

“Come, Listen to a Prophet’s Voice”

YOSHIHIKO KIKUCHI

I pray that the Spirit of the Lord will guide me so that I can say the things that I have in my mind and heart. It is indeed a great privilege for me to stand before you today in this great institution built upon the foundation of the true restored gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and dedicated to the propagation of knowledge. I consider it an honor to speak to you especially, the Lord’s elite, the leaders of the future and the future leaders of the world.

Today I would like to relate the stories of two great leaders who showed faith and courage in obeying the voice of the Lord. And then, I would like to issue an invitation to each of you to listen to the voice of the prophet, President Spencer W. Kimball, the mouthpiece for the Lord, and to obey his voice as he has directed us and continues to direct us to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with others.

Nephi’s Leadership

The first story comes from the Book of Mormon. Lehi’s and Ishmael’s families had left Jerusalem and had been sojourning in the wilderness and they “did travel and wade through much affliction in the wilderness” (1 Nephi 17:1). The scriptures tell us that “notwithstanding we had suffered many afflictions and much difficulty, yea, even so much that we cannot write them all” (1 Nephi 17:6).

Each of you sisters here today, suppose that you are Nephi’s wife and you brethren that you are Nephi. You have left Jerusalem and have been sojourning in the wilderness for the space of many days, months, and years, even eight years. “Our women did bear children in the wilderness” (1 Nephi 17:1). Without sufficient sanitary supplies, water, medications, and other necessary aids, many children were born.

Not only that, but while they were in the wilderness they “did live upon raw meat” (1 Nephi 17:2). Can you imagine saying to your daughter, “Sarah, here is your dinner of raw meat”; or to your son, “Matthew, here is some raw meat for your dinner tonight”?

Can you imagine the sufferings and afflictions that you are facing in the wilderness?

But the scripture tells us that “so great were the blessings of the Lord upon” them that they “began to bear their journeyings without murmurings” (1 Nephi 17:2).

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And because of their great faith in following the commandments given by the Lord, he said unto them:

I will make thy food become sweet, that ye cook it not;

And I will also be your light in the wilderness; and I will prepare the way before you, if it so be that ye shall keep my commandments; wherefore, inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall be led towards the promised land. [1 Nephi 17:12–13]

The prophet Nephi said that—

if . . . the children of men keep the commandments of God he doth nourish them, and strengthen them, and provide means whereby they can accomplish the thing which he has commanded them. [1 Nephi 17:3]

When they finally reached the seashore, of course, they “were exceedingly rejoiced,” and they called the sea Irreantum, and they called the place “Bountiful, because of its much fruit and honey” (1 Nephi 17:5).

They finally thought that they were settled there, but—

it came to pass that after I, Nephi, had been in the land of Bountiful for the space of many days, the voice of the Lord came unto me, saying: Arise, and get thee into the mountain. And it came to pass that I arose and went up into the mountain, and cried unto the Lord.

And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto me, saying: Thou shalt construct a ship, after the manner which I shall show thee, that I may carry thy people across these waters. [1 Nephi 17:7–8]

Brothers and sisters, I feel very strongly that we do have similar challenges—or invitations—given by the Lord to us today as a Church, as individuals, through President Kimball to share the gospel with all the world as well as with our neighbors.

Nephi could have said to the Lord, “Send me back to Jerusalem where I can find many hands to help me, tools to use, and much wood with which to construct a big ship.” Without saws, hammers, nails, lumber—all he had was a broken bow—instead of responding negatively, he sought to obey the Lord’s will, saying:

Lord, whither shall I go that I may find ore to molten, that I may make tools to construct the ship after the manner which thou hast shown unto me? [1 Nephi 17:9]

Of course the Lord revealed his will:

And it came to pass that the Lord told me whither I should go to find ore, that I might make tools. [1 Nephi 17:10]

And Nephi made a bellows with which to blow the fire, and he made tools from the ore which he melted out of the rock. But the prophet Nephi had his greatest opposition from his older brothers, as you know.

And when my brethren saw that I was about to build a ship, they began to murmur against me, saying: Our brother is a fool, for he thinketh that he can build a ship; yea, and he also thinketh that he can cross these great waters. [1 Nephi 17:17]

They continued murmuring against him:

And thou art like unto our father, led away by the foolish imaginations of his heart; yea, he hath led us out of the land of Jerusalem, and we have wandered in the wilderness for these many years; and our women have toiled, being big with child; and they have borne children in the wilderness and suffered all things, save it were death; and it would have been better that they had died before they came out of Jerusalem than to have suffered these afflictions. [1 Nephi 17:20]

And thus my brethren did complain against me, and were desirous that they might not labor, for they did not believe that I could build a ship; neither would they believe that I was instructed of the Lord. [1 Nephi 17:18]

But Nephi, as you know, replied to them:

Do ye believe that our fathers, who were the children of Israel, would have been led away out of the hands of the Egyptians if they had not hearkened unto the words of the Lord?

Yea, do ye suppose that they would have been led out of bondage? . . .

