

# *We Never Know Where Walking in His Steps Will Lead*

VAUGHN J. FEATHERSTONE

**B**rothers and Sisters, I am very pleased to be with you today. I recollect the story of a very voracious reader, a woman who had a study filled with books. Each night she came home and read from books in her library, and she always finished every book she read.

One night she came to a particularly interesting crossroads: She decided that she would read a book that she had been especially avoiding. Finally she picked the book up, sat down, and began to read. It was very dull and uninteresting, but she had made herself a promise that she would never read a book without finishing it. She continued, night after night, until days later she finally turned the back cover of the book, took it back, placed it on the shelf, and made this mental note to herself: "That was the dulllest book I have ever read in my life."

Sometime later she was out with a gentleman friend, and after dinner they started talking. He asked if she had ever read such and such a book. The mental note came back, "That was the dulllest book I have ever read in my life."

She said, "Yes; why?"

He said, "I wrote it."

Then they talked about the book. Finally, that evening about midnight when he dropped

her off, she went into her study, pulled this same book off the shelf, and read through the long hours of the night. When the first streaks of sunlight shafted across the sky, she closed the back cover of the book, placed it back again in its place on the bookshelf, and made another mental note to herself: "That was the most beautiful book I have ever read in my life." The difference was that she knew the author.

In the forty-fifth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord said:

*Hearken, O ye people of my church, to whom the kingdom has been given; hearken ye and give ear to him who laid the foundation of the earth, who made the heavens and all the hosts thereof, and by whom all things were made which live, and move, and have a being.*

*And again I say, hearken unto my voice, lest death shall overtake you; in an hour when ye think not the summer shall be past, and the harvest ended, and your souls not saved.*

---

*Vaughn J. Featherstone was a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this devotional address was given at Brigham Young University on 26 August 1979.*

*Listen to him who is the advocate with the Father, who is pleading your cause before him —*

*Saying: Father, behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin, in whom thou was well pleased; behold the blood of thy Son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified;*

*Wherefore, Father, spare these my brethren that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life. [D&C 45:1–5]*

We can know the author, and everlastingly so much is at stake whether or not we do know Him.

I am thrilled with the subject matter today. I suppose that in my limited schooling the subject of Jesus Christ figures the most of all subjects. I know and have read more about him than about any other subject, and I have served more in his cause that I have done anything else in my life. I suppose that it touches on the greatest degree of my learning. So I am thrilled with this assignment to discuss with you my feelings about him and my relationship to him.

Something else that I would like to share with you is my realization that the men I most love, admire, and respect also seem to have their lives most nearly intertwined in his. They model the things that he has taught. I suppose that President Spencer W. Kimball is the measure in our generation of the perfect man—truly a man of Christ.

Last night at a late hour when I was studying, I had a thought come to me that has passed by me many times. I would like to share it with you. We oftentimes quote from the poet of “A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief,” and when we quote this we relate it back to the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph, or we may relate it to a great Saint in this day who has lived that kind of life. But the poet was really talking about a certain poor wayfaring man of grief. This morning, in light of the thought of the poet, would you go back with me again and rehearse it? He said:

*A poor wayfaring Man of grief  
Hath often crossed me on my way,  
Who sued so humbly for relief  
That I could never answer, Nay.  
I had not power to ask his name,  
Whereto he went, or whence he came;  
Yet there was something in his eye  
That won my love; I knew not why.*

*Once, when my scanty meal was spread,  
He entered, not a word he spake;  
Just perishing for want of bread,  
I gave him all; he blessed it, brake,  
And ate, but gave me part again;  
Mine was an angel’s portion then,  
For while I fed with eager haste,  
The crust was manna to my taste.*

*I spied him where a fountain burst  
Clear from the rock; his strength was gone;  
The heedless water mocked his thirst;  
He heard it, saw it, hurrying on.  
I ran and raised the sufferer up;  
Thrice from the stream he drained my cup,  
Dipped and returned it running o’er;  
I drank and never thirsted more.*

