

Look Up

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Of the Seventy



Today is the time to look to the Source of truth and ensure that our testimonies are strong.

When I was eight, two cousins and I were sent to a nearby town to get groceries for the next 15 days. Looking back, I am amazed at how much confidence my grandmother and my aunt and uncle had in us. The morning skies were bright and shiny as we departed in our small caravan of three horses.

In the middle of the prairie, we had a brilliant idea that we should dismount and play marbles. So we did—for a long time. We were so absorbed in our game that we did not see the “signs of the times” above our heads as dark clouds covered the sky. By the time we realized what was happening, we didn’t even have time to mount our horses. The heavy rain was hitting us so hard, and hail was hitting our faces, so we could not think of anything to do but unsaddle the horses and take cover under the saddle blankets.

Horseless, wet, and cold, we continued our journey, now trying to move as fast as we could. As we approached our destination, we saw that the wide street that entered the town had flooded and was like a river heading toward us. Now our only choice was to drop our covers and climb the barbed-wire fence that surrounded the town. It was late at night when, tired and sore and soaked, we sought shelter in the first home we saw as we entered the town. The good young family there dried us off, fed us delicious bean burritos, and then put us to bed in a room of our own. Soon we discovered that the room had a flat dirt floor, so we had another brilliant idea. We drew a circle on the floor and continued our marbles game until we collapsed to the floor in sleep.

As children we were just thinking about ourselves. We never thought about the loved ones who were desperately searching for us back home—if we had, we would have never delayed our journey in such a useless pursuit. And if we had been wiser, we would have looked at the sky, spotted the clouds forming, and accelerated our pace to stay ahead of the storm. Now that I have a little more experience, I always remind myself, “Don’t forget to look up.”

My experience with my cousins taught me to pay attention to the signs of our times. We live in the stormy, perilous days that Paul described: “Men shall be lovers of their own selves, ... disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ... false accusers, incontinent, ... lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3:2–4).

Speaking of these times, Elder Dallin H. Oaks said: “We need to make both temporal and spiritual preparation. ... And the preparation most likely to be neglected is the one less visible and more difficult—the spiritual” (“Preparation for the Second Coming,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2004, 9). In other words, don’t neglect to look up.

Given the urgent need for spiritual preparation in a time of such peril, I want to extend a word of warning about one very strong sign of the times. My professional life put me on the forefront of technology, so I recognize the value it has, especially in communication. So much information of man is now at our fingertips. But the Internet is also full of much that is filthy and misleading. Technology has augmented our freedom of speech, but it also gives an unqualified blogger false credibility based on the number of viewers. This is why now, more than ever, we must remember this eternal principle: “By their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:20).

In particular, I caution you not to view filthy images or give your attention to the false accusers of Christ and the Prophet Joseph Smith. Both actions create the same effect: the loss of the Holy Ghost and His protecting, sustaining power. Vice and unhappiness always follow.

My dear brothers and sisters, if you ever come across anything that causes you to question your testimony of the gospel, I plead with you to look up. Look to the Source of all wisdom and truth. Nourish your faith and testimony with the word of God. There are those in the world who seek to undermine your faith by mixing lies with half-truths. This is why it is absolutely critical that you remain constantly worthy of the Spirit. The companionship of the Holy Ghost is not just a pleasant convenience—it is essential to your spiritual survival. If you will not treasure up the words of Christ and listen closely to the promptings of the Spirit, you will be deceived (see Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:37). We must do these things.

Jesus Christ, who was perfect, and Joseph Smith, who admitted that he himself was not, were both killed by false accusers who would not accept their testimony. How can we know that their testimony is true—that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Joseph Smith is a true prophet?

“By their fruits ye shall know them.” Can good fruit grow from a bad tree? I know for myself that my Redeemer has forgiven my sins and freed me of my personal yoke, bringing me to a state of happiness that I did not know existed. And I know for myself that Joseph Smith was a prophet because I have applied the simple promise in the Book of Mormon: “Ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ” (Moroni 10:4). In simple words, look up.

There are some who might suggest that you must have physical evidence in order to believe in the Resurrection of Christ or the veracity of His restored gospel. To them I quote the words of Alma to Korihor, who was trying to persuade others not to believe: “Thou hast had signs enough; will ye tempt your God? Will ye say, Show unto me a sign, when ye have the testimony of all these thy brethren, and also all the holy prophets? The scriptures are laid before thee” (Alma 30:44).

You and I are living evidence of the redeeming power of the Savior. We are living evidence of the ministry of the Prophet Joseph and the faithfulness of those early Saints who remained strong in their testimony. The Church of Jesus Christ has now expanded all over the world and is growing like never before—embraced, as in the times of Christ, by humble people who do not need to see and touch to believe.

No one knows when the Lord will come again. But the perilous times are now upon us. Today is the time to look to the Source of truth and ensure that our testimonies are strong.

Returning to my account, my cousins and I woke in the morning to a bright sun and beautiful sky. A man knocked on the door looking for the three lost boys. He put us on horses, and we started back home through the same prairie. I will never forget what we saw on our way home—a multitude of people who had been searching

for us throughout the night, their tractors and trucks stuck in the mud. They had found a saddle here and a horse there, and when they saw us returning home, I could feel their relief and their love. At the entrance to town, many people were waiting for us, and in front of them all were my loving grandmother and my uncle and aunt. They embraced us and cried, overjoyed that they had found their lost children. What a great reminder this is to me that our loving Heavenly Father is mindful of us. He is anxiously awaiting our return home.

Yes, there are signs of storms forming all around us. Let us look up and prepare ourselves. There is safety in a strong testimony. Let us cherish and strengthen our testimonies every day.

I know we can live together as families for eternity, that our loving Heavenly Father is waiting for us, His children, with His arms extended. I know that Jesus Christ, our Rescuer, lives. As with Peter, no flesh and blood has revealed it to me, but my Father who is in heaven (see Matthew 16:15–19). In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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