

"The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow into thee forever and ever" (D&C 121:45-46).

I testify of these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

We have just heard from Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

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

## Elder James E. Faust

I rejoice in the historic action taken at this session of conference, and with all my heart I welcome the new Seventies into the brotherhood of the General Authorities.

As President Hunter noted this morning, it is spring in the Northern Hemisphere. All nature is stirring. The grass is growing. The leaves are budding. The fruit trees are straining to blossom. Lambs are being born. Flowers are coming forth. We have celebrated the Easter season, and we have joined all Christendom to rejoice in the resurrection of the Savior from the tomb of death.

### The Comforter

It was a profoundly moving event those centuries ago when the Savior led his beloved disciples into the favored Garden of Gethsemane for the last time. Jesus was mindful of the great ordeal ahead of him. He agonized, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch" (Mark 14:34). He was ready for the unspeakable agony. Said he, "The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak" (Mark 14:38).

The eleven Apostles no doubt sensed — but could not understand — that some portentous event would happen. Jesus had spoken of leaving them. They knew that the Master whom they loved and depended upon was going somewhere, but where, they did not know. They had heard him say, "I will not leave you comfortless. . . . But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the

Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:18, 26).

It is of this Comforter that I wish to speak today. I do so because I am persuaded that there is a greater need for divine oversight in our lives today than ever before. I wish to testify that, by the power and gift of the Holy Ghost, we can know what to do and what not to do to bring happiness and peace to our lives.

### The Spirit of God

Elder LeGrand Richards stated, "It must . . . be understood that the Holy Ghost is the medium through whom God and his Son, Jesus Christ, communicate with men [and women] upon the earth" (*A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, rev. ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976], p. 119). All men are enlightened by the Spirit of God, or Light of Christ — sometimes called conscience. Job stated, "But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). This is the Spirit of God emanating from Deity. This power of God is the means by which, as President Joseph F. Smith stated, "every man is enlightened, the wicked as well as the good, the intelligent and the ignorant, the high and the low, each in accordance with his capacity to receive the light" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], p. 62; see also D&C 88:3-13).

## The gift of the Holy Ghost

The gift of the Holy Ghost, however, in distinction from the Spirit of God, does not come to all men and women. The ministrations of the Holy Ghost are, however, limited without receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that "there is a difference between the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 199). Many outside the Church have received revelation from the Holy Ghost, convincing them of the truth of the gospel. Cornelius, as well as many in attendance on the day of Pentecost, received the Holy Ghost before baptism (see Acts 2:1-12; 10:30-44). It is through this power that seekers after truth acquire a testimony of the Book of Mormon and the principles of the gospel.

The gift of the Holy Ghost comes after one repents and becomes worthy. It is received after baptism by the laying on of hands by those who have the authority. On the day of Pentecost, Peter instructed those who had previously been touched spiritually by the Holy Ghost, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). Those possessing the gift of the Holy Ghost can come to a greater light and testimony. The Holy Ghost bears witness of the truth and impresses upon the soul the reality of God the Father and the son Jesus Christ so deeply that no earthly power or authority can separate him from that knowledge (see 2 Nephi 31:18).

## A sure compass

The Book of Mormon, the Bible, and other scriptures, along with the guidance of modern prophets, provide true standards of conduct. In addition, the gift of the Holy Ghost is available as a sure guide, as the voice of conscience, and as a moral compass. This guiding compass is personal to each of us. It is unerring. It is unfailing. However, we must listen

to it in order to steer clear of the shoals which will cause our lives to sink into unhappiness and self-doubt.

We need a sure compass because many of the standards, values, vows, and obligations which have helped us preserve our spirituality, our honor, our integrity, our worth, and our decency have little by little been assaulted and discarded. I speak, among other values, of the standards of chastity, parental respect, fidelity in marriage, and obedience to God's laws—such as Sabbath observance—which have been weakened, if not destroyed. Society has been misled.

