

Fear Not: Believe Only!

By Elder Jeffrey R. Holland
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Begin your search for happiness by embracing the bounty we have already received from the giver of every good gift.

V 1.01

Section I (Karen and Micah)

I direct my remarks today to the young people of the Church, meaning anyone President Russell M. Nelson's age or younger. I seldom use visuals, but I can't resist sharing this one.

This *cri de cœur* comes from my eight-year-old friend Marin Arnold, written when she was seven. I will translate for you her early reformed Egyptian:

Dear Bishop
generle confrins
was Boring why
Do we half to
Do it? tell me why
Sinslerie, Marin Arnold.¹

Well, Marin, the talk I am about to give will undoubtedly disappoint you again. But when you write your bishop to complain, it is important that you tell him my name is "Kearon. Elder Patrick Kearon."

For nearly two years a pandemic of biblical proportions has enveloped our planet, and while that plague brought a halt to almost everything socially, obviously it did not bring a halt to brutality, violence, and cruel aggression politically—nationally or internationally. As if that were not enough, we are still facing long-standing social and cultural challenges, ranging from economic deprivation to environmental desecration to racial inequity and more.

Such stiff winds and dark days can be discouraging to the youth among us, those to whom we look for optimism and enthusiasm regarding the tomorrows of our lives. It has been said that "the power of youth is the common wealth for the entire world. The ... young ... are the faces of our ... future."² Furthermore, our children are the trustees into whose hands the destiny of this Church will be placed.

Given our current times, it is understandable if the idealism of the young is waning a little. Dr. Laurie Santos, a professor at Yale University, recently created a class titled Psychology and the Good Life. "The first year the class was offered, nearly [one-quarter] of the [*entire*] undergraduate student body enrolled."³ Over 64 million people then visited her podcast. Writing about this phenomenon, one journalist noted how painful it is to see so many

bright, young students—and adults—desperately “looking for something they’ve lost” or, worse yet, longing for something they never had.⁴

My plea today to our youth, and to you parents and adults who advise them, is to begin your search for happiness by embracing the bounty we have already received from the giver of every good gift.⁵ At precisely the moment many in the world are asking deep questions of the soul, we ought to be answering with the “good news”⁶ of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which holds aloft the mission and message of the Savior of the world, offers the most eternally significant way to both find good and do good at such a needful time.

President Russell M. Nelson has said that this generation of young people has the capacity to have “more impact [for good] on the world than any previous generation.”⁷ We, of all people, should be “sing[ing] the song of redeeming love,”⁸ but that takes discipline—“discipleship,” if you will—the kind that guards against negative attitudes and destructive habits that would pull us off-key as we try to sing that song of eternal salvation.

Karen's Thoughts:

I find it interesting that Elder Holland chose the words “biblical proportions”. So often those around us think that what we experienced during the pandemic was part of a natural cycle of human existence and things will return to ‘normal’. These are times that should not go unnoticed and lull us back to sleep. President Nelson during the Oct. 2020 (A New Normal) general conference gave us specific guidance for us during this time we live in right now.

“ We live in a glorious age, foreseen by prophets for centuries. This is the dispensation when no spiritual blessing will be withheld from the righteous.¹ Despite the world’s commotion,² the Lord would have us look forward to the future “with joyful anticipation.”³ Let us not spin our wheels in the memories of yesterday. The gathering of Israel moves forward. The Lord Jesus Christ directs the affairs of His Church, and it *will* achieve its divine objectives.

The challenge for you and me is to make certain that each of *us* will achieve his or her divine potential. Today we often hear about “a new normal.” If you really want to embrace a new normal, I invite you to turn your heart, mind, and soul increasingly to our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Let that be *your* new normal.

Embrace your new normal by repenting daily. Seek to be increasingly pure in thought, word, and deed. Minister to others. Keep an eternal perspective. Magnify your callings. And whatever your challenges, my dear brothers and sisters, live each day so that *you* are more prepared to meet your Maker.⁴ ”

President Eyring-2007, Eyring, Gifts of the Spirit for Hard Times

“Despite our uniqueness, we all have some things in common. We are all in the probationary test of mortality. And, wherever we live, that test will become increasingly difficult. We are in the last dispensation of time. God’s prophets have seen these times for millennia. They saw that wonderful things were to happen. There was to be a restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The true Church was to be brought back with prophets and apostles. The gospel was to be taken to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Most marvelous of all, the true Church and its members were to become worthy for the **coming of the Savior to His Church and to His purified disciples.**"

Karen's Thoughts- Elder Eyring prepares us with a spiritual gift as a prerequisite for the Redemption of Zion (Specifically). I will explain in detail this priority gift later in this section. Elder Eyring continues...

"But the true prophets also saw that in the last days Satan would rage. There would be wars and rumors of wars, which would inspire fear. The courage of many would fail. There would be great wickedness. Satan would deceive many.

Yet, happily, many would not be overcome. And many would not be deceived."

[Elder Holland continues] ...My plea today to our youth, and to you parents and adults who advise them, is to **begin your search for happiness by embracing the bounty we have already received from the giver of every good gift.** 5

Karen's Thoughts: Elder Holland provided us with this footnote 5:

Moroni 10:5–20

Book of Mormon

- 5 And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.
- 6 And whatsoever thing is good is just and true; wherefore, nothing that is good denieth the Christ, but acknowledged that he is.
- 7 And ye may know that he is, by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore I would exhort you that ye deny not the power of God; for he worketh by power, according to the faith of the children of men, the same today and tomorrow, and forever.
- 8 And again, I exhort you, my brethren, that ye deny not the gifts of God, for they are many; and they come from the same God. And there are different ways that these gifts are administered; but it is the same God who worketh all in all; and they are given by the manifestations of the Spirit of God unto men, to profit them.
- 9 For behold, to one is given by the Spirit of God, that he may teach the word of wisdom;
- 10 And to another, that he may teach the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;
- 11 And to another, exceedingly great faith; and to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;
- 12 And again, to another, that he may work mighty miracles;
- 13 And again, to another, that he may prophecy concerning all things;
- 14 And again, to another, the beholding of angels and ministering spirits;
- 15 And again, to another, all kinds of tongues;
- 16 And again, to another, the interpretation of languages and of divers kinds of tongues.

- 17 And all these gifts come by the Spirit of Christ; and they come unto every man severally, according as he will.
- 18 And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that every good gift cometh of Christ.
- 19 And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that he is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and that all these gifts of which I have spoken, which are spiritual, never will be done away, even as long as the world shall stand, only according to the unbelief of the children of men.
- 20 Wherefore, there must be faith; and if there must be faith there must also be hope; and if there must be hope there must also be charity.

Karen's Thoughts: These are a few of the many spiritual gifts available to us.

