

Elder Earl C. Tingey

Honor the Sabbath day

Good morning, brothers and sisters. My subject is the Sabbath day, specifically as it relates to shopping on Sunday.

From the beginning, God has instructed prophets to teach the covenant people to honor the Sabbath day. God rested from His creative labors on the seventh day.¹ This day was blessed and sanctified as a holy day.

The fourth commandment to Moses was to “remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.”²

Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught that “Sabbath observance was a sign between ancient Israel and their God whereby the chosen people might be known.”³

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints recognize Sunday as the Sabbath in commemoration of the fact that Christ came forth from the grave on Sunday, and the Apostles commenced meeting thereafter on the first day of the week.⁴

“Keep thyself unspotted from the world”

On Sunday, August 7, 1831, the Lord revealed the following to the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day;

“For verily this is a day appointed unto you to rest from your labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High;

“Nevertheless thy vows shall be offered up in righteousness on all days and at all times;

“But remember that on this, the Lord’s day, thou shalt offer thine oblations and thy sacraments unto the Most High, confessing thy sins unto thy brethren, and before the Lord.

“And on this day thou shalt do none other thing, only let thy food be prepared with singleness of heart that thy fasting may be perfect, or, in other words, that thy joy may be full.”⁵

In a recent regional training meeting for priesthood leaders, President Gordon B. Hinckley expressed concern that members of the Church may have a tendency to take on the ways of the world. He said: “We don’t adopt them immediately, but we slowly take them on, unfortunately. . . . I wish I had the power to convert this whole Church to the observance of the Sabbath. I know our people would be more richly blessed of the Lord if they would walk in faithfulness in the observance of the Sabbath.”⁶

Do not shop on Sunday

A very important aspect of properly observing the Sabbath concerns shopping on Sunday. Unfortunately many commercial businesses and establishments are open on Sunday. The world sees no conflict in Sunday shopping. But we of the Church have been counseled and taught by prophets to keep ourselves “unspotted from the world.”⁷ We should not shop on Sunday.

President Hinckley continued with the following instruction to priesthood leaders: “There isn’t anybody in this Church who has to buy furniture on Sunday. There really isn’t. There isn’t anybody in this Church who has to buy a new automobile on Sunday, is there? No. There isn’t anybody in this Church who, with a little care and planning, has to buy groceries on Sunday. No. . . . You don’t need ice cream to be bought on Sunday. . . . You don’t need to make Sunday a day of merchandising. . . . I don’t think we need to patronize the ordinary business merchants on the Sabbath day. Why do they stay open? To get customers. Who are those customers?

Well, they are not all nonmembers of this Church. You know that and I know that."⁸

In the book of Nehemiah in the Old Testament, the people were taught to observe the Sabbath with the following instruction: "And if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day."⁹

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve has taught: "Modern-day prophets have encouraged us not to shop on Sunday. . . . Those of us who shop on the Sabbath cannot escape responsibility for encouraging businesses to remain open on that day. Essential services must be provided, but most Sabbath transactions could be avoided if merchants and customers were determined to avoid doing business on the Lord's day."¹⁰

Brothers and sisters, let's not shop on Sunday. One way we avoid this is by planning ahead. Fill up the gas tank on Saturday. Acquire the needed groceries for the weekend on Saturday. Don't you be the means of causing someone to work on Sunday because you patronize their establishment. Of course, we know that there are essential businesses that must be open on Sunday. These are emergency, medical, transportation, and some forms of protective services, such as police and fire. We are grateful for those persons who staff these essential public establishments and afford us protection and comfort.

In many countries of the world and in many states of the Union, shopping on Sunday is not done or is prohibited by law. We as a community of Saints should use our influence in a positive way to encourage other citizens to not shop on Sunday. We should start with ourselves. If we will not shop on Sunday, businesses which open on Sunday will have no financial reason to remain open on Sunday. It's really that simple.

I often drive through small rural communities of Utah on a Sunday afternoon as I return home from stake conference assignments. I observe that almost always the tractors are idle and the fields are empty. I thank God for the faith of the humble farmers. When I enter the cities, I see the parking lots of many stores filled with cars on a Sunday, and I am saddened that the Lord's law is being broken. The justification for and reason often cited by the owners and operators of such businesses is to be competitive, to conform to corporate policy, and so on.

I well remember an interview President Spencer W. Kimball once had with a faithful Church member. It went like this: "What is your occupation?" And [the man] said, 'I operate a service station.' And I asked, 'Do you operate on the Sabbath?' His answer was, 'No, I do not.' 'Well, how can you get along? Most service station operators seem to think they must open on the Sabbath.' 'I get along well,' he said. 'The Lord is good to me.' 'Do you not have stiff competition?' I asked. 'Yes, indeed,' he replied. 'Across the street is a man who keeps open all day Sunday.' 'And you never open?' I asked. 'No, sir,' he said, 'and I am grateful, and the Lord is kind, and I have sufficient for my needs.'¹¹

Our heritage of Sabbath observance

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are a covenant people. We know we live in the world, but we are taught to not be of the world. Like ancient Israel, who also were a covenant people, we should encourage the proper observance of the Sabbath day by not shopping on Sunday. Let this become a sign with our God by which we shall be known.

