

"That All Their Outgoings from This House May Be in the Name of the Lord"

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I feel humbled and honored in the invitation to address you today, especially about a subject I love so deeply. A temple is an outward symbol that testifies the Lord desires to dwell with his people, for he has built his house in their midst. It is also our sign to the Lord that we desire him to dwell with us for we have constructed for him a house. He is always home. The pillar of fire by night over the ancient Hebrew tabernacle and the cloud by day suggested that truth, just as smoke coming from a chimney during the day and a light shining through the windows at night (see Numbers 14:14) suggest to us that a person is home. The Lord desires our visits and extends to us an open invitation.

Early in the Restoration, the Lord commanded Joseph Smith to build a temple, "that your incomings . . . [and] your outgoings may be in the name of the Lord" (D&C 88:119–20). We go into the temple as invited guests; we go out representing the Savior. More than thirty years ago, as a newly called missionary, I experienced my first incoming and outgoing from the temple. I went in somewhat unprepared, and my outgoing was accompanied with a degree of bewilderment and unease. Now, after more than thirty years of attending the temple, I join my voice with that of David, who wrote, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple" (Psalm 27:4).

What has made the difference between my first outgoing and my present ones? A number of factors have contributed to the change. During those years I have learned how to feel the deeper love of our Father in Heaven and our Savior as contained in the ordinances of his house, but that love required my deepest pondering. A friend of mine was leaving for the temple when he was stopped by his small son, who asked him where he was going. "We're going to the temple," was the reply. "Well, when you get there," the son said, "will you tell my good friend Jesus hi?" "I don't think we'll see him there," the mother answered. With the profound insight of a child, the son said, "Oh, I think you will find him if you look very hard for him."

Doing the work for my own ancestors has been vastly significant and is perhaps the single

most critical factor in discovering the love of our Father in Heaven and his Son. An ordinance worker once told our family, as we prepared to be baptized for individuals whose names we had researched ourselves, "Many of those for whom you will be baptized today lived hard and difficult lives; many of them died wondering if God had forgotten them. Today you will show them he has not forgotten them. He never forgets a single child. For the first time in many, many years their names will be spoken again, here in the Lord's house, and they will know of their Father's eternal love."

The focus of my assignment today is on the outgoings from the temple, but in order for us to bring the love and peace of the temple with us as we leave, our incomings must be done properly. When Jacob returned to the land of Canaan with his family, he was commanded to take them to a mountain called Beth-el. *Beth-el* in Hebrew means "the house of God." Twenty years earlier Jacob had a dream here of a ladder or stairway descending to the earth whose top reached into heaven. Angels ascended and descended on this stairway, and God stood above it. What a wonderful description that is of a temple.

Jacob asked his family to do three things before they went up to Beth-el. "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Beth-el" (Genesis 35:2–3). Rachel and Leah were among those who went up to Beth-el. What a wonderful example our ancient mothers teach about incomings and outgoings from the temple: "And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem" (Genesis 35:4).

I do not know what kind of "strange gods" and "earrings" this devoted family gave up before ascending the mountain of God's house, but they considered them inappropriate. They represented the things of the world. Before we go to the house of the Lord to make covenants and to receive eternal blessings, we must first put away the things of the world. This they did before they went, but notice the great lesson inherent in the words "and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem." When they left Beth-el they did not pick up the strange gods and trappings of the world. They left them buried by the oak of Shechem. To maintain the calming serenity of the temple, our outgoings must be the same.

One of the saddest things I experience in my present Church assignment is to see good members of the Church, whom we love, give up the "strange gods" and "earrings" of the world with their incomings to the temple only to pick them up again as they leave. These strange gods may be in renewed bad habits, ceasing to pay tithes and offerings, being caught up in material things, indulging in inappropriate forms of entertainment or environments, using grooming or styles of clothing that compromise the sacredness of that which we are given in the temple, that which is constantly on us as we go out of the temple and which is so deeply connected to the beautiful symbols of the temple. All that is associated with the temple is kept sacred and covered and is not revealed outside temple walls. Please, let the Lord's respect and honor for things that take place in the temple be our guide in regard to that sacred article we wear day and night.

We are told in Genesis that God protected Jacob's family as they left Beth-el and journeyed

in the dangerous world of Canaan. If we follow their example, we also are assured of the Lord's protection. The scriptures teach the temple is a house of refuge and safety. When my children were approaching their teenage years, I went to the temple one afternoon to seek guidance as a father. I told the Lord I was willing to offer any sacrifice if he would protect my children from worldly temptations and bless them with his Spirit. I believe all of you have offered this prayer in behalf of your children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

The Lord answered my petition, and I felt the Spirit whisper, "This is the sacrifice I ask of you. Be in this house frequently, constantly, and consistently, and the promised protection of this house will be extended to those you love." This promise is not unique to me but is a promise to all of us. I knew the Lord was not promising all my children would grow up without problems, but it was the promise of a powerful influence in their lives. If we are true to our covenants, our outgoings from the temple carry a protective shield to cover our families.

