

happiness and the central role of Jesus Christ in it.

Through the power to choose and the inherent capacity to believe the words of those who testify of Jesus Christ, we will be able to cross the great waters of life and reach our eternal destiny.

We have been taught this weekend by prophets, seers, and revelators. I am grateful for the guidance our Father in Heaven has extended to us and for His Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. I testify that They live and love us, and as we abide by the teachings we have received, we will make good choices, we will not be lost, and we will reach our eternal home. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Moses 1:39.
2. "Spiritual Gifts," at gospeltopics.lds.org.

3. See "God has a plan for your life," at www.mormon.org/mormonorg/eng/basic-beliefs/heavenly-father-s-plan-of-happiness/god-has-a-plan-for-your-life.
4. See "God has a plan for your life," at www.mormon.org.
5. Moroni 7:13.
6. Luis de Camões, *The Lusiad*, book I, stanza 1, trans. William Julius Mickle (1776).
7. "Conscience," in Guide to the Scriptures, at scriptures.lds.org.
8. See Acts 2:38.
9. See "Conscience," in Guide to the Scriptures, at scriptures.lds.org.
10. Thomas S. Monson, "Decisions Determine Destiny," *New Era*, Nov. 1979, 4.
11. See "God has a plan for your life," at www.mormon.org.
12. See Doctrine and Covenants 46:14.
13. Amos 3:7.
14. "Follow the Prophet," *Children's Songbook*, 110–11.

Elder F. Michael Watson

Guided by the wisdom of others

During my growing-up years in the small farming community of Spring City, Utah, an opportunity afforded itself each summer to be with my father alone for two weeks herding sheep in the mountain range of the Manti-La Sal. On one occasion the fog rested heavily in the area to the extent that you could not see your outstretched hand in front of you, and the evening was drawing nigh.

My father suggested that I return to camp, and he would soon follow. I remember questioning how I would be able to find the camp amidst the fog. My father simply said to me, "Give the horse the reins, and he will get you to camp." Following this counsel, I loosened my grip on the reins, and with encouragement to the horse, the journey began. At times I would be struck in the face by a low-hanging limb

I couldn't see or have my leg brush close to a tree. Eventually, the horse came to a complete stop, and the silhouette of the camp was in view.

Sometimes we may not always be able to immediately find the desired way before us, but the wisdom of those who have gone before, coupled with the wisdom of those who are with us still, will be our guide if we let them have the reins.

The voice of His servants

"Understandest thou what thou readest?" was the question asked by Philip of one who was diligently searching the scriptures.

The response came in the form of a question: "How can I, except some man should guide me?"¹

The answer to these searching questions comes from the prophets throughout

ages past who taught the importance of searching the scriptures, along with a promise: “Whoso treasureth up my word, shall not be deceived.”²

In each dispensation, the Lord has given commandments to the prophets “that they should proclaim these things unto the world; and all this that it might be fulfilled.”³ Doctrine and Covenants section 1 constitutes the Lord’s preface to the doctrines, covenants, and commandments given in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times. Of specific mention are verses 37–38:

“Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled.

“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.”

It is the voice of seven of the Lord’s servants of which I speak today. In March 1970, a long hoped-for desire to be of service to the Lord’s chosen servants commenced. From the very outset, opportunities were provided to be directly involved with the Brethren of the Quorum of the Twelve and subsequently with members of the First Presidency for almost four decades. It was during these formative years that an understanding of “my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled” began to swell in my heart.

Important admonition has been given in general conferences of yesteryear and will continue to be expounded by those who have the wisdom of ages past, which allows our hearts to burn within us. It will be in following such counsel that we must be strong, never give up, and endure to the end.

Let me share the direction and counsel given by these prophets of God.

Joseph Fielding Smith

For example, it was President Joseph Fielding Smith who often quoted the words set forth in the 24th chapter of Psalms, wherein a question is asked, an answer given, and a blessing promised to the faithful.

The question: “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?”

The answer: “He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.”

The promise: “He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.”⁴

Harold B. Lee

President Harold B. Lee in general conference counseled us to give heed to the words and commandments the Lord shall give through His prophet: “You may not like what comes from the authority of the Church. It may contradict your political views . . . [or] your social views. It may interfere with some of your social life. But if [we] listen to these things, as if from the mouth of the Lord himself, with patience and faith, the promise is that ‘ . . . the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name’s glory.’”⁵

Prior to his passing in December 1973, President Lee, speaking to an assembled group of Church employees and their families, posed the question after giving a history of the Church’s welfare program: “Do you believe these prophets knew what they were talking about?” Later in the same address, concerning the Brethren’s counsel to guard against the permissiveness invading the home through inappropriate literature and television, he asked, “Are you too close to the Brethren [so that you] think of them not as prophets but as men just guessing [such counsel] might be a good thing?”⁶

