

# *Powerful Truths That Make a Difference in Our Lives*

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I had some difficulty deciding on what ought to be the title and theme of my remarks today. I finally settled on “Powerful Truths That Make a Difference in Our Lives.”

We are all grieving today because of the senseless acts of violence that took the life of Elder MacKintosh and seriously injured Elder Borden in Ufa, Russia. Reportedly, the terrible crime was committed by an individual, or individuals, in a drunken condition.

Have you ever given much thought to how dramatically the world would be changed for the better if just one of the truths revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith more than 160 years ago—the Word of Wisdom—would be lived by people around the world? Most of the tragedies, immorality, and violence caused by those under the influence of alcohol or drugs would be eliminated, including those we experience in this country in almost every city and setting due to campus binge drinking that is so prevalent.

Also, we suffer more today at the loss of Elder MacKintosh’s life because we understand that he is much more than just an individual. He is a part of us. He is really family, and he was on the Lord’s errand—serving as a missionary like so many of our own are serving today all over the world. We share, at least in

part, the grief experienced by his parents and brothers and sisters, because they, too, are part of our family.

How comforting it is to know that as a result of other revealed truths we have been blessed to receive, as a result of the restoration of the sealing power of the priesthood, the Mackintosh family can anticipate a glorious reunion with their son and brother in the world beyond the veil. We know that Elder MacKintosh’s spirit is yet very much alive and that his missionary efforts have merely been transferred to another zone of experience.

Well, now, to what I have prepared to share with you. In light of these sad events, I hope that for the next few minutes we will think carefully, seriously, and gratefully about these powerful truths that really make a difference in our lives.

October 20 is quite a date! I hadn’t remembered that on this date in 1803 the Senate ratified the Louisiana Purchase. Likewise I didn’t recall that it was on October 20 in 1944, during World War II, that General Douglas

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MacArthur—two and a half years after he had said, “I will return”—waded ashore at Leyte in the Philippines. And since I don’t keep up on such matters, I didn’t remember that on this date in 1968, the Greek shipping tycoon Aristotle Onassis married Jackie Kennedy.

But October 20 has a very special personal significance for me because on this date in 1948—exactly 50 years ago today—Elder Blair Thomas and I left the mission home in Salt Lake City. We checked our suitcases and other paraphernalia and boarded a bus and made the long ride to El Paso, Texas. We crossed the Mexican border to Ciudad Juarez. We then spent two full days on a train to Mexico City on our way to the Mexican Mission, which at that time encompassed all of Mexico *and* all five Central American countries.

That was the beginning of a tremendous experience! Hardly a day has passed since then but what I have remembered something about those 31 months of life-shaping experiences as a missionary.

I know that there are thousands of you who are returned missionaries. I’m confident that most of you have similar vivid memories and could even remember the exact date you began your service. Most of you young freshman and sophomore men have not yet served a mission. I hope every one of you will fulfill that sacred priesthood obligation. Some of you young women also—though not obligated—will have that special opportunity for service come into your lives.

You returned missionaries have paid the price of time and effort to help build the kingdom, to proclaim the gospel, to strengthen the stakes of Zion, and to help in the establishment of the Church. You have responded to the call from a prophet of the Lord to lay on the altar your personal offering of approximately a “tithing” of your life to this point.

When I think of the impact that comes from serving a full-time mission, I am reminded of an experience we had with Elder LeGrand

Richards of the Quorum of the Twelve, who has to be one of the greatest missionaries of all time—of this or of any dispensation.

By the time he was 96, he no longer drove his car. As a result, whenever he came to Provo to speak at the Missionary Training Center, we had the privilege of going to Salt Lake City and providing transportation for him.

On one of those trips, we asked him a question something like this: “Elder Richards, after all the years you have lived, all the places you have been, and all the things you have done, what do you consider to be the most significant experience of your life?” We thought that maybe he would refer to an outstanding spiritual experience such as with the Brethren in the temple or something like that.

He didn’t hesitate for a moment in making this enthusiastic response: “Why, it was my first mission to Holland!” He then proceeded to share with us some of the choice and challenging experiences he had when he left home and arrived in Holland without knowing a word of Dutch. He said that even the dogs understood the language but he didn’t. But he supposed if the dogs could learn to understand Dutch, he probably could also—and that he did.

