

This is the true Church of Jesus Christ. He lives. He loves you, and He loves those whom you must serve and who will become your true friends forever.

In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. 2 Nephi 31:15–16.
2. See 2 Nephi 31:14; Doctrine and Covenants 40:1–3; 41:5–6.

3. Mosiah 18:8.
4. Meeting, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, 2 Aug. 1998.
5. Personal correspondence.
6. 2 Nephi 32:3.
7. 2 Nephi 32:5.
8. 2 Nephi 32:8–9.
9. John 15:12–15.
10. Alma 7:11–12.

Elder R. Conrad Schultz

Sneaker waves

In this world in which we live, things are not always what they appear to be. We sometimes are unaware of the powerful forces pulling on us. Appearances can be very deceptive.

A few years ago I had an experience with deceptive appearances where the results could have been tragic. My wife's cousin and family were visiting us from Utah. It was a calm summer day on the Oregon coast, and we were fishing in the ocean. It was pleasant, and we were having a good time catching salmon, when for some reason I turned around to see a huge eight-foot wave bearing down upon us. I only had time to shout a warning before the wave hit us broadside. Somehow the boat stayed upright, but Gary, our cousin, was thrown overboard. We were all wearing life jackets and with some difficulty maneuvered the boat, half filled with water, to where he was floating and pulled him aboard.

We had been hit by what is called a sneaker wave. It doesn't happen often, and there is no way to predict an occurrence. Later we found that up and down the Oregon-Washington coast, five people had drowned that day in three separate boating accidents. All were caused by the same sneaker wave, which for no apparent reason had welled up off the ocean surface. At the time we went out

over the bar, the ocean was flat and calm and gave no sign of any danger. But the ocean turned out to be very deceptive and not at all what it appeared to be.

As we make our way through this life's journey, we must continually be on guard and watch for those things which are deceptive and not what they appear to be. If we are not careful, the sneaker waves in life can be as deadly as those in the ocean.

“Faith obedience” is not blind obedience

One of the sneaky ploys of the adversary is to have us believe that unquestioning obedience to the principles and commandments of God is blind obedience. His goal is to have us believe that we should be following our own worldly ways and selfish ambitions. This he does by persuading us that “blindly” following the prophets and obeying the commandments is not thinking for ourselves. He teaches that it is not intelligent to do something just because we are told to do so by a living prophet or by prophets who speak to us from the scriptures.

Our unquestioning obedience to the Lord's commandments is not blind obedience. President Boyd K. Packer in the April conference of 1983 taught us about this:

“Latter-day Saints are not obedient because they are compelled to be obedi-

ent. They are obedient because they know certain spiritual truths and have decided, as an expression of their own individual agency, to obey the commandments of God. . . . We are not obedient because we are blind, we are obedient because we can see" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1983, 89–90; or *Ensign*, May 1983, 66).

We might call this "faith obedience." With faith, Abraham was obedient in preparing Isaac for sacrifice; with faith, Nephi was obedient in obtaining the brass plates; with faith, a little child obediently jumps from a height into the strong arms of his father. "Faith obedience" is a matter of trust. The question is simple: Do we trust our Heavenly Father? Do we trust our prophets?

Danger of relying on world's knowledge

Another of the adversary's deceptions is to have us believe that the wisdom and the learning of the world is the only source of knowledge we should follow. The prophet Nephi's brother Jacob understood the adversary's plan and warned us about it:

"O that cunning plan of the evil one! O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish" (2 Nephi 9:28).

Jacob did not say that we should not be learned. He went on to tell us that it is good to be learned, provided we hearken to the counsels of God (see 2 Nephi 9:29).

Counsel against selective obedience

Some come to believe that you may pick and choose which of God's commandments to follow. They conveniently label many commandments as little things that can be put off and that don't appear to be life threatening or too important—things like saying our prayers, honoring the Sab-

bath, reading the scriptures, paying our tithing, attending our meetings—and the list goes on.

Our Heavenly Father communicates in a very clear way to His children. In the teachings of the gospel, there is no uncertain sound of which the Apostle Paul speaks (see 1 Corinthians 14:8). There is no question about the meaning of what is being said or of feelings prompted by the Spirit. We have not been left alone. We have the scriptures, the prophets, loving parents, and leaders.

Heed prophets to avoid deception

Why do we sometimes stray? Why do we let ourselves be influenced by the deception of the adversary? The solution to his deception is simple in its answer, but sometimes it is difficult in its application. President Harold B. Lee in the October conference of 1970 spoke of the Lord, the adversary, and the solution to the adversary's power of deception:

"We have some tight places to go before the Lord is through with this church and the world in this dispensation. . . . The power of Satan will increase; we see it . . . on every hand. . . . We must learn to give heed to the words and commandments that the Lord shall give through his prophet. . . . There will be some things that take patience and faith" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 152; or *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1970, 126).

Then President Lee added a warning when he went on to say that we may not always like what comes from the authority of the Church, because it may conflict with our personal views or interfere with some of our social life. However, if we will listen to and do these things as if from the mouth of the Lord Himself, we will not be deceived and great blessings will be ours.

No doctrine more critical than obedience

It brings us back to obedience. It will always be so. It's part of the plan of eternal happiness. I know of no doctrine that

is more critical to our well-being in this life and the next. All scriptures teach obedience, and no apostle or prophet has ever lived who has not taught the principle of obedience.

Sometimes it is necessary to be obedient even when we do not understand the reason for the law. It takes faith to be obedient. The Prophet Joseph Smith, in teaching obedience, said that whatever God requires is right, though we may not know the reason until much later (see *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 256).

I am grateful that we had on our life jackets that summer day on the ocean. I am thankful we were able to avoid the tragedy that came to others from that sneaker wave. It is my prayer that we will continue to wear our life jackets of obedience in order to avoid the tragedy that will surely come if we are deceived and follow the enticings of the adversary.

I witness to you that our Father in Heaven lives, that He loves us, and that by being unquestioningly obedient to His commandments, we can once again dwell with Him and His Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Faust

The choir and congregation will now sing "Come, O Thou King of Kings." Following the singing, Elder Robert R. Steuer of the Seventy will address us. We will then be pleased to hear from Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

The choir and congregation sang "Come, O Thou King of Kings."

Elder Robert R. Steuer

Being teachable

True disciples of the Master are teachable. In just a few words, Abraham gives us much insight into why he was so greatly blessed. He lived a life "desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God."¹ "Desiring to receive instructions" is more than a willingness to listen. When our desire to receive instruction is a greater force than our comfort in remaining as we are, we become teachable.

President Brigham Young taught that our "first and foremost duty [is] to seek the Lord until we open the path of communication from God to our own soul."² Shortly after his death, the Prophet Joseph Smith appeared in a dream to Brigham Young and instructed him:

"Tell the people to be humble and faithful, and be sure to keep the spirit of

the Lord and it will lead them right. Be careful and not turn away the small still voice; it will teach them what to do and where to go; it will yield the fruits of the Kingdom."³

Be willing to receive instruction

How do we ignite this power of divine instruction in our lives? First, we need to start with a willingness to be instructed. While many naturally hunger and thirst after righteousness, others may be compelled to be humble.⁴ Some of us, rather than follow instructions or change ourselves, would simply like to change the rules.

Naaman certainly wanted to be rid of his leprous flesh but went away in a rage when told by the prophet's messenger to simply wash seven times in the river Jordan. It was inconvenient, a little thing,