

7. *History of the Church*, 7:233.
8. *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:156.
9. *Millennial Star*, 2 Sept. 1889, p. 547.
10. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939), p. 142.
11. See D&C 13; 107:20.
12. D&C 84:19.
13. See Giorgio Tourn, *The Waldensians: The First 800 Years*, trans. Camillo P. Merlino (Torino: Claudiana, 1980), pp. 3-4.
14. Archibald F. Bennett, "The Vaudois Revisited," *Improvement Era*, Jan. 1948, p. 12.
15. Lines 1-2.
16. "For the Strength of the Hills," *Hymns*, no. 35. Original text was a poem titled "Hymn of the Vaudois Mountaineers in Times of Persecution."
17. Archibald F. Bennett, "The Vaudois of the Alpine Valleys and Their Contribution to Utah and Latter-day Saint History" (student paper, Brigham Young University, 1960), pp. 8-9, 16; in Historical Department, *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Salt Lake City.
18. 2 Peter 1:20.

President Monson

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, also a member of the Council of the Twelve. He will be followed by Sister Patricia P. Pinegar, who was sustained yesterday as the new general president of the Primary.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

My dear brothers and sisters, I am grateful for the opportunity to join with you during this general conference in sustaining President Howard W. Hunter as the fourteenth President of the Church in this dispensation. He is a man without guile. I sustain him with all of my heart and pray that I might serve faithfully under his inspired leadership, and also his marvelous Counselors.

Extend deep roots into the gospel soil

Recently on the island of Molokai in the Hawaiian Islands, Sister Wirthlin and I passed by two very large trees that the wind had blown down and uprooted. These huge trees had extremely shallow roots. I wondered if they would have survived the winds and storms if their roots had been deeper. Relatively mild gusts of wind blow some trees down. Graceful palm trees, for example, are lovely to look at but will not stand up in

a heavy wind because they are not well anchored. Contrast this with giant oak trees that have deep root systems that can extend two-and-one-half times their height. Such trees rarely are blown down regardless of how violent the storms may be.

Faithful members of the Church should be like oak trees and should extend deep roots into the fertile soil of the fundamental principles of the gospel. We should understand and live by the simple, basic truths and not complicate them. Our foundations should be solid and deep-rooted so we can withstand the winds of temptation, false doctrine, adversity, and the onslaught of the adversary without being swayed or uprooted. Members whose roots are only at the surface of the gospel need to sink them deeper until they reach the bedrock below the soft topsoil.

Spiritual nourishment is just as important as a balanced diet to keep

us strong and healthy. We nourish ourselves spiritually by partaking of the sacrament weekly, reading the scriptures daily, praying daily in personal and family prayer, and performing temple work regularly. Our spiritual strengths are like batteries; they need to be charged and frequently recharged.

Reality of God the Father

I wish to review with you a few core principles of the gospel into which our spiritual roots should sink deeply. Most important is the reality of our Heavenly Father; his Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost.

Our Heavenly Father is the father of our spirits and of the entire human race; we are his offspring, his sons and daughters. We have inherited divine characteristics from him. Because of his love for his children, he provided a plan for us to progress and reach our highest potential and return to his presence. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, "God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself."¹

Reality of Jesus Christ, our Savior

Jesus Christ is infinitely more than a great teacher and philosopher. He is the Firstborn Son of God, the Only Begotten Son in the flesh, the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind. He accepted the Father's great plan of happiness, saying, "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever."² The Father's plan gave us our agency to choose right or wrong, good or evil so we can learn, develop, and progress. As part of the plan, Jesus offered to atone for the sins of all mankind and bear the suffering for those sins, satisfying the law of justice if the sinners repent. Otherwise they

have to suffer and pay the penalty for their transgressions.

He also offered his mortal life, was crucified, and became the first to be resurrected, making possible the literal resurrection of all of our Father's children. He created this earth under his Father's direction as a place for us to live in mortality and prove whether we would be obedient and "do all things whatsoever the Lord [our] God shall command."³ He also created innumerable other worlds. He is our Mediator with the Father and our Exemplar in all things. His loving kindness toward us is beyond our comprehension. He stands at the head of his church, which bears his name, and directs it through his prophets.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Rock of our salvation. He said in the Sermon on the Mount:

"Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell."⁴

To the Saints in this dispensation, he said, "Do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail."⁵

Reality of the Holy Ghost

The Holy Ghost is the third member of the Godhead. As the Prophet Joseph Smith taught, "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.”⁶ He is a witness and testifier of the truth of the gospel. He is a revelator and teacher who conveys information to our spirits with far more certainty than is possible by our natural senses. He can guide us in every choice and decision and never will deceive or mislead us. He is a comforter who brings peace to our souls in times of need.

Reality of Satan

Just as real is one who would prevent us from becoming rooted to God and his truths. Two of his names are Lucifer and Satan. He is the adversary of our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and of everything that is good. He rejected the Father’s plan in the premortal life, saying, “Send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor.”⁷ The Father then said:

“Because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down;

“And he became Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice.”⁸

From that time forward, Satan has led the forces of evil in a battle for the souls of men in his attempt to frustrate the plan of salvation.

Distinguishing between good and evil

We learn from the Book of Mormon prophet Moroni that “all things which are good cometh of God; and that which is evil cometh of the devil; for the devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against him continually, and inviteth and en-

ticeth to sin, and to do that which is evil continually.

“But behold, that which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good continually; wherefore, . . . to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God. . . .

“ . . . The Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; . . . every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; . . .