*’Twas night; the floods were out; it blew  
A winter hurricane aloof;  
I heard his voice abroad and flew  
To bid him welcome to my roof.  
I warmed and clothed and cheered my guest  
And laid him on my couch to rest,  
Then made the earth my bed, and seemed  
In Eden’s garden while I dreamed.*

*Stript, wounded, beaten nigh to death,  
I found him by the highway side;  
I roused his pulse, brought his breath,  
Revived his spirit, and supplied  
Wine, oil, refreshment—he was healed;  
I had myself a wound concealed,  
But from that hour forgot the smart,  
And peace bound up my broken heart.*

*In prison I saw him next condemned  
 To meet a traitor's doom at morn;  
 The tide of lying tongues I stemmed,  
 And honored him 'mid shame and scorn.  
 My friendship's utmost zeal to try,  
 He asked if I for him would die;  
 The flesh was weak; my blood ran chill;  
 But the free spirit cried, "I will!"*

*Then in a moment to my view  
 The stranger started from disguise;  
 The tokens in his hand I knew;  
 The Savior stood before mine eyes.  
 He spake, and my poor name he named,  
 "Of me thou hast not been ashamed;  
 These deeds shall thy memorial be,  
 Fear not, thou didst them unto me."  
 ["A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief," Hymns,  
 no. 153]*

We need to go back occasionally and think about the Savior's life and all that transpired in it. I suppose that more beautiful yet than the words of the poet are the words of the prophets. Alma said,

*And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God.*

[Now listen to these words and think about "A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief":] *And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people.*

*And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities.*

*Now the Spirit knoweth all things; nevertheless the Son of God suffereth according to the flesh that he might take upon him the sins of his people, that he might blot out their transgressions according to the power of his deliverance; and now behold, this is the testimony which is in me. [Alma 7:10–13]*

Finally, the prophet Nephi concluded the last verses in 2 Nephi by saying:

*And now, my beloved brethren, and also Jew, and all ye ends of the earth, hearken unto these words and believe in Christ; and if ye believe not in these words believe in Christ; and if ye believe not in these words believe in Christ. And if ye shall believe in Christ ye will believe in these words, for they are the words of Christ, and he hath given them unto me; and they teach all men that they should be good. . . .*

*And now, my beloved brethren, all those who are of the house of Israel, and all ye ends of the earth, I speak unto you as the voice of one crying from the dust: Farewell until that great day shall come.*

*And you that will not partake of the goodness of God, respect the words of the Jews, and also my words, and the words which shall proceed forth out of the mouth of the Lamb of God, behold, I bid you an everlasting farewell, for these words shall condemn you at the last day.*

*For what I seal on earth, shall be brought against you at the judgment bar; for thus hath the Lord commanded me, and I must obey. [2 Nephi 33:10, 13–15]*

What great words are the words of Nephi!

As I mentioned, the major part of my learning has touched upon the life of the Savior; I have read hundreds of books and have spent thousands of hours in his service. Although few men would truly be qualified to speak about him, know that—as limited though I am—my concern, my interest, my commitment, and my love could not possibly be greater. I suppose that to really examine his life

I should share with you some of the things I feel so keenly about him.

I have wondered about the men who have enlisted their hearts and souls in his cause. What manner of men, indeed, could enlist in the very beginning? The man Adam, after he was driven out of the Garden of Eden, built an altar and offered sacrifice. “And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying: Why dost thou offer sacrifices . . .?” This great soul, in a formula that all of us ought to understand, simply said, “I know not, save the Lord commanded me.”

*And then the angel spake, saying: “This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten. . . .*

*Wherefore, thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son [of God] forevermore. [Moses 5:6–8]*

Had we no further scriptures than that simple verse, we would have the pattern for living. Yet we oftentimes need much more.

