

Follow the Prophet

Cooper Mountain Ward Sacrament Meeting October 17, 2021

Mike Baird

Intro

- I don't believe I have ever been more thankful in my life today that we have a Prophet to follow.
- Look at a scriptural story, liken it unto us and see what we can learn from it
- Share a couple personal experiences about following the prophet

Naaman

- 2 Kings 5:1

Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper

- Naaman's wife had an Israelite as a servant.
- This servant told Naaman's wife that Naaman could be healed by the Prophet in Israel
- The King was told of this and sent Naaman to the king of Israel to be healed
- Naaman went to the King of Israel & presented the letter which said the King of Syria had sent Naaman to be healed of his leprosy
- King of Israel thought the King of Syria was seeking to cause a quarrel with Israel
- Elisha, the prophet, heard of this and he sent into the King to send Naaman to him to be healed that he would know there was a prophet in Israel

- 2 Kings 5:9-12

So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

- Do you think this is what Naaman was expecting?

- But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?

Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

Lessons from Naaman

- Several things we can learn from the story of Naaman
- #1 "And Elisha sent a messenger unto him"
 - D&C 1:38
 - ... whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same
 - Not just the prophet but
 - 1st Presidency, Apostles, and so forth
 - Stake conference we will have a general authority 70 here on assignment by the president of the quorum of the 12
 - Behind me sits bishop Ballageer.
 - I sustain him as my bishop.
 - He speaks the word of the Lord for our ward
- #2 "Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper."
 - How does the prophet speak to us?
 - Do we hear him when he does?
 - "Do we look as Naaman did for grand pronouncements of "Thus saith the Lord" and miss his message to us?
 - Or do we look for words from the prophet that say:
"I'm now speaking to you as the prophet and this is what the Lord has to say to you"?
 - "Do we look a personal invitation "Yes, Mike Baird, what I just said applies to you"
 - I went back through multiple years of President Nelson's conference talks and official communications from the 1st presidency
 - No grand "Thus saith the Lord". No "striking of the hand over the place to recover the Leper"
 - "I urge you..." "We urge you..."
 - "I invite you..."
 - "I pray that you will..."

- #3 "if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?"
 - "Do we look, as Naaman did, for great things to be asked of us, great sacrifices to be made and miss the simple things that are asked of us?"
 - Bro & sisters - We don't want to be like the children of Israel who perished because they wouldn't look on the brass serpent because of the simpleness of the way

#4 Be Like Naaman

- The part that we want to be like Naaman is in that he did do what the prophet directed him to do and was healed
- Let us follow the prophet in all things be they
 - Simple
 - Against what we think the prophet should say
 - Against what others may urge us to do
 - Let us have faith necessary to follow the prophet:
 - President Nelson: "It takes faith to follow prophets rather than pundits and popular opinion."

"Never too late"

- 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
 - Urged us once again to have a food storage and to avoid debt
- At that time we were in the middle of a strong economic growth
 - WHDL business – 2000 best year ever
 - 2001 – economy was faltering - .com bust
 - 9/11 happened – accelerated downward
 - WHDL barely survived
- 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)
- 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"
- 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 whatever matter it is if we have not been
 - The Lord wants to bless us but we must do as he asks to receive the blessings

Serving a Mission

- At times as we seek to follow the Prophet we cannot see how things are going to work out.
- At times it may seem at odds with what we may think we should do
- At times it may seem impossible to do given our circumstances
- My serving a mission
 - I was a teenager when President Kimball: – Every worthy young man should serve a mission
 - I determined I would serve a mission
 - By my senior year in high school
 - Economic recession
 - Oil embargo
 - Housing recession – My dad’s business closed and he was out of work
 - Summer – worked with Dad finishing last couple of houses
 - Went to Ricks on scholarship (tuition & books) and Pell grant (housing)
 - Dad worked odd construction jobs
 - Decided to serve after one semester
 - Called to server in Sweden
 - Jan-Feb working with my Dad
 - Decided to move to Southern Idaho
 - Drove a moving truck, dad the mobile home
 - My parents said things would work out financially and that I should go
 - Things did work out financially, in fact during the latter half of my mission was a time where my Dad did better financially than most any time in his life
 - Others were blessed who joined the church as part of my service
 - Personally, I was blessed me beyond measure by my service
 - My missionary service is “The experience that keeps on giving”
 - I have shared in our ward and stake some of the missionary experiences that blessed me

Testify