

Elder Robert D. Hales

Many of the examples used in the teachings of our Savior, Jesus Christ, were from everyday events which happened around him. In much the same way, modern-day prophets teach us by their daily example. The simple but powerful message is "Come, follow me."

May I share with you some of the teaching moments and lessons I have learned from a modern-day prophet.

"Sinned not, nor charged God foolishly"

We can learn much from the courage shown by President Kimball as he has endured his many illnesses. He is a living testimony that, by overcoming pain and adversity, we can cleanse our souls and strengthen our faith and testimony in Jesus Christ. Indeed, in terms of the trials he has had to face, he is in many ways a modern-day Job.

The story of Job in the Old Testament relates three of the great tests we all should be prepared to face at some period in our lives. First, temporal setbacks. Job lost all he owned. Second, physical illness that will test our faith and testimony. And third, depression. Job said, "Why died I not from the womb?" (Job 3:11.) "My soul is weary of my life." (Job 10:1.) But the great lesson of Job is that, "in all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." (Job 1:22.) Too often when adversity strikes, we use it as a justification to commit sin and turn away from the teachings of Jesus Christ, the prophets who lead us, and our family and friends. Job maintained his testimony and was blessed for his unwavering faith that God lived and that he would dwell in God's presence.

President Kimball, being a righteous man like Job, has endured many trials—cancer of the throat, heart surgery, boils, cranial surgery, and nu-

merous other afflictions. President Kimball's experiences serve as an example of how we should meet similar adversity and suffering in our lives.

President Kimball has not sinned or charged God foolishly. He has kept his integrity and his testimony, and sung the praises of his Lord throughout his many physical trials. We have never heard him complain about his trials. On the contrary, his challenge has been, "Give me this mountain" to climb. (See Josh. 14:12.)

The Kimballs' tests, love, and devotion

The courage and faith of President Kimball to overcome adversity are an example to all of us, to testify that we, too, can meet the challenges of life. Our aches and pains are but little hurts in comparison to his. After his throat operation, President Kimball had no voice. During a testimony meeting in the temple, President David O. McKay asked him to bear his testimony. He could not speak a word. He could only utter inaudible, breathy sounds. He wrote a note to President McKay afterwards and asked, "Why would you do that to me?" The President answered, "Spencer, you must get your voice back, for you still have a great mission to perform." (What a moving example of the love of one prophet for another.) President Kimball was obedient. He learned how to control air in his throat and to use the scar tissue that developed in his larynx and his remaining vocal cord. He regained his voice and carried on his great work. The accomplishment of President Kimball's prophetic mission will stand equal to any in this or any other dispensation.

President Kimball's wife, Camilla, has devotedly and lovingly followed her husband every step of the way. I remember one night in Samoa

when both President and Sister Kimball had temperatures of 104 degrees. Early the next morning they were the first ones on the bus. He conducted the meetings, and they fulfilled all their busy schedule throughout the day, not just enduring, but being gracious and considerate and thinking of the needs of everyone else around them.

When President Kimball was called to the Council of the Twelve, he accepted his call with humble tears. He wondered if he was worthy of such a great calling. After he hung up the telephone, it was Camilla who assured him, "You can do it, Spencer. You can do it." Camilla is a perfect example of being one with her companion. When asked about her health, her reply was "When he is well, I'm well."

Reaches out for the "one"

President Kimball taught me a lesson during my call to become a General Authority. He asked if I would come to Salt Lake City to serve as a General Authority for the rest of my life. I was overcome with emotion. My reply: "President Kimball, I just don't know what to say." Then he said, "I only want you to say yes." The lesson was clear; there is no need for an eloquent speech to express our commitment or our love and devotion when accepting a call from the prophet. He already knows these things.

President Kimball always reaches out with love to touch the "one."

We were preparing for an area conference briefing, and as I entered President Kimball's office, he was seated at a typewriter, his back toward the door. He finished typing and spun around in his chair to greet me. In one hand was a thirty-two-page letter from a young man who had read his book *The Miracle of Forgiveness* and, in the other, his personally typed reply to answer the special needs of a young

man who wanted and needed his help to repent. The message was a clear one to me: No matter how busy you are, never forget those who need your help.

Bears fearless testimony

He bears his missionary testimony as a special witness without the fear of man. I have observed it. At the Copenhagen Denmark Area Conference held August 3-5, 1976, President Kimball went to see Thorvaldsen's beautiful sculpture *The Christus*, the resurrected Christ, which has been reproduced, as you know, for the visitors' centers in Salt Lake City, Los Angeles, and New Zealand. After a few spiritual moments admiring *The Christus*, President Kimball bore his testimony to the caretaker who stood nearby. As he turned to the statue of Peter and pointed to the large set of keys in Peter's right hand, he proclaimed: "The keys of priesthood authority which Peter held as President of the Church I now hold as President of the Church in this dispensation." Then he stated to the caretaker, "You work every day with Apostles in stone, but today you are in the presence of living Apostles." He then introduced President N. Eldon Tanner, Elder Thomas S. Monson, and Elder Boyd K. Packer. He presented the caretaker with a Book of Mormon in Danish, and bore his testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith. The caretaker was moved to tears in acknowledgment of the Spirit he felt in the presence of a prophet and Apostles. He acknowledged to me as we left the church, "Today I have been in the presence of servants of God."

