

of the First Council of Seventy. I am sure from these addresses that there will be many young college students who will find a basis for setting their goals for the future.

The congregation and children's chorus will now join in singing "Redeemer of Israel." After the singing Elder O. Leslie Stone, Assistant to the Twelve, will address us.

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The hymn, "Redeemer of

Israel," was sung by the congregation.

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### President Lee

Elder O. Leslie Stone, Assistant to the Twelve, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Rex D. Pinegar of the First Council of Seventy, who is currently serving as the president of the North Carolina-Virginia Mission.

## Elder O. Leslie Stone

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve*

I am sure that as grandfathers and fathers, you rejoice with me in these children who have rendered the singing at this session of the conference. They are wonderful. Being a grandfather of 14, I have learned to love grandchildren.

I am reminded of the grandfather who got on the airplane. As he went down the aisle looking for a seat, he came to an attractive woman, and he said, "Are you a grandmother?" And she said, "Yes, I am." So he passed her up. He went on and repeated it again. Finally he asked a lady, "Are you a grandmother?" And she said, "No, I am not." He said, "May I sit down? I want to talk about my grandchildren."

In the few moments allotted to me, I would like to discuss the subject of faith, what it means, and how it affects us as individuals.

### Prayers answered

When I made preparation for this talk, I had no idea that in our family we would be called on so soon to exercise great faith and prayers for the well-being of my sweet

companion, who underwent major surgery just last Monday. Our faith and prayers were answered, and I want to thank all of my brethren here and all of my friends and others who joined with us in their faith and prayers for her recovery. She is listening from her hospital bed. I would like to take just a moment to tell her how much I love her. She has been a wonderful companion for 49 years this month. She has been an inspiration to me all the days that we have been married. She has been a fine mother and grandmother. We are looking forward to her return from the hospital.

### Faith defined

The apostle Paul tells us: ". . . faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. 11:1.) Faith and belief have been used synonymously, and it is sometimes difficult for us to differentiate between the two. There is a difference.

We cannot have faith without belief, but we can believe without having faith. Belief is the foundation

of faith. Faith is trusting in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

### Faith requires action

The scriptures contain many assurances of salvation to those who exercise faith and obey the commandments. One such assurance is found in Mark 16:16, which reads: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Note that the Lord said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." In other words, we must do more than believe—we must act. Faith is the motivating force that impels action.

In James 2:20 we read: "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"

Many believe that God will provide, but we cannot sit idly by and expect to get results. The Lord requires us to work for that which we seek. If we do our part and exercise faith, then we are promised he will help us in all our righteous undertakings. However, if we do not do our part, how can we expect the help of our Heavenly Father? Our late President David O. McKay said, "The rich rewards come only to the strenuous strugglers." In other words, to those who not only have faith but are willing to work and sacrifice in order to achieve their goals.

### Gaining faith

Some may ask, "How do we gain faith?" The answer is that we gain faith just as we gain any other attribute. We must first establish a foundation, and then cultivate our thoughts and actions.

Joseph Smith said: "Faith comes by hearing the word of God, through the testimony of the servants of God. . . ." (*Documentary History of the Church*, vol. 3, p. 379.) Our very

presence in meetings of this conference will tend to increase our faith because we come here with a desire to learn and to worship, to be motivated, and to be spiritually uplifted.

I testify to all within the sound of my voice that my attendance at general conferences over a period of many years, hearing the testimonies of our leaders here and in other places, has constantly increased my faith and helped me to build a strong testimony as to the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### Ways to build faith

Partaking of the sacrament administered by those having authority is a great aid to faith. The broken bread symbolizes the broken flesh of our Redeemer, and the holy cup represents his atoning blood. Reading the scriptures nurtures faith. Earnest prayer is essential to increasing one's faith. Prayer is vocalized faith.

Right living is the greatest of all faith builders. Sin is the greatest of all faith destroyers. Even small sins destroy faith. Vanity, pride, selfishness, greed, and hatred wound the fine spirit of God which nurtures and gives life to faith.

Ceaseless striving to find the bright light of living faith purifies the heart, strengthens the will, and develops sterling character.

The constant exercise of our faith by lofty thinking, prayer, devotion, and acts of righteousness is just as essential to spiritual health as physical exercise is to the health of the body. Like all priceless things, faith, if lost, is hard to regain. Eternal vigilance is the price of our faith. In order to retain our faith we must keep ourselves in tune with our Heavenly Father by living in accordance with the principles and ordinances of the gospel.