Elder Robert D. Hales shared his thoughts regarding Gifts of the Spirit at BYU in 1993.

Hales, Robert D, 1993, BYU Devotional, Gifts of the Spirit

"We are clearly instructed that each of us is given a gift or gifts. Do we know what gift we have been given? Are we seeking to find our gifts?

To some is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby. [v. 12]

The phrase "that all may be profited thereby" is a very important concept to understand about the gifts of the Spirit. The gifts given to each individual are given not only for the one who receives, but also for those who can benefit when the gift is shared with others.

For example, you may be given the gift of faith and never question the existence of God, our Heavenly Father, and his son Jesus Christ.

[...] In addition, you may be given the gift that others would believe on your words that they might have eternal life if they continue faithful. Many of you, as missionaries for the Church, have experienced all that I have just outlined. Or you may have brought a friend or neighbor into the Church by the way you have lived your life or through your testimony.

[...] And all these gifts [and more] come from God, for the benefit of the children of God. [v. 26]

[Additional] gifts identified in section 46 [of the Doctrine and Covenants] give rise to other gifts, such as:

- The gift to ponder; looking to God for direction.
- The gift to hear and respond to the still, small voice.
- The gift to be calm, which includes the ability to curb anger and to be temperate, rather than contentious.
- The gift to study and to listen.

- And, perhaps the greatest gift of all, *to have charity*.

There are many gifts. Bruce R. McConkie wrote, "Spiritual gifts are endless in number and infinite in variety" (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985], p. 371).

tell thee these things as a witness unto thee—that the words or the work which thou hast been writing are true. [v. 17]

The Lord reminded Oliver of the night he prayed to "know concerning the truth of these things." He helped Oliver remember by saying, "Did I not speak peace to your mind . . . ? What greater witness can you have than from God?" (D&C 6:22–23). Oliver had to learn to recognize influences of the Spirit, as you and I must learn."

Every Church member, if faithful, has the right to receive revelation for his or her personal blessing."

Karen's Thoughts- The gift of personal revelation was given to us through the Holy Ghost via our baptismal covenant. It is What Elder Eyring mentioned as essential or critical for the Redemption of Zion. He states:

"My purpose is to teach you how you can reach that happy and glorious goal.

[The gift of Receiving Revelations Daily]

...the Holy Ghost has touched your heart and mind from time to time. But you will need that influence consistently if you are not to be overcome or deceived. Is that possible, and what will it take to receive that blessing?

Yes, it is possible. Whenever I need that reassurance—and I need it from time to time too—remember two brothers. Nephi and Lehi faced fierce opposition. They were serving in an increasingly wicked world. They had to deal with terrible deceptions. So I take courage—and so can you—from a verse in Helaman:

"And in the seventy and ninth year there began to be much strife. But it came to pass that Nephi and Lehi, and many of their brethren who knew concerning the true points of doctrine, having many revelations daily, therefore they did preach unto the people, insomuch that they did put an end to their strife in that same year" (Helaman 11:23)

They had "many revelations daily." **So, yes, it is possible to have the companionship of the Holy Ghost sufficiently to have many revelations daily. It is not easy, but it is possible.** What it will require will be different for each person because we start from where we are in our unique set of experiences in life. For all of us there will be at least three requirements. None of them can be gained and retained from a single experience. All of them must be constantly renewed.

Have Faith in God

First, receiving the Holy Ghost takes faith in our Heavenly Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ. The memory of a great spiritual experience in which that truth was confirmed to you won't be sufficient. You will need to be sure of your faith in the moment of crisis, which may come at any time, day or night, when you plead for the influence of the Spirit. You must then be unshaken in your confidence that God lives, that He hears your cry for help, and that the resurrected Savior will do for you what He promised to do for His servants in His mortal ministry:

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" (John 15:26).

The record shows that Nephi and Lehi knew concerning the true points of doctrine. Of all the true doctrine, **nothing is more important to you and me than the true nature of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.** For that, I return again and again to the scriptures. For that, I return again and again to prayer. For that, I return again and again to partaking of the sacrament. And, above all, I come to know God and Jesus Christ best by keeping the commandments and serving in the Church. By diligent service in the Church we come not only to know the character of God but also to love Him. If we follow His commands, our faith in Him will grow and we may qualify to have His Spirit to be with us.

Vibrant faith in God comes best from serving Him regularly. Every member has a multitude of opportunities to serve God. For instance, for years we have heard the phrase, "Every member a missionary." Similarly, each member is to care for the poor among us and around us. That is why we have fast offerings and service projects. Our choice is to decide whether to join with the Lord and His disciples in our day as He and His disciples did during His mortal ministry.

...Your faith will grow as you serve the Lord in caring for Heavenly Father's children as the Lord's teacher to their home. You will have your prayers answered. You will come to know for yourself that He lives, that He loves us, and that He sends inspiration to those with even the beginnings of faith in Him and with the desire to serve Him in His Church. Stay close to the Church if you want your faith in God to grow. And as it grows, so will your ability to claim the promise you were given that you can receive the gifts of the Spirit.

Be Clean

"A second requirement for frequent companionship and direction from the Holy Ghost is to be clean. The Spirit must withdraw from those who are not clean. You remember the sad illustration of that in the Book of Mormon:

And because of their iniquity the church had begun to dwindle; and they began to disbelieve in the spirit of prophecy and in the spirit of revelation; and the judgments of God did stare them in the face.

And they saw that they had become weak, like unto their brethren, the Lamanites, and that the Spirit of the Lord did no more preserve them; yea, it had withdrawn from them because the Spirit of the Lord doth not dwell in unholy temples" (Helaman 4:23–24).

The path to receiving the Holy Ghost is to exercise faith in Christ unto repentance. We can become clean through qualifying for the effects of the Savior's Atonement. The covenants offered in baptism by authorized servants of God bring that cleansing. We renew our pledge to keep those covenants each time we partake of the sacrament. The peace we all seek is the assurance that we have received forgiveness for our sins of omission or commission.

The Savior has been given the right to grant that forgiveness and to give that assurance. I have learned that the Lord gives that assurance at the time He chooses, and He does it in His own way. And I have learned to ask for it in prayer. One way He grants that assurance is through the Holy Ghost. If you have difficulty in feeling the Holy Ghost, you might wisely ponder whether there is anything for which you need to repent and receive forgiveness.

If you have felt the influence of the Holy Ghost today, you may take it as evidence that the Atonement is working in your life. For that reason and many others, you would do well to put yourself in places and in tasks that invite the promptings of the Holy Ghost. Feeling the influence of the Holy Ghost works both ways: the Holy Ghost only dwells in a clean temple, and the reception of the Holy Ghost cleanses us through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. You can pray with faith to know what to do to be cleansed and thus qualified for the companionship of the Holy Ghost and the service of the Lord. And with that companionship you will be strengthened against temptation and empowered to detect deception.