In his journal Elder Richards described some of the experiences he had at the end of that first mission:

*In the evening meeting I spoke first to give my farewell. As I walked into the pulpit and viewed the faces of the brothers and sisters . . . , a feeling came over me that I had never had before. To think how I had preached them the word of the Lord with all the power the Lord had given me. . . . I had learned to love them, and they in turn placed me far above what I really am. . . . I never in my life felt happier than under the influence of the Spirit present this evening. [Lucile C. Tate, *LeGrand Richards: Beloved Apostle* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), p. 52]*

Before leaving his mission, Elder Richards went to the home of a woman who, with her family, had come into the Church as a result of his missionary efforts. His biographer described the occasion:

*She was so short that she had to look way up to him. . . . When he went to leave, tears rolled down her cheeks and she said, "Elder Richards, it was hard to see my daughter leave for Zion a few months ago, but it is much harder to see you go."*

*He went to bid another convert good-bye, a man who stood erect in the uniform of his country. This friend got down on his knees and took the elder's hand in his, hugged and kissed it, and bathed it with his tears of gratitude for the gospel the missionary had brought. Elder Richards said upon leaving him, "I wept all the way from Amsterdam to Rotterdam, thinking that I might never see those friends of mine again. It was much harder to leave them than it was my own family when I left on my mission." [Tate, *LeGrand Richards*, pp. 52–53; emphasis added]*

Many of you returned missionaries can relate to those feelings, can't you?

Now, getting back to the experience we had with Elder LeGrand Richards when we brought him to the Missionary Training Center to speak. It was a short time before he passed away. As I mentioned, he was 96 years of age and was having a variety of difficulties with his health. (I suppose we all might have some difficulties with our health if we live to age 96!)

He had some heart and circulation problems and walked with a cane. Before he died he had a portion of one of his legs amputated. He quipped that he was glad that they had started on that end.

On that Tuesday evening, he addressed about 1,700 missionaries. He gave a stirring message quoting missionary scriptures and sharing those lively missionary experiences to illustrate them. In a remarkable way he held the missionaries on the edges of their seats for

almost an hour. At the conclusion of the meeting I asked Elder Richards if he would share with the missionaries what he had told us earlier, just before the devotional began, when we had asked him how he was.

In his good-natured and enthusiastic way he returned to the pulpit and said:

*This is just for a little fun. I am past 96, as you know, and when people ask me how I am, I say "fine," if you don't want details. If they want details, I tell them: "Well, I've lost my hair. These are not my teeth. I can't see out of that eye. I can't hear out of this ear. My feet and legs don't percolate like they used to. The house I am living in is a bit dilapidated."*

[And then, raising his clenched hand above his head, he said,] *But LeGrand Richards IS ALL RIGHT!*

It was *electric!* That whole congregation of missionaries rose spontaneously to their feet and gave this great missionary apostle a standing ovation. I share the experience for two reasons: one, because it was one of those interesting and unforgettable experiences at the MTC, but two, and more important, because of what I learned from the occasion.

Here was a brother who knew the gospel very well and had a powerful testimony of it. He had studied it for years. Elder Richards had taken the pieces of the gospel puzzle and put them together in his speaking and writings in such a way that literally hundreds, if not thousands, have come to know and understand gospel ideas and truths, and they have become converted.

He had come to the time of life—as one of the Brethren described it—when the “warranty on our parts runs out,” but, with all of the physical problems within his system, he was still able to say with enthusiasm, “But LeGrand Richards IS ALL RIGHT!”