We could also consider Enoch, who was slow of speech and only a lad. All of the people hated him and called him a wild man, as it has been described in the scriptures (see Moses 6:31, 38). Enoch beheld the heavens weep, and he cried to the Lord:

*How is it that thou canst weep, seeing thou art holy, and from all eternity to all eternity?*

*And were it possible that man could number the particles of the earth, yea, millions of earths like this, it would not be a beginning to the number of thy creations; and thy curtains are stretched out still; and yet thou art there, and thy bosom is there; and also thou art just; thou art merciful and kind forever;*

*. . . How is it thou canst weep? [Moses 7:29–31]*

And then God let Enoch behold all the myriad of souls who have walked upon the earth. He beheld their wickedness and the misery of all of those. Finally, after Enoch had the privilege

of seeing these through his spiritual eyes, even with the discernment of God, he cried out; his heart swelled wide as eternity; he stretched forth his arms; his bowels yearned; and all eternity shook. I believe there have been a few times when, although we do not feel quite that degree and magnitude, we feel something akin to it—where our souls are so filled with love that we understand. So we catch from Enoch the prophet a dimension that we normally would not have—heart and soul enlisted in the cause of the Master.

And Moses also—after he had beheld the same things, all of the things that pertain to this life and every soul who had walked the earth, who was walking the earth at that time, or who would walk the earth—after the vision had departed from Moses and he was left unto himself, he said, “Now . . . I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed” (Moses 1:10).

Man *is* something, but I suppose that if we could have looked through the eyes of Moses and seen all of these things—millions, yea, billions of souls who had walked the earth—we may, with Moses, have cried out, “Now I perceive that man is nothing.” Those kinds of things help me to understand Him.

I believe that the same understanding comes when I read again the words of Daniel, chapter three, where Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, three of the Hebrew officers who were in the councils of Babylonia, were thrown into the furnace. King Nebuchadnezzar had built the marvelous golden image, threescore cubits high (in other words, about ninety feet high) and nine feet across, and placed it in the plains of Dura. Then he had all his officers, governors, counselors, sheriffs, and all others who held any position of worth come to this dedication. Then he had his herald proclaim to all those who were there.

*That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all*

*kinds of musick ye [shall] fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:*

*And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.*

And so the cornet and the flute and the harp and the sackbut and the psaltery were sounded and all of those who were there bowed down before the golden image, except for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Others who were jealous of these three Hebrew lads came to King Nebuchadnezzar and said, “O, king, live for ever,” and went on to tell him that there were three who, when these musical instruments sounded, would not bow down before nor worship the golden image and would not accept it. King Nebuchadnezzar was wroth, and he had these three young men brought before him and in the wrath of his heart he said to them:

*Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made, well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.*

Now, can you comprehend what is taking place—these three fine young Hebrew lads and this kind of pressure put on them? I mean not just a little bit of pressure, where it is a temptation—their lives really were hanging in the balance. But they responded in this manner:

*O, Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.*

*If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us.*

[And here is their commitment:] *But, if not, be it known unto thee, O king, we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image.*

In that selfsame hour the furnaces were heated seven times hotter than they were wont to be heated, and the mightiest men were wrapped in robes and hosen so that they might not perish in the flames; but even as they cast Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the burning fiery furnace, they perished in the flames because they were so hot. Then you recall that Nebuchadnezzar could see inside the furnace; and he said, “Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? . . . I see four men . . ., and the fourth is like the Son of God.” (See Daniel 3:1–25.)

I believe that for someone to have that kind of an influence over three young men, as He does over my life and your lives, there must be something substantial to which we can anchor our souls. We think of Peter and Thomas and the declaration so often quoted from Peter—“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16)—and Thomas’s affirmation—“Let us also go, that we may die with him” (John 11:16). I appreciate them.

We think also of the Prophet Joseph, Hyrum, Willard Richards, John Taylor, and others whose lives hung in the balance. Willard Richards said to the Prophet Joseph, “If you are condemned to [die] . . . I will [die] in your stead.”

Joseph, knowing something that many did not know at that time, said, “But you cannot.” Willard Richards said firmly, “I will.” (See B.H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, 2:283.) I think that these things help us to understand the kind of men enlisted not only in the service of Joseph and the other prophets but also in the greater work of the Master.