## Evil is often accepted gradually

Thomas R. Rowan, commenting on the lowering of television standards, said: "Author and commentator Malcolm Muggeridge once told a story about some frogs who were killed without resistance by being boiled alive in the cauldron of water. Why didn't they resist? Because when they were put in the cauldron, the water was tepid. Then the temperature was raised ever so slightly, and the water was warm, then a tiny bit warmer, then a bit warmer still, and on and on and on. The change was so gradual, almost imperceptible, that the frogs accommodated themselves to their new environment—until it was too late. The point that Mr. Muggeridge was making was not about frogs but about us and how we tend to accept evil as long as it is not a shock that is thrust on us abruptly. We are inclined to accept something morally wrong if it is only a shade more wrong than something we are already accepting" (*National Press Club Forum*).

This gradual process was foretold by ancient prophets. Nephi tells us that the hearts of the children of men would be stirred up "to anger against that which is good. And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell" (2 Nephi 28:20-21).

I have always been fascinated that people are led carefully down to hell.

Alexander Pope expressed a similar thought concerning the acceptance of evil:

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien  
As to be hated needs but to be seen;  
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her  
face,  
We first endure, then pity,  
then embrace.  
(*Essay on Man*, epistle 2, lines  
217-20)

### The Holy Ghost can strengthen us

The gift of the Holy Ghost will prompt us to resist temptation by reminding us of the gospel law in the very moment of temptation. Said B. H. Roberts, "By having the Holy Spirit as one's prompter in the moments of temptation, . . . this law of the Gospel . . . may be complied with" (*The Gospel: An Exposition of Its First Principles and Man's Relationship to Deity*, 10th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1965], pp. 191-92).

I wish to alert young people to this special, transcendent gift of the Holy Ghost, which is available to all. This Comforter is a personage of spirit and a member of the Godhead. The Doctrine and Covenants explains why the Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit: "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us" (D&C 130:22).

The gift of the Holy Ghost entitles a person who is desirous and worthy to enjoy "the power and light of truth of the Holy Ghost" (*Gospel Doctrine*, p. 61).

The comforting Spirit of the Holy Ghost can abide with us twenty-four hours a day: when we work, when we play, when we rest. Its strengthening influence can be with us year in and year out. That sustaining influence can be with

us in joy and sorrow, when we rejoice as well as when we grieve.

### The Comforter brings peace

I believe the Spirit of the Holy Ghost is the greatest guarantor of inward peace in our unstable world. It can be more mind-expanding and can make us have a better sense of well-being than any chemical or other earthly substance. It will calm nerves; it will breathe peace to our souls. This Comforter can be with us as we seek to improve. It can function as a source of revelation to warn us of impending danger and also help keep us from making mistakes. It can enhance our natural senses so that we can see more clearly, hear more keenly, and remember what we should remember. It is a way of maximizing our happiness.

The Spirit—the Holy Ghost—will help us work out our insecurities. For instance, it can help us learn to forgive. There comes a time when people must move on, seeking greater things rather than being consumed by the memory of some hurt or injustice. Dwelling constantly on past injuries is, by its nature, limiting to the Spirit. It does not promote peace.

### A confirming witness

The Holy Ghost will also help us solve crises of faith. The Spirit of the Holy Ghost can be a confirming witness, testifying of heavenly things. Through that Spirit, a strong knowledge distills in one's mind, and one feels all doubt or questions disappear.

The Apostle Paul said, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17). He added elsewhere that true Saints are the "temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

### The Holy Ghost's sealing power

I wish to say a word about the Holy Spirit of Promise, which is the sealing and ratifying power of the Holy Ghost.

To have a covenant or ordinance sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise is a compact through which the inherent blessings will be obtained, provided those seeking the blessing are true and faithful (see D&C 76:50-54).

For example, when the covenant of marriage for time and eternity, the culminating gospel ordinance, is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, it can literally open the windows of heaven for great blessings to flow to a married couple who seek for those blessings. Such marriages become rich, whole, and sacred. Though each party to the marriage can maintain his or her separate identity, yet together in their covenants they can be like two vines wound inseparably around each other. Each thinks of his or her companion before thinking of self.

