

3. Dallin H. Oaks, in Conference Report, Oct. 2005, 26; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 26.
4. See *Family Guidebook* (2001), 19.
5. Ezra Taft Benson, “What I Hope You Will Teach Your Children about the Temple,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1985, 10.
6. See Doctrine and Covenants 95:8.
7. See Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–2.
8. See Doctrine and Covenants 132:19–20.
9. *Ensign*, Aug. 1985, 10.
10. See Doctrine and Covenants 46:26.
11. See Doctrine and Covenants 46:12.
12. Moroni 10:8–11.
13. See Doctrine and Covenants 46:10–26.
14. *Deseret News*, July 30, 1862, 33.
15. Boyd K. Packer, “What Every Elder Should Know—and Every Sister as Well: A Primer on Principles of Priesthood Government,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1993, 10.
16. See Moroni 10:7–17.
17. Doctrine and Covenants 38:16.
18. Alma 9:27.

The choir sang “For the Beauty of the Earth.”

Elder Henry B. Eyring

A rock of safety in perilous times

The prophets of God have foreseen the times in which we live. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.”¹ Anyone with eyes to see the signs of the times and ears to hear the words of prophets knows that the peril is great. The peril comes from the forces of wickedness. Those forces are increasing. And so it will become harder, not easier, to keep the covenants we must make to live the gospel of Jesus Christ.

For those of us who are concerned about such a future for ourselves and for those we love—in our families, in our quorums, and in our classes—there is hope in the promise the Lord has given us of a place of safety in the storms ahead. Here is a word picture of that place. You have read about it in scripture. It has been repeatedly described by living prophets. A loving father told his sons of it this way as he tried to strengthen them against the storms of temptation:

“And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty

winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation . . . whereon if men build they cannot fall.”²

King Benjamin’s last sermon

It has never been more important than it is now to understand how to build on that sure foundation. For me, there is no better place to look than in the last sermon of King Benjamin recorded in the Book of Mormon. Most of us have read it again recently and have pondered it more than once. King Benjamin could see us and our descendants. He knew by prophetic power what we face. He knew from his own experience the terrors of war. He had defended his people in combat, relying on the power of God. He saw clearly the terrible powers of Lucifer to tempt and to overcome us.

He was a great and a holy man. And he knew how to invite people to build on that rock of safety as well as any of the Lord’s prophets.

A warning against ignoring peril

He started in his discourse where we must all begin to help people escape spiritual disaster. People have to believe that the danger is real to want to find safety. They have to fear the consequence of ignoring the peril. He made clear the hazards we face because we are free to choose between right and wrong and because we cannot avoid the consequence of those choices. He spoke directly and sharply because he knew what sorrow would come to those who might not hear and heed his warnings.

Here is how he described the consequences which follow our choice either to follow the prompting of the Spirit of Christ or to follow the evil messages which come from Satan, whose purpose is to tempt us and trap us into sin:

“For behold, there is a wo pronounced upon him who listeth to obey that [evil] spirit; for if he listeth to obey him, and remaineth and dieth in his sins, the same drinketh damnation to his own soul; for he receiveth for his wages an everlasting punishment, having transgressed the law of God contrary to his own knowledge. . . .

“Therefore if that man repenteth not, and remaineth and dieth an enemy to God, the demands of divine justice do awaken his immortal soul to a lively sense of his own guilt, which doth cause him to shrink from the presence of the Lord, and doth fill his breast with guilt, and pain, and anguish, which is like an unquenchable fire, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever.”

King Benjamin went on: “O, all ye old men, and also ye young men, and you little children who can understand my words, for I have spoken plainly unto you that ye might understand, I pray that ye should awake to a remembrance of the awful situation of those that have fallen into transgression.”³

For me, the power of that warning is the picture it forms in my mind of that

time when we will each stand before the Savior after this life to be judged. When King Benjamin speaks to me of shrinking from the presence of the Lord, it puts fear into my heart. I can see myself standing in that day of judgment before the glorified and resurrected Savior. I want with all my heart not to shrink, but rather to look up at Him and see Him smile and say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter in.”⁴

Becoming as a child

King Benjamin makes it clear how we can earn the hope to hear those words if we find the way in this life to have our natures changed through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. That is the only way we can build on the sure foundation and so stand firm in righteousness during the storms of temptation.

