

As President Spencer W. Kimball said, “As we give, we find that ‘sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven!’ [“Praise to the Man,” *Hymns*, no. 27.] And in the end, we learn it was no sacrifice at all” (“Becoming the Pure in Heart,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1985, 5). I pray that we will all become Saints willing to sacrifice and become eligible for the Lord’s special blessings. The Lord will watch over us so that it will not be too difficult to endure any sacrifice. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Monson

The choir and congregation will now sing “Come, Ye Children of the Lord.” At the conclusion of the singing, Elders Paul E. Koelliker, Lowell M. Snow, and Ulises Soares of the Seventy will address us. These brethren will be followed by Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

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

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## Elder Paul E. Koelliker

### Be faithful to covenants

Today I desire to express my deep feelings of reverence and love for our Father in Heaven; for His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; and for the Holy Spirit. I further bear my witness of the sacred call of President Gordon B. Hinckley as the Lord’s prophet, seer, and revelator. I sustain him with all my heart and energy.

I am grateful for the covenant of marriage in the temple to a gracious eternal companion, whom I love and cherish. She continually sets an example of caring service to those who are in need. Our marriage has been blessed with faithful and energetic children and grandchildren who have taught us much and continue to do so.

I feel particularly blessed that my brother, sisters, and I were born of righteous parents who have remained faithful to their temple covenants and have willingly sacrificed all that we might be securely invested in our Heavenly Father’s plan. To my angel mother, I can only say thank you for keeping the chain of love and gospel ordinances strong in our lives.

I have mentioned these sacred relationships because of the happiness that I

feel knowing there is a binding covenant with each of them sealed in the holy temple. I am profoundly grateful to know that regardless of any challenges that yet await us, there is hope and confidence in knowing that by keeping the covenants of the gospel, all of the momentary trials of life can be transcended. The scriptures teach us that all will eventually be well as we are faithful to our covenants. King Benjamin taught:

“Because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ. . . .

“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.

“And it shall come to pass that whosoever doeth this shall be found at the right hand of God” (Mosiah 5:7–9).

### Covenants are critical to salvation

Giving careful attention to covenant making is critical to our eternal salvation. Covenants are agreements we make with our Heavenly Father in which we commit our hearts, minds, and behavior to keeping

the commandments defined by the Lord. As we are faithful in keeping our agreement, He covenants, or promises, to bless us, ultimately, with all that He has.

In the Old Testament we are taught the Lord's covenant pattern in Noah's experience with a wicked world and the Lord's plan for cleansing the earth. Because of Noah's faithful, steadfast commitment, the Lord said to him:

"But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. . . .

"And Noah did . . . all that the Lord commanded him" (Genesis 6:18; 7:5).

After the floods were abated, they went forth out of the ark.

"And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord. . . .

"And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons [who were] with him, saying,

"And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you" (Genesis 8:20; 9:8-9).

We too have entered into sacred covenants with the Lord that we might be preserved from the adversary. Just as in Noah's time, we live in a day of prophetic promise and fulfillment. In the past eight years, 71 new temples have been dedicated—a feat, under the direction of the Lord's prophet, which may in some ways be like the building of the ark in Noah's day.

Our living prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley, has invited us to come through the door of the temple, where we can enter into covenants with the Lord.

### **Covenants require sacrifice**

As in Noah's day, our efforts to live these covenants may often be accompanied by a measure of sacrifice. This sacrifice, regardless of how great or small, often determines how committed in mind and heart we are to be submissive to the will of our Heavenly Father. The pattern of sacrifice

often includes a season of struggle where we must evaluate and weigh the consequences of our decisions. Choices may not always be clear or easy, so we struggle on. When we finally determine to rid ourselves of struggle and to sacrifice our will for the Lord's, we are lifted to a new level of understanding. This process is often more recognizable in our lives when we experience a significant tragedy or challenge.

Just a few weeks ago a young man, while at a Scout camp in the mountains east of Salt Lake City, was struck by lightning, which took his life. His parents, grief stricken and devastated at the sudden loss of their son, struggled quietly and asked why this happened. Because their hearts were submissive and their faith strong, there came a great outpouring of love from the Lord. In the midst of their grief came a quiet, tender resolve to accept without anger the outcome of this experience. With their acceptance came a larger vision of the purpose of life and a remembrance of the covenants that were in place. Though still filled with anguish from their sudden loss, they found themselves standing on a higher plane, committed to hold even faster to their covenants and to live such that they might be assured of a joyful reunion with their son.

### **Provide temple covenants for the dead**

In this dispensation, covenant making has taken on a new perspective different from the days of Noah. We are not only responsible to make covenants for ourselves, but additionally we have been given the responsibility to search out our kindred dead and open the door for all who desire to make covenants and worthily receive the gospel ordinances.

The work among those who lived previously is aggressively going forward with the forces of heaven commissioned by the Lord. In President Joseph F. Smith's vision of the dead, he records:

“But behold, from among the righteous, he organized his forces and appointed messengers, clothed with power and authority, and commissioned them to go forth. . . .

“I beheld that the faithful elders of this dispensation, when they depart from mortal life, continue their labors in the preaching of the gospel of repentance and redemption” (D&C 138:30, 57).

The scriptures further teach us that the messengers included “the prophets who had testified of [the Redeemer] in the flesh” (D&C 138:36). Some of those messengers might have included Peter, Paul, Alma, John, Joseph, and Nephi.

Having read this vision of President Smith’s and knowing of the missionaries assigned to do this work, one would think it would be highly motivational for each of us to keep our covenant to find the names of our deceased family members and fill all the available hours in every temple.

I can, with some confidence, report there is still available time in many temples to accommodate the counsel of the First Presidency to put aside some of our leisure time and devote more time to performing temple ordinances. I pray that we will be responsive to this invitation to come to the door of the temple.

I feel humbled at the opportunity to serve in this trusted calling and pray that I may act upon my covenants with the Lord and be submissive to the direction of the Spirit. I declare my solemn witness of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Restoration of His gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith. I express my love for the covenants and ordinances of the temple and commit to redouble my effort to participate in these holy houses of God. I know, as we make and keep sacred covenants, the Lord will bring us to His sacred presence. I testify of this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder Lowell M. Snow

Brothers and sisters, as I sat here I felt a great desire to express my love to you and to assure all who are under the sound of my voice of the love of their Heavenly Father. On behalf of the Brethren, I express gratitude for your willingness to come this day to be nourished by the good word of God.

### **The Savior marks the path**

I enjoy hiking in the mountains, and as I move along in the backcountry I often use a compass, maps, and signs to guide me toward my destination. These tools prove to be very helpful, even invaluable, when I am faced with unknown roads and trails that run in every direction.

Life is full of many intersecting roads and trails. There are so many paths to fol-

low, so many voices calling out “lo, here” or “lo, there.”<sup>1</sup> There is such a variety and volume of media flooding our personal space, most of it intent on herding us down a path that is broad and traveled by many.

When pondering which of these voices to listen to or which road among the many is right, have you ever asked yourself, as Joseph Smith did: “What is to be done? Who of all these [voices and roads is] right; or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?”<sup>2</sup>

My witness to you is that Jesus Christ continues to mark the path, lead the way, and define every point on our journey. His path is strait and narrow and leads toward “light and life and endless day.”<sup>3</sup> May I share an example from the scriptures with you.