

# “Always Remember Him”

ULISSES SOARES

Good morning, dear students, faculty, and staff. What a privilege it is for my wife, Rosana, and me to be with you today. We are thrilled for this opportunity. Thank you for taking the time to be with us today.

What a wonderful sight we have from this pulpit. You all look wonderful. Your faith and love for the Lord are very evident. I know how busy you are, and I know you could be doing something else at this hour. I compliment you for choosing to be here with us.

I bring love and greetings to all of you from the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. They think and pray for you more than you can imagine. I hope you will feel how much we and the Savior love you through my message today.

## A Special Generation

As I was preparing for this devotional, it came to my mind how special and blessed you are—all of you. You came to earth during a very significant time in world history. You have been preserved to be born at this time when we are preparing for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. President Russell M. Nelson, and his wife, Sister Wendy

Watson Nelson, recently addressed the youth of the Church, and they referred to them as a special generation, and surely that applies to you young adults as well. Listen to what President Nelson said:

*Our Heavenly Father has reserved many of His most noble spirits—perhaps, I might say, His finest team—for this final phase. Those noble spirits—those finest players, those heroes—are **you!** . . .*

*. . . You are among the best the Lord has **ever** sent to this world.<sup>1</sup>*

And Sister Nelson said:

*There has **never** been a time like this in the history of this world. **Never!**<sup>2</sup>*

Truly there has never been a time like this in the history of this world! We are living in a time of significant technological, medical, and scientific advancement. Information is available to

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everyone. Not long ago, when I was your age, we didn't have any of these powerful tools you have available in your hands that allowed us to communicate and obtain information so quickly. This is a great time to be alive.

However, we are living in challenging times that have been prophesied for centuries by prophets and apostles, both ancient and modern. Throughout history they have expressed their concerns about the last days. We have seen steadily declining moral values that have dramatically changed the world through the years. Modern communication has drawn people into the world and its values, and secularism has changed the way people see God's hand in their lives. As a result, we witness an increasing number of people who are confused about their identity as children of our Heavenly Father. They also have become confused about what really matters in life, and many who were once strong in faith have developed spiritual apathy.

My dear friends, you are truly a chosen generation—the hope of Israel in these days and a generation that has been given many promises, including increased access to excellent health care, remarkable educational opportunities, and financial prosperity beyond any generation in time. In many regards, you live a higher quality of life than ancient kings, queens, and emperors. You are the hope of God to help God's children to remember Him, His love, and His sacrifice for them—to see His loving arms reaching out to them.

### **The Cycle of Prosperity and Pride**

We learn in the scriptures about the cycle of prosperity and pride that has affected God's children throughout human history. In simple words, it is very clear that when people remembered the Lord, they prospered. But when they forgot Him, they fell into this cycle of pride because of their riches, technological advances, and educational opportunities. As a result, they became a people who rejected the Lord and His covenants and who forgot the poor, the needy, and the strangers around them. Eventually their society collapsed because they became morally bankrupt. Then, through the resulting trials, they became humble,

repented, and turned back to the Lord. This same cycle has occurred throughout history among many powerful nations and empires.

I recently was reading about Uzziah—or Azariah—one of the kings of Judah who lived between 792 to 740 BC.<sup>3</sup> His name in Hebrew, *Uzzyah*, means “Jehovah is my strength” or “Jehovah's strength.”

His life relates to what I just mentioned. At first, Uzziah was known as someone who always remembered the Lord in his life. Even his own name helped him remember the Lord. Uzziah began his reign by seeking, listening to, and worshipping the Lord. The Bible states:

*And he [Uzziah] did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. . . .*

*And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper.<sup>4</sup>*

It was during the reign of Uzziah that the kingdom of Judah experienced the greatest period of prosperity and influence since the reign of King Solomon. But unfortunately, pride in his military triumphs and pride in his great power and wealth caused him to forget the Lord. Because of this sin, Uzziah was struck with leprosy. Because of his disease, Uzziah was forced to live isolated from his people until he died.<sup>5</sup>

Uzziah prospered in every way in his life while he remembered the Lord, but when he forgot Him, Uzziah experienced heartbreak, disappointment, and sorrow for his sin.<sup>6</sup>

Based on what happened to Uzziah, how can a special generation like yours that has received so many promises avoid the cycle of prosperity and pride? How can you avoid being affected by modern-day leprosy that destroy us and afflict us? How can you apply Uzziah's experience in your life and always remember the Lord in all you do? These are the same questions I ask myself.

