

"But behold, I am consigned that these are my days." (Helaman 7:7, 9.)

Brothers and sisters, these are our days. This is *our time* on earth! These are *our tasks* to be done!

And in these days, being of good cheer is part of being valiant in the testimony of Jesus. (See D&C 76:79; D&C 121:29.)

Finally, in those moments when we feel the pain which is a necessary part of the plan of happiness, we can remember that there was an ancient time when that plan was first unveiled. Then the perceptive among us voted not secretly, but audibly—by shouting for joy! (See Job 38:7.) Let us not go back on those feelings now—for we saw more clearly then what we are experiencing now!

May God help us to be of good

cheer, for this is the forerunner feeling which precedes that glorious condition when our joy will be full! (See D&C 93:34.)

Meanwhile, He who knows the path perfectly has promised, "Be of good cheer, for I will lead you along. The kingdom is yours . . . and the riches of eternity." (D&C 78:18.)

In the name of Him who waits "with open arms to receive" us—Jesus Christ, amen. (Mormon 6:17.)

President Hinckley

Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Robert E. Wells, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Robert E. Wells

Another testament of Christ

This is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We are Christians. We know additional details about the Savior's role in the premortal existence before we came here: we have new information about His part in the creation of the world under the direction of our Father; we can identify Him as Jehovah of the Old Testament, communicating with the prophets of Israel. We have the Book of Mormon, which is another testament of Jesus Christ, which has great illuminating doctrines and information about the Savior. Our modern prophets have given revealed explanations, doctrines, light, and knowledge on the Christ as the Redeemer to whom we look for the remission of our sins. We have a wealth of information of tremendous value to all Christian churches. We do not diminish or tear down the faith others have in Christ, but seek

only to share with them our additional knowledge of the Lamb, the Shepherd, the Holy One of Israel (see Psalm 71:22)—for their benefit and salvation.

Like Nephi of old, "we believe in Christ, we . . . look forward with steadfastness unto Christ. . . . We are made alive in Christ because of our faith. . . . We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ. . . . We . . . look forward unto that life which is in Christ." (2 Nephi 25:24–27.) Can anyone doubt that we are Christians in the full sense of the word?

We are Christians

Some time ago, I was on an airplane over the Columbian jungle of South America. I had been telling my seat companion about the Church. At one point in my enthusiastic gospel conversation, my friend commented, "You Mormons

have surely built a magnificent shrine at Joseph Smith's grave site."

In surprise, I exclaimed, "What shrine—what grave site?"

He replied, "Why that tall building in Salt Lake City with the gold angel on top. Isn't that a mausoleum or a shrine of some kind where you worship your prophet?" He was referring to the great Salt Lake Temple.

In dismay, I recognized his misunderstanding. No telling where it came from. I proceeded to correct the error, to the best of my ability.

I said to my friend, "Please allow me to explain that we definitely *are* Christians—we *do* worship God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, and we do *not* worship any prophet or any saint—modern or of ancient times. We do not worship the Prophet Joseph Smith, although we love and honor him. But we never pray to him. In our doctrine, philosophy, and practice, he is not an intermediary of any kind, nor is any other prophet or saint. Christ alone is the advocate with the Father"—and I repeated for emphasis—"not Mary, not Joseph, not Peter, James, or John, not any of the ancient prophets like Adam, Moses, or Abraham. No modern prophet like Joseph Smith or Brigham Young is ever worshiped or prayed to."

Live so no one will doubt

I went on further to explain that the temple in Salt Lake City is not to honor the Prophet Joseph, nor is he even buried there. To make my point that we do not worship our prophets, I said, "Please believe me when I say that we never make a pilgrimage to where the Prophet Joseph is buried; as a matter of fact, I do not even know *where* he is buried!"

This explanation of my not knowing where Joseph Smith is buried seemed to be the most dramatic kind of clarification my friend could have received. He was thoroughly

astonished, but he could easily see that his understanding of our Church had been completely wrong. This turnabout then led to a conversation in which truths regarding how we *do* worship the Savior could be discussed easily and openly. The positive fact that we are practicing Christians was established.

I believe it to be the responsibility of every member of the Church to so live and teach and preach that there will never be any doubt on the part of our friends, associates, and casual acquaintances as to our being Christians, having the desire to receive redemption through Him; to be the kind of person that is a friend of the Savior, a servant of the Savior, and a son or a daughter of the Savior. Let me discuss each one of these three roles:

Be a friend of the Savior

First, Be a Friend of the Savior.

President Kimball qualifies as a friend of the Savior. When he was in the hospital ready to undergo open-heart surgery a few years ago, he was being wheeled down the hall and into the operating room by a young orderly. The young man accidentally smashed his finger between the metal door frame and the metal frame of the bed on which lay the already sedated prophet. When this mishap occurred, the young man, in pain, used an unfortunate expression in which he took in vain the name of the Savior. The prophet stirred, opened his eyes, and gently rebuked the orderly, saying, "Young man, don't say that; He's my best friend!"

