you may grow into the principle of revelation, until you become perfect in Christ Jesus.

END QUOTES JOSEPH SMITH JR

The word intelligence is from inter-legere, meaning to make a selection between things, to put a number of things together and to classify, to view the situation and to make a decision; and to make a decision is to discern -- the brain and intellect must have something to work with, data that comes mostly by sight.

- Hugh Nibley (Approaching Zion Chapter 9)

The Spirit will always invite people to repent and come unto Christ (i.e. "edification/direction"). A lot of people will claim to have "felt the Spirit", but when asked "what did it tell you to do?" they respond that they simply "felt feelings while listening"... This is NOT the Holy Ghost... One of the requirements to receive a visitation from the Holy Ghost is “real intent”, what does that mean? It means we have to be willing to do and act upon what the Holy Ghost shares with us! He

doesn't simply speak for speaking sake! He is inviting us to come unto Christ! And we have to have that real intent, willingness to respond to the "pure intelligence/directions" He gives or He will eventually stop prompting us!

Now, if we look closely at what Elder Bednar recently taught we will find it ties in perfectly with this! He taught "stop worrying if 🙌 the invitation to do 🙌 came from the Holy Ghost and just DO", meaning if you have an IDEA come to your head to DO something, stop worrying about if it is the Holy Ghost or not- if it is "good", just DO it! Elder Bednar here is in fact teaching members how to align themselves with the proper Holy Ghost- the one that is involved in good deeds, actions, etc. and not simply in feelings, intentions, etc. for as Elder Bednar taught on another occasion "Taking action *is the exercise of faith*. ... True faith is focused in and on the Lord Jesus Christ *and always leads to action*." (Seek Learning by Faith, CES broadcast reprinted in Ensign September 2007)

The Holy Ghost gives us edification/direction with the intent for us to act or take action on that information... The actions we then take based on that edification/direction become exercises of faith! If there was no edification/direction given than it wasn't the Holy Ghost; and if we took no actions after receiving edification/direction our faith is dead.

Section IV (Denni read by Aussie Brandon)

Third, We Can Be Wholehearted and Joyful in Our Devotion¹³

When hard times come, I try to remember that I chose to follow Christ before I came to earth and that challenges to my faith, my health, and my endurance are all part of the reason I'm here. And I certainly should never think that today's trial calls into question God's love for me or let it turn my faith in Him into doubt. Trials do not mean that the plan is failing; they are part of the plan meant to help me seek God. I become more like Him when I endure patiently, and hopefully, like Him, when in agony, I pray more earnestly.¹⁴

Jesus Christ was the perfect example of loving our Father with all His heart—of doing His will, regardless of the cost.¹⁵ I want to follow His example by doing the same.

I am inspired by the wholehearted, whole-souled discipleship of the widow who threw her two mites into the temple treasury. She gave her all.¹⁶

Jesus Christ recognized the abundance of her all where others saw only her lack. The same is true with each of us. He doesn't see our lack as failure but rather as an opportunity to exercise faith and to grow.

Conclusion

My fellow disciples of Jesus Christ, with all my heart, I choose to stand with the Lord. I choose to stand with His chosen servants—President Russell M. Nelson and his fellow Apostles—for

they speak for Him and are the stewards of the ordinances and covenants that tie me to the Savior.

When I stumble, I will keep getting up, relying on the grace and enabling power of Jesus Christ. I will stay in my covenant with Him and work through my questions by study of God's word, by faith, and with the help of the Holy Ghost, whose guidance I trust. I will seek His Spirit every day by doing the small and simple things.

This is my path of discipleship.

And until the day that the everyday wounds of mortality are healed, I will wait upon the Lord and trust Him—His timing, His wisdom, His plan.¹⁷

Arm in arm with you, I want to stand with Him forever. Wholehearted. Knowing that when we love Jesus Christ with all our hearts, He gives us all in return.¹⁸

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Footnotes:

1. [Matthew 24:6](#).
2. See [Matthew 24:13](#); [Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:11](#); see also [Matthew 28:19–20](#); [John 14:18](#).
3. Netty Penwood, "Leaves from My Iowa Log Book," *Nebraska Advertiser*, July 9, 1857, 1, newspapers.com/clip/60679566/pioneers-trek-to-the-salt-lake-valley/.
4. See [1 Nephi 8:27](#).
5. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 189.
6. See [John 16:33](#); [Revelation 7:13–17](#); [Abraham 3:25](#).
7. [Isaiah 53:3](#).
8. See M. Russell Ballard, "[Like a Flame Unquenchable](#)," *Ensign*, May 1999, 86; *Liahona*, July 1999, 102.
9. See Bible Dictionary, "[Faith](#)."
10. Personal correspondence.
11. See [Joshua 3:5, 13, 15–17](#); [2 Kings 5:14](#); [Matthew 14:29](#); [Mark 2:3–5](#); [Luke 8:43–44](#); [John 2:3–5](#); [Acts 11:12](#); [1 Nephi 4:6–7, 16:23](#); [3 Nephi 27:21](#); [Ether 2:16](#); [3](#); [Moses 6:32, 42](#).
12. [Luke 17:14](#); emphasis added; see also [verses 11–13](#).
13. "When the focus of our lives is on ... Jesus Christ and His gospel, we can feel joy regardless of what is happening—or not happening—in our lives" (President Russell M. Nelson, "[Joy and Spiritual Survival](#)," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 82).
14. See [Luke 22:44](#).
15. See [Matthew 26:39, 42, 44](#).
16. See [Mark 12:41–44](#).
17. See [Isaiah 40:31](#).
18. See [Romans 8:14–18, 28, 38–39](#).

Denni's Thoughts:

When we seek and serve the Lord, He promises us joy no matter our circumstances. President Nelson wrote this talk, "Joy and Spiritual Survival," in 2016 when he was President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

President Russell M. Nelson, "Joy and Spiritual Survival," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 82

“When the focus of our lives is on ... Jesus Christ and His gospel, we can feel **joy** regardless of what is happening—or not happening—in our lives.

Just as the Savior offers peace that “passeth all understanding,” He also offers an intensity, depth, and breadth of **joy** that defy human logic or mortal comprehension. For example, it doesn’t seem possible to feel **joy** when your child suffers with an incurable illness or when you lose your job or when your spouse betrays you. Yet that is precisely the **joy** the Savior offers. His **joy** is constant, assuring us that our “afflictions shall be but a small moment” and be consecrated to our gain.

We can start by “looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith in every thought. We can give thanks for Him in our prayers and by keeping covenants we’ve made with Him and our Heavenly Father. As our Savior becomes more and more real to us and as we plead for His **joy** to be given to us, our **joy** will increase.

Joy is powerful, and focusing on **joy** brings God’s power into our lives. As in all things, Jesus Christ is our ultimate exemplar, “who for the **joy** that was set before him endured the cross.” Think of that! In order for Him to endure the most excruciating experience ever endured on earth, our Savior focused on **joy**!

If we look to the world and follow its formulas for happiness, we will never know **joy**. The unrighteous may experience any number of emotions and sensations, but they will never experience **joy**! **Joy** is a gift for the faithful. It is the gift that comes from intentionally trying to live a righteous life, as taught by Jesus Christ.

Every day that you and I choose to live celestial laws, every day that we keep our covenants and help others to do the same, **joy** will be ours.”

2 Nephi 2:22

Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have **joy**.

2 Nephi 9

18 Righteous Saints “who have endured the crosses of the world ... shall inherit the kingdom of God, ... and their **joy** shall be full forever”

2 Nephi 27

30 And the meek also shall increase, and their **joy** shall be in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

Alma 27

16 And it came to pass that as Ammon was going forth into the land, that he and his brethren met Alma, over in the place of which has been spoken; and behold, this was a **joyful** meeting.

17 Now the **joy** of Ammon was so great even that he was full; yea, he was swallowed up in the **joy** of his God, even to the exhausting of his strength; and he fell again to the earth.

18 Now was not this exceeding **joy**? Behold, this is **joy** which none receiveth save it be the truly penitent and humble seeker of happiness.

Mosiah 4

2 And they had viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even less than the dust of the earth. And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified; for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things; who shall come down among the children of men.

3 And it came to pass that after they had spoken these words the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with **joy**, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience, because of the exceeding faith which they had in Jesus Christ who should come, according to the words which king Benjamin had spoken unto them.

Isaiah 35

10 And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting **joy** upon their heads: they shall obtain **joy** and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

2 Nephi 8

3 For the Lord shall comfort Zion, he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord. **Joy** and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

In our trials in life, as we do all that we can do - (3Nephi 14:7) ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; that we can submit to His will, wait patiently on the Lord, and when it's time He will answer. When I am sure I cannot go any further or do any more, I ask, seek, and knock more fervently, earnestly, to my Heavenly Father and He is always there and I always grow. As we keep Celestial laws, are true and faithful to our Covenants and help others to do the same, all of our afflictions will be consecrated for our gain.

