

We must follow the lead of our beloved prophet, President Hinckley, who recently told the students at Ricks College: "To you I say with all of the energy of which I am capable, do not become a weak link in the chain of your generations. You come to the world with a marvelous inheritance. You come of great men and women. . . . Never let them down. Never do anything which would weaken the chain of which you are a fundamental part" (*Scroll*, 14 Sept. 1999, 20). To me that means that we must do all in our power to ensure that we instill within our loved ones the great legacy of an abiding testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As my grandfather so eloquently stated 74 years ago: "I rejoice to bear my testimony to the truthfulness of this work of the Lord to the world, for I know it is true; I know it is for the uplift and the advancement of the children of God, and I pray that the Lord will help . . . us that we may remain faithful and true, that we may be found valiant workers in the cause of righteousness and help to build up his kingdom upon the earth" (Lars Oveson, in Conference Report, Apr. 1925, 127). To these truths I add my own witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder David R. Stone

A hurricane in the Dominican Republic

One Sunday morning more than a year ago, we awoke to a beautiful day in Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. The Caribbean sun was shining, and the sky was clear. A gentle breeze was blowing, barely ruffling the leaves on the trees; it was warm and peaceful and still. But far out to sea, beyond the reach of our physical senses that day, the deadly destroyer was coming our way, implacable and irresistible. The Hurricane Center, with responsibility to track and predict the path of Hurricane Georges, was constantly updating the information available on the Internet. In the peaceful, placid quiet of that morning, by virtue of those seeing eyes in the sky, I saw the predicted path of the storm, aimed like an arrow at the heart of Santo Domingo.

Within 48 hours the storm struck the island with intense and insensate fury, leaving in its path destruction, desolation, and death. The raw, elemental power of nature was astonishing. From

the relative safety of our house, we saw trees doubled over by the force of the wind, which alternately shrieked and howled and roared; the punishing power of that wind drove rain into the house around the window frames, and the surging three-foot river of water in the street outside, brought about by the intense rain, finally crested and began to subside when it was within an inch of coming into our house.

Around the area where we lived, most of the trees were either uprooted or split by the fierce winds. Trees, branches, power lines, and telephone poles were down all over town. Streets were blocked, traffic was difficult, and power was cut off for more than a week. Although the damage was great, it would have been much greater but for the warnings from those who track and predict and counsel people to be prepared. Virtually all of those who were adequately prepared came through the hurricane relatively unscathed. I am grateful to those men and women who devote time and attention to track and monitor those storms.

Their timely warnings and counsel save lives and protect people. Those who disregard the warnings pay the price of willful failure to listen to those guardians whose calling it is to watch and warn and save.

The devastation of spiritual hurricanes

Great as the damage and destruction and death from these awesome phenomena of physical force can be, there is even more desolation caused in people's lives by spiritual hurricanes. These furious forces often cause far more devastating damage than physical cyclones because they destroy our souls and rob us of our eternal perspective and promise. When the physical storm has passed, we can begin to put our lives and houses back in order. But some spiritual hurricanes sweep us into chaos, and we are encompassed and imprisoned by the shackles of powerful and ruinous influences whose consequences we can only dimly perceive at the time. Like those swirling cyclones, spiritual hurricanes can be virtually unnoticed until they are almost upon us, but they also can strike with intense and insensate fury.

We place ourselves in the path of these spiritual hurricanes when we indulge in anger, alcohol, and abuse; lust and licentiousness; promiscuity and pornography; drugs, pride, greed, violence, envy, and lies—the list is long. Perhaps, for a time, life seems to go on as before, and in that dormant period there is no hint of the terrible retribution to come, and then we are suddenly in the grip of their satanic power, and they lay waste our lives, bringing anguish and agony, depression, despair, and desolation. Too many times they also bring sadness, sorrow, suffering, and heartache to our loved ones. In the aftermath of their destructive path, it is often more difficult to restore a spiritually shattered soul than it is to rebuild a ruined city. There are whirling winds of malevolence,

malice, and evil on the move in society today, and they will not spare those who wander into their path.

Prophets warn us of coming dangers

But we also have our spiritual hurricane guardians, those whose calling it is to watch and warn, helping us avoid spiritual damage, destruction, and even death. Our watchmen on the tower are known to us as apostles and prophets. They are our spiritual eyes in the sky, and they know, through inspiration and insight and pure intelligence, the course these storms may take. They continue to raise their voices in warning to tell us of the tragic consequences of willful and wanton violations of the Lord's commandments. To intentionally ignore their warnings is to court misery, sorrow, and ruin. To follow them is to follow the chosen servants of the Lord into spiritual pastures of peace and plenty.

From this pulpit they have counseled us about the cyclones in our society and civilization. They have warned us about evil in its many forms and guises and called us, again and again, to return to the ways of the Lord. There are times when we may not wish to hear what they say. There are times when we may refuse to believe that the hurricane will come; but in its own time, come it will, for those who sow the wind shall reap the whirlwind (see Hosea 8:7). The Lord knew this, and there is perhaps no more poignant moment in scripture than when the Lord, looking over Jerusalem, speaks with longing and love and sorrow, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often I would have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not" (Luke 13:34).

Peace, safety in following the prophets

There is peace and tranquillity, there is solace and safety in His gospel.

If we will but listen to those whose calling it is to watch and warn, if we will heed to the words of the Master Himself, then our spiritual house will stand firm, and we can let the rain descend and the floods come and the winds blow and beat upon our house, because we are founded upon that rock (see Matthew 7:24–25).

The Lord has said, “And the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days” (D&C 1:4). He also said, “Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38).

I bear witness that there is a God in heaven, the framer of heaven and earth and all things that in them are. I bear

witness that He has a plan for us, His children. I bear witness that in fulfillment of that plan His Son, Jesus Christ, came to earth to take upon Him the sins of the world and make it possible for us to be freed from the terrible consequences of sin and evil. He is our Savior and Redeemer, and, as it was for Jerusalem, His arms are outstretched toward us. He will be our shield and our protector, and we will have peace in the midst of storm and refuge from the raging wind.

May we ever listen to those whose calling it is to watch and warn, to see and save. May we walk in the ways of the Lord and be preserved in paths of peace, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Henry B. Eyring

Warning about procrastination

All of us have faced deadlines. Fear can grip us when we realize that there may not be enough time left to finish what we promised we would do. The thought comes, “Why didn’t I start earlier?”

The Lord knew we would be tempted to procrastinate the most important preparation we could ever make in this life. More than once He warned us about delay. He taught the parable of the ten virgins, five of whom did not fill their lamps for the coming of the bridegroom. He also gave the parable of the servants who were faithless because they believed their Lord would delay His coming. The results of delay were tragic.

For the five unprepared virgins, it was this:

“Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

“But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not” (Matthew 25:11–12).

For the faithless servants who delayed their preparation, it was this:

“The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

“And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 24:50–51).

The temptation to delay repentance

The temptation to delay repentance comes not only at the end of the world as suggested by those scriptures. That temptation seems to have been nearly constant since the beginning of time and goes on throughout our lives. In youth we may have thought: “There will be time enough to worry about spiritual things just before my mission or before marriage. Spiritual things are for older people.” Then, in the early years of marriage, the pressures of life, of jobs, of bills, of finding a moment for rest and