Have a Pure Motive

A third requirement for the companionship of the Holy Ghost is pure motive. If you want to receive the gifts of the Spirit, you have to want them for the right reasons. Your purposes must be the Lord's purposes. To the degree your motives are selfish, you will find it difficult to receive those gifts of the Spirit that have been promised to you.

That fact serves both as a warning and as helpful instruction. First, the warning: God is offended when we seek the gifts of the Spirit for our own purposes rather than for His. Our selfish motives may not be obvious to us. But few of us would be so blind as Simon, who sought to purchase the right to the gifts of the Spirit:

"But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

"Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. ...

"Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me" (Acts 8:20–21, 24).

Apparently Simon recognized his own corrupt motives. It may not be so easy for each of us. We almost always have more than one motive at a time. And some motives may be mixtures of what God wants as well as what we want. It is not easy to pull them apart.

Consider yourself on the eve of a school examination or an interview for a new job. You know that the direction of the Holy Ghost could be of great help. I know from my own experience, for example, that the Holy Ghost knows the mathematical equations used to solve problems in thermodynamics. I was a struggling physics student studying in a book that I still own. Halfway down a page, in the middle of some mathematics, I had a clear confirmation that what I was reading was true. It was exactly the feeling that had come to me before as I had pondered the Lord's scriptures and that I have had many times since. So I knew that the Holy Ghost understood whatever was true in what I might be asked on an examination in thermodynamics.

You can imagine that I was tempted to ask God to send me the Holy Ghost during the examination so I wouldn't need to study further. I knew that He could do it, but I did not ask Him. I felt that He would rather have me learn to pay a price in effort. Always there is the possibility that we may have a selfish purpose that is less important to the Lord.

For instance, I may want a good grade in a course, when He prefers that I learn how to work hard in the service of others. I may want a job because of the salary or the prestige, when He wants me to work somewhere else to bless the life of someone I don't even know yet. I may desire to entertain or impress a congregation, but I try to suppress my desire and surrender to His."

President Russell M. Nelson has said that this generation of young people has the capacity to have “more impact [for good] on the world than any previous generation.”⁷ We, of all people, should be “sing[ing] the song of redeeming love,”⁸ but that takes discipline—“discipleship,” if you will—the kind that guards against negative attitudes and destructive habits that would pull us off-key as we try to sing that song of eternal salvation.

Nelson, Russel, M, 2018, Revelation for the Church; Revelation for our Lives

“In coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost.

Imagine the miracle of it! Whatever our Church calling, we can pray to our Heavenly Father and receive guidance and direction, be warned about dangers and distractions, and be enabled to accomplish things we simply could not do on our own. If we will truly receive the Holy Ghost and learn to discern and understand His promptings, we will be guided in matters large and small.

Brothers and sisters, how can we become the men and women—the Christlike servants—the Lord needs us to be? How can we find answers to questions that perplex us? If Joseph Smith's transcendent experience in the Sacred Grove teaches us anything, it is that the heavens are open and that God speaks to His children.

The Prophet Joseph Smith set a pattern for us to follow in resolving our questions. Drawn to the promise of James that if we lack wisdom we may ask of God,⁸ the boy Joseph took his question directly to Heavenly Father. He sought personal revelation, and his seeking opened this last dispensation.

In like manner, what will your seeking open for you? What wisdom do you lack? What do you feel an urgent need to know or understand? Follow the example of the Prophet Joseph. Find a quiet place where you can regularly go. Humble yourself before God. Pour out your heart to your Heavenly Father. Turn to Him for answers and for comfort.

Pray in the name of Jesus Christ about your concerns, your fears, your weaknesses—yes, the very longings of your heart. And then listen! Write the thoughts that come to your mind. Record your feelings and follow through with actions that you are prompted to take. As you repeat this process day after day, month after month, year after year, you will “grow into the principle of revelation.”⁹

Does God really *want* to speak to you? Yes! “As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course … as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints.”¹⁰

You don’t have to wonder about what is true.¹¹ You do not have to wonder whom you can safely trust. Through personal revelation, you can receive your own witness that the Book of Mormon is the word of God, that Joseph Smith is a prophet, and that this is the Lord’s Church. Regardless of what others may say or do, no one can ever take away a witness borne to your heart and mind about what is true.

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.

I am optimistic about the future. It will be filled with opportunities for each of us to progress, contribute, and take the gospel to every corner of the earth. But I am also not naive about the days ahead. We live in a world that is complex and increasingly contentious. The constant availability of social media and a 24-hour news cycle bombard us with relentless messages. 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.

My beloved brothers and sisters, I plead with you to increase your spiritual capacity to receive revelation."

Karen's Thoughts-In order for us to receive revelation during this critical historical time, we must be vigilant in exercising our faith, become clean through the atonement of Christ through daily repentance, and have pure motives in acquiring things of the spirit. We must submit all that we have and are to the Lord. I testify that as we do, we will receive revelation daily! I know it! This is not just something that happens to other people. It can happen for YOU! Yes YOU! We need this precious gift of revelation to get through this next period of time to prepare to meet the Savior. What is your desire? Your hopes and dreams?

Jorg Klebengat's talk titled Valiant Discipleship in May 2022's general conference stated:

"In the end we will therefore reap what our lifelong choices have sown.⁵ So what does the sum total of our thoughts, desires, words, and works say about our love for the Savior, His chosen servants, and His restored Church? Do our baptismal, priesthood, and temple covenants mean more to us than the praise of the world or the number of "likes" on social media? Is our love for the Lord and His commandments stronger than our love for anything or anyone else in this life?"

I bear my testimony that God Lives, that our Savior Jesus Christ will return to redeem His people literally! I know that we are being prepared for His return and to become sanctified through Him if we choose to follow him along the covenant path. In the name of Jesus Christ AMEN.

Micah's Thoughts:

Our Search For Happiness is a book written by Elder M. Russell Ballard that for a long time appeared in the "Missionary Reference Library" - I couldn't help but think about that as I read those intro words "begin your search for happiness". It is a tiny book that one could finish in an

afternoon- if you haven't had the chance to read it, I'd say it meshes well with the concepts being taught in this talk and you should absolutely give it a read.

I was somewhat disappointed when Holland said that the “young people of the church were those younger than President Nelson” but then didn’t add a reference in for President Nelson’s age, that would be been hilarious, like he was being dead serious.

A “cri de cœur” also didn’t have a reference on it, so I had to look that up as well:

1. An impassioned outcry, as of entreaty or protest.
2. An impassioned outcry, appeal, protest or entreaty.

But Elder Holland does provide his very first reference in the talk here with this letter and lets us know that it was shared with permission.

