

Fear Not to Do Good

October 2017 General Conference

By President Henry B. Eyring
First Counselor in the First Presidency

The Lord tells us that when we stand with faith upon His rock, doubt and fear are diminished; the desire to do good increases.

My dear brothers and sisters, I pray humbly that the Spirit of the Lord will be with us as I speak today. My heart is full of gratitude to the Lord, whose Church this is, for the inspiration we have felt in fervent prayers, inspired sermons, and angelic singing in this conference.

Last April, President Thomas S. Monson gave a message that stirred hearts across the world, including mine. He spoke of the power of the Book of Mormon. He urged us to study, ponder, and apply its teachings. He promised that if we dedicated time each day to studying and pondering and kept the commandments the Book of Mormon contains, we would have a vital testimony of its truth, and the resultant testimony of the living Christ would see us through to safety in times of trouble. (See "The Power of the Book of Mormon," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 86–87.)

Like many of you, I heard the prophet's words as the voice of the Lord to me. And, also like many of you, I decided to obey those words. Now, since I was a young boy, I have felt the witness that the Book of Mormon is the word of God, that the Father and the Son appeared and spoke with Joseph Smith, and that ancient Apostles came to the Prophet Joseph to restore priesthood keys to the Lord's Church.

With that testimony, I have read the Book of Mormon every day for more than 50 years. So perhaps I could have reasonably thought that President Monson's words were for someone else. Yet, like many of you, I felt the prophet's encouragement and his promise invite me to make a greater effort. Many of you have done what I did: prayed with increased intent, pondered scripture more intently, and tried harder to serve the Lord and others for Him.

The happy result for me, and for many of you, has been what the prophet promised. Those of us who took his inspired counsel to heart have heard the Spirit more distinctly. We have found a greater power to resist temptation and have felt greater faith in a resurrected Jesus Christ, in His gospel, and in His living Church.

In a season of increasing tumult in the world, those increases in testimony have driven out doubt and fear and have brought us feelings of peace. Heeding President Monson's counsel has had two other wonderful effects on me: First, the Spirit he

promised has produced a sense of optimism about what lies ahead, even as the commotion in the world seems to increase. And, second, the Lord has given me—and you—an even greater feeling of His love for those in distress. We have felt an increase in the desire to go to the rescue of others. That desire has been at the heart of President Monson’s ministry and teaching.

The Lord promised love for others and courage to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery when the tasks ahead of them could have seemed overwhelming. The Lord said that needed courage would come from their faith in Him as their rock:

“Fear not to do good, my sons, for whatsoever ye sow, that shall ye also reap; therefore, if ye sow good ye shall also reap good for your reward.

“Therefore, fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail.

“Behold, I do not condemn you; go your ways and sin no more; perform with soberness the work which I have commanded you.

“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” (D&C 6:33–37).

The Lord told His leaders of the Restoration, and He tells us, that when we stand with faith upon His rock, doubt and fear are diminished; the desire to do good increases. As we accept President Monson’s invitation to plant in our hearts a testimony of Jesus Christ, we gain the power, the desire, and the courage to go to the rescue of others without concern for our own needs.

I have seen that faith and courage many times when believing Latter-day Saints have faced fearsome trials. For one example, I was in Idaho when the Teton Dam broke on June 5, 1976. A wall of water came down. Thousands fled from their homes. Thousands of homes and businesses were destroyed. Miraculously, fewer than 15 people were killed.

What I saw there, I have seen whenever Latter-day Saints stand firmly on the rock of a testimony of Jesus Christ. Because they have no doubt He watches over them, they become fearless. They ignore their own trials to go to the relief of others. And they do so out of love for the Lord, asking no recompense.

For example, when the Teton Dam broke, a Latter-day Saint couple was traveling, miles away from their home. As soon as they heard the news on the radio, they hurried back to Rexburg. Rather than going to their own home to see if it was destroyed, they went looking for their bishop. He was in a building that was being used as the recovery

center. He was helping to direct the thousands of volunteers who were arriving in yellow school buses.

The couple walked up to the bishop and said, "We just got back. Bishop, where can we go to help?" He gave them the names of a family. That couple stayed mucking out mud and water in one home after another. They worked from dawn to dark for days. They finally took a break to go see about their own home. It was gone in the flood, leaving nothing to clean up. So they turned around quickly to go back to their bishop. They asked, "Bishop, do you have someone for us to help?"

That miracle of quiet courage and charity—the pure love of Christ—has been repeated over the years and across the world. It happened in the terrible days of the persecutions and trials at the time of the Prophet Joseph Smith in Missouri. It happened as Brigham Young led the exodus from Nauvoo and then called Saints to desert places all over the western United States, to help each other create Zion for the Lord.

If you read the journal entries of those pioneers, you see the miracle of faith driving out doubt and fear. And you read of Saints leaving their own interests to help someone else for the Lord, before getting back to their own sheep or to their own unplowed fields.

I saw that same miracle a few short days ago in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma in Puerto Rico, Saint Thomas, and Florida, where Latter-day Saints partnered with other churches, local community groups, and national organizations to begin cleanup efforts.