## The faith of Moses

Moses exercised faith when he led the children of Israel out of bondage. The Lord instructed him what to do, and he had faith that it could be done. He gathered the Israelites and proceeded on the journey. You will remember that they were closely followed by the Egyptians, who wanted to prevent their leaving.

They reached the Red Sea, and the Israelites felt there was no chance of escape. The sea lay before them and the Egyptians behind. Some said: ". . . it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness."

Moses told them: "Fear ye not. . . the Lord shall fight for you and ye shall hold your peace."

The Lord, speaking to Moses, said:

". . . lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.

"And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

"And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

"And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen." (Exod. 14:12-14, 16, 21-23.)

And then the Lord told Moses to stretch out his hand, and the water would come back and destroy the Egyptians. Moses again exercised his faith in God, and the Egyptians were destroyed.

## Joseph Smith's demonstration of faith

The Prophet Joseph demonstrated great faith throughout his ministry. When he was only 14, he was reading the scriptures, and in the first chapter of James, fifth and sixth verses, he read:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed."

This passage of scripture rocked his very soul, for he felt that if ever a person needed wisdom in deciding what to do, it was he.

He believed; he had faith; his faith impelled action, and so he went into the woods to pray. His prayers were answered.

How different our lives would be if it had not been for the strong faith of the Prophet Joseph!

## Brigham Young, a man of faith

Brigham Young was a man of great faith. He had faith in a living God. He had faith in every principle and doctrine revealed and taught by the Prophet Joseph. He had faith in himself.

He once made this statement:

"If the Latter-day Saints will walk up to their privileges, and exercise faith in the name of Jesus Christ, and live in the enjoyment of the fulness of the Holy Ghost constantly day by day, there is nothing on the face of the earth that they could ask for, that would not be given to them." (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 11, p. 114.)

The Latter-day Saint pioneers certainly demonstrated great faith when they crossed the plains. They

left their homes and most of their worldly belongings. Some of them left their families and friends to follow the Church leaders to an unknown land. The reason was obvious: they had great faith. They sought and found a place where they could exercise their faith, worship in peace, and serve the Lord.

### **Patience and faith**

Sometimes we become impatient because the world is converted so slowly. In our impatience, we wonder why God does not reveal himself in majesty and glory, that the whole world might instantly be brought to their knees to worship him. But when we think intelligently about the matter, we understand that God's slow, patient way of converting the world is best. When people are required to believe largely upon the testimony of others, they are compelled to grip the threads of truth firmly and hold on until they can develop strong faith. God's plan makes it necessary for us to nurture, cultivate, and enlarge our faith. In this long, patient process of developing our faith, we acquire fortitude and strength of character. These sterling qualities are of eternal worth.

I have been thrilled with the faith manifested by many of our recently returned prisoners of war. Many have expressed their faith in God, their faith in their families, and their faith in this great country and its leaders.

It is indeed gratifying to hear these expressions of love, faith, and gratitude from these men who have suffered so much. This is in such contrast to those who have protested everything our leaders have done to bring about the release of our prisoners and to reunite them with their families. I am sure we all feel grateful that this has been accom-

plished, and join together in giving thanks to our Heavenly Father for these great blessings. Our prayers and love are extended to all of these men, that they might get reestablished in the stream of life; that they might have joy in their labors and continue to show love for their God, their families, their country, and their fellowmen.

### **Need for faith**

There has never been a time in our lives, the history of the Church, or the history of our nation, when there existed a greater need for faith than today.

We need faith in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, faith in our church leaders, faith in America, faith in ourselves.

I conclude by bearing my witness as to the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The greatest blessings we have received in our family have been when we have been most liberal with our time, our means, and our efforts in carrying out our responsibilities in the Church. These blessings are available to everyone if they will but have faith, accept the gospel of Jesus Christ, and then live in conformity with its teachings.

It is my humble prayer that each of us will increase our faith day by day; that we will keep the commandments; that we will love, honor, and sustain our prophet, President Harold B. Lee, and all who are closely associated with him in building the kingdom of God; that we will so live as to be true to the end and worthy to receive the greatest of all blessings, which is salvation, exaltation, and eternal life in the kingdom of our Heavenly Father.

In the name of Jesus Christ.  
Amen.