

By keeping the temple covenants, all of God's children may be exalted. I say again that *we go to the temple to make the covenants, but we go home to keep those covenants.*

Gratitude for homes and temples

The story is told of Elder Boyd K. Packer: After traveling all over the world and seeing many exotic places, he was asked where he would go if he could go anywhere in the world he wanted. He replied, "I would go home." I feel the same way. If I were asked that same question, I would say, "I would go home and sit in a big rocking chair and take a couple of grandbabies in my arms and hope that a little of the heavenly dust they still have on them would rub off on me." I'm grateful for homes where we can go to learn how to love, how to share, how to be Christlike.

I am grateful for temples where we can go to be sealed together as families for eternity. I am grateful for temples where we can go to pray and to worship,

where we can call down the blessings of heaven upon our families. I am grateful for temples where we can go as families to strengthen the eternal bonds that will make us forever families, where we can go to do the great redemptive work for our forefathers, who cannot do it for themselves, even as Jesus did for us what we cannot do for ourselves. I am grateful that God in his eternal wisdom has made these blessings available to all of his children. Some, however, have to wait until the hereafter to enjoy these blessings. But all who live worthily will have every blessing. I testify that Jesus loved to go to the temple. Part of becoming more Christlike is learning to love to go to the temple. I pray that we may become eternal families, that we may have eternal life. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 18:18.
2. In Conference Report, Oct. 1994, p. 8; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, p. 8; italics added.
3. In Conference Report, Oct. 1994, p. 118; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, p. 88; italics added.

Bishop Merrill J. Bateman

Brothers and sisters, I express deep appreciation for the marvelous impact that President Howard W. Hunter had on Church members in his short period as prophet. From Hawaii to West Africa, I have seen members responding to his challenge for us to be more Christlike and a temple-worshipping people.

Today I sustain President Gordon B. Hinckley as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of the Church. As I watched the press conference that announced the new First Presidency, the Holy Spirit bore witness to me of his prophetic calling and the preparation that had preceded it. I also felt then and feel today the same confirmation regarding President Thomas S. Monson and

President James E. Faust as his counselors, and President Boyd K. Packer as Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve. And today I felt the Spirit with regard to Elder Henry B. Eyring. The Lord's way of preparing prophets is a marvelous work and a wonder.

Lessons taught by death

A short time ago I attended the funeral of a friend's son. Earlier in the week, the young man was traveling home late at night with friends when the driver of another car fell asleep. The second car crossed the median and smashed head-on into the first. The accident occurred with such swiftness that few,

if any, brake marks showed on the highway and both cars were demolished. The accident took three lives, including my friend's seventeen-year-old son.

In reflecting on the accident, I have thought about the lessons taught by death—particularly the death of a loved one. The first lesson is that life is short whether one dies at seventeen or at eighty. To a seventeen-year-old, eighty years seems like an eternity. But to a seventy-year-old, eighty years is not a long probationary period.

Second, death reminds us that there is a spirit in man. As we viewed the remains of our young friend, it was obvious that more than blood had left his body. The light of his spirit no longer animated his facial expression or twinkled in his eyes. He too had given up the ghost but at a tender, young age.

Another lesson taught by death concerns the importance of eternal families. Just as there are parents to greet a newborn on earth, the scriptures teach that caring family members greet the spirits in paradise and assist them in the adjustments to a new life (see Genesis 25:8; 35:29; 49:33). While I was standing before the casket, the thought came that separation was not only a shock for the parents but also for the young man as he suddenly found himself on the other side of the veil. I suspect that he would like to tell his parents once more how much he loves them. Brothers and sisters, heaven exists only if families are eternal.

A fourth lesson, and perhaps the most important, concerns the purpose of life. To be meaningful, life must be more than the ephemeral pleasures of youth. There must be a plan. Death, even if accidental, must be part of the plan. Developing faith in and coming to know one's Maker is at the core of the plan. Having hope with regard to one's eternal destiny and experiencing joy must also be part of life's purpose.

Atonement heals grief, sorrow, and sin

Death teaches that we do not experience a fulness of joy in mortality and that everlasting joy can be achieved only with the assistance of the Master (see D&C 93:33–34). Just as the lame man at the pool of Bethesda needed someone stronger than himself to be healed (see John 5:1–9), so we are dependent on the miracles of Christ's atonement if our souls are to be made whole from grief, sorrow, and sin. If grieving parents and loved ones have faith in the Savior and his plan, death's sting is softened as Jesus bears the believers' grief and comforts them through the Holy Spirit. Through Christ, broken hearts are mended and peace replaces anxiety and sorrow. Last week I received a letter from the boy's parents telling me of the peace they have found through their faith in Christ. They know that they will see their son again and be with him in the eternities. As Isaiah stated concerning the Savior, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: . . . And with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:4–5).

The prophet Alma also spoke of Christ's healing power as he taught the Gideonites. Referring to Christ, Alma stated that he would "go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people. And he will take upon him . . . their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, . . . that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people" (Alma 7:11–12). Whatever the source of pain, Jesus understands and can heal the spirit as well as the body.

The Savior, as a member of the Godhead, knows each of us personally. Isaiah and the prophet Abinadi said that when Christ would "make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed" (Isaiah 53:10; compare Mosiah 15:10).

