

Follow the Prophet It is never too late to start

Cooper Mountain Ward Sacrament Meeting November 24, 2008
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Intro

- When I started out I had many thoughts on my mind
- Ended up with a two part message
- Describe Bishop training on November 1, 2008 with Elder Oaks

Follow the Prophet and Apostles

- I have many hymns that are favorites
- One that has had deeper and growing meaning in my life is "We thank thee O God for a prophet"
- I don't believe I have ever been more thankful in my life than today that we have a Prophet to follow.
- D&C 124:45-46
*And if my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place.
But if they will not hearken to my voice, nor unto the voice of these men whom I have appointed, they shall not be blest...*
- D&C 1:38
... whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same
- Who has been appointed?
 - Prophet
 - Apostles
 - Acting in Harmony with the Prophet and Apostles are
 - Other General Authorities
 - Local Authorities

Stripling Warriors

- We have just finished reading in our family scripture study about the 2000 stripling warriors
 - Alma 53:19
 - ...and they would that Helaman should be their leader
 - Who was Helaman? He was the leader of the church – He was the prophet at that time
 - They would that the Prophet should be their leader!
 - D&C 57:21
 - Yea, and they did obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness; yea, and even according to their faith it was done unto them;
 - They followed with exactness the prophet and his representatives
- We need to be like the 2000 stripling warriors and have the prophet as our leader and obey with exactness

What are our leaders saying?

- President Dalton asked us to read/listen/watch a conference talk every day so we would know what they are saying
 - An aside: I know President Dalton well - all that he teaches is in harmony with what is taught by the Prophets and Apostles
 - He follows his own counsel in this matter. One of the first things he does every day is get on the internet and reads a conference talk
- As I have followed President Dalton's counsel I have been impressed more than ever how current the messages are
 - I have received counsel on what I should be doing
 - I have received counsel with regards to adversities I face – but also –
 - I have been uplifted by the things I have heard
 - I have received renewed determination
 - My faith has been strengthened

"Never too late"

- What have the prophets been telling us with regards to the economic situation we find ourselves in?
- President Hinckley from Oct 1998 Priesthood session
 - Quoted the story of pharaoh's dreams that were interpreted to mean 7 years of plenty followed by 7 years of famine
 - Reminded us once again to have a food storage and to avoid debt
- Gordon B Hinckley (Oct 2001 General Conference)

""Occasions of this kind pull us up sharply to a realization that life is fragile and...the economy is particularly vulnerable. We have been counseled again and again concerning self-reliance, concerning debt, concerning thrift. So many of our people are heavily in debt for things that are not entirely necessary.

"We cannot provide against every contingency. But we can provide against many contingencies. Let the present situation remind us that this we should do.

As we have been continuously counseled for more than 60 years, let us have some food set aside that would sustain us for a time in case of need."" (October 2001 General Conference)
- Thomas S Monson (Oct 2008 General Conference)

" We urge all Latter-day Saints to be prudent in their planning, to be conservative in their living, and to avoid excessive or unnecessary debt" (October 2008 General Conference)
- It is not my intent to beat us about our heads with "you should have, you should have"
- Instead I would like to make this point: "It is never too late to begin following the prophet"
- Elder Rasband (Bishop's training Nov 1, 2008)
 - After quoting similar things that I just read to us he said:
 - " It is never too late to start"
 - That is it is never too late to start following the counsel of the Prophet
 - When he said this I looked at Elder Oaks who was nodding his head in agreement

- He taught us some more and said:
 - Elder Rasband (Bishop's training Nov 1, 2008)

"Focus on the words of the Apostles and the Prophet, it is never too late"
- This is in spite of what you may have heard from your good friend so and so from Utah that they were in a meeting in a where it was said "it is too late"
- This is what we have been told
- Does that mean we might not suffer consequences if we haven't been following the Prophet's counsel?
 - Yes we may suffer consequences. The Lord is very clear:
 - D&C 124:45-46

And if my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place.