The waters of the Red Sea were divided hither and thither and they passed through on dry ground. . . .

. . . The Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea, who were the armies of Pharaoh. [1 Nephi 17:23–24, 26–27]

And so Nephi obeyed the Lord, built the ship, and carried his people to the promised land—in spite of the opposition of his brothers and the difficulties he encountered.

Enoch's Leadership

I want to relate another story. In the book of Moses, chapter 7, we read:

And the Lord said unto me: Go to this people, and say unto them—Repent, lest I come out and smite them with a curse, and they die.

And he gave unto me a commandment that I should baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, which is full of grace and truth, and of the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of the Father and the Son.

And it came to pass that Enoch continued to call upon all the people, save it were the people of Canaan, to repent;

And so great was the faith of Enoch, that he led the people of God, . . . and he spake the word of the Lord, and the earth trembled, and the mountains fled, even according to his command; and the rivers

of water were turned out of their course; and the roar of the lions was heard out of the wilderness; and all nations feared greatly, so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him. . . .

The fear of the Lord was upon all nations, so great was the glory of the Lord, which was upon his people. And the Lord blessed the land, and they were blessed upon the mountains, and upon the high places, and did flourish.

And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them [spiritually or physically].

And Enoch continued his preaching in righteousness unto the people of God. And it came to pass in his days, that he built a city that was called the City of Holiness, even Zion. [Moses 7:10–13, 17–19]

Oh, what great faith Enoch had! Not only was Enoch's faith great, but the people of Enoch were also very humble themselves. "They were of one heart and one mind and dwelt in righteousness." Therefore, there were no spiritually and physically poor among them.

Our Prophet's Leadership

Now, brothers and sisters, the Lord has commanded us in this day, through our living prophet, to teach the gospel to all the people, to go into all the world, and to "baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

In one of our Church hymns we sing:

*Come, listen to a prophet's voice,
And hear the word of God,
And in the way of truth rejoice,
And sing for joy aloud;
We've found the way the prophets went,
Who lived in days of yore;
Another prophet now is sent
This knowledge to restore.*

[Hymns, no. 46]

What strength we add to our testimonies
as we see the Lord's guiding hand in his great
church and in the preparation of his prophet,
even Spencer W. Kimball.

I say to all of you today,

Come, listen to a prophet's voice, . . .

*For God has shown his face [again]. . . .
The Savior to his people saith,
"Let all my words obey."
[Hymns, no. 46]*

"Let all my words obey." They—

*who believed in the words of the holy prophets, who
spoke as they were inspired by the gift of the Holy
Ghost, who truly testified of him in all things,
should have eternal life. [D&C 20:26]*

President Kimball, the living prophet,
teaches us many things, such as:

The sacred mission of Jesus Christ
The purpose of life
Eternal marriage and how to have a truly
happy married life
Family influences
How to have a full and abundant life
Family preparedness, and
How to fortify our homes against the evils
of the world.
He teaches us:
Faith
Forgiveness
Repentance
Obedience
Cleanliness
Reverence
Righteous living
To follow the commandments of the Lord
To honor the Sabbath
The meaning of the sacrament

Truth

Salvation

The importance of:

Children

Scripture study

Genealogy

Temple work

Keeping a journal

Honoring the priesthood

Priesthood responsibilities

The Relief Society organization

Welfare services

Loving one another

Service

Labor

Gardening

Filling Church assignments, and so on.

He teaches us about our most important
personal Liahona. And the list goes on and on.

Oh, how I believe the words of Elder
Thomas S. Monson, who said:

*I believe the Church has never had a person more
oriented toward spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ
than President Spencer W. Kimball. This has been
true throughout his entire life. . . .He truly has the
missionary spirit. The impact of his dynamics as a
missionary-oriented person, his long experience,
and the call through him as the Lord's Prophet, Seer,
and Revelator have set in motion factors which have
resulted in one of the greatest upsurges in mission-
ary work that we have ever seen. ["Status Report
on Missionary Work," Ensign, October 1977,
p. 8]*

In order for all of us to be prepared in righ-
teousness to come and dwell with the Lord in a
city of holiness, we must follow the prophet's
voice. Let us heed President Kimball's example
and do our part in the missionary cause.

Regarding member missionary work,
President Kimball recently said that it is—

not simply left to our discretion and pleasure. Every man and woman should return home from this conference with a determination that they will take the gospel to their relatives and their families. If they do not, they must consider that they are not in the total favor of their Heavenly Father, because he commanded us to do so!

To some extent we have been bypassing our neighbors. There are millions of great, wonderful Protestants, Catholics, and others, and they want it just the same. They may not know what they want, but they want it just the same. And you and I only can give it to them. The gospel is without price. [Auckland, New Zealand, Area Conference, 1980]

President Kimball further stated:

One of the highest forms of Christian service is to share the gospel because with its acceptance come so many other blessings. There is a special accountability to receive the oracles of God, the authoritative counsel from God's oracles.

And all they who receive the oracles of God, let them beware how they hold them lest they are accounted as a light thing, and are brought under condemnation, thereby, and stumble and fall when the storms descend, and the winds blow, and the rains descend upon their house (D&C 90:5).

