

# *Making Temple Worship a Pattern in Your Life*

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**T**hank you, President Samuelson, for that warm and friendly introduction. Sister Rasband and I are deeply honored to be here today to participate in this devotional.

We are grateful to have had all five of our own children, and some of their spouses, attend Brigham Young University and are pleased to have several of them, as well as other members of our extended family and dear friends, here in the audience with us today.

The year 2009 will be a historic year for the Church in Utah as we participate in the cultural events, open houses, and dedications of the Draper Utah and Oquirrh Mountain Utah temples in the Salt Lake Valley. These significant events are wonderful reminders and opportunities for us to inspire and strengthen each other in our personal commitment to attend the temple and worship there on a regular basis.

As we gather here this morning on the campus of Brigham Young University, thousands of members and many of those not of our faith are walking through the Draper Utah Temple, as the open house is under way for an eight-week period prior to the dedication. Obviously there is an extremely high interest among our members and friends to walk

through this beautiful, new temple and experience the beauty, spirit, and inspiration that come with such a visit. This is the first temple open house in the Salt Lake Valley since 1981, when the Jordan River Temple had an open house and was dedicated.

The Draper Utah Temple will be the third temple to be dedicated in the Salt Lake Valley, the 12th in the state of Utah, and the 129th in the Church.

During the open-house period, over one million tickets have been requested and given out for the eight-week public open house. I have had the personal privilege of taking the media, interfaith groups, government officials, and my own family through this beautiful, new temple. As I have taken guests through the spacious baptistry, beautiful ordinance rooms, the holy celestial room, and sacred sealing rooms, I can tell you without any reservation that the Spirit of the Lord is already in this temple. It leaves a deep and wonderful impression on all who visit.

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*Ronald A. Rasband was a member of the Presidency of the Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this devotional address was given on 10 February 2009.*

For those of you who have not made plans to visit the Draper Temple, I would invite you to do so today. You can still make reservations through the Church Web site (lds.org) and enjoy a wonderful opportunity with your friends and family in this most special and sacred place on earth, the house of the Lord.

On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, March 20–22, 2009, the Draper Utah Temple will be formally dedicated by President Thomas S. Monson. Latter-day Saints in the area served by the new temple will attend 12 dedicatory sessions. After the dedication, the temple will serve approximately 60,000 members of the Church in Draper, Sandy, and surrounding communities.

Additionally, the First Presidency recently announced the dates for the new Oquirrh Mountain Utah Temple open house and dedication. June 1 is the start of the eight-week open house. The dedication will be Friday through Sunday, August 14–16, 2009. If you miss the Draper Temple open house, plan to visit the Oquirrh Mountain Utah Temple open house!

Temples are houses of the Lord, where our Savior’s teachings are reaffirmed through sacred ordinances such as marriage, which unites families for all eternity. Sister Rasband, who is here with me today, and I were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple on September 4, 1973, by her granduncle, Elder LeGrand Richards. On that occasion, Elder Richards, speaking to his niece, Sister Rasband, handed her the marriage certificate and said, “Melanie, here is the deed to your new property,” meaning me! I have been safely in her watchful care ever since.

Years ago, at the Logan Temple cornerstone ceremony in 1877, President George Q. Cannon said this:

*Every foundation stone that is laid for a Temple, and every Temple completed . . . , lessens the power of Satan on the earth, and increases the power of God and Godliness, moves the heavens in mighty*

*power in our behalf, invokes and calls down upon us the blessings of the Eternal Gods, and those who reside in their presence. [“The Logan Temple,” *Millennial Star* 39, no. 46 (12 November 1877): 743]*

Certainly in a day and time like we live in, the importance of every temple built and dedicated to the Lord cannot be overstated.

Concerning temple building, Brigham Young said in the early days of this work in Utah:

*To accomplish this work there will have to be not only one temple but thousands of them, and thousands and tens of thousands of men and women will go into those temples and officiate for people who have lived as far back as the Lord shall reveal. [JD 3:372]*

Many years later, another of our latter-day prophets spoke of the importance of temple building. In 1980, President Ezra Taft Benson said this about temples:

*Our predecessors have prophesied that temples will dot the landscape of North and South America, the isles of the Pacific, Europe, and elsewhere. If this redemptive work is to be done on the scale it must be, hundreds of temples will be needed. [TETB, 247]*

At the time President Benson gave this message, there were 19 temples operating in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

As President Gordon B. Hinckley became the prophet in 1995, early in his ministry he said this about his desire to see temples built and taken closer to the Latter-day Saints:

*I have in my heart a great burning desire, my brothers and sisters, to make it possible to have a temple where every faithful Latter-day Saint can come and receive his or her temple blessings, and have opportunity to extend those blessings to his or her forbears. [“Messages of Inspiration from*

President Hinckley," *Church News*, 4 May 1996, Z2]

When President Hinckley gave this message there were 47 temples operating in the Church.