This protective influence was promised by Isaiah many centuries ago as he contemplated the world of today. The Lord counsels us in the scriptures to "stand in holy places, and be not moved" when we face the destructive influences of the world (D&C 87:8, 45:32, 101:22). "Be not moved" means more than staying in one place; it also means "don't be afraid." "To stand" is not a passive concept but an active one. It means "to make a stand" or "to fight." Make your stand against the influences of the world in the holy places, and don't be afraid. Isaiah tells us of the three holy places the Latter-day Saints will fight the forces of the world and prevail.

"And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory of Zion shall be a defence" (2 Nephi 14:5). Just as the pillar of fire was over the tabernacle while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness, so in the latter days the Lord's Spirit will be over every home and every assembly of the Saints as a defense. If you are true to your covenants, the pillar of fire will sit over your home.

Isaiah then speaks of the protective power of the temple. "And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge (a fortress), and a covert from storm and from rain" (2 Nephi 14:6). Isaiah also indicated that the temple was God's hearth, his fireside, his home (see Isaiah 29:1, n. *b*). When the forces of the world bear down on us like a hot summer day and we feel we cannot bear it any longer, the Lord seems to say, "Come home. Sit in the shade of my house. Feel the breezes of my Spirit. Be refreshed. Drink from my fountain of truth, and swim in my healing river. Now, your outgoings can be with greater strength and you can face the heat of the day."

As we protect our part of the defensive line in the great battle between good and evil, holding the sword of truth and justice, sometimes it appears as if all the forces of temptation and worldliness are attacking our position. We feel isolated and fear we will be swept away. It is as if the Lord were calling to us, "Come home. Retreat into the safety of my house of refuge. Put your sword down. There are no battles to be fought in my house. No enemy penetrates these walls. See in panoramic vision the great battle for the souls of men. Receive

instruction on how to hold firm even when others give way. Understand the adversary's strategy. Be comforted in the knowledge that it was foretold in the Garden of Eden that Lucifer would be crushed. Now, your outgoings can be with greater courage. Return to the battle front and swing your sword confident of ultimate victory."

When the forces of life beat upon you like a mighty storm, when the flood waters of trial or the pelting hail of day-to-day irritations leave you cold, discouraged, and looking for shelter, the Lord seems to whisper, "Come home. No stinging hail penetrates the shingles of my house. The flood waters cannot sweep away its foundations. No worldly wind can chill your spirit here. Sit by my hearth and listen to my truths. Feast at my table. Be warmed by the love of your Eternal Father. Now, your outgoings into the storms of life can be without hesitation, without fear." Sisters, a loving Father and Savior have given us a sacred triangle of home, stake, and temple within whose boundaries we can make our stand and not fear.

The Lord revealed to Joseph Smith that He would prepare a feast of the finest things, "yea, a supper of the house of the Lord, well prepared, unto which all nations shall be invited" (D&C 58:9). The feast of the temple consists of the richest doctrines, the most nourishing truths, the most life-sustaining covenants and ordinances. During his earthly ministry, Jesus spoke of this feast in a parable:

"A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled" (Luke 14:16–20, 23).

Sometimes our lives become so busy that we realize it's been quite some time since we've been to the temple. We know the feast is waiting, and we sense our need for its spiritual nourishment, but there is ground to see and oxen to prove and we ask to be excused. Yet the parable testifies that the Lord truly desires that his house be "filled."

We find ourselves often making bricks without straw. When Moses first appeared in Pharaoh's court he simply asked that the Israelites be allowed "three days' journey into the desert" to offer sacrifice to the Lord. In other words, in the midst of their brick-making for Pharaoh, they needed time off for worship. "Get you unto your burdens," Pharaoh said. "They be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words" (Exodus 5:2–9). He then withheld the needed straw.

Does life sometimes treat you that way? Does it demand so much of your time and energy that there is nothing left for feasting and sacrifice? I believe part of the adversary's plan is to see that we have no time left for feasting. The daily tale of bricks must not be diminished until, eventually, without that essential nourishment, like the overworked Israelites, we

"hearken not for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage" (Exodus 6:9).

Jesus' parable of the supper was introduced by these words, "And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God" (Luke 14:15). We look forward with anticipation to our celestial feast in the Lord's eternal kingdom. It seems that the Savior is telling us that we need not wait for the kingdom of God to enjoy the feast. We can "eat bread" with the Savior now, in his house, if we will not make excuse.

The bread of the endowment is unlike any other. The endowment is like the five barley loaves Jesus used to feed the five thousand. At first it did not appear to be sufficient to satisfy the needs of so many, but Jesus blessed it, and all could eat "as much as they would" until "they were filled." When the feast was finished, they "filled twelve baskets with the fragments . . . , which remained over and above unto them that had eaten" (John 6:11–13). The symbolic nature of temple ordinances enables us to return constantly to the twelve baskets that remain, for symbols can mean many different things to nourish us during the ever-changing circumstances of our lives.