He had a testimony of those powerful life-changing and life-shaping gospel ideas and

truths that missionaries share with investigators. Truths that let him know who he really was. Elder Richards had come to know that our Heavenly Father is a divine and glorified Personage rather than some indefinable Being. He understood that he was much more than merely a creature brought into existence by God out of nothing—or *ex nihilo*, as we read in Latin. He was not burdened by the heavy anxiety that the Protestant theologian Paul Tillich described when he wrote:

*Being created out of nothing means having to return to nothing. The stigma of having originated out of nothing is impressed on every creature. . . .*

*. . . And therefore man realizes that he is the prey of nonbeing.* [Systematic Theology, vol. 1 [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951], pp. 188, 196]

In contrast, Elder Richards knew that his spirit—that which gave him life, the “real” LeGrand Richards—was not created out of nothing but rather was literally a spirit son of his loving Heavenly Father. He knew that his relationship with our Heavenly Father was Father-to-son and not creator-to-creation, as the neoorthodox philosopher Emil Brunner starkly described about the distance, and hence the alienation, many mortals feel from God, their creator. He wrote:

*There is no greater sense of distance than that which lies in the words Creator-Creation. . . . The greatest dissimilarity between two things which we can express at all—more dissimilar than light and darkness, death and life, good and evil—is that between the Creator and that which is created.* [Emil Brunner, *Man in Revolt: A Christian Anthropology*, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1947), p. 90]

Elder Richards did not accept the pervasive, traditional Christian creeds—such as the Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed, or Westminster

Confession—that teach of a Trinity consisting of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who are described as three in one and one in three and without body, parts, or passions. He also understood well that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—the Only Begotten Son of the Father in the flesh—is a separate, distinct, and glorified Personage. With that knowledge came an understanding of who he was and the important purpose of his life in mortality.

Further, Elder Richards understood something about where he was going after this mortal life. Sister Richards had preceded him in death several years before, and through those lonely months and years of being without her companionship, he knew that, subject to faithfulness, they would be reunited as husband and wife and with their children—all of whom were sealed together for time and all eternity by the overarching power of the priesthood.

Having a testimony of these powerful truths helps all of us face whatever challenges come to us during our mortal lives. These are the truths that can change us for the better and are blessing literally millions of converts’ lives around the world. Any of us who are faithful and are blessed to become aware of these truths can say with understanding and assurance—regardless of our physical problems—that “We are all right!”

Such are the ideas that you missionaries had the privilege of sharing with those who had never known them before. These ideas and truths are so powerful that once understood, they change us for the better, forever.

Years ago I learned from the following personal experience that such powerful truths continue with us.

One summer while teaching a Latter-day Saint doctrine and philosophy course at the institute of religion adjacent to a university to the north of us, I attempted, as was customary, to become acquainted with the class members on the first day. One of the students introduced herself as a nonmember. She was a very bright

and attractive third-year student. Having a nonmember in the class was stimulating to all of us. She asked a lot of questions and participated freely in class discussion.

Generally things seemed to me to be going along well in the class. We had considered our Latter-day Saint ideas relating to the nature of God and mankind, our relationship to God, and revelation from God through living prophets to man.

Then, three weeks before the summer session was to end, she stopped coming. I wondered and frankly worried about what I might have unintentionally said that could have offended her in any way. We had no further contact until September, when students were registering for the fall quarter. She called my office and arranged to come and visit for a few minutes.

When she arrived, she said, "Last summer I registered for your course so I could find out more about what you Mormons believe. I had met a returned missionary from your Church, and we had dated a few times. He's a medical student, and I was interested in him. I decided I wanted to find out more about his beliefs in a setting where he was not present and I would feel free to ask any questions I had on my mind.

"As it turns out, all that is behind us. We are not going together anymore, and for a while that was hard for me to adjust to."

She glanced down at her handkerchief that she had wound around her fingers and continued, "I suppose you are wondering why I stopped coming to your class last summer."

I nodded, and she continued, "Well, on the first day I missed the class, as I was walking across campus toward the institute building, the thought crossed my mind, 'What if all this is true?' That thought upset me so much that I decided not to go back to class again. I would just drop the course and get away from it. I returned to my own church. I joined the choir. I even joined the civic action program spon-

sored by the church. I was there every Sunday and in between. I immersed myself in all the activities, but in spite of all my efforts, *the ideas would not let me go*. Is there something more that I could study about the Church?"

She enrolled in a Book of Mormon course and also met with the missionaries. She became a member of the Church because these gospel ideas and truths "would not let her go."

The powerful truths of the gospel stretch our minds and spirits, and after knowing and believing even some of them, our lives are changed forever. We learn about who we really are and how we relate to a loving Heavenly Father as well as how we relate to all that we see around us in the world. We come to know more about our Savior Jesus Christ and his coming to earth not merely to do his own will but rather that of the Father in carrying out the Atonement and the Father's plan for all of us, his children.

