

Righteousness is the only way

Righteousness is the better way. Finally, it is the only way. In righteousness is the power to provide the joy and happiness and the safety and security that men and women have longed for and searched for through all the generations of time.

It seems like such a simple solution, but the reality is that "Satan is abroad in the land, and he goeth forth deceiving the nations" (D&C 52:14). There is opposition. Right and wrong do exist. Our actions do have moral consequences. There is no right way to do a wrong thing.

As one called as a witness of Jesus Christ and to declare His gospel, I plead that you will not delay in doing all that you can, that you will strive to come to know His laws and commandments and

work with urgency to obey them. By this you will be in a process that will make you righteous and thus worthy of the promised blessings.

Jesus Christ is at the head of this work. He is a God of righteousness. In His gracious mercy, He has provided us with a righteous prophet, whom if we follow, we will be doing what is right. To the truth of this fact and the words that I have spoken, I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Faust

Elders Robert S. Wood and William R. Bradford of the Seventy have just spoken to us.

We will now be pleased to hear from Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Richard G. Scott

The Spirit motivates us to improve

Our hearts have been touched, our imaginations stirred, and our determination fortified to live better lives as a result of the messages of this conference. Many have been motivated, as have I, to improve our lives to make our actions more consistent with our goals and dreams. You may have been prompted to abandon a debilitating part of your current life or to set in order an unwholesome habit that has begun to take root, only to later produce bitter fruit. Likely there are some who have resolved to repent of serious mistakes and return to the refreshing waters of righteousness. These impressions to improve come from the Savior through the Holy Ghost.

I would speak of Him. Since thoughts of the Savior invoke tender feelings, I will quote His own words and the testimony of other prophets.

The gift of the Holy Ghost

That we may be led to make the correct choices, He has said:

"I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart."¹

"And the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith."²

"I say unto thee, put your trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good—yea, to do justly, to walk humbly, to judge righteously; and this is my Spirit.

". . . I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind, which shall fill your soul with joy;

". . . By this shall you know all things whatsoever you desire of me, which are pertaining unto things of righteousness, in faith believing in me that you shall receive."³

"Pray always, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you, and great shall be your blessing."⁴

With the gift of the Holy Ghost comes the ability to develop a powerfully sensitive capacity to make the right choices. Cultivate that gift. As the Lord has said, that is accomplished by consistent, righteous living. As you enhance your capacity to sense the direction of that infallible influence, you will avoid disappointment, discouragement, and even tragedy.

Learn the Lord's plan for you

The Lord has placed currents of divine influence in your life that will lead you along the individual plan He would have you fulfill here on earth. Seek through the Spirit to identify it and carefully follow that direction that the Lord has put in your life. Align yourself with it. Choose, willingly, to exercise your agency to follow it. Do not be overcome by concentrating solely on today, its challenges, difficulties, and opportunities. Such pre-occupations must not totally capture your attention so as to consume your life. Oh, how I would encourage you to weave deeply into the fabric of your soul the recognition that your life now is a part of a much bigger plan the Lord has for you. You lived part of it in the premortal existence. You were valiant there and came here because you wanted to grow and enjoy greater happiness. What you decide to do now will affect how well you fulfill that divine, personal plan He has for you.

I do not fully understand how it is done, but this divine current does not take away your moral agency. You can make the decisions you choose to make. Should your choices be wrong, there is a path back—repentance. When its conditions are fully met, the Atonement of the Savior provides a release from the demands of justice for the errors made. He said:

"I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance;

"Nevertheless, he that repeats and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven."⁵

It is wondrously simple and so incomparably beautiful. As you continue to live righteously, you will always know what to do. Sometimes the discovery of that may require significant effort and trust on your part. Yet you will recognize what to do as you meet the conditions for such divine guidance in your life: obedience to the commandments of the Lord, trust in His plan, and the avoidance of anything that is contrary to it. The more closely you conform your life to the doctrine of the Lord, the more capacity you will have to do what the Spirit inspires you to do.⁶

Power flows from the scriptures

I suggest that you memorize scriptures that touch your heart and fill your soul with understanding. When scriptures are used as the Lord has caused them to be recorded, they have intrinsic power that is not communicated when paraphrased. Sometimes when there is a significant need in my life, I review mentally scriptures that have given me strength. There is great solace, direction, and power that flow from the scriptures, especially the words of the Lord. These three examples will illustrate:

"Therefore, let your hearts be comforted . . . ; for all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God."⁷

"The works, and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught.

"For God doth not walk in crooked paths, neither doth he turn to the right hand nor to the left, neither doth he vary from that which he hath said, therefore his paths are straight, and his course is one eternal round.

"Remember, remember that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men."⁸

David rejoiced:

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

"He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."⁹

God knows what is best for us

Sometimes you may feel to complain to the Lord about a challenge that has come into your life through no fault of your own. Jacob taught:

"Seek not to counsel the Lord, but to take counsel from his hand. For behold, ye yourselves know that he counseleth in wisdom, and in justice, and in great mercy, over all his works."¹⁰

God knows what is best for us. Although we may not understand why we experience some things now, in His timetable we will know and be grateful.

He has promised to help us with our burdens: "I will . . . ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot feel them upon your backs, . . . that ye may know of a surety that I, the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions."¹¹

We are counseled, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee."¹² I have been greatly helped by

laying a vexing matter at His feet for a while. When I picked it up again, it was lighter and more manageable.

