

President Hinckley

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has just spoken to us, and the Tabernacle

Choir has sung "Come, Ye Children of the Lord."

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

"Always have his Spirit"

I have chosen to speak about the relationship between our partaking of the sacrament and our enjoying the blessings available from the gift of the Holy Ghost.

In modern revelation the Lord commanded, "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" (D&C 59:9). As we partake of the sacrament each week, we ponder the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ and we reaffirm and renew the covenants we made when we were baptized. These acts of worship and commitment are described in the revealed prayer the priest offers upon the bread. As stated in that prayer, we partake of the bread "in remembrance of the body" of our Savior, and by doing so we witness to God, the Eternal Father, "that [we] are willing to take upon [us] the name of [his] Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given [us]" (D&C 20:77).

After we were baptized, hands were laid upon our heads and we were given the gift of the Holy Ghost. When we consciously and sincerely renew our baptismal covenants as we partake of the sacrament, we renew our qualification for the promise "that [we] may always have his Spirit to be with [us]" (D&C 20:77).

We cannot overstate the importance of that promise. President Wilford Woodruff called the gift of the Holy Ghost the greatest gift we can receive in mortality

(see *The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, ed. G. Homer Durham [1990], 5). Unfortunately the great value of that gift and the important conditions for its fulfillment are not well understood. Nephi prophesied that in the last days churches would be built up that would "teach with their learning, and deny the Holy Ghost, which giveth utterance" (2 Nephi 28:4). He also pronounced "wo" upon "him that hearkeneth unto the precepts of men, and denieth the power of God, and the gift of the Holy Ghost!" (v. 26).

Scriptural teachings about the Holy Ghost

The Bible tells us that when the Savior gave His final instructions to His disciples, He promised that He would send them "the Comforter" (John 16:7). Earlier He had taught them the mission of this Comforter, who is otherwise referred to as the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Lord, or simply the Spirit. That Comforter dwells in us (see John 14:17). He teaches us all things and brings all things to our remembrance (see John 14:26). He guides us into truth and shows us things to come (see John 16:13). He testifies of the Son (see John 15:26; 1 Corinthians 12:3). The Bible also teaches that the Savior and His servants will baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire (see Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; John 1:33; Acts 1:5). I will speak of the meaning of that teaching later.

The Bible's teachings about the Holy Ghost are reaffirmed and elaborated in the Book of Mormon and in modern rev-

elations. The Holy Ghost is the means by which God inspires and reveals His will to His children (see, for example, D&C 8:2-3). The Holy Ghost bears record of the Father and of the Son (see 3 Nephi 28:11; D&C 20:27; 42:17). He enlightens our minds and fills us with joy (see D&C 11:13). By the power of the Holy Ghost we may know the truth of all things (see Moroni 10:5). By His power we may have the mysteries of God unfolded to us (see 1 Nephi 10:19), all things which are expedient (see D&C 18:18; 39:6). The Holy Ghost shows us what we should do (see 2 Nephi 32:5). We teach the gospel as we are directed by the Holy Ghost, which carries our words into the hearts of those we teach (see 2 Nephi 33:1).

Latter-day scriptures also teach that the remission of sins, which is made possible by the Atonement, comes "by baptism, and by fire, yea, even the Holy Ghost" (D&C 19:31; see also 2 Nephi 31:17). Thus, the Risen Lord pleaded with the Nephites to repent and come unto Him and be baptized "that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day" (3 Nephi 27:20).

A distinguishing part of our faith

The gift of the Holy Ghost is so important to our faith that a prophet gave it unique emphasis in a conversation with the president of the United States. Joseph Smith had journeyed to Washington to seek help in recovering compensation for injuries and losses the Saints had suffered in the Missouri persecutions. In his meeting with the president, Joseph was asked how this Church differed from the other religions of the day. The Prophet replied that "we differed in mode of baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands" (*History of the Church*, 4:42). He later explained that this answer was given because "all other considerations

were contained in the gift of the Holy Ghost" (*History of the Church*, 4:42).

In highlighting the gift of the Holy Ghost as a distinguishing characteristic of our faith, we need to understand the important differences between (1) the Light of Christ, (2) a manifestation of the Holy Ghost, and (3) the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The Light of Christ

The Light of Christ, which is sometimes called the Spirit of Christ or the Spirit of God, "giveth light to every man that cometh into the world" (D&C 84:46). This is the light "which is in all things, which giveth life to all things" (D&C 88:13). The prophet Mormon taught that "the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil" (Moroni 7:16; see also v. 19; 2 Nephi 2:5; Helaman 14:31). Elder Lorenzo Snow spoke of this light when he said, "Everybody has the Spirit of God" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 14:304). The Light of Christ enlightens and gives understanding to all men (see D&C 88:11).

