

we must realize that we cannot travel *both* roads—although sometimes we try. It is difficult to come back, but we can; and our greatest satisfaction will more than likely come from taking the lonelier road which is less traveled.

May the Lord bless us as we make our decisions in life to constantly keep our goal of eternal life in view. That we may study and pray each day to *know* and *understand* what is right but, more importantly, to *do* what is right; that we may have those who stand by us say, “Thee lift me, and I’ll lift thee, and we’ll ascend together,” is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder James E. Faust

My dear brothers, sisters, and friends, sixteen years ago I was called to be a General Authority of this church, and ten years ago this conference I was sustained as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. These years have been challenging and, in many ways, difficult, but they have also been fulfilling. My wife and I have been trying humbly to serve the Lord as best we know how. We have traveled over much of the earth in my ministry. This has afforded us opportunity to bear witness of the Savior in many countries.

Testimony of Jesus Christ

During those years, having worn as a spiritual cloak the knowledge that Jesus is the Christ, I feel led today to give my personal witness concerning Jesus of Nazareth and His mission. I wish to testify of the mediation, the atonement, and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. I speak of these transcendent events in light of my spiritual knowledge that Jesus is the Redeemer and the Son of God. I also testify of His divinity and of those events in the office, the priesthood, the calling, and the authority of the holy Apostleship with which I and my Brethren are charged.

The chorus sang “Hallelujah” from *The Mount of Olives* without announcement.

President Hinckley

Bishop Robert D. Hales, Presiding Bishop of the Church, has spoken to us, followed by the Mormon Youth Chorus singing “Hallelujah” from *The Mount of Olives*.

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our next speaker.

Jesus’ mediation and atonement

Through the Atonement and those singular events surrounding it, all of the terrible individual and collective sins of all mankind were taken upon the Lord’s shoulders. The marvelous result of this great suffering was that He was able to redeem from physical death the believers and the obedient as well as the unbelieving and disobedient (see D&C 46:13–14, Acts 24:15, 1 Corinthians 15:22). Every person ever born or yet to be born is the beneficiary of both the mediation and the atonement of the Savior (see Alma 11:42).

The act of the Atonement is, in its simplest terms, a reconciliation of man with his God. The word *atonement* means to be at one. “It is literally *at-one-ment*” (James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1924], p. 75). Because of their transgression, Adam and Eve, having chosen to leave their state of innocence (see 2 Nephi 2:23–25), were banished from the presence of God. This is referred to in Christendom as the Fall, or Adam’s transgression. It is a spiritual death because Adam and Eve were separated from the presence of God and given agency “to act for themselves and not

to be acted upon" (2 Nephi 2:26). They were also given the great power of procreation, so that they could keep the commandment to "multiply, and replenish the earth" and have joy in their posterity (Genesis 1:28).

All of their posterity were likewise banished from the presence of God (see 2 Nephi 2:22–26). However, the posterity of Adam and Eve were innocent of the original sin because they had no part in it. It was therefore unfair for all of humanity to suffer eternally for the transgressions of our first parents, Adam and Eve. It became necessary to settle this injustice; hence the need for the atoning sacrifice of Jesus in His role as the Savior and Redeemer. Because of the transcendent act of the Atonement, it is possible for every soul to obtain forgiveness of sins, to have them washed away and be forgotten (see 2 Nephi 9:6–9; Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, p. 89). This forgiveness comes about, however, on condition of repentance and personal righteousness.

Immortality and eternal life

There is a distinction between immortality, or eternal existence, and eternal life, which is to have a place in the presence of God. Through the grace of Jesus Christ, immortality comes to all men, just or unjust, righteous or wicked. However, eternal life is "the greatest of all the gifts of God" (D&C 14:7). We obtain this great gift, according to the Lord, "if you keep my commandments and endure to the end." If we so endure, the promise is, "you shall have eternal life" (D&C 14:7).

President Joseph Fielding Smith explains: "This distinction between *eternal life*, as received by the faithful, and *immortality*, obtained by both the faithful and unfaithful, is shown in the words of the Lord to Moses: 'For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality *and* eternal life of man.' The conjunction clearly separates the two thoughts. It explains that the Lord is giving to the vast majority of men, those who will not be obedient, the blessing of immortality; and to those who will serve him, the blessing of eternal life" (*The*

Way to Perfection [Salt Lake City: The Genealogical Society of Utah, 1946], p. 329).

Jesus' suffering

It has been almost two thousand years since the wondrous occasion when death was conquered. We still do not know how the Savior was able to take upon Himself and bear our transgressions, our foolishness, our grief, our sorrows, and our burdens. It was indefinable and unfathomable. It was almost unbearable. The indescribable agony was so great in Gethsemane that "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44). The haunting cry on the cross, in a loud voice in His native Aramaic, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34) gives but a mere glimpse of His suffering and humiliation. One cannot help wondering how many of those drops of precious blood each of us may be responsible for.

Even though, as a man or a woman, we are born, live a brief moment, and then die, through the atonement of Jesus Christ we will all live after death. Through the divinity which is within us as a gift of the great Creator, we can come to complete fruition as heirs of God with eternal powers, dominions, and progression without end. Paul said this gift is a free gift (see Romans 5:15). Through the Mediation and Atonement we will be resurrected ourselves without going through any part of the atoning agony that the Son of God went through.

Jacob's teachings in the Book of Mormon further explain, "if the flesh should rise no more our spirits must become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the Eternal God, and became the devil, to rise no more" (2 Nephi 9:8).