A nineteenth-century Protestant minister by the name of Paxton wrote these words about the power of ideas: "Ideas go booming through the world louder than cannon. Thoughts are mightier than armies. Principles have achieved more victories than horsemen or chariots" (W. M. Paxton, in *The New Dictionary of Thoughts*, revised and enlarged edition, comp. Tryon Edwards [New York: StanBook, 1977], pp. 286–87). Such are the ideas that all of you returned missionaries were privileged to teach during your time of service, and they came to us through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

In 1863 Brother William Fowler wrote the lyrics to the hymn "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," and the congregation has sung that hymn in virtually every general conference since that time. Each time I sing that hymn, I gratefully think of at least two prophets: the Prophet Joseph Smith and the current president of the Church.

As you remember, in the hymn we sing, "We thank thee for sending the gospel To



*lighten our minds with its rays*" (Hymns, 1985, no. 19; emphasis added). That is exactly what the restored gospel does for us. It enlightens our minds. It illuminates us. It brings us peace of mind. It brings us meaning to our everyday lives. We are indebted to the instrument in the hands of the Lord who brought these ideas to us—the Prophet Joseph Smith.

One cannot fully appreciate the powerful truths contained in the restored gospel without some understanding of the remarkable contribution of the Prophet Joseph Smith. These influential gospel truths and principles have come to us through him.

Even though he was blessed with many talents and capacities, Joseph Smith could not have accomplished what he did without divine help.

One of the greatest aspects of Joseph Smith's ministry was the continuous flow of revelation that came through him to become scripture. President Stephen L Richards, who became a member of the First Presidency, gave an address about the contributions of the Prophet Joseph Smith:

*His literary labors must not be forgotten. He produced more scripture, that is, the revealed word of God, than any other man of whom we have record. Indeed, his total scriptural productions would almost equal those of all others put together. Within the pages of the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price, which came to the world through him, are to be found such truth gems as, "The glory of God is intelligence"; "Men are that they might have joy"; it is the work and the glory of God to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man; and a clear statement of the purpose of good and evil in the world—a philosophical problem which has baffled the scholars of all times—and many other truths of inestimable value. There also came from him such memorable sayings as, "It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance"; "A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge"; "Whatever principle of*

*intelligence we attain unto in this life it will rise with us in the resurrection." He wrote history and dissertations on many subjects and was an orator of magnetism and convincing force.*

*The world's enlightenment of the century following his life has not disclosed a single error in his theological and philosophical pronouncements, and the society which he established is without question the peer, and many students not belonging to it maintain it is the superior, of all social systems on the earth. [Stephen L Richards, CR, October 1936, p. 32; also published in a pamphlet, Contributions of Joseph Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1958), p. 7]*

That he was able to accomplish all of this before he turned 39 years of age continues to be amazing to me. During his short life the Prophet Joseph Smith was forced out of three states—New York, Ohio, and Missouri—and into Illinois, where he was finally martyred. In the process of his life he was often a fugitive, he was harassed during those years by more than 40 lawsuits, and he had the emotional and temporal concerns of a young husband and father of nine children, of whom four were buried along the way.

Way back in 1823, the angel Moroni had told Joseph that his name would be had for good *and* evil among the nations of the earth (see JS—H 1:33). He certainly suffered at the hands of those who held his name for evil, but there were and are others who hold his name for good.

For example, the great Russian statesman, author, and philosopher, Count Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoi, had a very high opinion of the work of the Prophet Joseph Smith, as indicated in the account of his conversation about a century ago with Dr. Andrew D. White, former president of Cornell University and U.S. foreign minister to Russia:

*"Dr. White," said Count Tolstoi, "I wish you would tell me about your American religion."*

*"We have no state church in America," replied Dr. White.*

*"I know that, but what about your American religion?"*

*Patiently then Dr. White explained to the Count that in America there are many religions, and that each person is free to belong to the particular church in which he is interested.*

*To this Tolstoi impatiently replied: "I know all of this, but I want to know about the American religion. Catholicism originated in Rome; the Episcopal Church originated in England; the Lutheran Church in Germany, but the Church to which I refer originated in America, and is commonly known as the Mormon Church. What can you tell me about the teachings of the Mormons?"*