Manifestations of the Holy Ghost

In contrast, a manifestation of the Holy Ghost is more focused. This manifestation is given to acquaint sincere seekers with the truth about the Lord and His gospel. For example, the prophet Moroni promises that when we study the Book of Mormon and seek to know whether it is true, sincerely and with real intent, God will "manifest the truth of it unto [us], by the power of the Holy Ghost" (Moroni 10:4). Moroni also records this promise from the Risen Lord: "He that believeth these things which I have spoken, him will I visit with the manifestations of my Spirit, and he shall know and bear record. For because of my Spirit he shall know that these things are true" (Ether 4:11).

These manifestations are available to everyone. The Book of Mormon declares that the Savior “manifesteth himself unto all those who believe in him, by the power of the Holy Ghost; yea, unto every nation, kindred, tongue, and people” (2 Nephi 26:13).

To repeat, the Light of Christ is given to all men and women that they may know good from evil; manifestations of the Holy Ghost are given to lead sincere seekers to gospel truths that will persuade them to repentance and baptism.

The gift of the Holy Ghost

The gift of the Holy Ghost is more comprehensive. The Prophet Joseph Smith explained: “There is a difference between the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Cornelius received the Holy Ghost before he was baptized, which was the convincing power of God unto him of the truth of the Gospel, but he could not receive the *gift* of the Holy Ghost until after he was baptized. Had he not taken this sign or ordinance upon him, the Holy Ghost which convinced him of the truth of God, would have left him” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 199; italics added).

The gift of the Holy Ghost includes the right to constant companionship, that we may “always have his Spirit to be with [us]” (D&C 20:77).

A newly baptized member told me what she felt when she received that gift. This was a faithful Christian woman who had spent her life in service to others. She knew and loved the Lord, and she had felt the manifestations of His Spirit. When she received the added light of the restored gospel, she was baptized and the elders placed their hands upon her head and gave her the gift of the Holy Ghost. She recalled, “I felt the influence of the Holy Ghost settle upon

me with greater intensity than I had ever felt before. He was like an old friend who had guided me in the past but now had come to stay.”

For faithful members of the Church of Jesus Christ, the companionship of the Holy Spirit should be so familiar that we must use care not to take it for granted. For example, that good feeling you have felt during the messages and music of this conference is a confirming witness of the Spirit, available to faithful members on a continuing basis. A member once asked me why he felt so good about the talks and music in a sacrament meeting, while a guest he had invited that day apparently experienced no such feeling. This is but one illustration of the contrast between one who has the gift of the Holy Ghost and is in tune with His promptings and one who has not, or is not.

If we are practicing our faith and seeking the companionship of the Holy Spirit, His presence can be felt in our hearts and in our homes. A family having daily family prayers and seeking to keep the commandments of God and honor His name and speak lovingly to one another will have a spiritual feeling in their home that will be discernible to all who enter it. I know this because I have felt the presence or absence of that feeling in many LDS homes.

It is important to remember that the illumination and revelation that come to an individual as a result of the gift of the Holy Ghost do not come suddenly or without seeking. President Spencer W. Kimball taught that the Holy Ghost “comes a little at a time as you merit it. And as your life is in harmony, you gradually receive the Holy Ghost in a great measure” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 114).

The blessings available through the gift of the Holy Ghost are conditioned upon worthiness. “The Spirit of the Lord doth not dwell in unholy temples” (Hela-

man 4:24; see also Mosiah 2:36–37; 1 Corinthians 3:16–17). Even though we have a right to His constant companionship, the Spirit of the Lord will dwell with us only when we keep the commandments. He will withdraw when we offend Him by profanity, uncleanness, disobedience, rebellion, or other serious sins.

Worthy men and women who have the gift of the Holy Ghost can be edified and guided by inspiration and revelation. The Lord has declared that “the mysteries of his kingdom . . . are only to be seen and understood by the power of the Holy Spirit, which God bestows on those who love him, and purify themselves before him” (D&C 76:114, 116).

