

“Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ”

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My beloved young sisters, I have been inspired by the prayers, music, and words in this marvelous meeting. I feel that each young woman who is listening has been strengthened in her resolve to become what President Janette C. Hales has challenged her to become: a righteous, problem-solving woman of faith.

These wonderful women who are the general presidency of the Young Women of the Lord’s church have told us how this can be accomplished—how we can seek and obtain and increase faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Sister Pearce gave us inspiring examples of men and women who exercised faith and trust in our Heavenly Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, by believing that they are in charge of this world, that they know us and love us, and that they have a plan for us. Sister Pinegar taught us that we can and should seek and choose to believe in our Savior and his love.

These teachings and these teachers are true. I feel challenged by the responsibility of concluding a meeting on this most fundamental subject.

The first principle of the gospel is not “faith.” The first principle of the gospel is “Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ” (A of F 1:4). I wish to speak to you young women about that supremely important truth.

Faith does not exist by itself. Faith requires an object. It must be faith in something or someone.

In that respect, faith is like love. Love cannot exist without an object.

A personal experience illustrates that point. Sister Oaks and I are the parents of six, including four daughters. Our youngest daughter is still in her teens. As parents, we have learned a lot about teenage girls. I remember when one of our teenage daughters announced that she was in love with eight boys. She produced a list of their names. I made silent note of the fact that she had never even dated some of these boys, and one of them she had never even met. Within a few weeks she dropped several names off her list and added others. When I asked her how she could fall in love and out of love with so many boys so quickly, she wisely admitted, “I guess I’m not in love with those boys. I’m just in love with love.” Your parents and grandparents will remember the words of an old song, “Falling in love with love is falling for make believe” (Lorenz Hart, “Falling in Love with Love,” *The Boys from Syracuse*, n.p.: Chappell & Co., 1938).

Love is meaningless unless it is directed toward something or someone. We love our parents. We love our brothers and sisters. We love the Lord.

Faith is the same. If we think we have faith, we should ask, faith in whom or faith in what? For some, faith is nothing more than faith in themselves. That is only self-confidence or self-centeredness. Others have faith in faith, which is something like relying on the power of positive thinking or betting on the proposition that we can get what we want by manipulating the powers within us.

The first principle of the gospel is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Without this faith, the prophet Mormon said, we “are not fit to be numbered among the people of his church” (Moro. 7:39).

The scriptures teach us that faith comes by hearing the word of God (see Rom. 10:17). That word, which comes to us by scripture, by prophetic teaching, and by personal revelation, teaches us that we are children of God, the Eternal Father. It teaches us about the identity and mission of Jesus Christ, his Only Begotten Son, our Savior and Redeemer. Founded on our knowledge of those things, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is a conviction and trust that God knows us and loves us and will hear our prayers and answer them with what is best for us.

In fact, God will do more than what is best for us. He will do what is best for us and for all of our Heavenly Father’s children. The conviction that the Lord knows more than we do and that he will answer our prayers in the way that is best for us and for all of his other children is a vital ingredient of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This important reality is beautifully described in an experience recorded in Elder John H. Groberg’s recent book, *In the Eye of the Storm*. He describes a lesson he learned as a young missionary traveling on a sailboat in the Tongan islands.

“We would always pray for protection, success, and good seas and wind to take us to our destination. Once I asked the Lord to bless us with a good tail wind so we could get to Foa quickly. As we got under way, one of the older men said, ‘Elder Groberg, you need to modify your prayers a little.’

“‘How’s that?’ I replied.

“‘You asked the Lord for a tail wind to take us rapidly to Foa. If you pray for a tail wind to Foa, what about the people who are trying to come from Foa to Pangai? They are good people, and you are praying against them. Just pray for a good wind, not a tail wind.’

“That taught me something important. Sometimes we pray for things that will benefit us but may hurt others. We may pray for a particular type of weather, or to preserve someone’s life, when that answer to our prayer may hurt someone else. That’s why we must always pray in faith, because we can’t have true, God-given faith in something that is not according to His will. If it’s according to His will, all parties will benefit. I learned to pray for a good wind and the ability to get there safely, not necessarily a tail wind” (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993, p. 175).

Faith must include trust. I am glad that each member of the presidency stressed that fact in her talk. When we have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we must have trust in him. We must trust him enough that we are content to accept his will, knowing that he knows what is best for us.

