

All Will Be Well Because of Temple Covenants

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There is nothing more important than honoring the covenants you have made or may make in the temple.

My beloved brothers and sisters, this session of general conference has been, for me, a sacred time. I am grateful for the assignment to speak to the millions of Latter-day Saints and our friends across the world. I love you, and I know the Lord loves you.

Over 50 years ago, I had the privilege to serve as the president of Ricks College in Rexburg, Idaho. On the morning of June 5, 1976, my wife, Kathy, and I drove from Rexburg to the Idaho Falls Idaho Temple to attend the sealing of a close friend. Of course, with four young boys in our home at the time, our temple trip could be only accomplished with the help of a courageous babysitter! We left our precious children in her care and made the short, 30-minute drive.

Our experience in the temple that day was wonderful, as it always was. However, after the conclusion of the temple sealing—and as we were preparing to return home—we noticed many temple workers and patrons nervously conversing in the lobby of the temple. Within moments, one of the temple workers told us that the newly constructed Teton Dam in eastern Idaho had collapsed! More than 80 billion gallons (300 million cubic meters) of water were flowing through the dam and into the 300 square miles (775 square km) of neighboring valleys. Much of the city of Rexburg was underwater, with homes and vehicles carried away by floodwaters. Two-thirds of the 9,000 residents were suddenly homeless.¹

As you might imagine, our thoughts and concerns turned to the safety of our dear children, hundreds of college students and faculty, and a community we loved. We were less than 30 miles (50 km) from home, and yet on this day, long before cell phones and text messaging, we had no way of communicating immediately with our children, nor could we make the drive from Idaho Falls to Rexburg, as all the roads had been closed.

Our only option was to stay the night in a local motel in Idaho Falls. Kathy and I knelt together in our motel room and humbly pleaded with Heavenly Father for the safety of our dear children and the thousands of others affected by the tragic event. I recall Kathy pacing the floors into the early hours of the morning with worry about her children. Despite my own concerns, I was able to put my mind at ease and fall asleep.

It wasn't long thereafter that my sweet eternal companion woke me and said, "Hal, how can you sleep at a time like this?"

These words then came clearly to my heart and mind. I said to my wife: “Kathy, whatever the outcome, all will be well because of the temple. We have made covenants with God and have been sealed as an eternal family.”

At that moment, it was as if the Spirit of the Lord confirmed in our hearts and minds what we both already knew to be true: the sealing ordinances, found only in the house of the Lord and administered by proper priesthood authority, had bound us together as husband and wife, and our children had been sealed to us. There truly was no need to fear, and we were grateful later to learn that our boys were safe.

Perhaps this statement from President Thomas S. Monson best illustrates what Kathy and I felt on that unforgettable night. “As we attend the temple, there can come to us a dimension of spirituality and a feeling of *peace*. ... We will grasp the true meaning of the words of the Savior when He said: ‘Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. ... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid [John 14:27].’”²

I have been blessed to feel that peace every time I enter the sacred temple. I recall the first day I walked into the Salt Lake Temple. I was a young man.

I looked up at a high white ceiling that made the room so light it seemed almost as if it were open to the sky. And in that moment, the thought came into my mind in clear words: “I have been in this lighted place before.” But then immediately there came into my mind, not in my own voice, these words: “No, you have never been here before. You are remembering a moment before you were born. You were in a sacred place like this where the Lord could come.”

Brothers and sisters, I humbly testify that as we attend the temple, we can be reminded of the eternal nature of our spirits, our relationship with the Father and His divine Son, and our ultimate desire to return to our heavenly home.

In recent conference addresses, President Russell M. Nelson taught:

“The safest place to be *spiritually* is living *inside* your temple covenants!”

