

erences were expressed, the moment their eyes saw the words "You are hereby assigned to serve in the (blank) mission," without exception a wonderful feeling of good and right came over each family member. We each knew that a prophet had guided a divine selection process to which four of our children have gladly responded. Tens of thousands of returned missionaries can also testify of this process and the divine inspiration of their own missionary calling.

Church service is based on revelation

I never completely satisfied little Kami's question that night. Over the years, we have recalled that challenging evening when a small child was a bit overwhelmed with life. We have explored other scriptures and many other stories since that time. We have received the wonderful promise to those the Savior had chosen "that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it [to] you" (John 15:16).

That promise—of answer to our prayers—is directed even to a small

child. This was reaffirmed recently when I heard Kami, now 15 years old, respond to a question directed to her by an adult friend: "How come you were so lucky to live in Hong Kong when you were a child?" She looked directly at me as she gave her answer to our friend: "It wasn't luck; we 'were chosen.'"

That personal and prophetic revelation is the foundation upon which our Church service is firmly based is my witness, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Faust

We have just listened to Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, followed by Elder Monte J. Brough of the Presidency of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." Elder Sheldon F. Child of the Seventy will then speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

Elder Sheldon F. Child

His word was as good as his bond

I was raised on a small farm in northern Utah. We were blessed to have enough land—not enough to make a living, but enough to make work for a young boy. My parents were good, hard-working, industrious people. In order to make ends meet, my father took outside employment. Each morning before he left for work, he would make a list of chores he wanted me to accomplish before he came home that evening.

I remember on one occasion one of the items on the list was to take a small broken part from our hay rake to the blacksmith shop to have it repaired. I

was uncomfortable about going. My father hadn't left any money, and I wondered what I should do. I put off going as long as I could. When all my other chores were finished, I knew I couldn't avoid it any longer. Father expected the broken part to be repaired when he came home, and it was my responsibility to see that it was done.

I can still remember walking the mile or so to the blacksmith shop. I even remember how uncomfortable I was as I watched him weld the part. As he finished, I nervously told him that I had no money, but that my father would pay him later. I'm sure he sensed my anxiety. He patted me on the shoulder and said,

"Son, don't worry, *your father's word is as good as his bond.*" I remember running all the way home, relieved that the part had been repaired and grateful that my father was known as a man whose word was as good as his bond.

As a boy I didn't fully understand what that meant, but I knew it was good and something to be desired. It was years later that I recognized that a person whose word is as good as his bond is a person of honesty and integrity, a person to be trusted. In today's world, there are some who think nothing of breaking their word, their promises, their covenants with man and with God. What a blessing it is to deal with those whom we can trust.

Nephi and Zoram could be trusted

A powerful example of this can be found in the Book of Mormon. You will remember the assignment given to Nephi and his brothers by their father, Lehi, to go to Jerusalem to obtain the plates of brass from Laban. After an unsuccessful attempt, the brothers desired to return to their father in the wilderness. Nephi recognized that they had a task to perform, an assignment to fulfill. He stated, "We will not go down unto our father in the wilderness until we have accomplished the thing which the Lord hath commanded us."¹ They tried again, and again they failed. Nephi then "crept into the city and went forth towards the house of Laban."² It was there that he found Laban drunken with wine and obeyed the voice of the Spirit, which said to him: "Slay him, for the Lord hath delivered him into thy hands. . . . It is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief."³ Then, putting on the clothes of Laban, he went to the treasury and obtained the plates. Nephi had accomplished that which he had been sent to do.

But we must not overlook the powerful example of Laban's servant, Zoram.

Nephi commanded Zoram to follow him as he left the treasury, and it was only when he called to his brothers that Zoram realized that it was Nephi and not Laban whom he had followed. The scriptures tell us that Zoram "began to tremble, and was about to flee,"⁴ when Nephi seized him and told him he need not fear, that he should be a free man if he would go down into the wilderness with them. Zoram promised that he would; he gave his word. And Nephi said that "when Zoram had made an oath unto us, our fears did cease concerning him."⁵ He was a man to be trusted; his oath was binding; his word was as good as his bond.

Honesty is essential today

Honesty and integrity are not old-fashioned principles. They are just as viable in today's world. We have been taught in the Church that:

When we say we will do something, we do it.

When we make a commitment, we honor it.

When we are given a calling, we fulfill it.

When we borrow something, we return it.

When we have a financial obligation, we pay it.

When we enter into an agreement, we keep it.

President N. Eldon Tanner related the following experience:

"A young man came to me not long ago and said, 'I made an agreement with a man that requires me to make certain payments each year. I am in arrears, and I can't make those payments, for if I do, it is going to cause me to lose my home. What shall I do?'

"I looked at him and said, 'Keep your agreement.'

"'Even if it costs me my home?'