Spencer W. Kimball

It was President Spencer W. Kimball who in his writings provided us the comforting words that there is a miracle of forgiveness and God will forgive. In another setting, concerning the unexpected challenges which we may face, President Kimball cautioned us, if individually given the power to alter life-changing moments, would we have modified the events at Carthage Jail which resulted in the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith? And more importantly, with such uncontrolled power, what might we have done in the decisive moment of Gethsemane and the words spoken, “Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done”?⁷

Ezra Taft Benson

Each morning in the meeting of the First Presidency, the Brethren take turns praying. I always liked to listen to President Ezra Taft Benson pray. His prayers were almost entirely in thankfulness instead of asking for blessings. Of Another Testament of Jesus Christ, President Benson reiterated the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith “that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.”⁸ He admonished us to follow the Savior, who said, “Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life.”⁹

Howard W. Hunter

During his nine-month period of service as President of the Church, we all fell in love with the innate goodness of President Howard W. Hunter, who issued invitations for members of the Church to:

“Live with ever more attention to the life and example of the Lord Jesus Christ,

especially the love and hope and compassion He displayed. . . .

“ . . . Establish the temple of the Lord as the great symbol of their membership and the supernal setting for their most sacred covenants. It would be the deepest desire of my heart to have every member of the Church be temple worthy.”¹⁰

Gordon B. Hinckley

President Gordon B. Hinckley stated: “I have not spoken face to face with all of the prophets of this dispensation. I was not acquainted with the Prophet Joseph Smith, nor did I ever hear him speak. [However,] my grandfather, who as a young man lived in Nauvoo, did hear him and testified of his divine calling as the great prophet of this dispensation.”¹¹

President Hinckley bore witness of the First Vision, when young Joseph Smith went to pray in a grove and received his answer through divine revelation from both the Father and the Son.

President Hinckley’s passion with the building of temples and the sacred work performed therein will be a polar star for each of us to follow.

Thomas S. Monson

Our beloved prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, has reemphasized again the hoped-for desire of the First Presidency who in 1839 gave the direction we should constantly seek even today: “Upon your diligence, your perseverance and faithfulness, the soundness of the doctrines which you preach, the moral precepts that you advance and practice . . . hang the destinies of the human family.”¹²

It is President Monson whom we sustain as the prophet, seer, and revelator and who serves as the resounding voice to the widow, the fatherless, and to all who stand in need. He has truly exemplified in his life the pattern of the Master and the

sincere desire to always be found in His service. It is President Monson who is the Lord's mouthpiece and whose counsel and direction we are admonished to follow. In a very real sense, the Master speaks to us through His prophet. I know, and have recorded in meetings of the Brethren assembled, this to be true.

“His servants the prophets”

As one who has been taught at the feet of living prophets and of these latter-day witnesses whom I have known and love, I testify in all truthfulness, as members of this Church heed the words and commandments the Lord gave to the prophets of the testaments and followed by the Lord's prophet even today, we will more fully understand that “surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.”¹³

Of these truths and that God is in the heavens, that Jesus is the Christ, and of this The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which has prophets, seers, and revelators to guide us, I bear solemn witness in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Acts 8:30–31.
2. Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:37.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 1:18.
4. Psalm 24:3–5.
5. Harold B. Lee, in Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 152; or *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1970, 126.
6. Harold B. Lee, Christmas devotional for employees of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Dec. 13, 1973; in *The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, ed. Clyde J. Williams (1996), 298.
7. Luke 22:42; see Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle* (1972), 100.
8. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 4:461.
9. 3 Nephi 15:9.
10. Quoted in Jay M. Todd, “President Howard W. Hunter: Fourteenth President of the Church,” *Ensign*, July 1994, 4–5.
11. Gordon B. Hinckley, in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, 73; or *Ensign*, May 1992, 50.
12. *History of the Church*, 3:395; for further information on this epistle, see Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation* (1950), 48–49.
13. Amos 3:7.

Elder L. Tom Perry

A lost sheep

Many years ago I was driving along University Avenue near the mouth of Provo Canyon when I saw ahead of me the traffic slowing down. Up ahead there were police cars with their lights flashing, a fire truck, and several search and rescue vehicles all huddled together, blocking the road into Provo Canyon. At first I was annoyed, since it seemed like we might be there for a long time. I was also curious—what was causing all the commotion?

As I looked up the rock face along the east side of the entrance to Provo Canyon,

I saw some men climbing. I assumed they were the search and rescue people. What were they climbing to? Eventually I saw it. Somehow a ewe, a lost sheep, had made her way about 25 feet up the rock face, and she was stranded there. She was not a mountain goat or mountain sheep, just a white ewe separated from a shepherd's flock.

As I had nothing else to do, I searched the rock face for a way up to where the ewe stood. I could not for the life of me figure out how she ever got there. Nevertheless, she was there, and all the commotion in front of me was focused on her rescue. To