Follow the Lord's counsel

All doctrine in scripture can benefit us, even though it be given to a specific individual, for God has repeatedly said, "What I say unto one I say unto all."¹³

Emma Smith was told: "Continue in the spirit of meekness, and beware of pride. . . . Keep my commandments continually, and a crown of righteousness thou shalt receive."¹⁴

The Lord then added, "This is my voice unto all."¹⁵

This doctrine is confirmed by Nephi, who recorded, "I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning."¹⁶

In that spirit the Savior said: "Ye are commanded in all things to ask of God, who giveth liberally; and that which the Spirit testifies unto you even so I would that ye should do in all holiness of heart, walking uprightly before me, considering the end of your salvation, doing all things with prayer and thanksgiving."¹⁷

"Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not.

"Behold the wounds which pierced my side, and also the prints of the nails in my hands and feet; be faithful, keep my commandments, and ye shall inherit the kingdom of heaven."¹⁸

Joseph Smith's example

Joseph Smith was helped to accomplish tasks that were completely beyond his personal capacity. At times, this came through direct guidance and intervention. Yet often it was the quiet prompting of the Spirit and the accompanying support that came because of his obedience, his faith in the Master, and his unwavering determination to do His will. Why was he so successful? A portion of that answer comes in his personal decla-

ration, "I made this my rule: *When the Lord commands, do it.*"¹⁹

I testify that within your own personal sphere of activity and framework of responsibilities, the Lord will provide that same help. When needed and earned, you can enjoy divine inspiration to know what to do and, when necessary, power or capacity to accomplish it.²⁰ Joseph Smith learned how to perfect the ability to follow the guidance of the Lord by practiced, personal discipline. He did not let his own desires, convenience, or the persuasions of men interfere with that compliance as he grew and was schooled by the Lord in how to do the tasks given him. Let us follow his example.

Be grateful for each blessing

Enrich your life with the beauty around you. There is such an abundance of it: the resplendent breaking dawn welcoming a fresh new day, the abundant arms of a blue spruce adorned with golden medallions from adjacent aspen, shimmering ripples in a mountain lake transformed by the brilliant sun, a hushed stillness of a forest glen bathed in moonlight, the exuberance of a child at play and the love in his mother's eyes.

"Rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks."²¹

"And he who receiveth all things with thankfulness shall be made glorious; and the things of this earth shall be added unto him, even an hundred fold, yea, more."²²

Express gratitude for each blessing, for "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."²³

Follow the prophet; commit to Christ

In a few moments President Hinckley will give the closing conference message. I love him. Because of his humility

and tireless effort, the Lord has magnified his extraordinary natural capacities to bless millions of lives throughout the world. Let us follow his inspired counsel. He has borne witness that he is not the head of this Church. That head is our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ the Redeemer.

He guides it. He has given His life that even in our weakness, we may overcome our mistakes through repentance and obedience to His gospel. Oh, what a favored people we are to have this light, this knowledge, these opportunities for happiness on earth and throughout the eternities. May we commit to share a knowledge of this magnificent work, personally or through missionaries, with our friends and neighbors that they may join this kingdom of God on earth and receive the consummate, eternal blessings available to them.

My dear friend, if there is a need to repent in your life, do it—now.

If you have strayed and become entangled in the web of the world, come back. We love you. We need you. We will help you.

Testimony of the Savior

In closing, may I quote from Alma's testimony as if it were my own, for I have that same conviction:

"I speak in the energy of my soul; . . .

"For I am called to speak after this manner, according to the holy order of God, which is in Christ Jesus; yea, I am commanded to stand and testify . . .

". . . that I do know that these things whereof I have spoken are true. . . .

". . . They are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God. . . . I have fasted and prayed . . . that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit."²⁴

As one of His Apostles, authorized to bear witness of Him, I solemnly testify

that I know that the Savior lives, that He is a resurrected, glorified personage of perfect love. I witness that He gave His life that we might live with Him eternally. He is our hope, our Mediator, our Redeemer. I know that He lives. I know that He loves you and that He will help you have joy and happiness as you live worthy of that help. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 8:2; see also verse 3.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 42:14.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 11:12–14.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 19:38.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 1:31–32.
6. See Doctrine and Covenants 43:15–16.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 101:16.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 3:1–3.
9. Psalm 23.
10. Jacob 4:10.
11. Mosiah 24:14.
12. Psalm 55:22.
13. Doctrine and Covenants 61:18; 82:5; 92:1; 93:49.
14. Doctrine and Covenants 25:14–15.
15. Doctrine and Covenants 25:16.
16. 1 Nephi 19:23.
17. Doctrine and Covenants 46:7.
18. Doctrine and Covenants 6:36–37.
19. *History of the Church*, 2:170.
20. See Doctrine and Covenants 42:15–16.
21. Doctrine and Covenants 98:1; see also 1 Thessalonians 5:16.
22. Doctrine and Covenants 78:19.
23. Doctrine and Covenants 59:21.
24. Alma 5:43–46.

President Faust

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

As we conclude the conference in this historic Tabernacle, we express appreciation to the fine Salt Lake and Orem Institutes Choir, the Lehi Primary Choir, the BYU Men's Choir, and the Tabernacle Choir and their conductors and organists for the beautiful and inspiring music.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference; the doctors, Church Health Unit nurses, and the ambulance services which have been on hand to render assistance; the ushers and interpreters; and those who are responsible for the beautiful flowers on Temple Square and here in the Tabernacle.

We also express appreciation to local and national media representatives for their coverage of the conference and to the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations, cable systems, and Internet services which have given time and made facilities available to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, our beloved prophet, will be our concluding speaker. Following President Hinckley's remarks, the choir will sing "Abide with Me." The benediction will then be offered by Elder Cecil O. Samuelson of the Seventy. This conference will then be adjourned for six months.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Good-bye to the Tabernacle

My brethren and sisters, as we conclude this great conference, we experience considerable emotion. If present

plans hold, this is the last time we will meet in this Tabernacle for general conference. With few exceptions, a half-dozen perhaps, for 132 years our conferences have been held here.