Do you and I have a relationship with the Savior such that we would decry the misuse of His name? Does Jesus know that we feel about Him the way President Kimball feels about Him?

Another example of President Kimball's discipleship occurred one Christmas Eve several years ago. He called and asked if I were busy. I

quickly responded, "Not at all. What can I do for you, President Kimball?" He told me he needed a companion to go with him to the Primary Children's Hospital to give a few blessings. It turned out that he had heard of several children from South America, as well as some American Indian children, who were in the hospital. We went from floor to floor giving blessings to all the Latins and Lamanites and many others too. I was deeply affected by the love of President Kimball and his tender friendship with each child. He was a friend to the sick—a friend to those far from home. He exemplified the tender, loving friendship that the Savior would give. It was easy to see how he could say, "The Savior is my best friend."

Be a servant of the Savior

Second, Be a Servant of the Savior

King Benjamin made this clear:

"For how knoweth a man the master whom he has not served, and who is a stranger unto him, and is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart?" (Mosiah 5:13.)

How can we possibly be a servant to the Savior if we have not served Him, if we are strangers to Him, if we keep Him far from the daily thoughts and intents of our hearts?

President Harold B. Lee was the kind of person who so knew the Savior and had been a servant for such a long period of time that he knew instinctively what the Savior would say or do in any given situation.

For example, shortly after becoming President of the Church, President Lee held his first press conference as the new prophet of the Church. The reporters posed for President Lee what could have been a difficult question: "What is your position with regard to the Vietnam war?" You recall that at that time the war was underway, and there

were those who supported it and those who were against our involvement.

If President Lee said, "I am in favor of our government's position," the reporters could say, "How strange—a spiritual leader in favor of war?" If he answered, "I am against our government's involvement," the reporters could also raise doubts by saying, "How unusual—a religious leader who pretends to support his government, but does not?"

When the people of the press presented the question, President Lee responded as a servant of the Savior would, knowing how to use the very words of the Lord in an inspired manner. His answer disarmed them, impressed them. As I remember, he said, "We, together with the entire Christian world, abhor war." And he went on, "The Savior said, 'In the world ye shall have tribulations.' But He also said, 'In me ye might have peace.'" (See John 16:33.) Continuing, President Lee quoted from John 14: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I [peace] unto you." (Verse 27.)

And then President Lee taught a great principle. And he said to them: "The Savior was not speaking of the kind of peace which is won with armies or navies or force; nor was He speaking of the kind of peace which can be negotiated in the halls of congresses. He was speaking of the kind of peace we each can have in our hearts only when we live His commandments to such a degree that we know He is pleased with us." President Lee, speaking as a true servant of the Prince of Peace, had answered them with inspiration.

Be a son or daughter of the Savior

Third, Be a Son or a Daughter of the Savior

Let there be no confusion—our Heavenly Father *is* the Father of our spirits. He is also the Father of the

spirit of Jesus. The Holy Trinity is not a blur, but rather three separate and distinct personages. Heavenly Father gave to His Son those of His children who would take upon themselves the name of His Son, demonstrating faith in Him by repenting of their sins and entering the holy waters of baptism and then going forth steadfastly in His kingdom forever.

King Benjamin tells us:

“And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters” (Mosiah 5:7).

I pray that the entire membership of this church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, will so live that if there are any who would accuse us falsely of not being Christians, their words would not be believed by any who know us. Let us so live that every person who has ever met a member of this Church would know that we all strive daily to be better friends of the Savior, more unselfish servants of the Sav-

ior, more like sons and daughters given by the Father to our Savior by virtue of our taking His name upon us in the holy waters of baptism.

To this I testify humbly and with love, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Master and Redeemer, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Wells.

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet.”

After the singing, Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak to us.

The Choir and congregation sang “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet.”

President Hinckley

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will next address us. We shall then hear from Elder George P. Lee, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone

Personal feelings about parable

My beloved brothers and sisters, I would like to share my personal feelings about a parable of great hope and compassion. The Savior said, “A certain man had two sons” (Luke 15:11). The younger of the two sons seemed always to be in the shadow of his older, more mature brother. Compliments would come freely to the older brother. His age and size were in his favor; he could work harder. The younger son, always compared to his older

brother, never quite measured up. He tired more quickly, did not get all the work done, and probably had a fairly poor self-image. He may have determined that the “system” was against him. He was not being judged on his own merits. He decided to leave home and start in a new environment.

The parable continues: “And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me” (Luke 15:12). Apparently the father had previously discussed with his sons that one day