*"Well," said Dr. White, "I know very little concerning them. They have an unsavory reputation, they practice polygamy, and are very superstitious."*

*Then Count Leo Tolstoi, in his honest and stern, but lovable manner, rebuked the ambassador. "Dr. White, I am greatly surprised and disappointed that a man of your great learning and position should be so ignorant on this important subject. The Mormon people teach the American religion; their principles teach the people not only of Heaven and its attendant glories, but how to live so that their social and economic relations with each other are placed on a sound basis. If the people follow the teachings of this Church, nothing can stop their progress — it will be limitless. There have been great movements started in the past but they have died or been modified before they reached maturity. If Mormonism is able to endure, unmodified, until it reaches the third and fourth generations, it is destined to become the greatest power the world has ever known." [LeGrand Richards, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1973), pp. 435–36; emphasis in original]*

Dr. Harold Bloom, a distinguished professor of humanities at Yale University, published his book *The American Religion* in 1992. He included several chapters dealing with the work of Joseph Smith. I do *not* agree with many

of his statements, but I certainly agree with several that laud the Prophet. Bloom wrote:

*Whatever his lapses, Smith was an authentic religious genius, unique in our national history. [The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), p. 82]*

*I also do not find it possible to doubt that Joseph Smith was an authentic prophet. Where in all of American history can we find his match? . . . In proportion to his importance and his complexity, [Joseph Smith] remains the least-studied personage, of an undiminished vitality, in our entire national saga. [p. 95; emphasis added]*

*If there is already in place any authentic version of the American Religion then, as Tolstoy surmised, it must be Mormonism, whose future as yet may prove decisive for the nation, and for more than this nation alone. [p. 97]*

There are other bright individuals who are recognizing the Prophet for good. Heikki Raisanen, a Finnish theologian, commented on the Prophet's work and pointed out that "Joseph's teachings provide solutions for most, if not all, of the genuine problems and contradictions of the Bible with which scholars have wrestled for generations" (quoted in Edwin O. Haroldsen, "Good and Evil Spoken Of," unpublished article).

I share the positive enthusiasm of President Brigham Young, who said:

*I feel like shouting hallelujah, all the time, when I think that I ever knew Joseph Smith, the Prophet whom the Lord raised up and ordained, and to whom He gave keys and power to build up the kingdom of God on earth and sustain it. [JD 3:51]*

I have tried to remember when I first came to know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. I searched my memory and finally

concluded that I can't recall when I didn't know that he was a prophet. This knowledge seems to have always been a part of me. My testimony of the Prophet is one of my most valuable possessions, for which I will be eternally grateful. Over the years I have read many accounts of apostates and anti-Mormons who have written negative things about him. Still the deep conviction continues to grow within me that Joseph Smith in very deed was a prophet of the Lord.

I resonate to so much of what President John Taylor wrote about the Prophet Joseph Smith. Elder Taylor possessed great intellect and an unusual command of the English language. He also had extensive personal contact with the Prophet. He wrote:

*I testify that I was acquainted with Joseph Smith for years. I have traveled with him; I have been with him in private and in public; I have associated with him in councils of all kinds; I have listened hundreds of times to his public teachings, and his advice to his friends and associates of a more private nature. I have been at his house and seen his deportment in his family. I have seen him arraigned before the tribunals of his country, and have seen him honorably acquitted, and delivered from the pernicious breath of slander, and the machinations and falsehoods of wicked and corrupt men. I was with him living, and with him when he died, when he was murdered in Carthage jail by a ruthless mob . . . with their faces painted. I was there and was myself wounded; I at that time received four balls in my body. I have seen him, then, under these various circumstances, and I testify before God, angels, and men, that he was a good, honorable, virtuous man—that his doctrines were good, scriptural, and wholesome—that his precepts were such as became a man of God—that his private and public character was unimpeachable—and that he lived and died as a man of God and a gentleman. This is my testimony. [John Taylor, *The Gospel Kingdom*, sel. G. Homer Durham (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1943), p. 355]*

