

A Witness of God

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As you pray often and sincerely for opportunities to “stand as a witness of God,” those opportunities will come.

Much of the important work of God is unseen in the eyes of the world. The sixth century before Christ brought illustrious thinkers such as Confucius in China and Buddha in Eastern India, but the power of God’s priesthood was upon Daniel, the prophet living in captivity during the reign of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar.

Troubled by a dream in the night, King Nebuchadnezzar demanded that his magicians and sorcerers tell him both what he had dreamed and the interpretation of the dream. Of course, they could not tell the king what he had dreamed, and they protested. “There is not a man upon the earth that can [do this, nor any king that would ask] such things.”¹ King Nebuchadnezzar was furious with their failure and angrily declared that all his counselors would be slain.

Daniel, one of the king’s wise men, prayed for the “mercies of ... God ... concerning this secret.”²

A miracle occurred. The secret of what the king had dreamed was revealed to Daniel.

Daniel was taken before the king. “Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?”

Daniel responded:

“The wise men, the astrologers, the magicians [cannot tell you what you dreamed]. ...

“But there is a God in heaven that [can reveal these things, and He] maketh known to ... king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. ...

“The God of heaven,” Daniel said, “[shall] set up a kingdom, [a stone cut out without hands, that will become a great mountain and fill the whole earth,] never [to] be destroyed ... [but to] stand for ever.

“... The dream,” said Daniel, “is certain, and the interpretation ... sure.”³

With his dream explained and interpreted, the king spoke boldly, “Your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings.”⁴

From the miraculous intervention of God to Daniel came the prophesied future of the gospel of Jesus Christ being restored to the earth, a kingdom that would fill the whole earth, "never [to] be destroyed ... [but to] stand for ever."

The number of members of the Church in the latter days would be relatively few, as Nephi prophesied, but they would be upon all the face of the earth, and the power and ordinances of the priesthood would be available to all who desired them, filling the earth as Daniel foretold.⁵

In 1831 the Prophet Joseph Smith received this revelation: "The keys of the kingdom of God [and the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth] are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth."⁶

A Responsibility We Share

The gathering of Israel is a miracle. It is like an enormous puzzle whose pieces will be set in place prior to the glorious events of the Second Coming. Just as we might be perplexed with a mountain of puzzle pieces, the early Saints must have seen the commission to take the restored gospel to all the world as a nearly impossible task. But they began, one person, one puzzle piece at a time, finding the straight edges, working to rightly frame this divine work. Little by little, the stone cut without hands began to roll forth; from hundreds to thousands, to tens of thousands, and now millions of covenant Latter-day Saints across every nation are connecting the puzzle pieces of this marvelous work and a wonder.

Each of us is a piece of the puzzle, and each of us helps to set in place other essential pieces. You are important to this great cause. Our view ahead is now clear. We can see the miracle continuing and the Lord's hand guiding us as we complete the gaps that remain. Then, "the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done,"⁷ and He will return in majesty and glory.

President Thomas S. Monson has said: "Now is the time for members and missionaries to come together, to work together ... to bring souls unto Him. ... He will assist us in our labors if we will act in faith to fulfill His work."⁸

The divinely appointed responsibility that once rested primarily upon the shoulders of full-time missionaries now rests upon us all. We all want to share the restored gospel, and gratefully, thousands are baptized each week. But even with this wonderful blessing, our concern for our brothers and sisters and our desire to please God bring a compelling urgency to share and strengthen the kingdom of God across the world.

The Limits of Guilt

Even with a strong desire to share the gospel, you may be less than happy with the success of your past efforts. You may feel like a friend who said, "I have talked to our family and friends about the Church, but few have shown any interest, and with each rejection, I have become more hesitant. I know I should do more, but I am stuck, and all I feel is enormous guilt."

Let me see if I can help.

Guilt has an important role as it awakens us to changes we need to make, but there are limits to how far guilt will help us.

Guilt is like a battery in a gasoline-powered car. It can light up the car, start the engine, and power the headlights, but it will not provide the fuel for the long journey ahead. The battery, by itself, is not sufficient. And neither is guilt.