The first real paragraph of Elder Holland’s talk starts by calling Covid-19 a “pandemic of biblical proportions that has enveloped our planet”, almost exactly like what was described in

Doctrine and Covenants 45

30 And in that generation shall the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

31 And there shall be men standing in that generation, that shall not pass until they shall see an overflowing scourge; for a desolating sickness shall cover the land.

32 But my disciples shall stand in holy places, and shall not be moved; but among the wicked, men shall lift up their voices and curse God and die.

i.e. “a biblical sickness has covered the land”… He then goes on to say that this sickness has “brought a halt to almost everything socially” and that “brutality, violence, and cruel aggression” is abroad in the land… Continuing in

Doctrine and Covenants 45

33 And there shall be earthquakes also in divers places, and ***many desolations***; yet men will harden their hearts against me, and they will take up the sword, one against another, and they will kill one another.

This to me is a clear cut call out to these scriptures. He ends this paragraph “we are still facing … economic deprivation [and] environmental desecration” which to me is reminder once again that famine comes next. The first line of the next paragraph “stiff winds and dark days” is a call back to the same imagery used by President Eyring in his “Steady in the Storms” talk that we have already done a breakdown of. This imagery of “a storm” or “a whirlwind” or a “mighty wind” all point to a single point of reference. This was also gone over recently in The Macro Last-day Timeline Section 1 A Sense of Urgency Chapter 2 The Parable of the Figs.

The second reference Elder Holland chooses to place in his talk is from Kailash Satyarthi, who according to the internet, is an “East Indian social reformer who advocates the universal right to

education" ... The next two references Elder Holland quotes after that were from Yale professors... People know how I feel about this but I'm going to say it again- members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints need to learn the Pyramid of Truth, they need to understand what "doctrine vs policy" mean, they need to understand these thing because they clearly, *clearly* do not... Many who have listened to countless papers I have written and who have listened to me teach the Pyramid of Truth still don't understand it, but that doesn't stop them in their arrogance and ignorance in trying to use it as a weapon in straw man arguments against me- so here is my commitment on this point, please take the time to serious study the topic, eXpecially before you go off all half-cocked on me.

I will be posting my papers on the subject hopefully this week, please educate yourself. If you believe that the words of a social justice warrior from India holds more weight than that of *any other* human being on the planet simply because it was quoted by modern day Apostle, you are wrong. Period. Same goes for the Yale professors. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints seem to almost entirely fall within two camps with this doctrine:

Camp One: Prophet worshipers- nothing Apostles/Presidents of the Church say doctrinally speaking can ever be wrong, and even suggesting that is prideful on your part to this group, and they will become very hostile very fast (ironically all while claiming to have felt the Spirit leave). This group believes that the keys can do no wrong under any circumstance and they understand and know all- and if they don't know something clearly us plebs can never know it

Camp Two: Prophet deniers/Spirit-O-Meters- everything the Apostles/Presidents of the Church say policy wise is up for debate- there are always exceptions to the policies of the church and they view themselves as always the exceptions to said policies. When the Apostles/Presidents of the Church tell us to do something, or plead with us to do something, or urge us to do something, etc. this group must first consult with their Spirit-O-Meters before being obedient to the keys.

We need more educated Saints with real faith that understand the Pyramid of Truth, who know that Apostles/Presidents of the Church can and often do make mistakes, misspeak, etc. and they can be wrong on doctrinal matters. We need Saints who know this but who also know that when the keys of God tell us to act, when they tell us to jump, we jump, we sustain them in their callings and do all we can to support them and heed them.

Elder Holland ends this section with a plea (once again, note the word choice) to search for happiness in what we have already received. This ties directly back into the quote from President Joseph Fielding Smith that I quote ever so often that I will read again, as there are always those who've never heard it:

"Our right to guidance from Holy Ghost. We have the right to the guidance of the Holy Ghost, but we cannot have that guidance, if we wilfully refuse to consider the revelations that have been given to help us to understand and to guide us in the light and truth of the everlasting gospel. We cannot hope to have that guidance when we refuse to consider these great revelations which mean so much to us both temporally and spiritually. Now if we find ourselves in this condition of unbelief or unwillingness to seek for the light and the knowledge which the Lord has placed within our reach, then we are liable or in danger of being deceived by evil spirits, the doctrines

of devils, and the teachings of men. And when these false influences are presented before us, we will not have the distinguishing understanding by which we can segregate them and know that they are not of the Lord. And so we may become prey unto the ungodly, to the vicious, to the cunning, to the craftiness of men.”

-Joseph Fielding Smith (**Doctrines of Salvation, p.43**)

Which also ties in perfectly with what President Nelson has been warning us of- “Difficult days are ahead, rarely in the future will it be easy to be a faithful Latter-day Saint... Do all you can to strengthen your faith in Jesus Christ by deepening your understanding of the doctrine taught in His restored church... anchored in pure doctrine you will be able to step forward in faith and dogged persistence and do all that the Lord requires at your hand” etc. etc. etc. Once again a great tie in to this was The Parable of the Fig chapter, in it was covered the talk by President Nelson to Millennials that expands upon and fleshes out this last paragraph in this first section where Elder Holland is quoting President Nelson in his address to the young adults regarding seminary and institute... I would highly recommend a read.

Section II (Tamra and Micah)

Even as we stay “on the sunny side of the street,”⁹ we do run into that fellow from time to time who is determined to find something bleak and dismal about everything. You know his motto: “It is always darkest just before it goes pitch-black.” What a malignant vision, and what a miserable existence! Yes, we might sometimes want to run away from where we are, but we certainly should never run away from who we are—children of the living God who loves us, who is always ready to forgive us, and who will never, ever forsake us. You are His most precious possession. You are His child, to whom He has given prophets and promises, spiritual gifts and revelations, miracles and messages, and angels on both sides of the veil.¹⁰

He has also given you a church that strengthens families for mortality and binds them together for eternity. It provides more than 31,000 wards and branches where people gather and sing and fast and pray for each other and give of their means to the poor. This is where every person is named, accounted for, and ministered to and where lay friends and neighbors voluntarily serve each other in callings that range from clerical work to custodial duty. Young adults—and senior couples as well—serve missions by the thousands at their own expense with no say whatsoever as to where they will labor, and members young and old trundle off to temples to perform sacred ordinances necessary to bind the human family together—a bold activity in such a divided world but one which declares that such divisiveness is only temporary. These are a few of the reasons we give for “the hope that is in [us].”¹¹

Of course, in our present day, tremendously difficult issues face any disciple of Jesus Christ. The leaders of this Church are giving their lives to seeking the Lord’s guidance in the resolution of these challenges. If some are *not* resolved to the satisfaction of everyone, perhaps they constitute part of the cross Jesus said we would have to take up in order to follow Him.¹² It is precisely because there would be dark days and difficult issues that God promised He would, out of a

cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, guide prophets, give an iron rod, open a narrow gate leading to a strait path, and above all grant us the power to finish the course.¹³

So please, please, stay for the whole feast even if you are not sure about the broccoli. Bask in *His* light and lend *your* candle to the cause.¹⁴ They have it right in Primary: Jesus really *does* “[want you] for a sunbeam.”¹⁵

When the Jewish leader Jairus pled for Jesus to heal his 12-year-old daughter, who lay dying at home, the surrounding crowd waylaid the Savior so long that a servant soon came saying to this anxious father, “Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.”

