

“Oh Sweet The Joy This Sentence Gives, I Know That My Redeemer Lives.” (Hymn #136)

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This address was given, April 30, 2004 at the BYU Women's Conference

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About twenty-five years ago I piled all of our children in the station wagon and drove to Orange County to meet a bus loaded with young Indian placement students from the reservation. When I saw those noble women coming to meet the young Indian children, take them home with them, and assume that heavy responsibility, I wanted to cry. I feel the same way today. You are such good women. The Church moves forward on your backs. But it is just as the Book of Mormon promised, “I will...ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot feel them upon your backs....” Mosiah 24:14 Welcome and thank you for coming.

Our oldest son sent me this story written by the CEO of a Fortune 500 Company along with this note, “Mom, when I read this, I thought of you! Happy Mother's Day! I love you, Steve!”

“Not long ago I had the chance to do something I've always wanted to do – meet my wife's boyfriend from high school. We'll call him Billy Bob. I had only see photos of the guy, photos I'd swear my wife still carries around in her wallet. Anyway, we're in my wife's hometown and we walk into a general store. There is Billy Bob behind the counter. It turns out he's the store manager.

After talking for a few minutes, I can hardly wait to get back into the car to hear Susan's reaction. I say, 'Gee, Susan, wasn't it great to see Billy Bob after all these years?' 'Uh huh,' she replies. 'What did you think?' I ask. 'Nothing much,' she says. There is a long silence. I can't hold it in any longer, 'Susan I say, 'I've just got to ask you one question. Aren't you glad you married me? I mean, aren't you glad you're married to the CEO of a successful company instead of the manager of a general store? Well, she looks at me as only a wife can and says, 'Let's get one thing straight here, Max. If I'd married Billy Bob, he'd be the CEO of a successful company, and you'd be the manager of a general store.'"

One of the great joys of traveling with Brother Sorensen is meeting so many terrific sisters. As Wallace Stegner wrote about the early Mormons, "...The men were outstanding but their women were incredible." (The Mormon Trail, 13) So are you! No one can teach the gospel more adroitly than you sisters can. I've seen it with my own eyes in every place we've lived.

Even at that, President Packer keeps telling us we live far beneath our privileges. Let me remind you of one of the scriptures the Angel Moroni quoted to Joseph Smith in 1823 saying it was about to be fulfilled. The Prophet Joel said,

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy...." (Joel 2:28)

The book of Revelation explains this further:

Rev 19:10 ... for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

I realize it is always "risky" to use personal examples because of their imperfection and perceived lack of humility. However, as the poet Edgar A. Guest said, "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day. I'd rather one would walk with me than merely point the way." Walk with me...

Please put this experience in a tender place in your heart. When I think of my testimony of Jesus Christ, one defining event stands out. I was 20 years old and beginning BYU as a junior coming from Snow College. A friend highly recommended a particular religion class. It was a five-hour missionary preparation class taught daily at 7 a.m. by Reid Bankhead. In the course we learned the missionary discussions and all the supporting scriptures. In order to get an A, I accepted the assignment to memorize 150 scriptures. The final was simply to write 150 scriptures, chapter and verse by memory on a blank piece of paper. You can imagine that every spare moment I had I was memorizing scriptures.

One day, Brother Bankhead sat on his desk, looked us in the eye and said; "This is the most important session of this class or any other class ever convened. All knowledge is not of the same value. You will learn many things in this life but there is one thing more important than all the others. What is it? Quickly many thoughts raced through my mind. Could it be, "God lives?" "Joseph Smith is a prophet?" "This is the only true Church upon the face of the earth?" "We have a living prophet?" (All of these are components of a testimony.)

He sat very still and said, Listen carefully. You have to know for yourself that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world, the Son of God; "For every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ." (Mosiah 27:31, Romans 14:11) Then he added, "Pay any

righteous price for this knowledge. Live, search and pray until the Lord reveals it to you in His own time.”

I have been blessed with childlike faith. I believed what Reid Bankhead said was true. The class ended and I knew I had just heard a glorious truth. (I have to read this or I'll cry.) As I walked out of the class and down the stairs in the old Joseph Smith Memorial Building, a warm, burning sensation suddenly came over me. It was indescribable, powerful and all encompassing. I felt happier than I had ever felt before. I think the scriptures say, “a fulness of joy.”

Although there were many other students around me, I didn't see anything or even realize I was downstairs until the feeling gradually began to leave me. However, the afterglow or joy remained with me for days. I realized the Holy Ghost had witnessed to my heart and soul that Jesus is the Christ.

“No man can say Jesus is the Christ except by the power of the Holy Ghost.” 1 Cor 12:3

Moroni 10:5 “...And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.”

“...And if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you....” (DC 9:8)

DC 46:13 “To some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world.