Doctrine and Covenants 121

7 My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

2 Nephi 2

2 Nevertheless, Jacob, my firstborn in the wilderness, thou knowest the greatness of God; and he shall consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain.

Luke 22

44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Matthew 26

39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

Mark 14

32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;

34 And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.

35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things *are* possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.

37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour?

38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak.

39 And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words.

40 And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him.

41 And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

42 Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

Mosiah 3

7 And lo, he shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people.

Doctrine and Covenants 19

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

17 But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

18 Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

19 Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.

Obedience, the first law of heaven, and joy marks the lives of the faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 27 ...yea, I feel to say, O Lord, let Zion be comforted, let her waste places be built up and established an hundred fold; let Thy Saints come unto Zion out of every nation; let her be exalted to the third heavens, and let Thy judgment be sent forth unto victory; and after this great tribulation, let Thy blessing fall upon Thy people, and let Thy handmaid live till her soul shall be satisfied in beholding the glory of Zion; for notwithstanding her present affliction, she shall yet arise and put on her beautiful garments, and be the **joy** and glory of the whole earth. Therefore let you heart be comforted; live in strict **obedience** to the commandments of God, and walk humbly before Him, and He will exalt thee in His own due time.

Isaiah 50

5 The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.

Mark 12

41 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

43 And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

44 For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

Jesus Christ recognized the abundance of her all where others saw only her lack. The same is true with each of us. He doesn't see our lack as failure but rather as an opportunity to exercise faith and to grow - is what sister Michelle Craig said in her talk 'Wholehearted' about the previous scripture. We can trust the Lord, His timing, His wisdom, His plan; His ways are not our ways.

Isaiah 40

31 But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Romans 8

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 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.

18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

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

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Micah's Thoughts:

I want to hone in on this one line here in the final section because it is a more important doctrinal point than most realize: "My fellow disciples of Jesus Christ, with all my heart, I choose to stand with the Lord. I choose to stand with His chosen servants—President Russell M. Nelson and his

fellow Apostles—for they speak for Him *and are the stewards of the ordinances and covenants that tie me to the Savior.*”- Did you catch that? President Russell M. Nelson and his fellow Apostles are stewards of the ordinances AND COVENANTS that tie me to the Savior... There continues to be a dark cloud of apostasy that creeps into the Lord’s church from time to time, and the means of confusion, the means of deception, etc. seem to always break down along the same lines... How often have I heard of late those under the spirit of apostasy make such claims as “I don’t have to be obedient to keys- I don’t have to do what the keys are commanding, asking, urging, counseling, etc. me to do- all that is important are my covenants with the Lord”... This shows a fundamental breakdown in doctrinal understanding on a Titanic level of failure... Your covenants to the Lord are made through the ordinances and covenants of which they hold the keys... You don’t, or rather you can’t “keep you covenants with the Lord” while being out of sync with the keys- period.

Joseph F. Smith (Gospel Doctrine, Page 373)

"Among the Latter-day Saints, the preaching of false doctrines disguised as truths of the gospel, may be expected from people of two classes, and practically from these only; they are:

First-The hopelessy ignorant, whose lack of intelligence is due to their indolence and sloth, who make but feeble effort, if indeed any at all, to better themselves by reading and study; those who are afflicted with a dread disease that may develop into an incurable malady - laziness.

Second - The proud and self vaunting ones, who read by the lamp of their own conceit; who interpret by rules of their own contriving; will have to become a law unto themselves, and so pose as the sole judges of their own doings. More dangerously ignorant than the first.

Beware of the lazy and the proud."



Matthew 16

11 How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

12 Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Matthew 16:6–12. “Beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (see also Mark 8:14–21; Luke 12:1)

The Savior taught His disciples to beware of “the leaven” of the Pharisees and Sadducees, which was their doctrine. Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained that this teaching of the Savior can be likened to the need to beware of false doctrines and philosophies in all ages: “Literally, leaven is a substance that produces fermentation, as for instance yeast which causes bread to rise. Figuratively, leaven is any element which, by its fermenting, spreading influence, affects groups of people so that they believe and act in particular ways. Thus to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees is to shun their false doctrines, their concept that the Messiah must prove his claim to divinity by signs, for instance. Similarly, today, the warning is to beware of the leaven of any group whose false doctrines and antichrist philosophies work to keep men from accepting the truths of the restored gospel” (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 1:379).

If one has been feeding their bread the wrong leaven, this is what their "life experience" amounts to... “Beware of the lazy and the proud.”... Make the choice to stand with the Lord. I choose to stand with His chosen servants, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.