We live in a wonderful time. How many temples can you find mentioned in the scriptures? Perhaps only a handful. By the end of this year there will be one hundred temples. What must the ancient Saints think as they view this dispensation! In ancient Israel only one man, the high priest, a descendant of Aaron, could pass through the veil of the temple into its most holy place and only on one day a year. How many of you have sat in the celestial room of the temple? We can enter its most holy place as often as we desire. Every nationality, men and women, can pass through the veil. What wonder do the ancients feel as they see thousands of women daily entering into the temples and sitting in its most hallowed places? If we understand that, our outgoings will always be full of gratitude.

The Lord tells us that his house is a house of learning. He desires that our outgoings be filled with knowledge. Because we are taught through symbols in the temple, we may not understand and receive all the truth the Lord desires we obtain. We must learn how to learn through symbols. Let me suggest a formula for temple worship that will help you. Much of our ability to receive the power of the temple depends on what we do when we are outside its walls. We find this formula in 3 Nephi 17.

Jesus had spent the day teaching the Nephites and Lamanites. It had been a full day, and at its conclusion he said, "I perceive that ye are weak, that ye cannot understand all my words which I am commanded of the Father to speak unto you at this time" (3 Nephi 17:2). Are your outgoings from the temple ever accompanied by that feeling? You just don't understand all you've experienced and been taught? The Savior understands our weakness and teaches us what to do. We are not to be discouraged, doubtful, or apathetic. We are to do five things: "[1] go ye unto your homes, and [2] ponder upon the things which I have said, and [3] ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand, and [4] prepare your minds for the morrow, and [5] I come unto you again" (3 Nephi 17:3).

Sisters, often we only do the first of the Savior's suggestions—we simply go home. Yet, if

we desire that our next incoming to the temple be more powerful, we must ponder (which means to deeply reflect) upon our temple experience. We must show the Lord our desire to receive the full benefits of his teaching by sincerely asking him to help us understand.

There are many ways to prepare our minds to receive the Lord's teaching, but I think the best of all is to go to the temple hungering after insight and knowledge. As a teacher I know how wonderful it is to teach a class of students who hunger for truth. The temple uses "teacher" words to help us prepare our minds to learn. We must be alert, and attentive, and reverent. If these words reflect our attitude, we are prepared to receive. Last of all we must return, as frequently as our circumstances allow.

There is a beautiful prophecy in Ezekiel that tells us what accompanies our outgoings from the Lord's house. Ezekiel is shown a temple in Jerusalem. From its eastern doors, which face the bleak, barren, and dry landscape of the Judean wilderness and the Dead Sea, a river begins to flow. The river brings life to the desert, and Ezekiel sees "very many trees" on both sides of the river. He is promised that "every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live" (Ezekiel 47:7, 9). The pure temple waters flow into the Dead Sea and heal it. Many species of fish begin to inhabit its waters, and Ezekiel is shown fishermen spreading their nets all along its shores. Each time Ezekiel wades into the river, he finds it deeper, until finally it becomes "a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over" (Ezekiel 47:5).

Whenever I read that marvelous prophecy, the Spirit seems to whisper, "What is true of this prophetic temple is true of all my temples." From the doors of every temple a pure river flows. We cannot see these rivers with our natural eyes, but they are there just the same. They are rivers of truth, light, and love. We can be assured that they will give life to and heal "everything that liveth." They will give life to marriages and to parent and child relationships. They will heal our families and bring life to our branches, wards, and stakes. They will heal a parched life, rendered dry by the dust storms of trial and heartbreak. One day the combined flow from all the temples will bathe the world in love and light until finally there will be healing and peace.

Sisters, I believe these are also rivers of wonderful Latter-day Saint women who flow out from the temple endowed with the power of love and inner peace, secure in their covenants, enlightened by revelation and eternal perspective, trusting in promised protection, confident of the nature of never-ending family, assured of a Father and a Savior's great plan of happiness.

May your outgoings from the temple help to heal and give life to the spiritual deserts and Dead Seas of the world, until one day you meet your Father in Heaven at the doorway of his eternal celestial kingdom, where he will there take you by the hand and lead you into your final home. Then, as the scriptures promise, there will be no more outgoings forever (see Revelation 3:12).

1. Boyd K. Packer, "Little Children, *Ensign*, November 1986, 17.

2. J. Reuben Clark Jr., "The Charted Course of the Church in Education," address to Religious Educators, Brigham Young University Summer School, Aspen Grove, Utah, 8 August 1938; in Boyd K. Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1977), 310, 317.
3. Jay Evensen, "Religion Can Combat a Parent's Worst Nightmare," *Deseret News*, 9 April 2000, editorial page.
4. Packer, *Ensign*, November 1986, 17.
5. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 184.
6. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, November 1999, 102.
7. James E. Faust, "Womanhood: The Highest Place of Honor," *Ensign*, November 2000, 96.
8. Neal A. Maxwell, "The Women of God," *Ensign*, May 1978, 10-11.
9. *A Proclamation to the World*, 102.
10. Quoted in Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 386.
11. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 523-24.
12. *For the Strength of Youth* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1990), 4-5.
13. *Church Handbook of Instructions*, Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders, Section 4: *Young Women* (S) (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998), 211.
14. Stephen D. Nadauld, *Principles of Priesthood Leadership* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999), 76-78.
15. Nadauld, *Principles of Priesthood Leadership*

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