

Is It Still Wonderful to You?

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To marvel at the wonders of the gospel is a sign of faith. It is to recognize the hand of the Lord in our lives and in everything around us.

My wife and I had the great joy of rearing our five children near the magnificent city of Paris. During those years we wanted to offer them rich opportunities to discover the marvelous things of this world. Each summer, our family took long trips to visit the most significant monuments, historic sites, and natural wonders of Europe. Finally, after spending 22 years in the Paris area, we were getting ready to move. I still remember the day when my children came to me and said, “Dad, it’s absolutely shameful! We’ve lived here all our lives, and we have never been to the Eiffel Tower!”

There are so many wonders in this world. However, sometimes when we have them constantly before our eyes, we take them for granted. We look, but we don’t really see; we hear, but we don’t really listen.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus said to His disciples:

“Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see:

“For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.”¹

I have often wondered what it would have been like to live at the time of our Savior. Can you imagine sitting at His feet? feeling His embrace? witnessing as He ministered to others? And yet so many who met Him failed to recognize—to “see”—that the very Son of God was living among them.

We too are privileged to live in an exceptional time. The prophets of old saw the work of the Restoration as “a marvelous work ... , yea, a marvelous work and a wonder.”² In no previous dispensation have so many missionaries been called, so many nations been opened for the gospel message, and so many temples been built throughout the world.

For us, as Latter-day Saints, wonders also occur in our individual lives. They include our own personal conversion, the answers we receive to our prayers, and the tender blessings God showers upon us daily.

To marvel at the wonders of the gospel is a sign of faith. It is to recognize the hand of the Lord in our lives and in everything around us. Our amazement also produces spiritual strength. It gives us the energy to remain anchored in our faith and to engage ourselves in the work of salvation.

But let us beware. Our ability to marvel is fragile. Over the long term, such things as casual commandment keeping, apathy, or even weariness may set in and make us insensitive to even the most remarkable signs and miracles of the

gospel.

The Book of Mormon describes a period, very similar to our own, that preceded the coming of the Messiah to the Americas. Suddenly the signs of His birth appeared in the heavens. The people were so stricken with astonishment that they humbled themselves, and nearly all were converted. However, only a short four years later, “the people began to forget those signs and wonders which they had heard, and began to be less and less astonished at a sign or a wonder from heaven, ... and began to disbelieve all which they had heard and seen.”³

My brothers and sisters, is the gospel still wonderful to you? Can you yet see, hear, feel, and marvel? Or have your spiritual sensors gone into standby mode? Whatever your personal situation, I invite you to do three things.

First, never tire of discovering or rediscovering the truths of the gospel. The writer Marcel Proust said, “The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.”⁴ Do you remember the first time you read a verse of scripture and felt as if the Lord was speaking to you personally? Can you recall the first time you felt the sweet influence of the Holy Ghost come over you, perhaps before you even realized it was the Holy Ghost? Weren't these sacred, special moments?

We should hunger and thirst every day after spiritual knowledge. This personal practice is founded on study, meditation, and prayer. Sometimes we might be tempted to think, “I don't need to study the scriptures today; I've read them all before” or “I don't need to go to church today; there's nothing new there.”

But the gospel is a fountain of knowledge that never runs dry. There is always something new to learn and feel each Sunday, in every meeting, and in every verse of scripture. In faith we hold to the promise that if we “seek, ... [we] shall find.”⁵

Second, anchor your faith in the plain and simple truths of the gospel. Our amazement should be rooted in the core principles of our faith, in the purity of our covenants and ordinances, and in our most simple acts of worship.

A sister missionary told the story of three men she met during a district conference in Africa. They came from an isolated village far away in the bush where the Church had not yet been organized but where there were 15 faithful members and almost 20 investigators. For over two weeks these men had walked on foot, traveling more than 300 miles (480 km) over paths rendered muddy by the rainy season, so they could attend the conference and bring the tithes from the members of their group. They planned to stay for an entire week so they could enjoy the privilege of partaking of the sacrament the following Sunday and then hoped to set out on the return trip carrying boxes filled with copies of the Book of Mormon on their heads to give to the people of their village.

The missionary testified how touched she was by the sense of wonder these brethren displayed and by their wholehearted sacrifices to obtain things that for her had always been readily available.

She wondered: “If I got up one Sunday morning in Arizona and found that my car wasn't working, would I walk to my church only a few blocks away from home? Or would I just stay home because it was too far or because it was raining?”⁶ These are good questions for all of us to consider.

Finally, I invite you to seek and cherish the companionship of the Holy Ghost. Most wonders of the gospel cannot be perceived by our natural senses. They are the things that the “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, ... the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”⁷

When we have the Spirit with us, our spiritual senses are sharpened and our memory is kindled so we cannot forget the miracles and signs we have witnessed. That may be why, knowing Jesus was about to leave them, His Nephite disciples prayed fervently “for that which they most desired; and they desired that the Holy Ghost should be given unto them.”⁸

Although they had seen the Savior with their own eyes and had touched His wounds with their own hands, they knew that their testimonies might dwindle without being constantly renewed by the power of the Spirit of God. My brothers and sisters, never do anything to risk the loss of this precious and marvelous gift—the companionship of the Holy Ghost. Seek it through fervent prayer and righteous living.

I testify that the work in which we are engaged is “a marvelous work and a wonder.” As we follow Jesus Christ, God bears witness to us “with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will.”⁹ On this special day, I bear witness that the wonders and marvels of the gospel are anchored in the greatest of all of God’s gifts—the Savior’s Atonement. This is the perfect gift of love that the Father and the Son, united in purpose, have offered to each one of us. With you, “I stand all amazed at the love Jesus offers me. ... Oh, it is wonderful, wonderful to me!”¹⁰

That we may always have eyes that see, ears that hear, and hearts that perceive the wonders of this marvelous gospel is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

1. Luke 10:23–24.

2. 2 Nephi 27:26.

3. 3 Nephi 2:1.

4. “Marcel Proust,” *Guardian*, July 22, 2008, theguardian.com/books/2008/jun/11/marcelproust.

5. Matthew 7:7.

6. Adapted from Lorraine Bird Jameson, “The Giants of Kinkondja” (article on Africa Southeast Area website, 2009); web.archive.org/web/20101210013757/http://www.lds.co.za/index.php/news-a-events/news/aseanews/91-the-giants-of-kinkondja.

7. 1 Corinthians 2:9.

8. 3 Nephi 19:9.

9. Hebrews 2:4.

10. "I Stand All Amazed," *Hymns*, no. 193.