

Saturday, October 6, 2001

So look upward in joy  
And take hold of his hand;  
He will lead you to heights that are  
new—

A land holy and pure,  
Where all trouble doth end,  
And your life shall be free from all sin,  
Where no tears shall be shed,  
For no sorrows remain.  
Take his hand and with him enter in.<sup>11</sup>

I hope that we will have the courage to begin climbing our own Mount Everest, that we may progress in life's journey step by step until we reach the best that is within us.

Our Heavenly Father lives and knows and loves each one of us. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Savior and Redeemer of all, and yes, the Prince of Peace. Joseph Smith is the prophet of the Restoration, and President Gordon B. Hinckley is our prophet, seer, and revelator on the earth today. I bear this testi-

mony, and it is my testimony to you that you will be happy and content if you only do your best. This is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### NOTES

1. "Everest Grueling for Blind Man," *Deseret News*, 5 June 2001, A12; see also Karl Taro Greenfeld, "Blind to Failure," *Time*, 18 June 2001.
2. *The Teachings of Joseph Smith*, ed. Larry E. Dahl and Donald Q. Cannon (1997), 519.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 14:7.
4. Mosiah 4:27.
5. See <http://www.coachwooden.com/bio.shtml>
6. <http://www.coachwooden.com/bodysuccess.shtml>
7. Psalm 119:105.
8. 1 Nephi 8:24.
9. James 1:5.
10. Jacob 7:26.
11. "Does the Journey Seem Long?" *Hymns*, no. 127.

## Elder L. Whitney Clayton

### "Help thou mine unbelief"

On one occasion the Savior encountered a great multitude of people who were listening to a discussion between His disciples and the scribes. He then asked the scribes, "What question ye with them?"

A certain man, kneeling down to Him, answered that he had asked the disciples to cast an evil spirit out of his son, but "they could not." The father begged Him, saying, "But if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

"Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

"And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

The Savior then rebuked the evil spirit and charged it to "come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him."<sup>1</sup>

All of us have come face-to-face with difficult, even desperate hours when with tears we have fallen on our knees and pleaded as did this father, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

Just as the Savior stood ready to help this father whose son was "sore vexed,"<sup>2</sup> so is He ready to help our unbelief today so that with faith we can survive our mortal struggles and "come off conqueror."<sup>3</sup>

### Faith is developed by obedience

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the first principle of the gospel. It is more than

mere belief.<sup>4</sup> Faith is a “hope for things which are not seen, which are true.”<sup>5</sup> “Faith always moves its possessor to . . . physical and mental action.”<sup>6</sup> “To have faith in Jesus Christ means to have such trust in him that we obey whatever he commands. There is no faith where there is no obedience.”<sup>7</sup>

Faith comes from hearing the word of God and is a spiritual gift.<sup>8</sup> Faith increases when we not only hear, but act on the word of God as well, in obedience to the truths we have been taught.<sup>9</sup>

Mary’s reply to the angel’s announcement provides an excellent example. Mary was told by the angel Gabriel: “Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest.” Mary then obediently said to Gabriel, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.”<sup>10</sup>

On another occasion, “Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

“And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

“And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.”<sup>11</sup>

After the Savior’s Resurrection, Peter and other disciples went “a fishing.” However, “that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.” He told them to “cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.”<sup>12</sup>

We find similar faith-developing obedience in the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Following the angel Moroni’s all-night-long visits with him in September 1823, Joseph went to work in the morning with his father. Having been awake nearly

all night, he “found [his] strength so exhausted as to render [him] entirely unable” to perform “the necessary labors of the day.” His father told him to return home, and he “started with the intention of going to the house; but [his] strength entirely failed [him], and [he] fell helpless on the ground, and for a time was quite unconscious of anything.”

When he awoke, he “looked up, and beheld the same messenger standing over [his] head, surrounded by light as before.” Joseph was commanded to “go to [his] father and tell him of the vision and commandments which [he] had received.” Although weary, he obediently “returned to [his] father in the field, and rehearsed the whole matter to him.” His father replied “that it was of God, and told [him] to go and do as commanded.” Exhausted but obedient, Joseph then “left the field, and went to the place where the messenger had told [him] the plates were deposited,” a journey of several miles.<sup>13</sup>

### Doing the things that matter most

Each day we decide what we will do and what we will not do, among myriad alternatives. When we choose to obey the commandments cheerfully as our first priority, neither murmuring about nor measuring the things He commands, we become the handmaids of the Lord and fishers of men and cast our nets on the right side of our own ships. We simply go and do the things the Lord has commanded, even when we are weary, trusting that He will help us to do exactly as He asks.<sup>14</sup> As we do so, the Lord helps our unbelief, and our faith becomes powerful, vibrant, and unshakable. The Prophet Joseph wrote from Liberty Jail:

“Therefore, dearly beloved brethren, let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance [or faith], to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed.”<sup>15</sup>