King Benjamin describes that change with a beautiful comparison, used by prophets for millennia and by the Lord Himself. It is this: that we can, and we must, become as a child—a little child.

For some that will not be easy to understand or to accept. Most of us want to be strong. We may well see being like a child as being weak. Most parents have wanted their children at times to be less childish. Even the Apostle Paul used these words as he was about to urge us to incorporate charity, the pure love of Christ, into our lives: “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”⁵

But King Benjamin, who understood as well as any mortal what it meant to be a man of strength and courage, makes it clear that to be like a child is not to be childish. It is to be like the Savior, who prayed to His Father for strength to be able to do His will and then did it. Our natures must be changed to become as a child to gain the strength we must have to be safe in the times of moral peril.

Here is King Benjamin's stirring description of what that change to become like a child is and how it comes to us:

"For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father."⁶

We are safe on the rock which is the Savior when we have yielded in faith in Him, have responded to the Holy Spirit's direction to keep the commandments long enough and faithfully enough that the power of the Atonement has changed our hearts. When we have, by that experience, become as a child in our capacity to love and obey, we are on the sure foundation.

From King Benjamin we learn what we can do to take us to that safe place. But remember: the things we do are the means, not the end we seek. What we do allows the Atonement of Jesus Christ to change us into what we must be. Our faith in Jesus Christ brings us to repentance and to keeping His commandments. We obey and we resist temptation by following the promptings of the Holy Ghost. In time our natures will change. We will become as a little child, obedient to God and more loving. That change, if we do all we must to keep it, will qualify us to enjoy the gifts which come through the Holy Ghost. Then we will be safe on the only sure rock.

Answers to humble, childlike prayers

Like you, I have felt what King Benjamin meant when he said that we could become like a little child before God. I have prayed, as you have, to know what to do when choices that I faced would have eternal consequences. Over many years I

have seen a recurring pattern in the times when the answers to such a prayer have come most clearly.

Once, for instance, I prayed through the night to know what I was to choose to do in the morning. I knew that no other choice could have had a greater effect on the lives of others and on my own. I knew what choice looked most comfortable to me. I knew what outcome I wanted. But I could not see the future. I could not see which choice would lead to which outcome. So the risk of being wrong seemed too great to me.

I prayed, but for hours there seemed to be no answer. Just before dawn, a feeling came over me. More than at any time since I had been a child, I felt like one. My heart and my mind seemed to grow very quiet. There was a peace in that inner stillness.

Somewhat to my surprise, I found myself praying, "Heavenly Father, it doesn't matter what I want. I don't care anymore what I want. I only want that Thy will be done. That is all that I want. Please tell me what to do."

In that moment I felt as quiet inside as I had ever felt. And the message came, and I was sure who it was from. It was clear what I was to do. I received no promise of the outcome. There was only the assurance that I was a child who had been told what path led to whatever He wanted for me.

I learned from that experience and countless repetitions that the description of the Holy Ghost as a still, small voice is real. It is poetic, but it is not poetry. Only when my heart has been still and quiet, in submission like a little child, has the Spirit been clearly audible to my heart and mind.

Knowing and loving the Lord

King Benjamin taught us how those moments may come more often, which they must in the perils we face. He told us

that there are things we can and must do to invite the blessing of that change to a childlike heart.

All of them have to do with doing what it takes to build greater faith in Jesus Christ and so qualify for the help of the Holy Ghost. King Benjamin gave the reason for that:

“And moreover, I say unto you, that there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent.”⁷

What we need is faith in Him and to love Him. We must know that He lives and who He is. When we do, we will love Him. King Benjamin suggested how to know Him in these words, which you have heard often:

“For how knoweth a man the master whom he has not served, and who is a stranger unto him, and is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart?”⁸

We come to love those we serve. If we choose to begin to serve the Master out of even a glimmer of faith, we will begin to know Him. We will come to know His purposes for the people we serve for Him. Even when they do not accept our offer to serve them, we will feel His appreciation if we persist.