A few years ago I met with a prospective mission president and his wife to discuss their availability for service. I asked whether their responsibilities to aged parents would preclude their service at that time. This sister was the only daughter of a wonderful mother, then about 80, whom she visited and helped each week. Though somewhat dependent physically, this mother was strong spiritually. She had served four missions and 15 years as a temple worker. Because she was in tune with the Spirit, she had a remarkable experience. Several months before this interview, she told her daughter that the Spirit had whispered that her daughter’s husband would be called as a mission president. So advised, the mother had prepared herself for the needed separation and assured her daughter, long in advance of my assignment for the exploratory interview, that she would “not be a hindrance” to their service.

Renew covenants to have His Spirit

The need to keep our personal temple clean in order to have the companionship and guidance of the Holy Ghost explains the importance of the commandment to partake of the sacrament on the Sabbath.

In partaking of the sacrament, we can renew the effects of our baptism. When we desire a remission of our sins through the Atonement of our Savior, we are commanded to repent and come to Him with a broken heart and a contrite spirit (see 3 Nephi 9:20; 12:19; Moroni 6:2; D&C 20:37). In the waters of baptism we witness to the Lord that we have repented of our sins and are willing to take His name upon us and serve Him to the end (see D&C 20:37). The effects are described by Nephi: “For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost” (2 Nephi 31:17; see also Moroni 6:4). That last promise is fulfilled as a result of our receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The renewal of our covenants by partaking of the sacrament should also be preceded by repentance, so we come to that sacred ordinance with a broken heart and a contrite spirit (see 2 Nephi 2:7; 3 Nephi 12:19; D&C 59:8). Then, as we renew our baptismal covenants and affirm that we will “always remember him” (D&C 20:77), the Lord will renew the promised remission of our sins, under the conditions and at the time He chooses. One of the primary purposes and effects of this renewal of covenants and cleansing from sin is “that [we] may always have his Spirit to be with [us]” (D&C 20:77).

Attitude when taking the sacrament

My brothers and sisters, I solemnly witness to you that these doctrines and principles are true. In view of these truths, I plead with all members of the Church, young and old, to attend sacrament meeting each Sabbath day and to partake of the sacrament with the repentant attitude described as “a broken heart and a contrite spirit” (3 Nephi 9:20). I pray that we will do so with the reverence and worship of our Savior that will signify a serious covenant to “always remember

him" (D&C 20:77). The Savior himself has said that we should partake "with an eye single to my glory—remembering unto the Father my body which was laid down for you, and my blood which was shed for the remission of your sins" (D&C 27:2).

I pray that we will also partake of the sacrament with the submissive manner that will help us accept and serve in Church callings in order to comply with our solemn covenant to take His name and His work upon us. I also plead for us to comply with our solemn covenant to keep His commandments.

Promises of the sacrament

To those brothers and sisters who may have allowed themselves to become lax in this vital renewal of the covenants of the sacrament, I plead in words of the First Presidency that you "come back and feast at the table of the Lord, and taste again the sweet and satisfying fruits of fellowship with the saints" ("An Invitation to Come Back," *Church News*, 22 Dec. 1985, 3). Let us qualify ourselves for our Savior's promise that by partaking of the sacrament we will "be filled" (3 Nephi 20:8; see also 3 Nephi 18:9), which means that we will be "filled with the Spirit" (3 Nephi 20:9). That Spirit—the Holy Ghost—is our comforter, our direction finder, our communicator, our interpreter, our witness, and our purifier—our infallible guide and sanctifier for our mortal journey toward eternal life.

Any who may have thought it a small thing to partake of the sacrament should remember the Lord's declaration that the foundation of a great work is laid by small things, for "out of small things proceedeth that which is great" (D&C 64:33). Out of the seemingly small act of consciously and reverently renewing our baptismal covenants comes a renewal of the blessings of baptism by water and by the Spirit, that we may always have His Spirit to be with us. In this way all of us will be guided, and in this way all of us can be cleansed. That we may qualify for these precious blessings is my humble prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Consider the Lilies."

President Hinckley

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has spoken to us. The choir then sang "Consider the Lilies."

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "High on the Mountain Top." We shall then hear from Bishop Richard C. Edgley, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

The choir and congregation sang "High on the Mountain Top."

Bishop Richard C. Edgley

"We care enough to send our very best"

Today I would like to address my remarks to those not of our faith who are joining us in these proceedings. I speak as one of approximately 100,000 mothers

and fathers of more than 50,000 missionaries from our Church who are serving the Lord in all parts of the world. Paraphrasing the slogan of a prominent greeting card company, "We care enough to send our very best."¹