John Taylor also said about Joseph Smith: “God chose this young man. . . . I have never met a man so intelligent as he was” (*JD* 21:163). About the truths that the Prophet Joseph Smith taught, President Taylor wrote one of my favorite quotations. (Incidentally, I usually like to have a dictionary close at hand when I read his writings.) Here is the quote:

*Truth [these powerful ideas that will not let us go] will stand proud and erect, unsullied and uncontaminated by the pestiferous breath of calumniating mortals, and no power can stay its progress. [The Gospel Kingdom, p. 356]*

And so it is that we can sing with real feeling “We thank thee for sending the gospel to lighten our minds with its rays.” Thank heaven for a rational theology that enlightens and lifts us. As missionaries, how grateful we should be for the privilege of teaching these life-shaping truths to all who will listen. Our message is powerful and unique. There is nothing comparable to it in all of traditional Christianity.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is growing rapidly throughout the world, including countries behind the former Iron Curtain. Whoever would have dreamed that we would live long enough to see the day! If the predictions of non-Latter-day Saint Dr. Rodney Stark are correct and the Church's growth trends continue, there will be 265 million members of the Church by the year 2080 (see “Modernization and Mormon Growth: The Secularization Thesis Revisited,” in *Contemporary Mormonism: Social Science Perspectives*, eds. Marie Cornwall, Tim B. Heaton, and Lawrence A. Young [Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois, 1994], p. 13).

Of the Church, Dr. Stark said, “We are observing an extraordinarily rare event. After a hiatus [or break] of fourteen hundred years, in our time a new world faith seems to be stirring” (Rodney Stark, “Modernization,” p. 22; see also “The Rise of a New World Faith,”



*Review of Religious Research* 26, no. 1 [September 1984]: 18–27).

I believe that even though our numbers are relatively few, the prediction of Count Leo Tolstoi will be realized completely: the Church will literally become the greatest power the world has ever known. With or without you and me, it will go forth. But it will go forth a lot better with us than without us!

Now what does this mean for all of us? Here are a few suggestions.

1. We should study more about the Prophet and the truths and ideas he was inspired to share with us because no one has yet plumbed the depths of what could be learned about his life or teachings. We should commit ourselves to thoughtful study and consideration.

2. We should prepare ourselves to be the knowledgeable missionaries we are expected to be, either full-time or informally, throughout our entire lives.

3. And, of great importance, we should accept the challenge presented by President Stephen L Richards:

*If any man has received in his heart the witness of the divine truth embraced in the contributions of the Prophet Joseph, I charge him to be true, — true to his testimony, true to the Prophet, the founder, true to the cause and its duly commissioned leaders, true to the covenants he has made in holy places, and true to the brotherhood of man in the service that he renders. If any man has not received this witness, I appeal for his thoughtful, prayerful, sympathetic consideration. [CR, October 1936, p. 33; also Contributions of Joseph Smith, p. 9]*

President Richards offered promises to those who would receive and apply the teachings of Joseph Smith. I believe them with

all my heart. I have taken the liberty of adapting them to you personally:

1. *You will be made happy.*
2. *Doubt and uncertainty will leave you.*
3. *Glorious purpose will come into your life.*
4. *Your family ties will be sweeter.*
5. *Your friendships will be dearer.*
6. *Your service will be nobler.*
7. *The peace of Christ will be your portion.*

[Adapted from CR, October 1936, p. 33; also *Contributions of Joseph Smith*, p. 9]

Our life-shaping missions have given us an opportunity to teach these powerful ideas and truths that can help us say with enthusiasm along with Elder LeGrand Richards—even if we live to be 96 years of age—that we, the *real* we, are all right! We have taught truths that once learned “will not let people go”—ideas that change individuals for the better forever.

As we read in scripture, may we realize that indeed “Joseph Smith, the prophet and seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it” (D&C 135:3).

Joseph Smith was truly a prophet and witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we know great truths about our Father in Heaven and his great plan of happiness that bring supernal meaning into our lives forever. And so this morning I testify with all my heart that Joseph Smith was a prophet; that our Heavenly Father lives, he loves us, and he knows every one of us by name; and that Jesus is the Christ. I have never known that more surely than today. I know that this is his church and that it is led by a living prophet of God, our president and prophet Gordon B. Hinckley. Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.