No matter who we are or where we live, there is much about our daily lives that is routine and repetitive. As we go about this dailiness, we must be deliberate about doing the things that matter most. These must-do things include making room first for the minimum daily requirements of faithful behavior: true obedience, humble prayer, serious scripture study, and selfless service to others. No other daily vitamins strengthen the muscles of our faith as fast as these actions. We also must remember that genuine fasting fosters strong faith. This is especially important as we faithfully seek to fix deeply embedded character flaws which go “not out but by prayer and fasting.”<sup>16</sup>

### How to develop strong faith

Developing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is a step-by-step, line-upon-line, and precept-upon-precept process. We promote the process of strengthening our faith when we do what is right; increased faith always follows as a consequence.<sup>17</sup> If we exercise our faith daily with prayer, study, and obedience, the Savior helps our unbelief, and our faith becomes a shield to “quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”<sup>18</sup> Alma taught that we may “withstand every temptation of the devil, with [our] faith on the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>19</sup> However, we can neither ignore nor reject the essential ingredients of faith and then expect to reap a rich harvest.

We see countless examples of faith developing in Church members today. As young men, young women, and mature couples accept calls to serve missions, as couples prepare themselves in virtue to be married in the holy temple, as parents train up children in the way they should go,<sup>20</sup> they strengthen their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. As we keep the Sabbath day holy, magnify our callings, pay tithes and offerings, welcome new members into Church circles, and invite friends and neighbors to learn gospel truths, we

strengthen our faith. When we choose to abandon our sins and repent willingly, and when we fall to our knees in prayer in good times as well as in turbulent times, we develop strong faith.

We then find occurring in our own lives an experience described in the Book of Mormon: “Nevertheless they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God.”<sup>21</sup>

I know that the Savior lives and that He helps our unbelief. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### NOTES

1. See Mark 9:14–29; Matthew 17:14–21.
2. Matthew 17:15.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 10:5.
4. See Articles of Faith 1:4; Bible Dictionary, “Faith,” 669–70.
5. Alma 32:21; see also Hebrews 11:1; Ether 12:6.
6. Bible Dictionary, 670.
7. *Gospel Principles* (1997), 118.
8. See Romans 10:17; Moroni 10:11; Bible Dictionary, 669–70.
9. See Bible Dictionary, 669–70.
10. Luke 1:31–32, 38.
11. Matthew 4:18–20.
12. John 21:3–4, 6.
13. Joseph Smith—History 1:48–50.
14. See 1 Nephi 3:7.
15. Doctrine and Covenants 123:17.
16. Matthew 17:21; see also Mark 9:29.
17. See Bible Dictionary, 669.
18. Doctrine and Covenants 27:17.
19. Alma 37:33.
20. See Proverbs 22:6.
21. Helaman 3:35.

### President Monson

Thank you, Brethren. I have it on good authority that when Elder Joseph

B. Wirthlin played championship football at the collegiate level, his nickname was "Swiftly."

The choir and congregation will now sing "Come, Ye Children of the Lord." At the conclusion of the singing, Elders Christoffel Golden Jr. and Walter F. Gon-

zález of the Seventy will address us. They will be followed by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve.

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The choir and congregation sang "Come, Ye Children of the Lord."

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## Elder Christoffel Golden Jr.

### Our Father's plan

In a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith sometime in June 1830, we are told of our Heavenly Father's declared intention: "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."<sup>1</sup> According to this decree, the Father's desire is to provide all of us with the opportunity to receive a fulness of joy, even the fulness that He possesses in His perfected and glorified state.<sup>2</sup>

### Premortal life

During these momentous latter days, we declare that God our Eternal Father lives. We testify that we existed in His presence, prior to this life, as His spirit children. During our premortal existence we were tutored in conditions that provided us with the opportunity to develop our talents and abilities. In that blessed premortal abode, we were "left to choose good or evil." Alma states that we chose good by exercising "great faith" and performing "good works." Thus, we kept our first estate, while our Father, in turn, foreordained us to receive certain privileges in this lifetime.<sup>3</sup>

### Mortal life

Likewise, latter-day revelation reveals that our Heavenly Father ordained a great plan of happiness for all of His spirit children who had kept their first estate.<sup>4</sup> It

embraced the prospect that we could one day become like our Father in Heaven and possess all of the attributes and rights He now enjoys. The Apostle Peter reminded the Saints that our Lord's "divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness," so that "ye might be partakers of the divine nature."<sup>5</sup> Peter's statement may be considered bold, and we admit that it would take a lifetime, and more, to accomplish; nevertheless, his thoughts find resonance in the Savior's charge, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."<sup>6</sup>

The Father's plan also required all who had kept their first estate to be tried and tested in a mortal or second estate. In this environment, we are required to act for ourselves and prove to ourselves and to God whether we would keep all of His commandments and overcome sin and opposition.<sup>7</sup>

### The Fall and the Atonement

Since the Fall of Adam and because of the nature of mortal mankind, man developed a predisposition to violate the laws of God and thereby become enslaved to the demands of justice. Nevertheless, because of our Heavenly Father's foreknowledge and through the great plan of happiness, He devised a plan of mercy. It furnished a way for the exacting requirements of justice to be appeased through an infinite Atonement.<sup>8</sup>