To others it is given to believe on their words, that they also might have eternal life if they continue faithful.”

Both are gifts.

Both are available to you.

To me this was a profound spiritual experience. I knew the Lord was mindful of me. I have never been the same since that day. From then on, I wanted to be like Paul who said, “For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified...” 1 Cor 2:2 I'm so grateful I was invited to speak on this subject and I compliment you for being here.

Reid Bankhead's message is as true today as it was fifty years ago. I invite you to continue to faithfully read and study the scriptures. This process will guide you to the knowledge of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. This process will help you identify the spirit in your lives.

Never fear, the gift will be delivered. DC 82:10 “I the Lord am bound when ye do what I say.” Bind the Lord.

.”...Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.

“But in every nation he (she) that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.” Acts 10:34-35

This testimony of Jesus Christ has made me resilient through 47 years of marriage to my beloved husband, rearing seven children, welcoming six exceptional spouses, 29 beautiful grandchildren, depression-post partum, life-threatening accidents, life-threatening illnesses, financial challenges and big disappointments. The strong testimony and witness of Jesus Christ has equipped me to retain my energy and expand my testimony.

I'm still reading the scriptures every day and memorizing them. Let's quote the theme:

“Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. For the Lord Jesus is my strength and my song. He also is become my salvation.

Therefore, with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. Isaiah 12:3

A memory technique: Write a favorite scripture on a 3 x 5 card. Read the scripture three times. Then, turn the 3 x 5 card over and write the first letter of every word with a space in between; include all punctuation signs.

B, G i m s; I w t, a n b a: f t L J i m s a m s; h a i b m s.

T w j s y d w o o t w o s. Isaiah 12:2-3

Try saying the scripture at least five times just following the first letter of every word, referring back to the scripture when you have to. After you have learned it, stop concentrating on it for a week or two. Then revisit it. Keep following this pattern until it is in your long-term memory. You'll never forget it, even when you are standing in front of a congregation. The Holy Ghost will recall it to your mind whenever it is expedient. I recommend following a scripture-reading schedule religiously.

Yearly Scripture Schedule (Read the entire Standard Works once and the Book of Mormon twice)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
34																		
35	Jul	Old T	BofM	Aug	Old T	BofM	Sep	New T	BofM	Oct	New T	BofM	Nov	DC	BofM	Dec	DC	BofM
36	1	970	530	1	1135	89	1	1300	179	1	1460	266	1	35	356	1	195	444
37	2	975	1	2	1140	92	2	1306	182	2	1465	269	2	41	359	2	200	447
38	3	980	4	3	1146	95	3	1311	185	3	1471	272	3	46	362	3	206	450
39	4	986	7	4	1151	97	4	1316	188	4	1476	275	4	51	365	4	211	452
40	5	991	10	5	1156	100	5	1322	191	5	1481	278	5	57	368	5	216	455
41	6	996	13	6	1162	103	6	1327	193	6	1487	281	6	62	371	6	222	458
42	7	1002	16	7	1167	106	7	1332	196	7	1492	284	7	67	374	7	227	461
43	8	1007	19	8	1172	109	8	1338	199	8	1497	287	8	73	377	8	232	464
44	9	1012	22	9	1178	112	9	1343	202	9	1503	290	9	78	380	9	238	467
45	10	1018	25	10	1183	115	10	1348	205	10	1508	292	10	83	383	10	243	470
46	11	1023	28	11	1188	118	11	1354	208	11	1513	295	11	89	386	11	248	473
47	12	1028	31	12	1194	121	12	1359	211	12	1519	298	12	94	388	12	254	476
48	13	1034	33	13	1199	124	13	1364	214	13	1524	301	13	99	391	13	259	479
49	14	1039	36	14	1204	127	14	1369	217	14	1529	304	14	105	394	14	264	482
50	15	1044	39	15	1210	129	15	1375	220	15	1535	307	15	110	397	15	270	484
51	16	1050	42	16	1215	132	16	1380	223	16	1540	310	16	115	400	16	275	487
52	17	1055	45	17	1220	135	17	1385	225	17	1545	313	17	121	403	17	280	490
53	18	1060	48	18	1226	138	18	1391	228	18	1551	316	18	126	406	18	286	493
54	19	1066	51	19	1231	141	19	1396	231	19	1556	319	19	131	409	19	291	496
55	20	1071	54	20	1236	144	20	1401	234	20	1561	322	20	137	412	20	2	499
56	21	1076	57	21	1242	147	21	1407	237	21	1567	324	21	142	415	21	8	502
57	22	1082	60	22	1247	150	22	1412	240	22	1572	327	22	147	418	22	13	505
58	23	1087	63	23	1252	153	23	1417	243	23	1577	330	23	153	420	23	18	508
59	24	1092	65	24	1258	156	24	1423	246	24	1583	333	24	158	423	24	24	511
60	25	1098	68	25	1263	159	25	1428	249	25	1588	336	25	163	426	25	29	514
61	26	1103	71	26	1268	161	26	1433	252	26	3	339	26	168	429	26	34	516
62	27	1108	74	27	1274	164	27	1439	255	27	9	342	27	174	432	27	40	519
63	28	1114	77	28	1279	167	28	1444	257	28	14	345	28	179	435	28	45	522
64	29	1119	80	29	1284	170	29	1449	260	29	19	348	29	184	438	29	50	525
65	30	1124	83	30	1290	173	30	1455	263	30	25	351	30	190	441	30	56	528
66	31	1130	86	31	1295	176				31	30	354				31	61	531
67																		
68	"Ye ought to search the scriptures" Alma 33:2																	
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Remember to stay on schedule religiously, especially in the beginning. It takes 21 days to form a habit. My experience has been to never allow yourself to fall more than two days behind. Bless your efforts.