But if they will not hearken to my voice, nor unto the voice of these men whom I have appointed, they shall not be blest...
- Does that mean we throw up our hands and cry "woe is me"?
 - No, we simply begin today to follow the prophet in this matter if we have not been
- What then should we do to "follow the prophet" in this matter?
- Do the principles in the two pamphlets "All is safely gathered in"
- DO THESE THINGS STARTING NOW IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY
 - Do what you can
 - I'm not telling you to do it all tomorrow
 - It is not so much important how much you do but that you are doing it. You are following the prophet
 - The Lord wants to bless us but we must do as he asks to receive the blessings

Beyond the edge of the light

- At times as we seek to follow the Prophet we can not see how things are going to work out.
- We struggle when we apply try to apply the counsel of the Prophet to our immediate situation

- I would like to share from an experience by Elder Packer
- Boyd K Packer – beyond the edge of the light
 - Elder Packer early on as a General Authority was living in Lindon, Utah (Near Orem)
 - Decided to relocate to SLC nearer Church Headquarters
 - President Henry D Moyle assigned someone to help Packers find a place
 - They did and fell in love with it.
 - Elder Harold B Lee looked over the house and property and counseled "By all means you are to proceed"
 - However when the Packers added up their assets and their loan on their insurance they could not see a way to get the house
 - Still Elder Lee insisted, "Go ahead, I know it is right"
 - Elder Packer wrote:

"I was in deep turmoil, because I had been counseled to do something I had never done before-to sign a contract without the resources to meet the payments."
 - Sensing the turmoil, Brother Lee sent him to President David O. McKay, who listened very carefully, then said: "You do this. It is the right thing." But he extended no resources to make it possible.
 - Brother Packer recalled, "When I reported to Brother Lee he said, 'That confirms what I have told you.'
 Elder Packer said, "I was still not at peace, and then came the lesson. Elder Lee said, 'Boyd, do you know what is wrong with you-you always want to see the end from the beginning.'
 "I replied quietly that I wanted to see at least a few steps ahead. He answered by quoting from the sixth verse of the twelfth chapter of Ether. 'Wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith.'
 "And then he added, 'My boy, you must learn to walk to the edge of the light, and perhaps a few steps into the darkness, and you will find that the light will appear and move ahead of you.' "
 For Elder Packer it was a great test of faith, but he moved ahead and step by step the way opened for him to acquire the property, move his family, make the payments, and begin to make it their home. (A Watchman on the Tower, 137-139)
 - Two phrases we should have written in our hearts:

- Ether 12:6
dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith
- Harold B Lee:
"you must learn to walk to the edge of the light, and perhaps a few steps into the darkness, and you will find that the light will appear and move ahead of you"
- Remember the Stripling warriors
 - D&C 57:21
Yea, and they did obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness; yea, and even according to their faith it was done unto them;
- Michael Baird:
"If we desire to follow the counsel of the prophet, then act in faith and walk to the edge of the light and perhaps a few steps into the darkness a way will be provided that we may do so. That is my faith"

Faith & Fear

- A long time ago I read a popular Science Fiction book called Dune written by Frank Herbert
 - A phrase from it has stuck with me ever since
 - Frank Herbert (Dune - Bene Gesserit Litany against fear):
"I must not fear. Fear is the mind-killer."
- Fear causes us to become paralyzed and instead of acting we are acted upon
- Fear causes us to be hesitant and to doubt
- Joseph Smith:
"For doubt and faith do not exist in the same person at the same time; so that persons whose minds are under doubts and fears

cannot have unshaken confidence; and where unshaken confidence is not, there faith is weak." (Lectures on Faith, 6:12.)

- The only thing we should fear is that which can destroy our soul
 - **Matt 10:28**
And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.
 - Remember Job?
- Michael Baird:
"Let faith guide your actions, not your fears"
 - We act based on our faith and good things happen.
 - Fear can paralyze us (Fear is the mind-killer) and we get acted upon instead of acting
 - Fear causes us to react instead of act
 - The only thing we should fear is that which can destroy our soul
- In order to walk to the edge of the light and into the darkness, we must not fear. It is an exercise in faith to follow the Prophet

"For your good"

- My faith is as this scripture says
 - **D&C 90:24**
Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together *for your good*, if ye walk uprightly and remember the covenant wherewith ye have covenanted one with another
 - Note that it does not say "how I want" or "when I want" but rather it says "for your good"

Closing

- My desire is to bring a message of hope, trust in the Lord and a desire to follow the Prophet with exactness

- As we follow the counsels of the Prophets and Apostles we will find peace in our lives amidst turmoil

- I feel to liken this scripture to us

- Imagine if you will the Savior is speaking to you with these words:

- D&C 6:32-36

Verily, verily, I say unto you, as I said unto my disciples, where two or three are gathered together in my name, as touching one thing, behold, there will I be in the midst of them—even so am I in the midst of you.

Fear not to do good, my sons, for whatsoever ye sow, that shall ye also reap; therefore, if ye sow good ye shall also reap good for your reward.

Therefore, fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail.

Behold, I do not condemn you; go your ways and sin no more; perform with soberness the work which I have commanded you.

Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not.

Behold the wounds which pierced my side, and also the prints of the nails in my hands and feet; be faithful, keep my commandments, and ye shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. Amen