### **The Covenant to Always Remember Jesus Christ**

In light of Uzziah's story, let us consider one of the covenants that we renew weekly when we partake of the sacrament—the covenant to “always

remember him," the Savior.<sup>7</sup> This covenant is repeated in both sacrament prayers. An important word of this covenant is *remember*.

The word *remember* is constantly used in the scriptures. It appears hundreds of times in the scriptures. In ancient Israel, the word *remember* was used in many instances to help the Lord's people to remember what He had done for them in times past. It was even more commonly used in the context of covenants the Lord made with His people.

The children of Israel, like many today, had a difficult time remembering the Lord and His commandments, and because of their forgetfulness, they often suffered painful consequences. That is one of the reasons the Lord used the word *remember*. For example, the journey to Israel from Egypt began with a commandment to "remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place."<sup>8</sup>

The word *remember* comes from the Latin word *memor* and means "to be mindful of," and *re-* means "again." In this context, the word *remember* means to have in or to be able to bring to one's mind an awareness of someone or something that one has seen, known, or experienced in the past.<sup>9</sup> There is a strong correlation between the emotion felt and the resulting memory. Thus, the stronger the emotion, the more vivid and influential is the memory. In the Hebrew context, the word *remember* involves a knowledge that is accompanied by appropriate action. Thus, "doing" is an essential part of the remembering.

That is exactly what happened with Uzziah, the king of Judah, isn't it? Even Uzziah's own name reminded him where he was to turn for help during his life as he made decisions.

In summary, the more we remember the Lord, the more power we will have to keep on the path doing what the Lord expects from us. In this sense, when we partake of the sacrament, we witness unto God, the Eternal Father, that we will remember the Savior in our mind and in our heart at all times and in all places. We promise that we will keep in our hearts vivid emotions and

feelings of gratitude for His sacrifice, His love, and His gifts for us. We also promise that we will act upon these memories, feelings, and emotions.

One year following the Restoration of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Lord gave to Joseph Smith a revelation that is found in section 59 of the Doctrine and Covenants. This section gives a broader dimension to the covenant to always remember Him. This is what the Lord instructed Joseph Smith:

*Thou shalt offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in righteousness, even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.*

*And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day; . . .*

*Nevertheless thy vows shall be offered up in righteousness on all days and at all times;*

*But remember that on this, the Lord's day, thou shalt offer thine oblations and thy sacraments unto the Most High, confessing thy sins unto thy brethren, and before the Lord.<sup>10</sup>*

Through this revelation the Lord taught us about the why, the how, and the what to do to always remember Him. The why: to "fully keep thyself unspotted from the world." The how: that "thy vows shall be offered up in righteousness" with "a broken heart and a contrite spirit." And, finally, the what: to "offer thine oblations and thy sacraments unto the Most High, confessing thy sins unto thy brethren, and before the Lord."

This scripture mentions the word *oblations*. In the scriptures, the word *oblation* implies a full devotion to the Lord, offering Him a broken heart and a contrite spirit. It also means any sacrifice we make for the Lord. Thus the covenant of always remembering Him relates to sacrificing everything for the Lord with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. All this confirms that remembering the Savior is to act upon the things that will keep us on the path to righteousness.

What a priceless gift has been given to us as we partake of the emblems of the broken body and

the shed blood of the Master on His Sabbath day. As we partake of the sacrament, we eat the broken bread in remembrance of His body. We drink the water in remembrance of His blood that was shed for us. And we covenant with the Lord that we will always remember Him. We then receive the marvelous promise to “always have his Spirit to be with [us]”<sup>11</sup> if we act upon our covenant. Partaking of the sacrament is regarded in such importance by our Heavenly Father that we are admonished to partake of it regularly every Sunday.

My dear friends, the covenant to always remember Him should influence and inspire us in every decision and action in our lives. King Benjamin in the Book of Mormon taught:

*Therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives. . . .*

*And I would that ye should remember also, that this is the name that I said I should give unto you that never should be blotted out, except it be through transgression; therefore, take heed that ye do not transgress, that the name be not blotted out of your hearts.*<sup>12</sup>

Thus, remembering the Savior every single day affects every single decision we make. It affects, for example, how we speak; what we choose to do, to watch, to read, and to listen to; and how we treat one another. I can assure you that the Lord Himself will inspire these decisions, guide us in our challenges, and assure that the harvest will be positive. I definitely can assure you that we won’t be affected by the modern-day leprosies that are conducting people away from the path of righteousness.