As we persist, we will feel the need for the influence of the Holy Ghost because our task will seem beyond us. Our humble prayer to our Heavenly Father will be answered. The Holy Ghost has as a major purpose witnessing that Jesus is the Christ. As we plead for help in His service, the Holy Ghost will come and confirm our faith in Him. Our faith in the Savior will increase. And, as we continue to serve Him, we will come to love Him. To be called to serve is a call to come to love the Master we serve. It is a call to have our natures changed.

The need to guard against sin

To keep the blessing of that change in our hearts will require determination, effort, and faith. King Benjamin taught at least some of what that will require. He said that to retain a remission of our sins from day to day we must feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, and help people spiritually and temporally.⁹ He warned that we must guard against even the feelings of contention entering into our hearts.¹⁰ He made it clear that the mighty change which comes through the Atonement working in us can diminish if we are not on guard against sin. The Lord said in warning, “Therefore let the church take heed and pray always, lest they fall into temptation; yea, and even let those who are sanctified take heed also.”¹¹

Through sin the gift can be lost. King Benjamin taught that we are responsible for the determined effort necessary to resist temptation. He warned his people about specific temptations. But after giving those warnings, he put the obligation on them. As often as we pray not to be overcome by temptation and to be delivered from evil, we are responsible for ourselves. Here are the words he spoke, which are not his, but from God:

“And finally, I cannot tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin; for there are divers ways and means, even so many that I cannot number them.

“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.”¹²

With the help of the Holy Ghost, we can watch over ourselves. We can pray to

recognize and reject the first thoughts of sin. We can pray to recognize a warning not to speak words which would hurt or tempt someone else. And we can, when we must, pray for the humility and the faith to repent.

The Savior helps us overcome weaknesses

There will surely be some who hear my voice who will have this thought come into their minds: “But the temptations are too great for me. I have resisted as long as I can. For me, the commandments are too hard. The standard is too high.”

That is not so. The Savior is our Advocate with the Father. He knows our weaknesses. He knows how to succor those who are tempted.¹³

I bear you my witness that the Savior lives and that He is the sure foundation. I know that by acting on our faith in Him we can be cleansed and changed to become pure and strong, as a little child. I bear you my testimony that the Holy Ghost can lead us to truth and away from sin.

Joseph Smith saw Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son. The Book of Mormon is the word of God and a witness of Jesus Christ as our Savior. This is the true Church. I know that we can choose the promised joy of eternal life, however perilous the times.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. 2 Timothy 3:1.
2. Helaman 5:12.
3. Mosiah 2:33, 38, 40.
4. See Matthew 25:21.
5. 1 Corinthians 13:11.
6. Mosiah 3:19.
7. Mosiah 3:17.
8. Mosiah 5:13.
9. See Mosiah 4:26.
10. See Mosiah 2:32.
11. Doctrine and Covenants 20:33–34.
12. Mosiah 4:29–30.
13. See Doctrine and Covenants 62:1.

The choir sang “Consider the Lilies.”

President Faust

We are grateful to the Tabernacle Choir for the beautiful music they have provided this morning. President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our concluding speaker at this session of the conference.

Following President Monson’s remarks, the choir will sing “High on the Mountain Top.” The benediction will then be offered by Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Presidency of the Seventy, and the conference will be adjourned until 2:00 this afternoon.

President Thomas S. Monson

Object lesson of the *maka-feke*

Many years ago, on an assignment to the beautiful islands of Tonga, I was privileged to visit our Church school, the Liahona High School, where our youth are taught by teachers with a common bond of faith—providing training for the mind and preparation for life. On that occasion,

entering one classroom, I noticed the rapt attention the children gave their native instructor. His textbook and theirs lay closed upon the desks. In his hand he held a strange-appearing fishing lure fashioned from a round stone and large seashells. This, I learned, was a *maka-feke*, an octopus lure. In Tonga, octopus meat is a delicacy.