I would suggest that one of the great legacies of President Gordon B. Hinckley is the number of temples that were built during his presidency. During his almost 13 years as our prophet there were 77 temples built and dedicated.

Now I ask you all, my dear brothers and sisters, to what end and to what purpose is all of this focus and emphasis on temple building? How does it apply to you at this stage of your life? As we consider this together, I am reminded of a passage of scripture in Doctrine and Covenants 52:14, which reads:

*And again, I will give unto you a pattern in all things, that ye may not be deceived; for Satan is abroad in the land, and he goeth forth deceiving the nations.*

I would recommend to you today that temple worship is an important pattern for each of you to set—individually and as families—as you consider your own areas of focus and attention, as you put in place firm foundations in your life. I know many of you already do this, and for that we are most grateful to you.

Let us ponder for a few moments some of the doctrine that has been revealed to us concerning temple worship. We know as Latter-day Saints that temple and family history work is one great work. We refer to the feelings that we can have in seeking out our departed ancestors as having the Spirit of Elijah. About this work President James E. Faust said:

*Searching for our kindred dead isn't just a hobby. It is a fundamental responsibility for all members of the Church. We believe that life continues after death and that all will be resurrected. We believe*

*that families may continue in the next life if they have kept the special covenants made in one of the sacred temples under the authority of God. We believe that our deceased ancestors can also be eternally united with their families when we make covenants in their behalf in the temples. Our deceased forebears may accept these covenants, if they choose to do so, in the spirit world. ["The Phenomenon That Is You," *Ensign*, November 2003, 54]*

A significant and wondrous prophecy was given by God to the ancient prophet Malachi some 400 years before the coming of Jesus Christ:

*Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. [Malachi 4:5–6]*

In this dispensation, the Lord spoke to the Prophet Joseph Smith through His heavenly messenger Moroni. Joseph recorded the following concerning the evening of September 21, 1823, in his father's home:

*While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor. . . .*

*He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni. [JS—H 1:30, 33]*

The importance of this experience was emphasized with Moroni appearing four times and repeating the same message each time with some additions. Joseph recorded a portion of that experience as revelation in section 2 of the Doctrine and Covenants, chronologically the first section received:

*Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.*

*And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers.*

*If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming. [D&C 2:1–3]*

When and where was this to happen? It had been over 2,200 years since Malachi first gave this prophecy. Direction came to Joseph Smith from the Lord, who instructed Joseph to build the first temple in this dispensation in Kirtland. This temple was built out of the poverty of the Saints, and shortly after its dedication the Lord came and accepted it. At that glorious time other heavenly manifestations also took place, including the fulfillment of the prophecy found in Malachi.

From section 110 of the Doctrine and Covenants, received in 1836, we read:

*After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us; for Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said:*

*Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi—testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come—*

*To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse—*

*Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors. [D&C 110:13–16]*

Since that remarkable day in 1836, through a continuation of the priesthood authority given to the Prophet Joseph, that power has been on the earth through prophets, seers, and revelators of the Church. We are so privileged to have

President Thomas S. Monson as our prophet today. He holds that same priesthood authority that was given by Elijah to the Prophet Joseph in 1836. This is known as the sealing authority of God, by which we perform the sacred work in the temples today.

Let us ponder the importance of that experience at Kirtland and the sealing authority of God for each of us gathered here. This was stressed by the Prophet Joseph Smith when he declared: “The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead” (*HC* 6:313). He also said, “Those Saints who neglect it in behalf of their deceased relatives, do it at the peril of their own salvation” (*HC* 4:426).

The First Presidency has issued an invitation to all the members of the Church, which certainly applies to you and me:

*Where time and circumstances permit, members are encouraged to replace some leisure activities with temple service. . . .*

*“All of the ordinances which take place in the House of the Lord become expressions of our belief in that fundamental and basic doctrine of the immortality of the human soul. As we redouble our efforts and our faithfulness in going to the temple, the Lord will bless us.” [Letter from the First Presidency, 11 March 2003; in “Encouraging Temple Worthiness and Preparation,” *Ensign*, June 2003, 76, and in *Ensign*, March 2004, 45]*

As we, my young friends, consider righteous patterns that we want to establish in our lives, we all would be well to continue remembering this admonition from the First Presidency.