“But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.”¹⁶

And she was. And so will you. “Fear not: believe only.”

Tamra's Thoughts:

I would like to focus on the words “You are His most precious possession. You are His child, to whom He has given prophets and promises, spiritual gifts and revelations, miracles and messages, and angels on both sides of the veil”.

In Elder Hollands talk titled, The Ministry of Angels, he states “When Adam and Eve willingly stepped into mortality, they knew this celestial world would contain thorns and thistles and troubles of every kind. Perhaps their most challenging realization, however, was not the hardship and danger they would endure but the fact that they would now be distanced from God, separated from Him with whom they had walked and talked, who had given them face-to-face counsel.”

“But God knew the challenges they would face, and He certainly knew how lonely and troubled they would sometimes feel. He watched over His mortal family constantly, heard their prayers always, and sent prophets (and later apostles) to teach, counsel, and guide them. But in times of special need, He sent angels, divine messengers, to bless His children, reassure them that heaven was always very close and that His help was always very near.”

The sentence “You are His most precious possession” brought a feeling of instant love, contentment and the recognition that to Him, we ARE His most precious possessions! What comfort this talk was to me. Without question, it was difficult for our Father to watch as Adam and Eve left the protection of the Garden to start the process of fulfilling their earthly mission. It was their time and earth, and eventually it would be each of our time here too.

I remembered the song, “God is Love” – especially the words within the 2nd and 3rd verse.

2. We do not see God's love,
But in our hearts we know
He watches over us
Wherever we may go.

3. We do not have to see

To know the wind is here;
We do not have to see
To know God's love is near.

And a few choice words from Elder Hollands, “ From the beginning down through the dispensations, God has used angels as His emissaries in conveying love and concern for His children. Time in this setting does not allow even a cursory examination of the scriptures or our own latter-day history, which are so filled with accounts of angels ministering to those on earth, but it is rich doctrine and rich history indeed.”

“I have spoken here of heavenly help, of angels dispatched to bless us in time of need. But when we speak of those who are instruments in the hand of God, we are reminded that not all angels are from the other side of the veil. Some of them we walk with and talk with—here, now, every day. “

When we read the Book of Mormon, we recognize the love Lehi likewise had for his children. One in particular, was his dream of the Tree of Life. In it we learned that Lehi came forward and tasted the fruit (i.e. the fruit from God – His word), and it was sweet to the taste. He was excited about the fruit and Lehi wanted to share that with his family. Just like us in our own lives, we want to share with those we love, our own important moments which bring us great joy! We also learned from Lehi that his wife and two of his sons came and partake of the fruit, but when he turned to invite Laman and Lemuel to come taste of the fruit, they turned away from him. How often have we felt that “back” in our own relationships? A family member, friend, church member or neighbor who rejects “our good news”? While studying in the CFM program, God tells Samuel that the rejection wasn’t towards him (Samuel) rather their rejection was towards Him, our God. They wanted a King! Yet, over and over again, God is there to offer His word, send us prophets, and angels which help us along our journeys’ way, EVEN when we might reject Him. God truly IS love and He is the only true King to each of us, this world, and all of His creations.

In Elder David Bednar’s talk, **Therefore They Hushed Their Fears**, he states, “In our daily lives, endless reports of criminal violence, famine, wars, corruption, terrorism, declining values, disease, and the destructive forces of nature can engender fear and apprehension. Surely we live in the season foretold by the Lord: “And in that day … the whole earth shall be in commotion, and men’s hearts shall fail them” (D&C 45:26).”

“Upon hearing the voice of God after partaking of the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve hid themselves in the Garden of Eden. God called unto Adam and asked, “Where art thou? And [Adam answered], I heard thy voice … , and I was afraid” (Genesis 3:9–10). Notably, one of the first effects of the Fall was for Adam and Eve to experience fear. This potent emotion is an important element of our mortal existence.”

God is teaching us to CONQUER fear through Him. This is powerful!! He does not want us to bend to fear, or be driven by our fear of Him, but rather to conquer our fears through Him.

Correct knowledge of and faith in the Lord empower us to hush our fears because Jesus Christ is the only source of enduring peace. He declared, “Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me” (D&C 19:23).

Elder Bednar continues: “The Master also explained, “He who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come” (D&C 59:23).”

Truly, one of the great blessings of devoted discipleship is “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Philippians 4:7).

The second sentence of this portion which I wanted to focus on is “Of course, in our present day, tremendously difficult issues face any disciple of Jesus Christ. The leaders of this Church are giving their lives to seeking the Lord’s guidance in the resolution of these challenges”

Two years ago, I would have expressed my concern of how quickly things were changing on a seemingly monthly basis. Today, I would express concerns over daily and in many instances hourly changes. It truly is a time when evil is said to be good, and good evil. The way that arguments are pieced together are (and can be) worded to make one feel like we are on the wrong side. As if there is something fundamentally wrong with us. This is satan, his methods, and his playbook.

After clearly looking at the message the line “the leaders of this church are giving their lives to seeking the Lords guidance in the resolution of these challenges” popped out to me. This is a severe warning! One with sirens and flashing lights, so let us “heed” and act on the warning. Our leaders are giving their lives in order to keep us safe. They are praying for us and guiding us on “how to BE safe”. The world is in turmoil, and it is only starting. The past few months I have felt those “labor pains” change drastically from “are we in labor” into a full steam ahead ride, holding tight and getting beyond bumpy.

Let me tell you something about me. I hate Ferris Wheels. Okay, let me re-word that.... I detest with every fiber of my being Ferris Wheels. I can ride roller coasters all day long (and boy do I love them) but Ferris Wheels? They are torture incarnate. My family has requested my presence (for their comical relief) and aggressive guilt maneuvers, to get me on a Ferris Wheel. The last one that I was on was particularly dreadful as they had these little cups that can be spun around, all the while going up and over on this detestable ride – all the while contemplating the truly wicked and maniacal mind that created this stupid ride.

Brothers and Sisters, in my estimations we are on THAT ride. We can cry and fret and try to get off, but it isn’t going to happen until the ride runs its course. We need to listen (and white knuckle hang on tight) to every word that comes out of the mouth of our dear prophet. We need to be on our knees praying to God for clarity of mind and personal revelation. We need to make our homes, a Holy Place, a fortress for truth and light. Just as Lehi had family members who turned their backs on him, we too will have those who reject us. Expect it!

