

Prepared in a Manner That Never Had Been Known

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May we prepare to worthily receive saving ordinances drop by drop and keep the associated covenants wholeheartedly.

When our youngest daughter returned home after her first day of school, I asked, “How did it go?”

She answered, “It was good.”

The next morning, however, when I woke her up for school, she folded her arms and firmly stated, “I already went to school!” Apparently I had not *prepared* her or explained that going to school was not a onetime event but that she was expected to go to school five days a week for many, many years.

As we consider the principle of being prepared, imagine with me the following scene. You are sitting in the celestial room of the temple and notice a number of brides and grooms being reverently ushered in and out as they wait to be married for time and all eternity. A bride enters the celestial room, hand in hand with her sweetheart. She is wearing a simple but beautiful temple dress and a calm, peaceful, warm smile on her face. She is well groomed but not distracting. She takes her seat, glances about, and then is suddenly overcome with emotion. It seems that her tears come because of the awe and reverence she has for both the place she is in and the sacred ordinance awaiting her and the love of her life. Her demeanor seems to say, “How grateful I am to be in the Lord’s house today, ready to begin an eternal journey with a beloved eternal companion.” She seems *prepared* for much more than just an event.

Our cute teenage granddaughter recently left a note for me on my pillow that in part said: “One thing that strikes me as I enter the temple is the peaceful, loving spirit that dwells there. ... People can go to the temple to receive inspiration.”¹ She is right. We can receive inspiration and revelation in the temple—and also power to cope with the adversities of life. What she is learning about the temple as she consistently participates in taking her own family names to do temple baptisms and confirmations will prepare her to receive additional temple ordinances, covenants, and blessings, both for herself and those on the other side of the veil.

Elder Russell M. Nelson taught, “As temples are prepared for the people, the people need to prepare themselves for the temple.”²

As I am again reading about Captain Moroni in the Book of Mormon, I am reminded that one of Moroni’s greatest accomplishments was his careful preparation of the Nephites to withstand the frightening Lamanite army. He prepared his people so well that we read, “Behold, to [the Lamanites’] uttermost astonishment, [the Nephites] *were prepared for them, in a manner which never had been known.*”³

That phrase, “prepared ... in a manner which never had been known,” really caught my attention.

How can we better prepare for sacred temple blessings? The Lord taught, “And again, I will give unto you a pattern in all things.”⁴ Let’s consider a scriptural pattern to help us prepare well. Moroni’s preparation for the enemy took consistent and faithful diligence, and this pattern will require the same.

I never seem to tire of the beautiful parable the Savior told of the five wise and five foolish virgins. Though this parable refers to being prepared for the Second Coming of our Savior, we could also liken it to being prepared for temple blessings, which can be like a spiritual feast for those who are well prepared.

In Matthew 25 we read:

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

“And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. ...

“[They that were] wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

“While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

“And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

“Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

“And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

“But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

“And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

“Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

“But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, Ye know me not.”⁵

I don’t think there is anyone, especially among those with tender hearts, who doesn’t feel sad for the foolish young women. And some of us just want to say to the others, “Can’t you just share so everyone can be happy?” But think about it. This is a story the Savior told, and He is the one who calls five of them “wise” and five of them “foolish.”

As we consider this parable as a pattern for temple preparation, consider the words of a latter-day prophet who taught that “the oil of spiritual preparedness cannot be shared.”⁶ President Spencer W. Kimball helped clarify why the five “wise” young women could not share the oil in their lamps with those who were “foolish” when he said: “Attendance at sacrament meetings adds oil to our lamps, drop by drop over the years. Fasting, family prayer, home teaching, control of bodily appetites, preaching the gospel, studying the scriptures—each act of dedication and obedience is a drop added to our store. Deeds of kindness, payment of offerings and tithes, chaste thoughts and actions ... —these, too, contribute importantly to the oil with which we can at midnight refuel our exhausted lamps.”⁷

Can you see the pattern of preparedness—drop by drop—that can help us as we think how we might be more diligent in our preparation to receive sacred ordinances for ourselves and others? What other small and simple things might we do to add precious spiritual drops of oil to our lamps of preparation?