I think of President Kimball, whose whole life—in spite of open heart surgery—is given to service. And he is still probably the youngest man in the Church. I am impressed with President Benson, who in a great area conference in Sweden three or four years back stood up and—as a prophet would—in that faraway European country declared to the leaders, kings, and presidents of nations that they

should accept the Lord Jesus Christ and repent. That is what one would expect a prophet of God to do.

Along with all of these things, I would like to suggest to you that there are certain places at which we arrive when we walk in his footsteps where we would not suppose that life would ever lead us. Let me share with you just a few of the places where walking in his steps has led me.

I remember one Christmas Eve, not too many years back, when I went to sit in the home of a little widow in our ward and spent thirty or forty minutes with her. She discussed with me the things that were in her heart that lonely Christmas Eve, and I received a little jar of jelly from her as I prepared to depart. I found out a few months later that she was in a rest home, so I dropped by occasionally and visited her there. Then again, just a few short months after that, I was privileged to speak at her funeral. I suppose that acts such as this are performed outside the Church as well; but I feel that the greater act was hers, because she gave me an opportunity and blessings that I would not have had otherwise.

My experiences include the privilege of standing by men, women, and children in dire poverty whose lives are committed to Him—to see them feed the missionaries when all the food they had in the house was on the table and what little was left over would go to the children; and if there was none left, the children would have none. They just trusted totally in the fact that it was an act of Christianity—one that they could not forego—to feed the Lord's servants.

I have seen His teachings reflected in our day. We so often read about the widow and her placing into treasury her mite—bitterly embarrassed as she did it, I suppose, for fear that it was such a little bit to be given. I once saw a widow come before the bishop at tithing settlement and say, "That is my full tithing: \$55.00." Her income, then, would have been \$550 with which to pay her taxes, buy her food, take care

of her phone and light and heat bills and make other contributions to the Church. When the fifty-five dollars for tithing was taken it left \$495. With a sweet, humble attitude she said, "That's all there was, bishop, but it is a full tithing." We talk about poverty at the \$4,500 income level, and now the \$7,500 level; I am not certain that we understand. There are those who have poverty of the spirit; and there are those who are rich with the spirit, as this sweet sister whom I recollect.

We talk about the woman who had an issue of blood—twelve years of suffering every single day. She had gone to many physicians and had spent all of her money, but she was none the better. And in fact she was even worse. Then she found out that Jesus would be in the streets. Watching in desperation as he came by—and, I am sure, pushing herself through the multitude, thinking in her heart, "If I may touch his clothes, I will be whole"—and she finally reached out, touched his garment, and was healed; the blood was stanchd.

The Savior stopped and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" The disciples said, in effect, "What do you mean who touched you? There are all these people thronging around." As he turned around and looked on the body of people near him, this woman undoubtedly stood out to him as though she were a light globe. If I read correctly between the lines, she felt guilty: "I should have asked." So she came forward and knelt before him and simply confessed that it was she. Then he said, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole." I love him for that. (See Mark 5:24–34.)

I love him for other things; I love him for a phone call from Idaho. A little couple had just had twins prematurely. One of them was doing fairly well, but the other, weighing just a little over a pound and a quarter, was brought into the University of Utah Medical Center. Think of five cubes of butter, if you would—that was the size of this little soul. I received a call: "He has been administered to, but would you mind

dropping by the hospital and giving him a blessing? We'd like to have that done, and we're up here in Idaho. Would you please do it?"

I found that about the only hour I had available that particular day was 5:00 a.m. I dropped by the University of Utah Medical Center, went into the room, and found the oxygen canopy. I put my fingers—all that would fit—on the forehead of this little soul, gave a blessing, and had the impression from God that one day this boy—six feet tall and weighing two hundred pounds—would be a young ambassador for the Lord. This kind of experience has built my understanding and love for the Savior.