But... as Elder Holland and Elder Bednar carefully reminded us... God loves us, He will always love us. He has made a way for us to be safe and He has empowered us with power on high, we will be ministered by angels on BOTH sides of the veil, we will learn who we can depend on and be completely empowered by the divine armor of our God, His truth and love for each of us.

Isn't this sufficient? I proclaim that it is.

"Yea, see that ye look to God and live" ([Alma 37:47](#)).

Micah's Thoughts:

Elder Holland makes sure to include the reference for "Sunny Side of the Street": This phrase is taken from a 1930s popular jazz song titled "On the Sunny Side of the Street," with lyrics by Dorothy Fields (see "On the Sunny Side of the Street," Jazz Standards, jazzstandards.com).

When talking about the Lord's love and willingness to forgive us, etc. I always find it important to refresh my mind and soul on what that actually means doctrinally... A good start is this quote from

Elder Scott (Personal Strength through the Atonement of Jesus Christ)

The joyful news for anyone who desires to be rid of the consequences of past poor choices is that the Lord sees weaknesses differently than He does rebellion. Whereas the Lord warns that unrepented rebellion will bring punishment,¹⁶ when the Lord speaks of weaknesses, it is always with mercy.¹⁷

In that quote he references ALL of the following scriptures:

1 Samuel 12:15

Old Testament

15 But if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as it was against your fathers.

Isaiah 1:20

Old Testament

20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

1 Nephi 2:23

Book of Mormon

23 For behold, in that day that they shall rebel against me, I will curse them even with a sore curse, and they shall have no power over thy seed except they shall rebel against me also.

Mosiah 15:26

Book of Mormon

26 But behold, and fear, and tremble before God, for ye ought to tremble; for the Lord redeemeth none such that rebel against him and die in their sins; yea, even all those that have perished in their sins ever since the world began, that have wilfully rebelled against God, that have known the commandments of God, and would not keep them; these are they that have no part in the first resurrection.

Alma 9:24

Book of Mormon

24 For behold, the promises of the Lord are extended to the Lamanites, but they are not unto you if ye transgress; for has not the Lord expressly promised and firmly decreed, that if ye will rebel against him that ye shall utterly be destroyed from off the face of the earth?

Doctrine and Covenants 76:25

Doctrine and Covenants

25 And this we saw also, and bear record, that an angel of God who was in authority in the presence of God, who rebelled against the Only Begotten Son whom the Father loved and who was in the bosom of the Father, was thrust down from the presence of God and the Son,

Moses 4:3

Pearl of Great Price

3 Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down;

Proverbs 28:13

Old Testament

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

1 Corinthians 2:3

New Testament

3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

1 Corinthians 15:43

New Testament

43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

2 Corinthians 13:4

New Testament

4 For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

James 3:17

New Testament

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

2 Nephi 3:13

Book of Mormon

13 And out of weakness he shall be made strong, in that day when my work shall commence among all my people, unto the restoring thee, O house of Israel, saith the Lord.

Jacob 4:7

Book of Mormon

7 Nevertheless, the Lord God sheweth 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.

Alma 34:17

Book of Mormon

17 Therefore may God grant unto you, my brethren, that ye may begin to exercise your faith unto repentance, that ye begin to call upon his holy name, that he would have mercy upon you;

3 Nephi 22:8

Book of Mormon

8 In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.

Ether 12:26–28

Book of Mormon

26 And when I had said this, the Lord spake unto me, saying: Fools mock, but they shall mourn; and my grace is sufficient for the meek, that they shall take no advantage of your weakness;
27 And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.

28 Behold, I will show unto the Gentiles their weakness, and I will show unto them that faith, hope and charity bringeth unto me—the fountain of all righteousness.

Doctrine and Covenants 24:11

Doctrine and Covenants

11 In me he shall have glory, and not of himself, whether in weakness or in strength, whether in bonds or free;

Doctrine and Covenants 35:17

Doctrine and Covenants

17 And I have sent forth the fulness of my gospel by the hand of my servant Joseph; and in weakness have I blessed him;

Doctrine and Covenants 38:14

Doctrine and Covenants

14 But now I tell it unto you, and ye are blessed, not because of your iniquity, neither your hearts of unbelief; for verily some of you are guilty before me, but I will be merciful unto your weakness.

Doctrine and Covenants 62:1

Doctrine and Covenants

1 Behold, and hearken, O ye elders of my church, saith the Lord your God, even Jesus Christ, your advocate, who knoweth the weakness of man and how to succor them who are tempted.

Those were all the references for just that single quote from Elder Scott's talk... That is how a talk should be written- once again, "Pyramid of Truth"... One more quote dealing with this subject that will help people understand this doctrine is

Elder Craig (The Savior Wants to Forgive)

No one need suppose that this forgiveness comes without repentance. Indeed, the Lord has declared, "I, the Lord, forgive sins unto those who confess their sins before me and ask forgiveness," and then He adds the cautionary qualifier "who have not sinned unto death."²⁴ While the Lord "cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance,"²⁵ yet He differentiates the relative gravity of some sins. He stipulates there will be no forgiveness for "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost."²⁶ He declares the gravity of murder²⁷ and emphasizes the seriousness of sexual sin such as adultery.²⁸ With regard to repeated serious sexual sin, He makes known the increased difficulty of receiving His forgiveness.²⁹ And He has said that "he who sins against the greater light shall receive the greater condemnation."³⁰ Yet, in His mercy, He allows for improvement over time rather than demanding immediate perfection. Even with the multitude of sins occasioned by the weakness of mortality, as often as we repent and seek His forgiveness, He forgives again and again.³¹

There was over a dozen scriptural references in that quote as well, I'd recommend checking them out. Another key bit of information to make sure we understand on this doctrine is gone over in the chapter "Disobedience Necessitates Suffering", it is the very important concept of "seeking the Lord early while he may be found"

The next thing that really drew my attention was Elder Holland himself drawing attention to the fact that things are done in the church "lay", going as far as to say "thousands *at their own expense*", all in an attempt to give validity and more power to these actions. Yes folks I'm talking about "priestcraft", and once again, we can't have it both ways... You don't get to point at all this "lay service" or "service that we actually pay for" (i.e. "missions") and say "see! Look! Good!" and then turn around and justify other "Saints" selling the Words of God for money... You just can't do that and remain principled, doctrinal, faith filled, etc. you become a hypocrite, you become a "selective applier of the law", i.e. "priestcraft is [insert people I don't like here] and is not [insert people who I love here] and I can't justify that position with facts, logic, doctrine, etc. so I will boil it down to 'feelings' and 'intent of the heart' which obviously can't be proven"... There are no such laws from God- you either are or you are not, you either killed someone or you did not, you sinned or you did not sin... I won't bore people with a longer breakdown of priestcraft as the culture has made up its mind and it will take God's judgement alone to snap people out of it, for now the overwhelming majority of "Saints" will stick to the "it's okay when we do it!" philosophy when it comes to priestcraft... I will say that if you are interested in learning the doctrine (not just to have you confirmation bias stroked) there will be a chapter dedicated to that subject in The Macro Last-day Timeline... I would suggest people look up "lay clergy" and what the Church has to say about it, the benefits of it, etc. and then ask ourselves "how well does this actually apply to us?"