“But whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God . . . is of the devil; for after this manner doth the devil work, for he persuadeth no man to do good, no, not one; neither do his angels; neither do they who subject themselves unto him.”⁹

The sins of corruption, dishonesty, strife, contention, and other evils in this world are not here by chance. They are evidences of the relentless campaign of Satan and those who follow him. He uses every tool and device available to him to deceive, confuse, and mislead. He has many followers who do anything for money without regard for the effects of their misdeeds.

Importance of moral purity

Another core principle is moral purity. One of the most pervasive deceptions in recent years is the notion that immorality is normal and acceptable and has no negative consequences. In truth, immorality is the underlying cause of much suffering and many other problems that are prevalent today, including rampant disease, abortion, broken families, families without fathers, and mothers who themselves are children. President Ezra Taft Benson said, “The plaguing sin of this generation is sexual immorality.”¹⁰ The Lord said, “Thou shalt not . . . commit adultery, . . . nor do anything like unto it.”¹¹ That means we are to avoid abnormal sexual

behavior, including fornication, homosexual behavior, child molestation, or any other perversion of God's plan of happiness.

The Word of Wisdom

A gospel principle that provides spiritual and physical strength is the Word of Wisdom. For many years after the Prophet Joseph Smith received this revelation in 1833, people deceived themselves into believing they could ignore or violate this law of health with impunity. I believe the Lord inspired President Heber J. Grant to emphasize it frequently and forcefully to counter the media that was becoming increasingly sophisticated and persuasive during his time. Today medical science has proven that tobacco and other such addictive substances are poisons that are harmful to the human body.

Missionary service

We can reach out to others in missionary service in response to the Savior's injunction to "go . . . into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."¹² The Lord used a harvest analogy when he instructed the early Saints to proclaim the gospel. He said, "Behold, the field is white already to harvest; therefore, whoso desireth to reap, let him thrust in his sickle with his might, and reap while the day lasts, that he may treasure up for his soul everlasting salvation in the kingdom of God."¹³ That is our sacred privilege and obligation.

The field is still white and all ready to harvest. Church members remain a small percentage of the world's population. "For there are many yet on the earth among all sects, parties, and denominations . . . who are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it."¹⁴ In proclaiming the gospel

we need to be sensitive to the feelings of others, remembering that "we claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may."¹⁵

Missionaries labor diligently to teach and baptize those who accept the gospel. In the process their own testimonies become deeply rooted. Missionary service provides the finest foundation possible for young people as they move into adulthood. The deep roots they sink into the gospel will sustain them for a lifetime and for all eternity. The Church needs more missionaries, many more, including couples, to fulfill its charge to proclaim the gospel "unto all nations, kindreds, tongues and people."¹⁶

Teach pure doctrine

God has revealed everything necessary for our salvation. We should teach and dwell on the things that have been revealed and avoid delving into so-called mysteries. My counsel to teachers in the Church, whether they instruct in wards and stakes, Church institutions of higher learning, institutes of religion, seminaries, or even as parents in their homes, is to base their teachings on the scriptures and the words of latter-day prophets.

We should follow Paul's counsel to the Ephesians: "Be no more . . . tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine."¹⁷ The winds of false doctrine that are blowing today both outside and a few within the Church are far more dangerous to the ultimate salvation of mankind than are earthquakes, hurricanes, typhoons, volcanic eruptions, and other natural disasters. These winds can uproot people if their roots are not firmly anchored to the Rock of our salvation, which is the teachings and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Be firmly rooted in gospel principles

We as a people are to live our religion and its principles and follow the leadership of our prophet, seer, and revelator regardless of what the world does. We should strive always to be obedient to our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and should keep in mind these words of the Savior: "I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise."¹⁸

The Lord has reserved this land as the place for the restoration of his church. For this land to achieve its full potential, its citizens must remain rooted firmly in the principles that made it great. The enemies of God are attacking the core foundations of this land. The Lord's law for this land is declared in the Book of Mormon, where we read that this land is a "land of promise" that "the Lord God had preserved for a righteous people. . . . And whatsoever nation shall possess it shall serve God, or they shall be swept off."¹⁹ The only power strong enough to withstand a fulness of iniquity is the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As we understand and live the fundamental principles, we will develop unshakable testimonies and convictions of their truth that will keep us from ever being swayed or uprooted.

Our Heavenly Father has endowed us with hearts of courage and faith, with strong wills, and with the ability to understand and to see clearly the difference between right and wrong, good and evil. He mercifully has clothed each member with the gift of the Holy Ghost, which gives us insight and personal power.

Even though the tasks of life become heavy, and although sorrow thrusts a drooping burden upon us, the light that emanates from our Savior beckons us on, undismayed. A righteous self-discipline can and will rule our lives.

The Church will never compromise

In closing I should like to state this: Our church does not and will not in any way compromise its position, and never at any time or place does it falter, hesitate, or show any reluctance to bear unwavering testimony to the divinity of Jesus Christ. Let us not forget the two giant trees we observed in Molokai whose roots were not strong or deep enough for the trees to withstand the heavy winds that destroyed them.

I bear testimony that we can find peace, security, and joy and happiness in the principles of the gospel. I know our Heavenly Father lives and that his Son, Jesus Christ, is our Savior and Redeemer. They know and love each one of us. The gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. We are led by a prophet today, President Howard W. Hunter. I bear this testimony humbly in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938), p. 354.
2. Moses 4:2.
3. Abraham 3:25.
4. Matthew 7:24–27.
5. D&C 6:34.
6. D&C 130:22.
7. Moses 4:1.
8. Moses 4:3–4.
9. Moroni 7:12–13, 16–17.
10. *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), p. 277.
11. D&C 59:6.
12. Mark 16:15.
13. D&C 6:3.
14. D&C 123:12.
15. Articles of Faith 1:11.
16. D&C 42:58.
17. Ephesians 4:14.
18. D&C 82:10.
19. Ether 2:7, 9.