As I left a conference and was on the way out of the airport, I met a sweet family of members. They had contacted a nonmember man who was having severe problems and wondered if I would give him a blessing. We dropped by the home to find an apartment in a condominium or large apartment complex. In the living room were two pieces of furniture—a bean bag and a stereo set—and nothing more. A little girl, age nine, was taking care of her father because the mother, when she heard that her husband had cancer, had abandoned him and the nine-year-old girl and a seven- or eight-year-old boy.

The girl said, "I don't think my father is expecting you. I don't think he is expecting anyone."

We said, "Would you please go ask him?"

She went into the bedroom, and in a minute she came out and said, "Yes, he is expecting you. Will you please come in?"

She took us down the hallway into his room, and here on the bottom bunk of a bunkbed set we saw this man; he was six feet tall and weighed only sixty-seven pounds. We administered to him, that feeling he would not live; but we felt impressed to bless him with the thing that would be of most worth to him: that his son and daughter would be protected, that angels would walk through this life with

them, that they would be protected when he was no longer there to do it. I suppose that those of us who have been involved in such experiences (and all of us have) would not sell them for all the money in the world.

I had the privilege of being involved with a young man and a father recently. The young man and a friend were up hiking in the lower foothills near Cody, Wyoming. The friend jumped across a high-power line that was down, but the young man got tangled in it and was electrocuted. The friend turned and ran all the way back down to where the father lived—and it was no short distance—and told him that his son had been electrocuted and was dead. The father, who was not a young man, ran all the way back up, taking about fifteen minutes. When he got where the boy was lying across the wires, he in some way removed the boy from the wires with a board or large stick. Then he picked his son up in his arms and held him, saying, "In the name of Jesus Christ and by the power and authority of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood, I command you to live." The dead boy in his father's arms opened his eyes. He was taken to the University of Utah Medical Center for treatment and a blessing. I believe that it is this kind of experience that we have as we walk through this life with Him.

I believe that we also experience the miracle of forgiveness. Once a couple drove all the way from one of the central California stakes, came to my office, and said, "We just need half an hour with you." The husband continued, "At conference you mentioned that every single major transgression must be confessed. Monday after conference my wife and I were sitting at home for home evening, and not a word had been spoken. Then my wife said to me, 'Are you thinking what I'm thinking?' And I said, 'Yes, I think I am.' She said, 'How soon should we leave?' And I said, 'Why not right now?'" So they had climbed into their car and driven the sixteen hours to the Church Office Building.

The man went on, "We have come to confess a major transgression. Forty-three years ago, before we were married, we committed fornication once. My father was the bishop of the ward, and so he didn't ask us the questions, but just signed our temple recommends. We went to the stake president and he saw that they were signed, so he didn't ask the questions. We went to the temple unworthily.

"While we were out on our honeymoon we decided that we would make it up to the Lord. We would give every particle of energy all of our lives in order to repent: he couldn't ask us to do anything we wouldn't do. We'd pay more than our share of tithing, more than our share of building fund. We would go forth and really serve. We wouldn't go to the temple that next year because we weren't worthy." It was almost a self-imposed restitution program.

"We've done that," he said, "I've been a bishop and I've been on two high councils. My wife has been stake Relief Society president for six years. We know now—and I guess we've known all along, although we have repented—that we still had to confess."

Normally we send people back to their bishops or stake presidents for such confessions; they do not need to come to the General Authorities, because every single member of the Church has a priesthood leader. But General Authorities are common judges, and so I called President Kimball on the phone and said, "President Kimball, I have this lovely couple in my office." I explained to him the story of this couple and said, "I feel that they've repented. Would you feel all right if I exercised my common judgeship and simply closed this case for these two wonderful people, so they will not have to drive the sixteen hours back to California just to go through this experience again?"

He asked, "Are they still in your office?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Would you bring them right up?"

I know that it shocked me. I said yes, hung up the phone, and said to them, "President Kimball would like to see you in his office right now." The blood drained from their faces.

I took them up to the twenty-fifth floor, where his office was at that time, and we walked back through the reception area to Arthur Haycock's office, where Brother Haycock said, "The President is expecting you."

The President got up from his desk and came to the door to meet us. I introduced him to this lovely couple and said, "President, I need not stay. I'll run back downstairs. When you're finished, call me and I'll come right back up and get them."

