

Elder M. Russell Ballard

This is a great honor for me to address you, my brethren, and I seek the Spirit of the Lord that what I say might help each of us want to become better members of the Church and serve more diligently in the priesthood.

Personal experience

I had an extremely frightening experience several years ago while flying from Reno, Nevada, to San Rafael, California, with a friend in his twin-engine Aztec airplane.

When we left Reno, the weather was a little cloudy, and my friend was somewhat worried about it. Because of his concern, we landed at the Lake Tahoe airport to get a second report on the weather. It did not indicate that the weather was too bad, so we continued our flight to San Rafael.

Our destination was an airport in the northern part of San Francisco Bay. As we approached the Bay area, the clouds became increasingly low and dense. We tried to stay under the clouds so we could see the water and thus keep our bearings visually. But suddenly we flew into very dense clouds and could see nothing.

When you fly into such clouds, you become totally disoriented. You do not know whether you are flying straight, sideways, or upside down. You lose your sense of forward motion, and it takes a few minutes for the pilot to orient himself from visual flying to instrument flying. At 180 miles an hour, you move a long distance in that few minutes and can get into serious trouble very quickly. Unfortunately, my friend had not flown entirely on instruments for two years.

My friend struggled intensely and was near the point of panic as he tried to recall all that he had learned about instrument flying. I knew very little about instrument flying, so I

could not help him. All I could do was put my hand on his shoulder and tell him to take a deep breath and get hold of himself. The only instrument that I could read was the altimeter. I said, "We are now at 500 feet. Don't make any quick moves; just think it out, and you can pull us through."

It seemed an eternity before he finally made radio contact with Hamilton Air Force Base. He said to them, "I am in trouble; please help me." The air traffic controllers had us on their radar screen and immediately began to help my friend regain control of the plane. They told us where we were and started to give us instructions to help guide us to safety.

When my friend heard the voice from Hamilton Tower, he regained a sense of confidence that enabled him to gain control. But he knew that the plane was completely out of control and that our chances of pulling out of this danger were marginal. We could easily go the wrong way. The foothills, buildings, towers, and bridges were not far away. At one time we dropped to only 200 feet, and must have been flying upside down at one time because the maps and other items in the visor above my head fell into my lap.

At the peak of this crisis, an instant replay of my entire life flashed through my mind. I thought of my wife, my seven children, my parents, my business partners, the 37 priests whom I was the adviser to, and many other things. I prayed fervently all through this crisis and made a commitment more deep and more sincere than ever before in my life. I began, "Heavenly Father, guide us out of this thick, dense cloud, and help my friend remember all he knows about instrument flying." And then I said, "In the name of Jesus Christ and by the power of

the holy priesthood, bless my friend that he might regain control." My prayer continued. I committed to Heavenly Father that if he would help us, I would place my life in his hands. I promised him that I would be what he wanted me to be.

Finally, we saw the lights on the runway. The white line in the center of the runway was a most welcome sight.

Every priesthood bearer sitting in this priesthood meeting tonight has a great work to do. Each one of us has the power to demonstrate to our Heavenly Father that we really love him and desire to serve him with all of our hearts.

Making a meaningful commitment

Let me show how each of us can make a sincere and meaningful commitment to Heavenly Father right now. Please find a small piece of paper and a pencil. Borrow from your neighbor if you need to. Now, brethren, write on your piece of paper the name of one inactive or non-member man or boy who lives in your ward. Will you make a commitment tonight that you will do all in your power, with the help of the Lord, to lead that person out of darkness into the full light of the gospel? You can be to him as the voice from Hamilton Tower was to my friend and me, and you can guide him safely into full fellowship in the Church of Jesus Christ.

Just a few months after I made my *full* commitment to the Lord that I would give my life to his service if he so desired, I was presiding over the Canada Toronto Mission. During that mission, President Kimball called me to spend the rest of my life in the service of the Lord as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Worth of souls is great

No work is more important than helping bring the gospel into the

lives of our brothers and sisters. You and I have no better way to demonstrate our love for the Lord than to personally lead someone into the safety of full activity in the Church.

I want to help you keep the commitment that you have just made, brethren. I invite you to write to me when you feel the time has come that you need some additional help. Send me the name and address of the man or the boy whom you seek to rescue, and I will write a letter of encouragement to him. I am sure that my brethren of the General Authorities will help me if I receive more letters than I can answer, because they are fully committed to helping you and me meet our righteous commitments.

The Lord has said in the Doctrine and Covenants, "Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;

"For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him.

"And he hath risen again from the dead, that he might bring all unto him, on conditions of repentance.

"And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth!

"And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!" (D&C 18:10-13, 15).

Keep commitments

The light of the Lord is real, my brethren. He will lead every soul out of the clouds of darkness and away from the fog of doubt and uncertainty with a perfect eternal signal that will guarantee safety, peace, and confidence. He said to all the world, "Come, . . . follow me" (Mark 10:21), and "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

Life's flight pattern can be changed. The instruments we use in saving souls are love and sharing our testimonies of the divine mission of our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Thousands of our lost brethren, both men and boys, can be led to a safe landing if we will keep the commitments that we have made tonight. The power of the priesthood that is within each one of us is a greater power than any radar, radio, or any other communication system. Nothing is more important to the Lord than saving souls.

God bless us to keep this commitment, my brethren, to bring into

full fellowship one precious son of God, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

We have just heard from Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder W. Grant Bangerter, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder John H. Groberg, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder W. Grant Bangerter

Central to the calling to administer the gospel to all people, living and dead, is the power of the Holy Ghost. My experience tells me that many who labor in the callings of the priesthood lack insight into this great agency and are unable to be as effective as they ought to be.

I pray that I may be blessed to give some helpful instructions about this most potent and sacred influence.

Obviously, if I do not have the Holy Spirit, I may as well not speak tonight.

Teaching by the Spirit

Most of our work is done in the form of teaching. This takes place in classes such as priesthood quorums, Sunday School, and seminary; many times in interviews; by missionaries as they present the gospel in their discussions; by home teachers to the families of the Church; and, of course, in sermons such as this one.

So I'm speaking to stake presidents, bishops, and quorum leaders, to missionaries, auxiliary leaders, home teachers, and class instructors.

How can we teach by the Spirit? Brethren, try to detect the influence of the Holy Spirit in the following experiences.

Calls to serve

While I was serving as stake president, my counselors and I invited a certain brother for an interview where we presented to him his calling to be the president of the stake Young Men organization. This man had not been fully active. He liked to spend his weekends, including Sundays, camping and fishing, and it was reported that he and his wife did not always obey the Word of Wisdom. There was some question as to whether we should consider him for such a position, but because of the prayerful discussions we had held in the presidency and the high council we concluded that he should be called. As we advised this brother of his appointment, he responded that he was not interested and that he did not feel worthy or qualified. We then told him how we had come to choose him over all the