One of the great blessings available through the Holy Spirit of Promise is that all of our covenants, vows, oaths, and performances, which we receive through the ordinances and blessings of the gospel, are not only confirmed but may be sealed by that Holy Spirit of Promise. However, that sealing may be broken by unrighteousness. It is also important to remember that if a person undertakes to receive the sealing blessing by deceit, "then the blessing is not sealed, notwithstanding the integrity and authority of the person officiating" (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-56], 2:98-99).

To have a covenant or ordinance sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise means that the compact is binding on earth and in heaven.

### "I will not leave you comfortless"

It is always gratifying to hear of prayers being answered and miracles occurring in the lives of those who need them. But what of those noble and faithful souls who receive no miracles, whose prayers are not answered in the way they wish? What is their solace? From whence will their comfort come? Said the Savior of the world: "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. . . . But the

Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, . . . the Father will send in my name" (John 14:18, 26).

In simple terms, the gift of the Holy Ghost is an enhanced spiritual power permitting those entitled thereto to receive it, to receive a greater knowledge and enjoyment of the influence of Deity.

### Joseph's counsel to Brigham Young

In the marvelous experience of Brigham Young in February of 1847, when the Prophet Joseph appeared to him in a dream or vision, Brigham pleaded to be reunited with the Prophet. Brigham Young asked the Prophet if he had a message for the Brethren. The Prophet said:

"Tell the people to be humble and faithful, and to be sure to keep the spirit of the Lord and it will lead them right. Be careful and not turn away the still small voice; it will teach them what to do and where to go; it will yield the fruits of the kingdom. Tell the Brethren to keep their hearts open to conviction, so that when the Holy Ghost comes to them, their hearts will be ready to receive it."

The Prophet further directed Brigham Young as follows: "They can tell the Spirit of the Lord from all other spirits; it will whisper peace and joy to their souls; it will take malice, hatred, strife and all evil from their hearts; and their whole desire will be to do good, bring forth righteousness and build up the kingdom of God" (*Manuscript History of Brigham Young: 1846-47* [Historical Dept., The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints], pp. 528-31).

### A constant companion

If in this life we cannot live in the presence of the Savior as did Simon Peter, James, John, Mary, Martha, and the others, then the gift of the Holy Ghost can be our Comforter and sure compass.

I testify that as we mature spiritually under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, our sense of personal worth, of belonging, and of identity increases. I further testify that I would rather have every person enjoy the Spirit of the Holy Ghost than any

other association, for they will be led by that Spirit to light and truth and pure intelligence, which can carry them back into the presence of God.

I pray that the promise of the Lord will be fulfilled for each of us, that "the Holy Ghost shall be [our] constant companion, and [our] scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and [our] dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto [us] forever and ever" (D&C 121:46). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has been our concluding speaker.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M.

The nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will

be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats in the Tabernacle no later than 9:15 A.M.

We call your attention to the fact that because of the change to daylight saving time tonight, you should move your clocks ahead one hour before you retire; otherwise, you may come at the wrong time.

We express gratitude to the BYU combined choirs for the beautiful music we have heard this afternoon. They will sing in closing, "How Beautiful upon the Mountain." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder L. Aldin Porter of the Second Quorum of the Seventy.

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The choir sang "How Beautiful upon the Mountain."

Elder L. Aldin Porter offered the benediction.

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## GENERAL PRIESTHOOD SESSION

The general priesthood session, the third session of the 159th Annual General Conference, convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 1, 1989. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by the Ricks College centennial priesthood choir. The choir was directed by Richard Robison and Mike Belnap, with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

President Monson opened the meeting with the following remarks:

### President Thomas S. Monson

Brethren, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked that I conduct this general priesthood session. We extend our love

and best wishes to all of the brethren participating in this session.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit and satellite transmission to holders of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall, the BYU Marriott Center, and locations in many countries around the world. We note that Elders Angel Abrea and Glenn L. Rudd are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders James M. Paramore and Gardner H. Russell are seated on the stand in the BYU Marriott Center.

For the information of the brethren in outlying areas, we announce that at the session this afternoon, the following were sustained as additional members of the First Quorum of the Seventy: Joe J. Christensen, W. Eugene Hansen, Jeffrey R. Holland, and Marlin K. Jensen.

Announcement was also made of the establishment of the Second Quorum of