This is our heritage. In this dispensation, from the days of our pioneer forefathers, we have been so taught. I recall a talk given by President Hinckley several years ago wherein he said:

"May I take you back 142 years when there was, of course, no tabernacle here, nor temple, nor Temple Square. On July 24, 1847, the pioneer company of our people came into this valley. An advance group had arrived a day or two earlier. Brigham Young arrived on Saturday. The next day, Sabbath services were held both in the morning and in the afternoon. There was no hall of any kind in which to meet. I suppose that in the blistering heat of that July Sunday they sat on the tongues of their wagons and leaned against the wheels while the Brethren spoke. The season was late, and they were faced with a gargantuan and immediate task if they were to grow seed for the next season. But President Young pleaded with them not to violate the Sabbath then or in the future."¹²

Can we possibly imagine how tempting it must have been for our pioneer forefathers to break the Sabbath day? Their survival depended on the food they could grow and harvest. Yet their leaders counseled them to exercise faith in the promises of the Lord and to respect the Sabbath day.

Blessings for honoring the Sabbath

What are the promises and blessings of the Lord to those who honor the Sabbath day by not shopping on Sunday? The 59th section of the Doctrine and Covenants and the 26th chapter of Leviticus in the Old Testament give similar promises: The fulness of the earth is yours; the land will be blessed with rain and will yield its increase; there will be peace in the land; and God will magnify His faithful people, have respect for them, and establish His covenant with them.¹³

As another blessing—and a warning—I think of the counsel of President George Albert Smith when he said, "Much of the sorrow and distress that is

afflicting . . . mankind is traceable to the fact that they have ignored [God's] admonition to keep the Sabbath day holy."¹⁴

A measure of the depth of conversion

In conclusion, and appropriate to this beautiful Easter season, our observance of the Sabbath is an indication of the depth of our conversion and our willingness to keep sacred covenants. Elder Mark E. Petersen has said:

"Our observance or nonobservance of the Sabbath is an unerring measure of our attitude toward the Lord personally and toward his suffering in Gethsemane, his death on the cross, and his resurrection from the dead. It is a sign of whether we are Christians in very deed, or whether our conversion is so shallow that commemoration of his atoning sacrifice means little or nothing to us."¹⁵

I bear humble witness of the sanctity of the Sabbath day and of our need to resolve not to shop on Sunday. It is an element of our faith and obedience to eternal principles. It is a sign between our God and His chosen people. It is a true law and commandment of God. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. See Moses 3:3; Genesis 2:2–3.
2. Exodus 20:8.
3. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (1966), 658; see also Nehemiah 13:15–22; Isaiah 56:1–8; Jeremiah 17:19–27; Ezekiel 46:1–7; Exodus 31:12–17.
4. See John 20:1–19; Luke 24:1–12; Mark 16:1–9; Matthew 28:1–6; Acts 20:7.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 59:9–13.
6. Heber City–Springville Utah regional conference, priesthood leadership session, 13 May 1995.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 59:9; James 1:27.
8. Heber City–Springville Utah regional conference, priesthood leadership session, 13 May 1995.

9. Nehemiah 10:31.
10. In Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 26; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 21.
11. *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (1982), 227.
12. In Conference Report, Oct. 1989, 68; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 51.
13. See Doctrine and Covenants 59:16–19; Leviticus 26:2–6, 9.
14. In Conference Report, Oct. 1935, 120.
15. In Conference Report, Apr. 1975, 72; or *Ensign*, May 1975, 49.

President Hinckley

Elder Earl C. Tingey of the Seventy has just spoken to us.

The chorus and congregation will now join in singing “How Firm a Foundation.” Following this we will hear from Sister Chieko Okazaki, first counselor in the general Relief Society presidency.

The chorus and congregation sang “How Firm a Foundation.”

Sister Chieko N. Okazaki

We are all one in Christ

My dear brothers and sisters, aloha! In February I rejoiced with you when the number of members outside the United States edged ever so slightly past the number of members inside the United States. That slight shift is an important symbol of the international nature of the Church. I thought of Paul’s statement to the Galatians: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). This week I celebrate the 54th anniversary of my baptism. People like me who are converts know the promise of Paul: “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body” (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Brothers and sisters, today I want to talk about the beautiful oneness that we share in the gospel. I just returned from the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Tonga, and Fiji three weeks ago, where Sister Susan Warner and I participated in leadership training. Earlier assignments have taken me to Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, Samoa, Korea, and Japan.

In all these places we worked hard and long. People have said, “Oh, you must have been so tired.” On the contrary, there was a feeling of being borne up “as on eagles’ wings” (D&C 124:18) because we have seen the daughters of Zion “awake, and arise . . . and put on [their] beautiful garments” (Moroni 10:31) in response to the good news of the gospel. We taught, but—and this is the point I want to stress—we also learned.

The most important lesson was that we are truly all one in Christ Jesus. We are one in our love of the Savior. We are one in our testimonies of the gospel. We are one in faith, hope, and charity. We are one in our conviction that the Book of Mormon is the inspired word of God. We are one in supporting President Hinckley and the other General Authorities. We are one in loving each other.

Are we perfect in any of these things? No. We all have much to learn. Are we exactly the same in any of these things? No. We are all at different points on our journey back to our Father in Heaven. Did the Jews and Greeks whom Paul addressed in his epistle to the Galatians stop being Jews and Greeks when