We learn from Elder Richard G. Scott that “personal worthiness is an essential requirement to enjoy the blessings of the temple. ... Worthy character is best forged from a life of consistent, correct choices centered in the teachings of the Master.”⁸ I love the word *consistent*. To be consistent is to be steady, constant, and dependable. What a great description of the principle of worthiness!

We are reminded in the Bible Dictionary: “Only the home can compare with the temple in sacredness.”⁹ Do our homes or apartments fit that description? A darling young woman in our ward came to our home recently. Knowing her brother had just returned from his mission, I asked her what it was like to have him back home. She said it was great, but he would occasionally ask if the music could be turned down. She said, “And it wasn’t even *bad* music!” It may be worthwhile for us to check ourselves now and then to make sure our homes are places we are prepared to feel the Spirit. As we prepare our homes to be places where the Spirit is welcome, we will be prepared to feel more “at home” when we enter the house of Lord.

As we prepare ourselves to worthily enter the temple and are faithful to temple covenants, the Lord will bestow “a multiplicity of blessings”¹⁰ upon us. My good friend Bonnie Oscarson recently turned a scripture inside out when she said, “Where much is required, much more will be given.”¹¹ I couldn’t agree more! Because we come to the temple to receive *eternal* blessings, it should not surprise us that a higher standard is required to qualify for those blessings. Again Elder Nelson taught: “Because the temple is the house of the Lord, standards for admission are set by Him. One enters as His guest. To hold a temple recommend is a priceless privilege and a tangible sign of obedience to God and His prophets.”¹²

World-class athletes and university doctoral students spend hours and days and weeks and months and even years of preparation. Daily drops of preparation are required of them to come out on top. Likewise, those who wish to qualify for exaltation in the celestial kingdom are expected to live a higher standard of obedience that comes by practicing the virtue of obedience day by day and drop by drop.

As we consistently and diligently add oil, drop by drop, to our spiritual lamps, doing these small and simple things, we can have our lamps “trimmed and burning”¹³ with astonishing preparation. My cute husband, who is a stake president, recently remarked that he can almost always tell when someone is prepared and worthy to enter the temple, because “they light up the room” when they come seeking a temple recommend.

In the dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet Joseph Smith asked the Lord “that all people who shall enter upon the threshold of the Lord’s house may feel thy power, ... that they may grow up in thee, and receive a fulness of the Holy Ghost, ... and be prepared to obtain every needful thing.”¹⁴

It is my prayer that for us, going to the temple will be much more than a onetime event. May we prepare to worthily receive saving ordinances drop by drop and keep the associated covenants wholeheartedly. As we do so, I know we will qualify to receive the promised blessings of a fulness of the Holy Ghost and the power of the Lord in our homes and individual lives. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

1. Personal note from Aydia Kaylie Melo to Linda K. Burton, Aug. 31, 2014.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “Prepare for the Blessings of the Temple,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Oct. 2010, 41.
3. Alma 49:8; emphasis added; see also verses 6–7.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 52:14.
5. Matthew 25:1–2, 4–11; Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 25:12 (in Matthew 25:12, footnote *a*).
6. Marvin J. Ashton, “A Time of Urgency,” *Ensign*, May 1974, 36.
7. Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle* (1972), 256.
8. Richard G. Scott, “Receive the Temple Blessings,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 25; *Liahona*, July 1999, 29.
9. Bible Dictionary, “Temple.”
10. Doctrine and Covenants 104:2.
11. Bonnie L. Oscarson, “Greater Expectations” (Seminaries and Institutes of Religion satellite broadcast, Aug. 5, 2014); [lds.org/broadcasts](https://www.lds.org/broadcasts); see also Luke 12:48; Doctrine and Covenants 82:3.
12. Russell M. Nelson, “Personal Preparation for Temple Blessings,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 33; *Liahona*, July 2001, 38.
13. Doctrine and Covenants 33:17.

14. Doctrine and Covenants 109:13, 15.

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