The kind of faith that includes trust in the Lord stands in contrast to many imitations. Some people trust no one but themselves. Some put their highest trust in a friend or another family member, perhaps because they feel that person is more righteous or more wise than they. But that is not the Lord’s way. He told us to put our faith and our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Savior gave us the model for that kind of faith and trust. Remember how he prayed to the Father in the agony of Gethsemane? This was the culminating event of his life, the climactic fulfillment of his mission as our Savior. The gospel of Luke, as corrected in the inspired translation of the Prophet Joseph Smith, describes how he knelt down and prayed: “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done” (JST, Luke 22:42).

Here we see the Savior’s absolute faith and trust in the Father. “Nevertheless,” he said, “not my will, but thine be done.” The Father’s answer was to deny the plea of his Only Begotten Son. The Atonement had to be worked out by that lamb without blemish. But though the Son’s request was denied, his prayer was answered. The scripture records: “And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him” (JST, Luke 22:43).

Strengthened from heaven to do the will of the Father, the Savior fulfilled his mission. “And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and he sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (JST, Luke 22:44).

When we try to develop faith in the Lord Jesus Christ rather than merely cultivating faith as an abstract principle of power, we understand the meaning of the Savior’s words: “If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me” (Moro. 7:33).

Similarly, the Savior taught the Nephites that they must always pray to the Father in his name, adding: “And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you” (3 Ne. 18:20).

Here the Savior reminds us that faith, no matter how strong it is, cannot produce a result contrary to the will of him whose power it is. The exercise of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is always subject to the order of heaven, to the goodness and will and wisdom and timing of the Lord. That is why we cannot have true faith in the Lord without also having complete trust in the Lord’s will and in the Lord’s timing. When we have that kind of faith and trust in the Lord, we have true security in our lives. President Spencer W. Kimball said, “Security is not born of inexhaustible wealth but of unquenchable faith” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982, pp. 72–73).

I read of a young woman who exercised that kind of faith and trust. For many months her mother had been seriously ill. Finally, the faithful father called the children to her bedside and told them to say good-bye to their mother because she was dying. The twelve-year-old daughter protested:

“Papa, I do not want my mamma to die. I have been with her in the hospital ... for six months; time and time again ... you have administered to her, and she has been relieved of her pain and quietly gone to sleep. I want you to lay hands upon my mamma and heal her.”

The father, who was Elder Heber J. Grant, told the children that he felt in his heart that their mother’s time had arrived. The children left, and he knelt by his wife’s bedside. Later he recalled his prayer: “I told the Lord I acknowledged his hand in life [and] in death. ... But I told the Lord that I lacked the strength to have my wife die and to have it affect the faith of my little children.” He pleaded with the Lord to give his daughter “a knowledge that it was his mind and his will that her mamma should die.”

Within an hour the mother died. When Elder Grant called the children back into her room and told them, his

little six-year-old boy began to weep bitterly. The twelve-year-old sister took him in her arms and said: “Do not weep, Heber; since we went out of this room, the voice of the Lord from heaven has said to me, In the death of your mamma the will of the Lord shall be done” (Bryant S. Hinckley, *Heber J. Grant: Highlights in the Life of a Great Leader*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1951, pp. 243–44).

When we have the kind of faith and trust exhibited by that young woman, we have the strength to sustain us in every important event in our lives. President Spencer W. Kimball said that we need what he called “reservoirs of faith” to stand firm and strong against all the temptations and adversities of life (Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972, pp. 110–11).

My beloved young sisters, each of you needs to build a reservoir of faith so you can draw upon it when someone you love or respect betrays you, when some scientific discovery seems to cast doubt on a gospel principle, or when someone makes light of sacred things, such as the name of God or the sacred ceremonies of the temple. You need to draw on your reservoir of faith when you are weak or when someone else calls on you to strengthen them. You also need to draw on your reservoir of faith when some requirement of Church membership or service interferes with your personal preferences.

You need the strength that comes from faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ if you are to fulfill your duty “to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places” (Mosiah 18:9). In times of trial you need the comfort offered in the holy scriptures, which assure you that when you have the shield of faith you will “be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked” (D&C 27:17).

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ prepares you for whatever life brings. This kind of faith prepares you to deal with life’s opportunities—to take advantage of those that are received and to persist through the disappointments of those that are lost.

Most importantly, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ opens the door of salvation and exaltation: “For no [one] can be saved, according to the words of Christ, save they shall have faith in his name” (Moro. 7:38).

I testify that these things are true. I invoke the blessings of Almighty God upon you, my faithful young sisters, as you seek to develop and exercise your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and as you seek to serve him and keep his commandments, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.