Jesus' resurrection

The testimonies of those faithful followers who saw, heard, and touched the resurrected Lord stand uncontroverted to this day. After the crucifixion, Mary

Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome had bought sweet spices to anoint His body (see Mark 16:1).

But the devoted women were concerned as to who would roll away the great stone in front of the sepulchre. When they arrived, they found that the stone had been rolled away (see Mark 16:3-4). A great earthquake had intervened, and an angel had rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it, causing the keepers to shake with fear and become as dead men (see Matthew 28:2-4). The angel instructed the women to tell the disciples quickly of the Lord's resurrection, assuring them that "he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him" (Matthew 28:7). As they went to tell the disciples, "Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him" (Matthew 28:9).

The Apostles' transformation

During the forty days that the Savior spent with the Apostles and others, they heard and saw many unspeakable things. This special ministry changed the Apostles from an uncertain, confused, divided, and weak group into powerful witnesses of the Lord. Mark records that the Savior upbraided the eleven "because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen" (Mark 16:14).

Perhaps the Apostles should not be unduly criticized for not believing that Jesus, having been crucified and buried in a tomb, had come back to earth as a glorified being. In all human experience, this had never happened before. It was completely unprecedented. This was a different experience than the raising of Jairus' daughter (see Mark 5:22, 24, 35-43), the young man of Nain (see Luke 7:11-15), or Lazarus (see John 11:1-44). They all died again. Jesus, however, became a resurrected being. He would never die again. So it was that to the Apostles the story of Mary Magdalene and the other women who witnessed the Resurrection "seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not" (Luke 24:11).

Said President David O. McKay of this experience: "The world would never

have been stirred by men with such wavering, doubting, despairing minds as the apostles possessed on the day of the crucifixion.

"What was it that suddenly changed these disciples to confident, fearless, heroic preachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ? It was the revelation that Christ had risen from the grave. His promises had been kept, his Messianic mission fulfilled. In the words of an eminent writer, 'The final and absolute seal of genuineness has been put on all his claims, and the indelible stamp of divine authority upon all his teachings. The gloom of death had been banished by the glorious light of the presence of their Risen, Glorified Lord and Savior.'

"On the evidence of these unprejudiced, unexpected, incredulous witnesses, faith in the resurrection has its impregnable foundation" (*Treasures of Life*, comp. Clare Middlemiss [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1962], pp. 15-16).

We should be transformed

Like the Apostles of old, this knowledge and belief should transform all of us to be confident, settled, unafraid, and at peace in our lives as followers of the divine Christ. It should help us carry all burdens, bear any sorrows, and also fully savor all joys and happiness that can be found in this life. The disciples who walked with the Savior on the road to Emmaus said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke 24:32). No wonder they entreated him, "Abide with us: for it is toward evening," and he "sat at meat with them" (Luke 24:29-30). They sought to savor those precious moments and feelings.

The vacating of the tomb transcended all other events in the history of the world, for it attested that Jesus had not died, but that death itself had been overcome.

As I have traveled over much of the earth, I have been saddened over and over again by the legions of crippled, maimed, deformed, suffering, and diminished people almost everywhere. What parent

of a special child has not agonized over the future and well-being of that child? Through the individual resurrection of each of us, there is great hope for all.

Testimonies of the Resurrection

Amulek, in the Book of Mormon, promises that following the temporal death, "the spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame, . . . and we shall be brought to stand before God, . . . and have a bright recollection of all our guilt" (Alma 11:43).

The Prophet Joseph Smith stated: "I can taste the principles of eternal life, and so can you. . . . I know that when I tell you these words of eternal life . . . , you taste them, and I know that you believe them" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, ed. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 355). So it is that the humblest and newest believer, the child, youth, or adult can come to have a personal conviction of the truth of eternal life.

John the Revelator "saw a new heaven and a new earth" and "heard a great voice out of heaven" (Revelation 21:1, 3). "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Revelation 21:7). "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

Testimony comes through obedience

It is not necessary for anyone to depend continually upon the testimony of another regarding the mediation, atonement, and resurrection of Christ as our Redeemer and Savior. Each can savor the sweetness of the truths of the gospel by obedience to the principles, ordinances, and covenants.

One can still go to the Garden of Gethsemane, but the Lord Jesus cannot be found there, nor is He in the Garden

Tomb. He is not on the road to Emmaus, nor in Galilee, nor at Nazareth or Bethlehem. He must be found in one's heart. But He left us the great Comforter forever (see John 14:16) and the everlasting power of the priesthood. Of this power, Jacob, the son of Lehi, testified, "We truly can command in the name of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea" (Jacob 4:6).

I testify that, through righteousness, this priesthood power and these supernal gifts of the Atonement and the Mediation can operate in our lives. Ultimately each of us must come to know these great spiritual truths by following the counsel of Jesus: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17).

Testimony and prayer

In conclusion, I wish to make a humble declaration and affirmation that Jesus is the Christ, our Redeemer, and the Savior of the world. I do this with all the solemnity of my soul. This testimony has come to me, not alone from a lifetime of study or from reason or logic, but more by personal revelation under the spirit of prophecy.

I pray that our Savior will heal our souls, dry our tears, and create in each of us a pure heart. I also pray that we may find shelter in the shadows of His outstretched arms and that He will be merciful and forgiving concerning our weaknesses. That He will be a father to the fatherless, and deliver to the needy according to their needs, and incline His ear to our cries, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "Now We'll Sing with One Accord" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has borne eloquent testimony to us, following which