

have been amplified and clarified by subsequent prophets. (2) Our protection from erroneous doctrine lies in an overriding belief in continuing revelation to the current prophet.

President Harold B. Lee spoke of this by relating an experience:

"Years ago as a young missionary I visited Nauvoo and Carthage with my mission president, and we were holding a missionary meeting in the jail room where Joseph and Hyrum had met their deaths. The mission president related the historical events that led up to the martyrdom and then he closed with this very significant statement: 'When the Prophet Joseph Smith was martyred, there were many saints who died spiritually with Joseph.' So it was when Brigham Young died: so it was when John Taylor died. Do revelations given to President John Taylor, for example, have any more authority than something that comes from our president and prophet today? Some Church members died spiritually with Wilford Woodruff, with Lorenzo Snow, with Joseph F. Smith, with Heber J. Grant, with George Albert Smith. We have some today willing to believe someone who is dead and gone and to accept his words as having more authority than the words of a living authority today" (*Stand Ye in Holy Places* [1974], 153).

President Lee amplified this by telling of his response to a man who was disturbed at a new policy of the Church which was different from one established in the time of Joseph Smith. He said to this questioning brother:

"Have you ever thought that what was contrary to the order of heaven in 1840 might not be contrary to the order of heaven in 1960?' He had not thought of that. He again was following a dead prophet, and he was forgetting that there is a living prophet today. Hence the importance of our stressing that word *living*" (*Stand Ye in Holy Places*, 153).

### An ongoing stream of revelation

In summary, the Church is founded on continuing revelation to a current, living prophet. "Many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" have been revealed, and more are yet to be revealed through the living prophet. Beginning with Joseph Smith and continuing on to his successors as President of the Church, the ongoing stream of revelation has perfected our understanding of the gospel. The understanding of doctrines is more complete as taught by the Church today than at any prior time in this dispensation. Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder Gordon T. Watts

### Gratitude

As a young boy, life on our small family farm was heaven. Often in our humble home there were not as many shingles as we had roof. The rest-room facility was connected by a long path that required some advance planning, and sometimes my worn shirt had more buttonholes than buttons. The Saturday night bath in front of a warm stove,

where your body experienced both extremes in temperature, was a luxury.

Then something changed. I started school and began to notice possessions I had not known. Some had nice clothing, beautiful homes with all the modern conveniences, and drove newer automobiles. Many my age were not required to arise early and do chores before going to school, only to go home at night and do them all over again. While they were

popular and confident, I became backward and shy. Regretfully, I began to forget how happy I had been with my basket of blessings as I indulged in comparing their seemingly endless bushels to mine. Thus, the blinders to humility began distorting reality, giving way to ingratitude. The expectation that more is deserved can cause our plate of plenty to appear empty. Gratitude has many faces and takes on many forms. Failure to recognize the Lord for all we have will soon result in selfish behavior.

### **"But where are the nine?"**

The Savior, though always the giver, was seldom the receiver of gratitude.

"And as he [Christ] entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

"And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

"And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

"And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

"And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

"And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?"<sup>1</sup>

Contemplating the Savior's question "But where are the nine?" gives cause for deep reflection. In President Hinckley's opening remarks during last April conference, he said:

"And so, my beloved brothers and sisters, let us rejoice together now as we celebrate with appreciation the wondrous doctrines and practices which have come as a gift from the Lord in this most glorious time of His work. . . . Let us ever be grateful for these most precious gifts and privileges and act well our part as those who love the Lord."<sup>2</sup>

Notwithstanding all the "precious gifts and privileges" spoken of by our prophet, oftentimes we fail to recognize our abundant blessings. More importantly, some expressions of gratitude fall short of the Lord's expectations. "And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments."<sup>3</sup>

### **Gratitude begins with attitude**

Gratitude begins with attitude. While to some every apple shines, to others the remaining blemishes after the polishing process are all that's visible. We must use caution not to be drawn into the growing populace of ungrateful people who have become calloused to blessings as they bicker in misery.

Joy and happiness are born of gratitude. Recently Sister Watts and I spent three years in another part of the world working with a very kind and gracious people. If worldly possessions equated to happiness, the majority of these Saints would be unhappy. Quite the contrary, gratitude abounds, resulting in a contagious display of rejoicing. It is evident that even though they live in a challenging environment with few advantages, they are a delightful people. A cheerfulness is generated by their gratitude for the gospel of Jesus Christ and the blessings derived from living the principles taught. One faithful district president expressed gratitude to have a bicycle for transportation to perform his calling. It seemed the more he pedaled, the happier he became. Perhaps there is a lesson here: if we are feeling ungrateful, we need to pedal a little faster. The depth and the willingness with which we serve is a direct reflection of our gratitude.

Elder James E. Talmage said, "Gratitude is twin sister to humility; pride is a foe to both."<sup>4</sup> Also, President James E. Faust has said, "A grateful heart is a beginning of greatness."<sup>5</sup>

### Gratitude in times of trial

In times of trial we can accept with gratefulness that which is to come, a gratitude for the blessings and gifts the Lord has in reserve for those who keep the commandments and serve Him in thanksgiving. An eternal friend and former neighbor who embraced the teachings of the gospel in our home so many years ago has recently felt the refiner's fire in the loss of his beloved companion. His recent words of indefinable gratitude for the gospel, temple covenants, and eternal marriage are engraved on my mind. In the passing of his sweet wife, this knowledge brings a comfort unknown to them before joining the Church. His words of "How can I ever thank you for sharing with our family this great eternal gift?" join with my own words of unspeakable gratitude to our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, for the "precious gifts and privileges" offered to us all.

"And he who receiveth all things with thankfulness shall be made glori-

ous; and the things of this earth shall be added unto him, even an hundred fold, yea, more."<sup>6</sup> God is the gracious giver, and I testify of Him and of His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### NOTES

1. Luke 17:12-17.
2. In Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 4-5; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 6.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 59:21.
4. "With the Voice of Thanksgiving," *Sunday Night Talks*, 2nd ed. (1931), 483.
5. In Conference Report, Apr. 1990, 110; or *Ensign*, May 1990, 86.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 78:19.

### President Monson

Elder Merrill C. Oaks of the Seventy has just spoken to us, followed by Elder Gordon T. Watts, also of the Seventy.

We shall now hear from Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

## Elder Russell M. Nelson

### We are children of God

Recently I observed young men who attracted attention to themselves because of their extreme styles of dress and grooming. One made a revealing remark when he said, "I'm trying to find out who I really am." This occurred after I had come from a Church meeting where Primary children had sung "I Am a Child of God."<sup>1</sup> Such contrasting experiences emphasize the importance of knowing that we are literally children of God.

We are dual beings. Each soul is comprised of body and spirit,<sup>2</sup> both of which emanate from God. A firm understanding of body and spirit will shape our thoughts and deeds for good.

### The body

The marvel of our physical bodies is often overlooked. Who has not encountered feelings of low self-esteem because of physique or appearance? Many people wish their bodies could be more to their liking. Some with naturally straight hair want it curly. Others with curly hair want it straight. Occasionally some ladies, believing that "gentlemen prefer blonds," become "decided blonds."

Your body, whatever its natural gifts, is a magnificent creation of God.<sup>3</sup> It is a tabernacle of flesh—a temple for your spirit.<sup>4</sup> A study of your body attests to its divine design.

Its formation begins with the union of two reproductive cells—one from the