He said, "Bishop, I want you to come in, too."

I went into his office along with the couple. We sat down in front of his desk, and he went around behind the desk. Then, for three or four minutes, he visited with them tenderly and sweetly about the things he had in his office. Then he turned to the man and said, "Bishop Featherstone has told me about this condition. Have you suffered equal to the transgression? In other words, 'It has been a major transgression; have you suffered?'"

Tears came to this brother's eyes, and he said, "President, we think we have suffered many times more."

President Kimball asked, "Have you prayed for forgiveness?" The man said, "I have prayed for forgiveness, and my wife has. We haven't offered a prayer in forty-three years in which we haven't asked for forgiveness."

Let me digress here just to say this: Do you know that the President of the Church is the only man on the face of the earth who can actually forgive on behalf of the Lord? The rest of us who are common judges forgive on behalf of the Church, as the Lord's agents. President Kimball has said that he never uses this authority unless he really knows.

After talking to them and counseling with them, he said finally, "Would you feel all right

if I came around and knelt down and had a prayer with you?" He came around from behind his desk. The couple knelt, and we knelt facing the couple. President Kimball offered the prayer and said these words in the very beginning: "Heavenly Father, we love thee." he said "We love thee" in a way I have never heard it said before. Tears came to my eyes and streamed down my cheeks. I could hear them dropping on the carpet, and they sounded like thunder, to me at least.

He continued to pray; and I understood a little better than what an advocate is, because he pleaded for this couple. He felt that they had repented, but he needed to know.

Finally, as he concluded his prayer and stood up, he came over, put his arm through my arm, pulled me close to him, and asked me a question. Do you know, I still do not know what the question was? I never did answer it. All I know is that I turned to him with tears in my eyes and said, "President Kimball, I love you." And I did—every particle of my heart and soul loved the man President Kimball.

He then went over to this man and said to him, as he shook his hand, "I want you to forgive yourself, and I want you to forgive your wife. I don't want you ever to think about it again. You are forgiven." The man put his head down on President Kimball's shoulder and sobbed. In a few moments President Kimball walked over to the woman, took both of her hands in his, and said, "I want you to forgive yourself. I want you never to think about it again. You are forgiven."

I could not have had that experience except for the fact that I had tried to walk in the Savior's footsteps. Every one of you who has had similar experiences has had them because you have tried to walk in his steps.

Who could forget the Canaanite woman who cried incessantly after the Savior as he traveled between Sidon and Tyre with the disciples? Finally the disciples said to the Master, "Send her away; for she crieth after us." The

Savior—addressing not the woman but the disciples—then said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And then the woman, knowing that they were talking about her—mind you, this Canaanite woman—ran to him and worshipped him. I suppose that she probably knelt down before him, maybe even clasping his knees or laying her cheeks up against him or looking up into his face, and pleaded for her daughter, who was grievously vexed with a devil. "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David."

And the Lord said something that at the time seemed so harsh: "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs."

Now, she could have stood up and said, "I'm not a dog; and I have some pride, too, you know." And she could have worked her way out of the crowd. But she taught us one of the great lessons in humility, and there is no question in my mind that the Savior knew exactly what her response would be. She said, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table."

"Woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." The blessing was granted. (See Matthew 15:21–28.)

We find also that when the Savior taught some extremely hard doctrine the disciples began by ones and twos to veer off, and they never walked again with him. Finally, all that were left were the twelve apostles, and he said to them, possibly with a heavy heart, "Will ye also go away?" At this Peter said,

*Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.*

*And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.* [See John 6:66–69]

Indeed, think about that. To whom shall we go if not to him? Where in all the world? In whom could we put our trust? Where could we find the peace that surpasseth understanding? When we have gone to the very limit—to the

mountains too high and too wide and too deep in the earth to get across—where can we go when we need to reach the other side, except to him?