"I said, 'I am not talking about your home. I am talking about your agreement; and I think your wife would rather

have a husband who would keep his word, meet his obligations, keep his pledges or his covenants, and have to rent a home than to have a home with a husband who will not keep his covenants and his pledges."⁶

We are all familiar with the statement "Honesty is the best policy." For members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, honesty is the *only* policy. We must be honest with our fellowmen. We must be honest with our God. We are honest with God when we honor the covenants we make with Him.

Be honest with God by keeping covenants

We are a covenant-making people. We make covenants at the waters of baptism.⁷ We renew those covenants each week as we worthily partake of the sacrament. We take upon ourselves the name of Christ; we promise to always remember Him and to keep His commandments. And in return He promises us that His Spirit will always be with us. We make covenants as we enter into the temple, and in return we receive the promised blessings of eternal life—if we keep those sacred covenants.

Covenants with God are not to be taken lightly. In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord tells us, "I will prove you in all things, whether you will abide in my covenant, even unto death, that you may be found worthy."⁸

The account of the Anti-Nephi-Lehies in the Book of Mormon is a touching example of this. Ammon and his brethren spent 14 years preaching to the Lamanite people. Thousands were brought to the knowledge of the truth, and those who were converted unto the Lord "never did fall away."⁹ "For they were perfectly honest and upright in all things; and they were firm in the faith of Christ, even unto the end."¹⁰ They were so grateful for the mercy of God that

they covenanted with Him "that rather than shed the blood of their brethren they would give up their own lives."¹¹ You will remember that they buried their weapons of war in the ground. They were so true to that covenant that even when the armies of the Lamanites came upon them, "they went out to meet them, and prostrated themselves before them to the earth, and began to call on the name of the Lord."¹² They offered no resistance. Many were slain. These people were willing to die rather than break the covenant that they had made with the Lord.

Rewards of honesty

In our dealings with both God and our fellowmen, let us be examples of honesty and integrity. Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin tells us:

"The rewards of integrity are immeasurable. One is the indescribable inner peace that comes from knowing we are doing what is right; another is an absence of the guilt and anxiety that accompany sin. Another reward of integrity is the confidence it can give us in approaching God. . . . The consummate reward of integrity is the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. . . . Let us live true to the trust the Lord has placed in us."¹³

It is my prayer that we may honor the commitments and covenants that we make with God and with our fellowmen, that it can be said of each of us, "Our word is as good as our bond." In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. 1 Nephi 3:15.
2. 1 Nephi 4:5.
3. 1 Nephi 4:12–13.
4. 1 Nephi 4:30.
5. 1 Nephi 4:37.
6. In Conference Report, Oct. 1966, 99; or *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1966, 1137.
7. See Mosiah 18:8–10.

8. Doctrine and Covenants 98:14.
9. Alma 23:6.
10. Alma 27:27.
11. Alma 24:18.
12. Alma 24:21.
13. *Finding Peace in Our Lives* (1995), 193–94.

President Faust

Elder Sheldon F. Child of the Seventy has just spoken to us.

Elder Dennis E. Simmons of the Seventy will be our next speaker. He will be followed by Elder Jerald L. Taylor of the Seventy.

Elder Dennis E. Simmons

“My peace I give unto you”

During the last few days of the Savior’s mortal ministry, He finalized His instruction to His Apostles. They had been with Him during His three-year ministry, but now He completed His teaching that had come line upon line and precept upon precept as rapidly as they had been able to receive it.

Knowing the end of His ministry was near, He told them of His impending departure: “Yet a little while I am with you. . . . Whither I go, ye cannot come” (John 13:33).

Fear, frustration, and concern must have gripped these humble disciples. Jesus had been their security, their help, their light. What could they do without His direction, His instruction, His example, His comfort?

In love and compassion, the Master assured them:

“I will not leave you comfortless” (John 14:18).

“I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

“Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

“ . . . He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:16–17, 26).

To His apostolic friends and for the benefit of all believers, Jesus added a significant benediction: “Peace I leave with you, *my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*” (John 14:27; italics added).

The scriptures testify that the promise was fulfilled in the lives of His servants in the meridian of time. We testify that the fulfillment continues in this dispensation of the fulness of times.

Peace in the midst of tribulation

It should be noted that Jesus promised *His* peace—not the peace that the world gives. The world cries out for freedom from war, from violence, from oppression, from injustice, from contention, from disease and distress. That the Savior did not expect such worldly peace is clear from His concluding remark as He finished His special teaching to His Apostles: “These things I have spoken unto you, that *in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world*” (John 16:33; italics added).

In mortality tribulation would continue. But in the midst of that tribulation His followers would have peace in Him. In other words, even if all the world is crumbling around us, the promised Comforter will provide His peace as a result of true discipleship. Ultimate total