And he continued:

I am concerned with all that has been written and all that has been said. Many of our people are still hard of hearing and seemingly unwilling to make the effort to proselyte their neighbors. . . .

We are busy people, but we must remember a heavy responsibility has been placed upon us. We must not expect the way to be easy. We must not expect to grow without some obstacles.

We must remember what a development comes to us as we teach (share) the gospel. Perhaps almost more comes to us than to them. We know, of course, there are disappointments and many people will

not accept. [Regional Representative Seminar, 30 September 1976, p. 4]

Brothers and sisters, it is our great need, great desire, great dream, and great obsession to bring this everlasting light, which is the gospel of the Lord, to the people of the world, this

candle of understanding to light the way out of obscurity and darkness. Our message is to bring light into the world, and our charge to convert the people of the world to accept the truth. [Regional Representative Seminar, 30 September 1976, p. 1]

On 3 April 1975, President Kimball charged the members of the Church with the following:

Members must be finders. . . . Members should shoulder this responsibility. Every member knows nonmembers he or she can refer to the missionaries. Every father, mother, and youth in this Church should share the gospel by giving a Book of Mormon by telling the account of the Prophet Joseph Smith, or by inviting our acquaintances to a special meeting. [Regional Representative Seminar, 30 September 1976]

A Missionary Story

Now, brothers and sisters, may I just share with you a wonderful and beautiful story. Brother Isogai is 17 years old, and right before I left for this conference trip to Salt Lake, he passed on to me his conversion story, which I want to share with you today.

My family consists of three members. We are now living in our grandparents' home because two years ago my parents got divorced. Since then our grandfather and my mother started working to support us. Some time in October 1979, I met the missionaries on the street near Shibuya station. I studied and I was baptized, and I became inactive following my baptism.

Since my family was not stable, I was not happy, and I wondered about my future, though I was baptized—about my life, about my family. I wondered, I wondered, I wondered every day. And one day I wandered through Shibuya again. I was feeling depressed. With the feeling of depression and emptiness in my heart, I was walking toward a church without conscious direction. While there, I attended a beautiful baptism service. I was very impressed and inspired by it. I decided to come back to the Church, which I did.

I learned of the importance of the missionary work, and I helped the missionaries, and I did this particularly almost every day. I went to the street with the missionaries. And I contacted many people. One day I had been praying, and I received a strong feeling that I should teach my own family. I had baptized seven of my friends within two months. So I started to introduce the gospel to my family. First, I thought I should introduce it to my mother. My mother has many friends, and she was attending another Christian church. Because of that, she refused to be baptized. But because of the beautiful fellowship and the cooperation of the missionaries, I finally did baptize her. Then, we went into the temple during the open house for the Tokyo Temple. When we saw the sealing room, we all cried because we knew that we could be together for all eternity, and we have decided to go to that sacred spot again. My sister got baptized September 11, and I felt so strongly I should introduce to my grandparents the gospel, which I did. Now, they have studied and believe, and they are ready to be baptized next Saturday, this Saturday. And I will baptize them. Oh, what a great blessing I receive.

Our Missionary Challenge

Brothers and sisters, this is one just simple example, but just at the close of my talk I want to share the essence of why the members of the Church should be involved in the missionary work so aggressively and why the Brethren of the Church ask us to involve ourselves in the missionary work. Brother Monson put it so beautifully:

*The eternal truth is: that which we willingly share, we keep; and that which we selfishly keep to ourselves, we lose. We care because we want all of our members elsewhere to be happy. Is there any better reason? [“Status Report on Missionary Work,” *Ensign*, October 1977, p. 8]*

Brothers and sisters, direction is so clear. Now you are studying in the most beautiful and most profound and the most inspired institution that you can find anywhere in the world. You are the leaders of the Church, and you are the leaders of the nation, and you are the leaders of the world. And you are the saviors of the world.

Now, brothers and sisters, let’s heed the words of the prophet and all become humble people like the City of Enoch, so that we can involve ourselves in the missionary work, in a humble way so that we can dwell in righteousness, in the city of holiness, even Zion.

I bear you my testimony, my brothers and sisters, the gospel is true. There is nowhere any name under heaven except the name of Jesus of Nazareth whereby we might be saved. We are his brothers and sisters. I bear you my testimony that this is the work of the Lord and this is the Church of God, and we have a responsibility to do the work of the Lord, to share the gospel with our neighbors, our friends and relatives, our parents. I know, I know that President Spencer W. Kimball is a prophet of the Lord. I love our Heavenly Father with all my heart and all my soul. I love you missionaries. People are waiting for you to come. And you, brothers and sisters, people are waiting for you to stand before them to share the truth and the knowledge—the everlasting knowledge—you have. Yours is the greatest heritage, to bless the people of the nations and the nations of the world; your forefathers preserved that heritage, and you can bless the people of the nations, even unto eternal life, which

witness I bear in the sacred name of the Lord
Jesus Christ. Amen.