My dear friends, given the reality of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, life has eternal and divine possibilities for those who always remember Him. It is of central importance to remember the feelings we have when we partake of the sacrament. We are preparing for eternal life and exaltation as we partake of the sacrament and promise to remember the Savior in our hearts and minds, knowing that remembering will help guide us in every decision and action.

### **“I Stand All Amazed”**

I invite you to join me in reflecting about the impact this important principle can have in our personal lives. Please consider some of the things we can do to always remember Jesus Christ every single day. The Savior said, “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”<sup>13</sup>

Our Savior Jesus Christ was motivated by His commitment to always remember the Father and to always do God’s will because of His infinite love for God and for us. His sincere prayer in Gethsemane still echoes in my mind: “Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.”<sup>14</sup>

Paraphrasing the words of the hymn “I Stand All Amazed,”<sup>15</sup> composed by Charles H. Gabriel, I declare to you that

- I stand all amazed by the moment when Jesus was nailed to the cross, and, while still stumbling under His load, He said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”<sup>16</sup>
- I stand all amazed that for me He was crucified, that for me, a sinner, He suffered, He bled, He died, and He was resurrected. And He promised me that if I have a contrite spirit, acknowledging my sins and shortcomings, and if I am willing to repent, loving God’s children like the Savior, the Lord will guarantee my forgiveness and my place at His side.
- It is wonderful that, even for a man like me, there is a chance if I always remember Him.

### **Jehovah Will Be Our Strength**

I share my testimony with you today that these words are true and worth remembering. I love my Savior. I adore Him. I love my Heavenly Father. I worship Him in the name of His Beloved Son.

As one of His ordained apostles on earth, I leave a blessing upon you—a blessing to help you to always remember and recognize the Savior in your lives. I leave you a blessing to help you to always remember to come unto Him; to allow His influence to guide your thoughts, your feelings,

and your decisions; and to always follow Him. I leave you a blessing to help you to always look to Him in moments of distress, in moments of difficulties, in moments of depression, and in moments of challenges. I leave you a blessing that will allow you to feel of the Savior's love and His real concern for your well-being.

I plead with you, my dear friends, to remember that you are precious children of our Heavenly Father, reserved to come to earth at this point in history. Remember that you were chosen by the Father to come at this time because you have the power to face the challenges of this era. Please remember that happiness and peace in this life and in the world to come depend upon remembering the Savior and your covenants with Him daily.

I testify to you that Jesus Christ lives. I know He lives. I know He leads this Church through prophets, seers, and revelators. I assure you, with all my heart, that you will be very safe if you follow the teachings of our prophets in these very difficult days. Let us not allow the rich and marvelous blessings we enjoy to create confusion in our minds and hearts as they did with King Uzziah and many others.

I witness that when we put our trust in the Savior, in His love, and in His atoning sacrifice, that when we seek for His help, even in the things that are confusing us, Jehovah will be our strength and Jehovah will help us, as He did for Uzziah before his fall.

I invite you to feel His love and to have faith that He will come to you. I promise in His name that

He is near and that He will, indeed, come to you. He will always be with us. Let us always remember the Savior. Let us always remember His love.

This is my sincere testimony, and I share it and my love for all of you in the name of our Savior, our Redeemer, even Jesus Christ, amen.

#### Notes

1. Russell M. Nelson, in Russell M. Nelson and Wendy W. Nelson, "Hope of Israel," worldwide youth devotional, 3 June 2018, [lds.org/new-era/2018/08-se/hope-of-israel?lang=eng](https://lds.org/new-era/2018/08-se/hope-of-israel?lang=eng); emphasis in original.

2. Wendy W. Nelson, in Nelson and Nelson, "Hope of Israel"; emphasis in original.

3. Uzziah, also known as Azariah; see 2 Kings 14:21; 15:1, 6–8; 1 Chronicles 3:12. See also 2 Chronicles 26.

4. 2 Chronicles 26:4–5.

5. See 2 Kings 15:5; 2 Chronicles 26:21–23.

6. See 2 Chronicles 26:16–23.

7. D&C 20:77, 79.

8. Exodus 13:3.

9. See Merriam-Webster online dictionary, s.v. "remember."

10. D&C 59:8–9, 11–12.

11. D&C 20:77; see also verse 79.

12. Mosiah 5:8, 11.

13. John 15:14.

14. Mark 14:36.

15. See "I Stand All Amazed," *Hymns*, 2002, no. 193.

16. Luke 23:34.