I suggest that you stop feeling guilty about any insufficiency you think you have in sharing the gospel. Rather, pray, like Alma taught, for opportunities "to stand as [a witness] of God at all times and in all things, and in all places ... that [others] may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, [and] have eternal life."⁹ This is a much stronger motivation than guilt.

To be a witness of God at all times and in all places reflects both how we live and how we speak.

Be open about your faith in Christ. When the occasion presents itself, speak of His life, His teachings, and His incomparable gift to all mankind. Share His powerful truths from the Book of Mormon. He has given us this promise: "Whosoever ... shall confess me before men, him will I confess ... before my Father ... in heaven."¹⁰ I promise you that as you pray often and sincerely for opportunities to "stand as a witness of God," those opportunities will come, and those who seek more light and knowledge will be put before you. As you respond to spiritual promptings, the Holy Ghost will carry your words to the heart of another, and one day the Savior will confess you before His Father.

A Group Effort

The spiritual work of helping someone come into the kingdom of God is a group effort. Enlist the missionaries as soon as you can, and pray for heavenly help. But remember, the timing of another's conversion is not fully up to you.¹¹

Kamla Persand was from the Mauritius island, attending medical school in Bordeaux, France, when we met her in February of 1991. We had prayed as a family to be able to share the gospel with someone who was seeking the truth, and we taught her in our home. I was privileged to perform her baptism, but we were not the most significant influences in Kamla joining the Church. Friends, missionaries, and even family members had been "witnesses of God" in her home country, and one day in France,

when the time was right for Kamla, she made the decision to be baptized. Now, 25 years later, the blessings of that decision are all around her, and her son is a missionary in Madagascar.

Please don't see your efforts to share the love of the Savior with another as a pass/fail test with your grade determined by how positively your friends respond to your feelings or invitation to meet the missionaries.¹² With our mortal eyes, we cannot judge the effect of our efforts, nor can we establish the timetable. When you share the love of the Savior with another, your grade is always an A+.

Some governments have restricted the work of missionaries, leading our noble members to show even greater courage in being "witnesses of God at all times and in all ... places."

Nadezhda from Moscow often gives others a copy of the Book of Mormon in a gift box with lots of candy packed around it. "I tell them," she said, "that it is the sweetest gift I could possibly give them."

Shortly after being baptized in Ukraine, Svetlana had the impression to share the gospel with a man she frequently saw on the bus. When the man got off at his stop, she asked, "Would you like to know more about God?" The man said, "Yes." Missionaries taught Viktor, and he was baptized. He and Svetlana were later sealed in the Freiberg Germany Temple.

Be careful; your blessings may come in unexpected ways.

Seven years ago, Kathy and I met Diego Gomez and his beautiful family in Salt Lake City. They attended a temple open house with us but graciously declined our invitation to learn more about the Church. This past May, I received a surprising telephone call from Diego. Events in his life had led him to his knees. He had found the missionaries on his own, taken the discussions, and was ready for baptism. This past June 11, I walked into the waters of baptism with my friend and fellow disciple Diego Gomez. His conversion had its own timetable and came with the help and support of many who reached out to him as "witnesses of God."

An Invitation to the Youth

To our amazing youth and young adults across the world, I give a special invitation and challenge to be "witnesses of God." Those who surround you are open to spiritual inquiry. Remember the puzzle? You do not come to the table with empty hands but with technology and social media at your command. We need you; the Lord needs you to be even more engaged in this great cause.

The Savior said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."¹³

It is not by chance that you live in Africa; Asia; Europe; North, Central, or South America; the Pacific; or another place in God's world, because the gospel must go to "every nation, kindred, tongue, and people."¹⁴

"The God of heaven [has] set up a kingdom, [a stone cut out without hands, that has become a great mountain and is filling the whole earth,] never [to] be destroyed ... [but to] stand for ever.

"... The dream is certain, and the interpretation ... sure."¹⁵

I close with words from the Doctrine and Covenants: "Call upon the Lord, that his kingdom may go forth upon the earth, that the inhabitants thereof may receive it, and be prepared for the days to come, in the which the Son of Man shall come down [from] heaven, clothed in the brightness of his glory, to meet the kingdom of God ... on the earth."¹⁶ In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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