“*Everything* we believe and *every* promise God has made to His covenant people come together in the temple.”³

“Each person who makes covenants ... in temples—and keeps them—has increased access to the power of Jesus Christ.”⁴

He also taught that “once we make a covenant with God, we leave neutral ground forever. God will not abandon His relationship with those who have forged such a bond with Him. In fact, all those who have made a covenant with God have access to a special kind of love and mercy.”⁵

Under President Nelson’s inspired leadership, the Lord has accelerated, and will continue to accelerate, the building of temples across the world. This will allow all of God’s children the opportunity to receive the ordinances of salvation and exaltation and to make and keep sacred covenants. Qualifying to make sacred covenants is not a one-time effort but a lifetime pattern. The Lord has said it will take our full heart, might, mind, and strength.⁶

Frequent participation in the ordinances of the temple can create a pattern of devotion to the Lord. When you keep your temple covenants and remember them, you invite the companionship

of the Holy Ghost to both strengthen and purify you.

You may then experience a feeling of light and hope testifying that the promises are true. You will come to know that every covenant with God is an opportunity to draw closer to Him, which will then create a desire in your heart to keep temple covenants.

We have been promised, “Because of our covenant with God, He will never tire in His efforts to help us, and we will never exhaust His merciful patience with us.”⁷

It is through the sealing covenants in the temple that we can receive the assurance of loving family connections that will continue after death and last for eternity. Honoring marriage and family covenants made in temples of God will provide protection from the evil of selfishness and pride.

Consistent care of brothers and sisters for each other will come only with persistent efforts to lead your family in the Lord’s way. Give children opportunities to pray for each other. Discern quickly the beginnings of discord, and positively recognize acts of unselfish service, especially to one another. When siblings pray for each other and serve each other, hearts will be softened and turned to each other and to their parents.

In part, that is what is described by Malachi as he foretold of the coming of the prophet Elijah: “He shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.”⁸

Trials, challenges, and heartaches will surely come to all of us. None of us are immune from “thorns of the flesh.”⁹ Yet, as we attend the temple and remember our covenants, we can prepare to receive personal direction from the Lord.

When Kathy and I were married and sealed in the Logan Utah Temple, then-Elder Spencer W. Kimball performed our sealing. In the few words he spoke, he gave this counsel: “Hal and Kathy, live so that when the call comes, you can walk away easily.”

Initially, we did not understand what that counsel meant for us, but we did our best to live our lives in such a way that we would be prepared to leave to serve the Lord when the call came. After we had been married nearly 10 years, an unanticipated call did come from the Commissioner of Church Education, Neal A. Maxwell.

The loving counsel given by President Kimball in the temple to be able to “walk away easily” became a reality. Kathy and I received a call to leave what seemed an idyllic family situation in California to serve in an assignment and in a place that I knew nothing about. However, our family was ready to leave because a prophet, in a holy temple, a place of revelation, saw a future event for which we were then prepared.

My dear brothers and sisters, I bear witness that there is nothing more important than honoring the covenants you have made or may make in the temple. No matter where you are on the covenant path, I urge you to qualify and become eligible to attend the temple. Visit as frequently as circumstances will allow. Make and keep sacred covenants with God. I can assure you of the same truth I shared with Kathy in the middle of the night nearly five decades ago in an Idaho Falls motel room: “No matter the outcome, all will be well because of temple covenants.”

I give you my sure witness that Jesus is the Christ. He lives and leads His Church. Temples are houses of the Lord. President Russell M. Nelson is God’s living prophet on the earth. I love him, and I love each of you. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. See “1976: The Teton Dam Failed, KTVB Captured the Aftermath from the Air,” ktvb.com.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Blessings of the Temple,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 91–92; emphasis added.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “The Temple and Your Spiritual Foundation,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2021, 96, 94.
4. Russell M. Nelson, “Overcome the World and Find Rest,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2022, 96.
5. Russell M. Nelson, “The Everlasting Covenant,” *Liahona*, Oct. 2022, 5.
6. See Doctrine and Covenants 59:5.
7. Russell M. Nelson, “The Everlasting Covenant,” 6.
8. Joseph Smith—History 1:39.
9. See 2 Corinthians 12:7–10.