Also, before someone pips off in the chat about "the Levites got paid!" let me remind you, the Levites got NO LAND inheritance... So if you are ok with no land inheritance in Zion for a few bucks today, you go right on ahead with that, I want my piece of land next to Joseph Smith in Zion... Just saying...

The last thing I wanted to say about this section was his line "*It is precisely because there would be dark days and difficult issues that God promised He would, out of a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, guide prophets, give an iron rod, open a narrow gate leading to a strait path, and above all grant us the power to finish the course.*" I was really looking forward to checking out the reference or references he choose to put at the end of that statement and I was not disappointed- thank you Elder Holland for coming through for us here!

Exodus 13:21–22

21 And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:

22 He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

Amos 3:7

7 Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

1 Nephi 8:24, 30

24 And it came to pass that I beheld others pressing forward, and they came forth and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and they did press forward through the mist of darkness, clinging to the rod of iron, even until they did come forth and partake of the fruit of the tree.

30 But, to be short in writing, behold, he saw other multitudes pressing forward; and they came and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and they did press their way forward, continually holding fast to the rod of iron, until they came forth and fell down and partook of the fruit of the tree.

2 Nephi 9:41

41 O then, my beloved brethren, come unto the Lord, the Holy One. Remember that his paths are righteous. Behold, the way for man is narrow, but it lieth in a straight course before him, and the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name.

The Lord will “make bare His arm in the eyes of all nations” and He will do it through a prophet of God, He will do it through the prophet the Lord himself promised would do it.

Doctrine and Covenants 103:

11 But verily I say unto you, I have decreed that your brethren which have been scattered shall return to the lands of their inheritances, and shall build up the waste places of Zion.

12 For after much tribulation, as I have said unto you in a former commandment, cometh the blessing.

13 Behold, this is the blessing which I have promised after your tribulations, and the tribulations of your brethren—your redemption, and the redemption of your brethren, even their restoration to the land of Zion, to be established, no more to be thrown down.

14 Nevertheless, if they pollute their inheritances they shall be thrown down; for I will not spare them if they pollute their inheritances.

15 Behold, I say unto you, the redemption of Zion must needs come by power;

16 Therefore, I will raise up unto my people a man, who shall lead them like as Moses led the children of Israel.

17 For ye are the children of Israel, and of the seed of Abraham, and ye must needs be led out of bondage by power, and with a stretched-out arm.

18 And as your fathers were led at the first, even so shall the redemption of Zion be.

19 Therefore, let not your hearts faint, for I say not unto you as I said unto your fathers: Mine angel shall go up before you, but not my presence.

20 But I say unto you: Mine angels shall go up before you, and also my presence, and in time ye shall possess the goodly land.

21 Verily, verily I say unto you, that my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., is the man to whom I likened the servant to whom the Lord of the vineyard spake in the parable which I have given unto you.

22 Therefore let my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., say unto the strength of my house, my young men and the middle aged—Gather yourselves together unto the land of Zion, upon the land ... has been consecrated unto me.

There are literally about two dozen scripture chains alone that tie into this, all of which people have heard me read ad nauseam so I won't again here. I however can't stop myself and will include two quotes, the first is from the The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints student manual for Doctrine and Covenants which reads:

Doctrine and Covenants 103:21–28. The Lord commands the Prophet Joseph Smith to go to Zion

In December 1833 the Lord revealed a parable regarding the redemption of the land of Zion. In that parable “a certain nobleman” had his servants plant 12 olive trees on a “very choice piece of land” (D&C 101:44). He commanded his servants to “set watchmen round about them, and build a tower, that one may overlook the land” and protect it from the enemy (D&C 101:45). However, the servants did not complete the tower, and the enemy “came by night, and ... destroyed their works, and broke down the olive-trees” (see D&C 101:46–51). The nobleman, the Lord of the vineyard, then said to one of his servants, “Go and gather together the residue of my servants, and take all the strength of mine house, which are my warriors, ... and go ye straightway unto the land of my vineyard, and redeem my vineyard” (D&C 101:55–56).

In the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 103, *the Lord identified the Prophet Joseph Smith as the servant in the parable who would “redeem,” or reclaim, the vineyard* (see D&C 103:21).

Elder Bruce R McConkie (1949–O:75, Bruce R. McConkie, The Message of the Restoration)

With these brethren who have testified, I have in my heart a knowledge and an assurance that is real and positive and certain that this work is true. I know just as well as I know anything in this world that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that Joseph Smith is his chiefest prophet and his chiefest witness for this dispensation.

At that strait gate where men must enter if they attain the celestial world, there stands a keeper of the gate who is the Holy One of Israel. He employeth no servant there.

. . . and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name 2 Ne. 9:41

But those who receive the servants of the Lord receive him D&C 84:36 and he in turn receives them because they received his servants. And as pertaining to people who lived in this dispensation, when the judgment is set and the books are opened, they will find that the Prophet Joseph Smith will be seated on the right hand of Christ, and it will be with his approval and his

approbation and his counsel and his consent that all men from his dispensation who attain salvation will be permitted to inherit it.

Section III (Brandon and Micah)

Because each of you in this audience is precious to God and to this Church, I close with this special apostolic declaration. Before you ever received the gift of the Holy Ghost, you had the Light of Christ planted in your soul,¹⁷ that “light which is in all things, … giveth life to all things,”¹⁸ and is the influence for good in the hearts of all people who have ever lived or ever will live. That light was given to protect you and teach you. One of its central messages is that life is the most precious of all gifts, a gift which is obtained eternally only through the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. As the Light and Life of the World,¹⁹ the Only Begotten Son of God came to give us life by conquering death.

We must commit ourselves fully to that gift of life and run to the aid of those who are at risk of giving up this sacred gift. Leaders, advisers, friends, family—watch for signs of depression, despair, or anything hinting of self-harm. Offer your help. Listen. Make some kind of intervention as appropriate.