I suppose that we should think how this affects you and me. We need to live a Christlike life. President Harold B. Lee said, “I came to a night, some years ago, when on my bed, I realized that before I could be worthy of the high place to which I had been called, I must love and forgive every soul that walked the earth, and in that time I came to . . . a peace and a direction, and a comfort, and an inspiration, that told me things to come . . . [which] I knew were from a divine source” (Harold B. Lee, in Conference Report, October 1946, p. 146).

I wonder if in that hour he knew that he would be the prophet, seer, and revelator of this Church. I think, like him, that we must love and forgive every soul that walks the earth—a wayward son, a husband, a wife, maybe a divorced former companion, maybe someone who has offended us bitterly. If we would be Christlike, we must love and forgive every soul that walks the earth. Then are we entitled to that peace.

We also find the answer in three of the Lord’s parables:

*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.*

*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:*

*Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.*

*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind*

*Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. [Matthew 13:44–48]*

James E. Talmage says that the cost is always the same for every single one of us as we accept Christ and him crucified. The cost everlastingly and always will be the same; it is, simply, all we have. If we are truly going to be his disciples it could never be less than all we have. If, we say, “I’ll go so far, and that’s as far as I can go,” then I am not certain that we measure up as true disciples.

Listen to the words of a modern prophet, President Kimball:

*We extend to every listener a cordial invitation to come to the watered garden, to the shade of trees, to unchangeable truth. Come with us to sureness, security, . . .*

*Come, listen to a prophet’s voice and hear the word of God. [Speech given at youth conference, Long Beach, California, April 9, 1978]*

I believe that we have in this generation those who are simply responding. The Lord has said, “My sheep hear my voice” (John 10:27), and they are coming to the shade, to the watered gardens, to the cool waters.

One of the great poets, William Ernest Henleys wrote a verse entitled “Invictus.” As you will recall, in those verses he said:

*Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.*

*In the fell clutch of circumstance,  
I have not winced nor cried aloud:  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.*

*Beyond this veil of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.*

*It matters not how strait the gate,*

*How charged with punishment the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate:  
I am the captain of my soul.*

But a modern apostle who saw the Savior in Gethsemane, Orson F. Whitney, replied:

*Art thou in truth?  
Then what of Him who bought thee with His blood?  
Who plunged into devouring seas  
And snatched thee from the flood,*

*Who bore for all our fallen race  
What none but Him could bear—  
The God who died that man might live  
And endless glory share.*

*Of what avail thy vaunted strength  
Apart from His vast might?  
Pray that His light may pierce the gloom  
That thou mayest see aright.*

*Men are as bubbles on the wave,  
As leaves upon the tree,  
Thou, captain of thy soul! Forsooth,  
Who gave that place to thee?*

*Free will is thine—free agency,  
To wield for right or wrong;  
But thou must answer unto Him  
To whom all souls belong.*

*Bend to the dust that “head unbowed,”  
Small part of life’s great whole,  
And see in Him and Him alone,  
The captain of thy soul.  
[“The Soul’s Captain”]*

I think that we need to come to the point where we find Him and know that he is the captain of our soul. If we can “bend to the dust our ‘head unbowed’ ” and accept him and strip the pride from our beings and serve our fellowmen, we walk in his steps.

The great prophet Job wrote:

*Oh that my words were now written? oh that they were printed in a book!*

*That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!*

*For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:*

*And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. [Job 19:23–26]*

And then, in this last day, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, two great prophets, declared our gift to this generation:

*And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!*

*For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—*

*That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God. [D&C 76:22–24]*

Finally, in the words quoted in the beginning:

*Hearken, O ye people of my church, to whom the kingdom has been given; hearken ye and give ear to him who laid the foundation of the earth, who made the heavens and all the hosts thereof, and by whom all things were made which live, and move, and have a being.*

*And again, I say, hearken unto my voice, lest death shall overtake you; in an hour when ye think not the summer shall be past, and the harvest ended, and your souls not saved.*

My prayer is that our learning and education will not only touch on the great truths of life, but more importantly will focus on the life of the Master. That we might hear his voice and follow in his sacred and holy footsteps I pray this day in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.