

The Gift of Testimony

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[36:27] Eighteen years ago, Valérie and I received a telephone call from President Thomas S. Monson during which he called me to serve as a General Authority Seventy. We accepted in faith, knowing that this calling would profoundly change the course of our lives.

The next morning, as I prayed for comfort and guidance, I felt prompted to open a copy of the Liahona magazine lying on our kitchen table. Almost immediately, my eyes found this reassuring promise from the Lord: “Be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ.”

That scripture brought peace to my heart. I realized that my primary responsibility was simply to bear witness of the Savior. Everything else will be in His hands.

[37:27] Eleven months ago, I was reminded of that same promise under remarkable circumstances. I had just been called to serve as one of the Lord’s Apostles and was invited to join the First Presidency and the Twelve in their sacred meeting room. You can imagine how I felt: astonished, humbled, and deeply moved.

President Dallin H. Oaks invited me to bear my testimony of Jesus Christ. As I prepared to speak, a feeling of peace again filled my heart, and those familiar words returned with power: “Be of good cheer, and do not fear ... and ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ.”

In that sacred moment, I knew that nothing could be more meaningful as my first act as a newly ordained Apostle than to bear witness of the Redeemer of the world.

[38:27] As recorded in the New Testament, before ascending to His Father, the resurrected Savior gave His Apostles this unequivocal charge: “Ye shall be witnesses unto me.”

Today, in the restored Church of Jesus Christ, the apostolic witness remains central to our doctrine and compelling evidence of its truth. As the Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ.”

Each Apostle is called of God and endowed with priesthood keys to be a “special witness of the name of Christ in all the world.” Apostles bear a unique, authoritative, divinely empowered witness of the living Christ: of His divine reality, His gospel, His Atonement, and His Resurrection.

[39:28] Yet the sacred responsibility to bear witness of Jesus Christ is not limited to prophets and Apostles. It extends to all His disciples. The truth of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ is manifest

in the lives of millions of His followers throughout the world. Through your testimonies in word and deed, you demonstrate the reality of a loving Savior and of the blessings that come through His gospel.

[40:02] Bearing witness is a foundational responsibility of discipleship. As members of the Church who have covenanted to take upon ourselves the name of Christ, sharing our witness of God and His Son is an essential way to keep that sacred covenant. As taught in the Book of Mormon, covenant disciples will “stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places.”

[40:33] The gift of testimony is deeply personal. It is received in the intimacy of our relationship with God and shaped according to our unique experiences, circumstances, and needs. It grows through faith, earnest seeking, gospel living, and the quiet influence of the Holy Ghost. Truly, to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is one of life’s greatest blessings and a precious gift from God.

Your testimony may be different from mine or that of other family members or fellow Saints. Please trust it, nurture it, and bear it, because it is uniquely yours.

[41:20] Like many of you, I have often wondered, “Why me? Why was I so privileged to receive a testimony of the restored gospel?” I never found a fully satisfying answer [at the time]. However, I came to ask a better question: “What does the Lord expect me to do with this gift?”

Our testimony is not a talent to be hidden. It is a gift to be shared with grateful hearts and in a spirit of humility and love.

[41:54] Testimony and love are deeply connected gifts that echo and strengthen one another. To say “I know” is a tender expression of love toward our neighbor. Because we love others, we naturally desire to share with them the most precious gift we have received: our witness of Jesus Christ and His gospel. In turn, saying “I love you” with a pure and sincere heart is a way of bearing testimony of Jesus Christ. Whenever we express Christlike love to those around us, we bear witness of Him, the source of all perfect love.

Brothers and sisters, I hope you will fill your lives and the lives of others with many heartfelt “I knows,” as I hope you already do with many “I love yous.” As these expressions of faith and love come together, they will help create an environment where the Spirit of the Lord can dwell and bring joy to your hearts.

[43:03] One of our nieces recently shared an experience from her youth. She said, “A few years ago, when I was beginning to gain a testimony, I bore my testimony at a Young Women camp. I was so nervous that I only managed to say two simple sentences: ‘I know that God loves me, and I know that God has a plan for me.’ In the days that followed, I felt discouraged because I wished I could speak like the other girls. I talked with my mom, and she asked, ‘Do you believe what you said?’”

“Yes,” I replied.

“Then that’s all that matters,” she said.

Her mother was right. There is great power in a sincere, humble, and heartfelt testimony. It need not be long, eloquent, or dramatic. It only needs to be true.

[44:02] Each of us can bear such a witness, for it is the Spirit, not words, that testifies of the truth. As the Lord promised, when one speaks by the power of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost “shall be shed forth in bearing record unto all things whatsoever ye shall say.”

Throughout history, countless seekers of truth have been transformed by the testimonies of humble servants of the Lord, those whom He calls “the weak and the simple.” From Enoch and Moses to Joseph Smith and to the more than 90,000 missionaries serving throughout the world today, the pattern is the same: they stand and declare what they knew to be true. Their words may be simple and their speech imperfect, but their witness carries divine power because it is confirmed by the Holy Ghost.

[45:02] Brothers and sisters, do you realize that your testimony can literally change lives—your own and the lives of others? As you share it freely, your own testimony will grow stronger. You will draw closer to the Lord and feel more deeply the power of His redemption. In turn, you will become instruments in His hands to bless and minister to those around you.

At a moment of deep anguish, the younger Alma remembered having heard his father prophesy “concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ ... to atone for the sins of the world.” That remembered witness from his father became the spark of hope that led him to repent and completely change his life. How many Almas are there around you, waiting to hear your witness and discover or rediscover the hope that is found in Jesus Christ?

[46:10] If you have received the gift of testimony, even if it is only the beginning of one, it is your duty and your privilege to share it.

I invite you to look each day for opportunities, as prompted by the Holy Ghost, to bear witness of Jesus Christ and His restored gospel. Even if only for a minute or two, a brief, sincere expression of faith can make a profound difference—whether at home with your family, in testimony meetings, in ministering visits, missionary lessons, on social media, or in simple everyday interactions with others. You can share your beliefs in simple and natural ways, such as “I love our Savior Jesus Christ” or “The gospel brings joy to my heart.”

[47:02] Imagine what could happen if all of us, millions of disciples of Jesus Christ, consistently shared our testimonies. Countless lives would be blessed, faith would grow, and the love of Christ would spread more abundantly throughout the world.

[47:20] As a servant of the Lord and as one of His special witnesses, I am profoundly grateful for the gift of testimony I have received through the power of God. I solemnly declare that we have a loving

Heavenly Father and that His Son, Jesus Christ, is the Savior of the world and the source of every good gift. I express my earnest desire to serve Them and to bear witness of Them continually all the days of my life, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.