May we also consider the promised blessings by prophets, seers, and revelators as we faithfully attend the temple.

I would like to share a few of these promised blessings for our faithful service in the temple. First, from President Gordon B. Hinckley:

*I would hope that we might go to the house of the Lord a little more frequently. . . .*

*. . . I encourage you to take greater advantage of this blessed privilege. It will refine your natures. It will peel off the selfish shell in which most of us live. It will literally bring a sanctifying element into our lives and make us better men and better women. ["Closing Remarks," *Ensign*, November 2004, 104, 105]*

He also promised:

*If there were more temple work done in the Church, there would be less of selfishness, less of contention, less of demeaning others. The whole Church would increasingly be lifted to greater heights of spirituality, love for one another, and obedience to the commandments of God. [TGBH, 622]*

Now let me share a quote from President James E. Faust:

*We unavoidably stand in so many unholy places and are subjected to so much that is vulgar, profane, and destructive of the Spirit of the Lord that I encourage our Saints all over the world, wherever possible, to strive to stand more often in holy places. Our most holy places are our sacred temples. Within them is a feeling of sacred comfort. ["Standing in Holy Places," *Ensign*, May 2005, 62]*

And from President Thomas S. Monson comes this promise:

*Come to the temple and place your burdens before the Lord and you'll be filled with a new spirit and confidence in the future. Trust in the Lord, and if you do He'll hold you and cradle you and lead you step by step along that pathway that leads to the celestial kingdom of God. [Quoted in Dell Van Orden, "San Diego Temple: 45th House of the Lord Dedicated in 'Season for Temple Building,'" *Church News*, 8 May 1993, Z8]*

Brothers and sisters, another comforting blessing of temple worship is the assurance of protection and peace from the storm that is upon us in our day.

I think of a promise given in the Book of Mormon through Ammon in the book of Alma. Speaking of where members will be gathered into the garners, or temples of the Lord, he said:

*Yea, they shall not be beaten down by the storm at the last day; yea, neither shall they be harrowed up by the whirlwinds; but when the storm cometh they shall be gathered together in their place, that the storm cannot penetrate to them; yea, neither shall they be driven with fierce winds whithersoever the enemy listeth to carry them. [Alma 26:6; see also verse 5]*

I bear my testimony, brothers and sisters, that some of the safest places that Heavenly Father has established for the gathering of His people are in the temples of the Lord. I invite you to the Draper Utah Temple open house—or the Oquirrh Mountain Utah Temple open house that will follow this summer—to experience anew the feeling that you receive in these temples of the Lord.

More important, I invite you, as has the First Presidency, to make temple worship a pattern in your life. Most all of you in this congregation can participate in the temple in one way or another. Most all of you can perform baptisms for the dead. Many of you who are endowed can perform washings and anointings, endowments, and sealings—first for yourselves and then for others living on the other side of the veil who are waiting for you and me to serve as proxies for them in this great redemptive work.

President Hinckley taught:

*Now, I'd like to submit to you that when all is said and done, the work and the mission of this Church is to save. It's just that simple and just*

*that profound . . . to save people. That's the whole purpose of what we are doing. That's why we have home teachers. That's why we have visiting teachers. That's why we have classes. That's why we have sacrament meeting. That's why we build temples, to save the living and the dead. That's our work. [TGBH, 119]*

The statement on the outside facade of every temple reads: "Holiness to the Lord / The House of the Lord." I testify that all of the temples of the Lord are His sanctuaries here upon the earth. I invite all of you to attend more frequently, as your circumstances permit, and claim your blessings and protections that have been promised to you by prophets of God. Jesus Christ lives. This is His Church. This service in temples is rolling forward throughout the earth—as prophets throughout

the ages have seen in vision and prophecy—to bless the lives of the Latter-day Saints and carry out the work of redeeming the dead.

I know that President Thomas S. Monson is God's prophet upon the earth today and holds the sealing power of God, the same authority that was given to Joseph Smith by the prophet Elijah in the Kirtland Temple. It is by that authority that new families are created and sealed together for time and all eternity—so unlike that which is done out in the world relative to the divine institution of marriage.

I pray the Lord will bless each of us here today with a greater desire and greater intent to hearken unto the words of the living prophets and attend the temple.

I leave my testimony and reaffirm these prophetic blessings to all of you today, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.