Like my friends in Rexburg, one nonmember couple in Florida focused on helping the community rather than laboring on their own property. When some Latter-day Saint neighbors offered help with the two large trees blocking their driveway, the couple explained that they had been overwhelmed and so had turned to helping others, having faith that the Lord would provide the aid they needed at their own home. The husband then shared that before our Church members arrived with offers of assistance, the couple had been praying. They had received an answer that help would come. It came within hours of that assurance.

I have heard a report that some have started calling the Latter-day Saints who are wearing yellow Helping Hands T-shirts "The Yellow Angels." One Latter-day Saint took her car in for service, and the man helping her described the "spiritual experience" he had when people in yellow shirts removed trees from his yard and then, he said, they "sang some song to me about being a child of God."

Another Florida resident—also not of our faith—related that Latter-day Saints came to her home when she was working in her devastated yard and feeling overwhelmed, overheated, and close to tears. The volunteers created, in her words, "a pure miracle."

They served not only with diligence but also with laughter and smiles, accepting nothing in return.

I saw that diligence and heard that laughter when, late on a Saturday, I visited with a group of Latter-day Saints in Florida. The volunteers stopped their cleanup labor long enough to let me shake some hands. They said that 90 members of their stake in Georgia had created a plan to join in the rescue in Florida just the night before.

They left Georgia at 4:00 in the morning, drove for hours, worked through the day and into the night, and planned to labor again the next day.

They described it to me all with smiles and good humor. The only stress I sensed was that they wanted to stop being thanked so they could get back to work. The stake president had restarted his chain saw and was working on a downed tree and a bishop was moving tree limbs as we got into our vehicle to go to the next rescue team.

Earlier that day, as we pulled away from another site, a man had walked up to the car, taken off his hat, and thanked us for the volunteers. He said, "I'm not a member of your church. I can't believe what you have done for us. God bless you." The LDS volunteer standing next to him in his yellow shirt smiled and shrugged his shoulders as if he deserved no praise.

While the volunteers from Georgia had come to help this man who couldn't believe it, hundreds of Latter-day Saints from that very devastated part of Florida had gone hundreds of miles south to another place in Florida where they had heard the people were harder hit.

That day I remembered and understood better the prophetic words of the Prophet Joseph Smith: "A man filled with the love of God, is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world, anxious to bless the whole human race" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 426).

We see such love in the lives of Latter-day Saints everywhere. Each time there is a tragic event anywhere in the world, Latter-day Saints donate and volunteer to the Church's humanitarian efforts. An appeal is seldom needed. In fact, on some occasions, we have had to ask would-be volunteers to wait to travel to the recovery site until those directing the work are prepared to receive them.

That desire to bless is the fruit of people gaining a testimony of Jesus Christ, His gospel, His restored Church, and His prophet. That is why the Lord's people doubt not and fear not. That is why missionaries volunteer for service in every corner of the world. That is why parents pray with their children for others. That is why leaders challenge their youth to take President Monson's request to immerse themselves in the Book of Mormon to heart. The fruit comes not by being urged by leaders but by the youth and members acting on faith. That faith, put into action, which requires selfless sacrifice, brings the change of heart that allows them to feel the love of God.

Our hearts, however, remain changed only as long as we continue to follow the prophet's counsel. If we stop trying after one burst of effort, the change will fade.

Faithful Latter-day Saints have increased their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Book of Mormon as the word of God, and in the restoration of priesthood keys in His true Church. That increased testimony has given us greater courage and concern for others of God's children. But the challenges and the opportunities ahead will require even more.

We cannot foresee the details, but we know the larger picture. We know that in the last days, the world will be in commotion. We know that in the midst of whatever trouble comes, the Lord will lead faithful Latter-day Saints to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. And we know that the Lord's true disciples will be worthy and prepared to receive Him when He comes again. We need not fear.

So, as much as we have already built faith and courage in our hearts, the Lord expects more from us—and from the generations after us. They will need to be stronger and braver because they will do even greater and harder things than we have done. And they will face increasing opposition from the enemy of our souls.

The way to optimism as we go forward was given by the Lord: "Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not" (D&C 6:36). President Monson told us how to do that. We are to ponder and apply the Book of Mormon and the words of prophets. Pray always. Be believing. Serve the Lord with all our heart, might, mind, and strength. We are to pray with all the energy of our hearts for the gift of charity, the pure love of Christ (see Moroni 7:47–48). And above all, we are to be consistent and persistent in following prophetic counsel.

When the way is difficult, we can rely on the Lord's promise—the promise President Monson has reminded us of when he has often quoted these words of the Savior: "Whoso receiveth you, there I will be also, for I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up" (D&C 84:88).

I testify that the Lord goes before your face whenever you are on His errand. Sometimes you will be the angel the Lord sends to bear others up. Sometimes you will be the one surrounded by angels who bear you up. But always you will have His Spirit to be in your heart, as you have been promised in every sacrament service. You have only to keep His commandments.

The best days are ahead for the kingdom of God on the earth. Opposition will strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ, as it has since the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Faith always defeats fear. Standing together produces unity. And your prayers for those in need are heard and answered by a loving God. He neither slumbers nor does He sleep.

I bear my witness that God the Father lives and wants you to come home to Him. This is the true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. He knows you; He loves you; He watches over you. He atoned for your sins and mine and the sins of all of Heavenly Father's children. Following Him in your life and in your service to others is the only way to eternal life.

I so testify and leave you my blessing and my love. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

© 2017 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.