To any of our youth out there who are struggling, whatever your concerns or difficulties, death by suicide is manifestly *not* the answer. It will not relieve the pain you are feeling or that you think you are causing. In a world that so desperately needs all the light it can get, please do *not* minimize the eternal light God put in *your* soul before this world was. Talk to someone. Ask for help. Do *not* destroy a life that Christ gave *His* life to preserve. You can bear the struggles of this mortal life because we will help you bear them. You are stronger than you think. Help *is* available, from others and especially from God. You are loved and valued and needed. We need you! “Fear not: believe only.”

Someone who faced circumstances far more desperate than you and I ever will once cried: “Go forward [my beloved young friends]. Courage, … and on, on to the victory! Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad.”²⁰ We have so much to be glad about. We have each other, and we have Him. Don’t deny us the chance to have you, I plead, in the sacred and holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Master, amen.

Brandon’s Thoughts:

Elder Holland addressed the issue of suicide and plead with us to support those who struggle with these thoughts. Unfortunately, I have seen firsthand the harm that suicide can leave on those left behind and I’ve seen the effects of the evil whisperings of suicide pressed upon many of my siblings.

For some background knowledge the family I grew up with consisted of two broken families that were brought together in a combined family. My biological father basically abandoned me, my mother and my two sisters when I was age 6. My adopted father’s first wife committed suicide leaving him with four daughters ranging from 9 months to 8 years old. My mother and adopted father married and had four more children together. Although my childhood was far from perfect, I am so grateful that Heavenly Father did everything he could to bring our two families

together. But I can tell you firsthand from watching my adopted sisters as teenagers, they were emotionally traumatized by their mother's decision to leave them, and despite all of my family's keen knowledge of the damage suicide can cause on those left behind, half of my siblings at some point have seriously considered taking their own lives.

I'm not sure why I have been spared from this particular trial, but I believe it may have something to do with being able to discern when I am being whispered to by an evil spirit. I believe that two ways to truly combat these dark whisperings are two have daily repentance and to learn to recognize and listen to the Holy Ghost. President Nelson advised all of us in his talk this last April entitled The Power of Spiritual Momentum to make daily repentance a priority. It might sound counterintuitive for those struggling with thoughts of self-worthlessness to have to account for their daily sins but that would be a very wrong assumption. When you truly repent and account for your daily sins you are freed from them. They are no longer a burden you must carry. This may not rid you of these trials, but it will give you daily relief. Since April I have tried daily repentance and I can testify that there is power in it. If you repent daily you will find it easier to break the negative cycles plaguing your life.

- Alma 37:36 Yea, and cry unto God for all thy support; yea, let all thy doings be unto the Lord, and whithersoever thou goest let it be in the Lord: yea, let all thy thoughts be directed unto the Lord; yea, let the afflictions of thy heart be placed upon the Lord forever.

I also believe that one of the best ways to battle dark whisperings is to learn what the Holy Ghost sounds like and to block out all other thoughts.

- Mosiah 4:30 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.
- 2 Nephi 4:27-28 And why should I yield to sin, because of my flesh? Yea, why should I give way to temptations, that the evil one have place in my heart to destroy my peace and afflict my soul? Why am I angry because of mine enemy? Awake, my soul! No longer droop in sin. Rejoice, O my heart, and give place no more for the enemy of my soul.

I think it's very good to "mourn with those that mourn... and comfort those that stand in need of comfort" (Mosiah 18:9), but the fact is that no human being can always be there to guard another person from the constant penetrating whispers of the evil one. But if you allow the Holy Ghost in your life by striving to be worthy, and unburden yourself from sins and mistakes, you will have the constant companionship and help you need.

It was so difficult to combine two entirely broken families that my mother and adopted father almost divorced a few years after marrying, but they endured, and today it's like we were always meant to be one and I can testify that the Lord's hand was at work in bringing our families together. It was very important to me to take my adopted father's last name. In a somewhat dissimilar fashion perhaps, but possibly still instructive, It is critical that we take upon ourselves the name of the Lord and can thereby become rescued and made free.

- Mosiah 5:8 And under this head ye are made free, and there is no other head whereby ye can be made free. There is no other name given whereby salvation cometh; therefore, I

would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives

- Matthew 7 Ask, and it shall be given you seek, and ye shall find; knock and, it shall be opened unto you:

Micah's Thoughts:

Elder Holland in conclusion makes the choice to teach a bit about the Light of Christ and how it is different from the Holy Ghost- once again, this was one of those talks in this last conference that truly confirmed the School of Joseph's Boys and what we as Saints were being lead to accomplish. Going back to Doctrine and Covenants 103 we get a very good idea from the Lord on how we can remain “the salt of the earth” i.e. “retain the Light of Christ and receive the Holy Ghost”, the Lord also teaches us plainly the connection between that doctrine and “being overcome/despair/etc.” for those with ears to hear and eyes to see.

Doctrine and Covenants 103:

4 And that those who call themselves after my name might be chastened for a little season with a sore and grievous chastisement, because they did not hearken altogether unto the precepts and commandments which I gave unto them.

5 But verily I say unto you, that I have decreed a decree which my people shall realize, inasmuch as they hearken from this very hour unto the counsel which I, the Lord their God, shall give unto them.

6 Behold they shall, for I have decreed it, begin to prevail against mine enemies from this very hour.

7 And by hearkening to observe all the words which I, the Lord their God, shall speak unto them, they shall never cease to prevail until the kingdoms of the world are subdued under my feet, and the earth is given unto the saints, to possess it forever and ever.

8 But inasmuch as they keep not my commandments, and hearken not to observe all my words, the kingdoms of the world shall prevail against them.

9 For they were set to be a light unto the world, and to be the saviors of men;

10 And inasmuch as they are not the saviors of men, they are as salt that has lost its savor, and is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.

Realize that these scriptures were directly in front of the “Redemption of Zion” scriptures I read at the end of Section II of this talk breakdown and combine these scriptures, especially the call out from the Lord to “those who call themselves after my name but yet harken unto the precepts of men and fear the Lord according to those precepts”, says the Lord

Doctrine and Covenants 112

22 Inasmuch as they shall humble themselves before me, and abide in my word, and hearken to the voice of my Spirit.

23 Verily, verily, I say unto you, darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people, and all flesh has become corrupt before my face.

24 Behold, vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth, a day of wrath, a day of burning, a day of desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation; and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth, saith the Lord.

25 And upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth, saith the Lord;

26 First among those among you, saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me, and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house, saith the Lord.

We do have so much to be glad about. We have each other, and we have Savior of the world and we have the Lord's servant coming to collect those who have remained faithful.

3 Nephi 24

16 Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard; and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.

17 And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

18 Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

I plead with you who have had your names written in that book but have since due to your actions had it removed- don't deny us the chance to have you- For after "the test, the Test, the TEST" Joseph Smith and others will return and select those who have remained worthy, and only those who have remained worthy, to take part in the building of that beautify city The New Jerusalem, in the sacred and holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Master, amen.