Abinadi explains that “his seed” are the righteous, those who follow the prophets (see Mosiah 15:11). In the garden and on the cross, Jesus saw each of us and not only bore our sins but also experienced our deepest feelings so he would know how to comfort and strengthen us.

The power to heal from within

As part of his redeeming power, Jesus can remove the sting of death or restore the spiritual health of a struggling soul. The scriptures are filled with examples, but a young Korean sister indelibly taught me this lesson. In early 1994, while attending a stake conference in Seoul, Korea, I met Kim Young Hee, a young woman in her twenties. I noticed her beautiful countenance as she sat in a wheelchair on the stand waiting to speak. When her turn came, a brother pushed her chair to the front of the stand but off to the side of the pulpit so she could see and be seen. He gave her a microphone, and she told us her story.

As a young woman, she was healthy, had an excellent job, and was content with life. She was not a Christian. In 1987 she was in a terrible car accident that left her paralyzed from the waist down. Following her recovery in a hospital, she returned to her parents' home wondering what life held for her. She was despondent and empty. One day a knock came at the door. Her mother answered, and two American women asked to share a message about Jesus Christ. The mother was hesitant, but the daughter heard their voices and invited them in. They were missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Kim Young Hee accepted the invitation to receive the missionary lessons. She read the Book of Mormon, prayed about its truthfulness, attended church, and received a witness of the divinity of the Restoration. She was baptized.

As she bore her testimony in stake conference, she said: “I know that Heavenly Father does not look on the outward appearance but on the heart. I also know that the true miracle is the healing within, the change of heart, the loss of pride. Although my physical body may not be healed in mortality, my spirit has felt the healing power of the Holy Ghost. And in the Resurrection a fully restored, perfect physical body will again house my spirit, and I will receive a fulness of joy.”

As I listened, the Spirit bore witness of the great miracles of the Atonement and the Savior's power to mend broken hearts, to heal from within. The Savior's parable of the ten lepers took on new meaning. Luke describes Jesus meeting ten lepers. Upon seeing the Savior, they cried, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” Jesus responded, “Go shew yourselves unto the priests.” As they went their way, they were cleansed. One returned, fell on his face at the Master's feet, and gave thanks. Jesus said, “Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?” And then the Lord said to the one who returned, “Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole” (see Luke 17:12–19). In becoming a whole person, the grateful leper was healed inside as well as on the outside. That day nine lepers were healed skin deep, but only one had the faith to be made whole. The tenth leper and Sister Hee were changed eternally by their faith in the Savior and the healing power of his atonement.

The Atonement is intimate and infinite

The Savior's atonement in the garden and on the cross is intimate as well as infinite—infinite in that it spans the eternities, intimate in that the Savior felt each person's pains, sufferings, and sicknesses. Consequently he knows how

to carry our sorrows and relieve our burdens that we might be healed from within, be made whole persons, and receive everlasting joy in his kingdom. May our faith in the Father and the Son help each of us to become whole. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have heard from Elder J Ballard Washburn of the Seventy, followed by Bishop Merrill J. Bateman, the Presiding Bishop of the Church.

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will be our next speaker.

Elder Robert D. Hales

Expression of love for prophets

President Hinckley, President Monson, President Faust, as we raised our hands in the law of common consent during the solemn assembly, we gave our consecration, our love, and our devotion to our prophet, and we sustain the First Presidency. "We thank thee, O God, for a prophet to guide us in these latter days" (*Hymns*, no. 19).

Twice in the space of a year we have lost prophets who are very dear to us, President Ezra Taft Benson and President Howard W. Hunter. These two great prophets of God brought truth and light and joy into our lives. They conveyed to us the word of God. They taught us about the importance of family, studying the Book of Mormon, and living our lives in such a way that we would draw closer to God. They taught us the importance of being kind to one another, obeying the commandments, and how to receive a fulness of joy and merit eternal life. They have pleaded with us to live more Christlike lives, to emulate the Savior in all we do, and to qualify ourselves to be worthy of the saving and exalting blessings available only in the holy temples of the Lord. They gave us words of encouragement and wise counsel to bring more happiness and peace into our lives and into the world. We love them for their obedience and for their concern for us.

Today I join you in sustaining President Gordon B. Hinckley as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We live in a world of turmoil where we find sadness and destruction in every corner, much of which is brought about by man's failure to listen to the words of the true prophets of God. How different would the lives have been of those who lived in all dispensations if they had listened to the prophet Moses and followed the Ten Commandments?

There has always been a desperate need for the steady and reassuring voice of a living prophet of God—one who will speak the mind and will of God in showing the way to spiritual safety and personal peace and happiness.

The Lord protects Jehoshaphat's people

Our loving Heavenly Father has given the world prophets from the days of Adam. The prophets of old taught well the importance of listening to the voice of prophets. The story of Jehoshaphat found in 2 Chronicles 20 is an example. King Jehoshaphat had several great armies coming to battle with him in an attempt to possess his land. Understandably he was seized with dreadful fear, so he proclaimed a fast throughout all his kingdom and gathered the people of Judah together to plead for guidance from the Lord. Jehoshaphat