Loving diligence

President Kimball works with loving diligence with all of his heart, might, mind, and strength. He does not demand or expect those around him to work at his pace, but at their pace. He is a man of action,

demonstrated by the simple sign on his desk that says, "Do It."

For those who work with him, his example eliminates phrases such as "I'll try" or "I'll do my best." His example and love motivate those who follow his example to achieve higher goals and lengthen their stride toward perfection. He has that rare ability to encourage each of us to do better than our best and to keep striving until we exceed our goals.

During the planning and preparation for the Mexico, Central and South America area conferences in February 1977, we were scheduled to hold meetings in La Paz, Bolivia, which is twelve thousand feet above sea level. Dr. Ernest L. Wilkinson and Dr. Russell M. Nelson advised us that President Kimball should have four to six hours' rest to acclimate his heart and blood pressure to the high altitude. President Kimball is very tightly scheduled during area conferences, and this allows little time for rest. (In reality, the doctors accompanied the General Authorities so that we could keep up with President Kimball.)

I talked with President Tanner and President Romney to seek their assistance in getting President Kimball to rest in La Paz before the start of the area conference. They only smiled and said, "You can try."

Detailed plans were presented to the First Presidency for area conferences in Mexico, Central and South America. I saw President Kimball make two small red check marks next to La Paz, Bolivia, where there were two meetings that he was not scheduled to attend. "What are these meetings? Why am I not attending?" he asked. There was a pause; then I replied, "That's a rest period, President Kimball." And he remarked, "Are you tired, Elder Hales?"

We arrived in La Paz, and the first meeting was a cultural event. He would not rest. My head ached; it felt as though it would explode in adjusting to the altitude, and we breathed

oxygen to attempt to speed up our being acclimated to the twelve-thousand-foot altitude; but President Kimball took no oxygen. He greeted, embraced, and shook hands with two thousand Saints.

After the last meeting, he invited one thousand more of his beloved Lamanites, who had come down from the Altiplano, to come shake his hand. They came and embraced him and shook his hand vigorously. He wanted to show his love for the Lamanites.

Dr. Wilkinson was concerned with the President's vigorous activity at twelve thousand feet and approached him. He asked President Kimball if it would be possible for him to stop soon. President Kimball said, "If you knew what I knew, you wouldn't ask me that question." President Kimball is driven by the knowledge that we are preparing for the second coming of Jesus Christ. He knows that it is his responsibility, along with those who are chosen to work with him, to take the message to all nations in their own tongue and language.

"I want to be exalted"

President Kimball told the General Authorities, "I am not afraid of death. What I am afraid of is that I will meet the Savior and he will say, 'You could have done better.'"

Can you feel the dedication and urgency of a prophet's voice to move the kingdom forward? "Are you tired, Elder Hales?" has a way of ringing in my ears when I rest for a moment. If we knew what President Kimball knows, then we, too, would work with all our heart, might, mind, and strength.

When we tried to save his strength, he'd say, "I know you are trying to save me. But I don't want to be saved; I want to be exalted." He then would tell us that the Lord would sustain him as the prophet, and we should not slow the Church down because of him.

The Prophet Joseph Smith was counseled:

“My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

“And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes.

“Thy friends do stand by thee, and they shall hail thee again with warm hearts and friendly hands.” (D&C 121:7-9.)

In testimony, I ask the Lord’s blessing upon us that we might feel the urgency of this great work, to understand what drives our prophet. He is a missionary because he knows that all mankind must be taught by the Spirit and be baptized. Then, if we live worthily, we will attain eternal life, be exalted, and return to the presence of

God the Father and Jesus Christ to dwell with them throughout eternity.

I bear you my testimony that a prophet leads this Church today by revelation. One time, in closing a general conference, President Kimball said, “My people say ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not what I say.” It is my prayer that we will say, “Lord, Lord,” and do as our prophet and those who lead this Church today say, and follow their example, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

We have just listened to Elder Robert D. Hales, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu

Some years ago an assignment took me to one of the islands of the South Seas to dedicate a newly completed chapel. That evening, as I approached the building with some of the local leaders, we were surprised to notice that the building was completely dark.

A test, a special blessing, light

As we entered the building and saw all the members sitting in the chapel, we inquired about the absence of lighting. The bishop informed us that earlier in the afternoon the building supervisor had inspected the building to make sure all was in readiness for the dedication. But now, as the time approached to begin the services, for some reason there were no lights, even though lights were aglow in nearby homes. All possibilities for correcting the problem were checked without success, and so the local lead-

ers and I decided to proceed with the dedicatory services.

As the program proceeded, illuminated only by a kerosene lantern in front of the chapel, I felt sure that this would be the first dedication performed in darkness in the history of the Church!

I’m sure all those good brothers and sisters in the congregation joined me with a silent prayer in their hearts to ask the Lord to bless us with light so that the chapel could be dedicated.

One by one the speakers spoke—in the dark. The choir sang beautiful anthems—in the dark. As the concluding speaker, I, too, gave my talk in the dark. Then, as I asked the congregation to unite with me for the dedicatory prayer, the lights in the chapel suddenly flickered on. How grateful we were to the Lord for this special blessing! I was overcome with emotion and felt meek and humble that we had been so blessed, but the