I'm afraid to tell you how many times I've read the standard works because you would expect me to be better than I am. But, I can tell you; it will make a saint out of you. Discipline yourself. My quote is, "A page a day keeps Satan away Seven a day is the Celestial way!"

Now, don't fall for Satan's best tool for discouraging LDS women: his tool is to get you to compare yourself to others. Comparisons are not scriptural and they are deadly. Paul said, "But they, measuring themselves by themselves, are not wise." 2 Cor 10:12

A saint's response to receiving a blessed testimony is to share it. "Behold I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. I have been called to declare his word among this people that they might have everlasting life." 3 Ne 5:13

We need to remember what President Kimball said, Once you understand the Plan of Salvation, you will have the courage to share it. With this visual aid, I hope to empower you. Sometimes the missionaries drew stick figures when they were teaching the Plan of Salvation. Stick figures did not seem to dignify or ennoble the plan. This power point presentation is one of the best ways I know to share your testimony. You can make it as simple or complex as you like.

In the final analysis, almost all the converts I've known personally have confided in me that the Plan of Salvation was the thing that converted them to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Merciful Plan of the Great Creator
(We have to teach this plan with alacrity because time is of the essence)

Fit these comments somewhere into your power-point presentation:

The Spirit looks just like the body in its mature, perfect state. That's about 20-21 years old. After that, it's down hill. The prophets have told us the spirit does not grow old.

The temple is the connecting point between heaven and earth. It is where God's power is exposed or as the scriptures say, "...the arm of the Lord is revealed. Baptism is the first saving ordinance for everyone. For sisters, all the higher saving ordinances are in the temple. Yes, the plan is like a map and absolutely essential. "Where there is no vision, the people perish."
Proverbs 29:18

The atonement is not fully realized without the temple ordinances. No one will go to the highest degree of the celestial kingdom without going through the temple. The temple completes the atonement of Jesus Christ.

I've tried doing missionary work two ways: 1) Teaching the gospel without building a solid relationship of trust, 2) Teaching the gospel after building a solid relationship of trust. It is imperative to build a relationship of trust before presenting the plan to a perspective member. The converts that I receive Christmas cards from year after year, who have remained active, are the ones I built a relationship of trust with first. Then, after the relationship was established, on a one-on-one basis, I taught them the plan.

When we were in Asia, some of those folks believed in reincarnation. They taught that if you turned out to be a bad little girl, you might come back as a fly. But if you were a good little fly, you might come back as a queen. Whose doctrine is this? (Satan's) Life is not a dress rehearsal.

We are interested in and focused on the Celestial Kingdom. The restoration or the Dispensation of the fulness of Times is designed to lead us to the Celestial kingdom. "For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Cor 2:9 Exaltation.

I know what you're thinking. You think you're not good enough to inherit a Celestial body and be exalted in the Celestial Kingdom. When Satan reminds you of your past, you remind him of his future. He will never have a body. He will never have a little girl to sit on his knee or a little boy to take fishing. You are already way ahead of him. "...Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow." Isaiah 1:18 We came to this life to learn to use agency. Therefore, we came here to make mistakes. You simply must keep repenting. The main purpose of life is to repent. "It matters not where you are on the path. What matters is that you are facing the Savior and moving toward Him."

Conclusion: (Quote scriptures by memory)

"Oh sweet the joy this sentence gives, I know that my redeemer lives."

"I am the resurrection & the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? Yea, Lord, we believe...." John 11:25-26

This is my goal in life, "I soon go to the place of my rest, which is with my Redeemer; for I know in him I shall rest. And I rejoice in the day when my mortal shall put on immortality, and shall stand before him; then shall I see his face with pleasure, and he will say unto me: Come unto me, ye blessed, there is a place prepared for you in the mansions of my Father. Amen Enos 1:26