

The Power of God in Great Glory!

Elaine S. Dalton and Emi Edgley

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Elaine: It's so wonderful to be here with all of you this afternoon and to share this time with my daughter, Emi. It's amazing how quickly time passes. It seems like such a short time ago Emi was born, and I still remember that day so vividly. This was back in the day when we didn't know if we were having a boy or a girl until the baby was born. Emi is our third child, and I secretly longed for a girl. But when Emi was born, she didn't look like a little girl. I remember she had a little top knot of hair which the doctor promptly cut off as she was born and said, "You can't have a curl on this boy!" She's come a long way from that day to this, and her goodness and example tutor me.

It wasn't until after having children that I realized the profound power of covenants in my life. The covenants made at baptism, endowment, and marriage have been significant in my life. I distinctly remember praying as I held each of my children in my arms that they would be happy and protected and grow to become all that our Heavenly Father wanted them to become.

Emi: I am grateful to have a mother who honors her covenants and who prays for me, even now that I also am a mother! My mom has always taught, both in word and deed, that family is the most important thing. She loves being a mother! Even within the demands of her calling, she finds time to dance with her granddaughters, orchestrate family gatherings, and share lessons learned from her travels.

My mom and I share a special bond! My mom has always taught me that I am not only her daughter but also a daughter of God. And as such, Heavenly Father is counting on me to do specific, special, covenant-based work for Him with my life. I remember a letter my mom wrote where she referred to me as a "limited edition of one." Those words—"limited edition of one"—were cemented in my head as I felt, through the Spirit, my identity as a child of God.

My mother and my father have dedicated their lives to covenant relationships that are centered in family life. I have been an eyewitness to my parents trusting God, choosing

their actions through the direction and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and guiding their lives (and in turn, *our* lives) in Christ-centered ways. This has been a great blessing in my life and in the lives of my five brothers.

From my parents, I have learned that I can find power through covenant-centered living. This has been a great strength for me in my marriage and life as a mother. There are so many loud voices in the world that glorify the secular rather than scriptural, that call for convenience rather than commitment, and that emphasize temporary happiness rather than holiness.¹ My covenants—those that I made at baptism, in the temple and with my husband Steve—give me stability as I navigate life's inevitable difficulties and chart my course.

Elaine: Despite all the voices in the world, family is the most important unit in time and eternity, and our covenants not only provide protection and direction but also purpose, peace, and power.

In the Book of Mormon we learn that Nephi saw our day, and he “beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb, and upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory.”² He prophesied that the covenant people would prevail in the latter days. That fact fills me with hope and optimism because I know that whatever storms or difficulties we may encounter, we will be able to prevail as long as we keep our covenants. As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we are women of covenant, and that knowledge makes us *different* and it makes *all the difference* in our journey through mortality. There is power in making and keeping sacred covenants!

That knowledge refines us, and it defines us. It helps us keep our focus on the things that matter most, and it gives us power to navigate the paths of life. The blessing that was given in the Doctrine and Covenants, section 25, is for each of us as daughters of God. In that blessing we are each told to “walk in the paths of virtue,”³ to “lay aside the things of the world, and seek for the things of a better [world],”⁴ and to “cleave unto [our] covenants.”⁵ Making and keeping covenants focus us on the things that matter most. Our ability to keep our covenants will not only bless us but will be a blessing to generations.

Emi: We come from a long line of noble women who kept their covenants, who were sustained by their covenants, and who were given power to face the challenges of life. Each embraced the Lord's will in her life, and learned to rely on the Lord, despite many hardships. Deaths in their family, particularly those of children or spouses, enhanced their desire to attain exaltation. They put aside troubles and concerns of this world in anticipation of a better. They devoted their lives and all their energy toward the building of the kingdom of God on earth.

They each were sustained and strengthened by their covenants as they faced great difficulties and made many sacrifices. Some of their sacrifices allowed for the building of temples. They understood the need to be armed with righteousness and with the power of

God in great glory. Their understanding of the importance of covenants and the accompanying blessings bless my family and me. I now find myself the beneficiary of their being true to their covenants.

Some of you here today may be the beginning of this line of women who have made and kept their covenants. Your covenants, faithfully observed now, will bless the generations who follow you.

Elaine: When the Saints left Nauvoo and headed west, they suffered unimaginable hardships and privation. What made them do it? What strengthened them for their journey west where they could again build a temple—a house of God? It was their endowment that strengthened them and prepared them for their journey, for they knew that no matter what might happen, the Lord would keep His covenants with them. The temple was central to all because they had made sacred covenants and were endowed with power. Their heartfelt feelings and their knowledge of the power of their covenants are expressed in the hymn “Come, Come, Ye Saints,” as they sang, “All is well! All is well!”⁶

Emi: We too are on a journey. We too face opposition and trials and difficulties. We too must know and understand why the early Saints sang “all is well” as they progressed forward in their journey to Zion.

Elaine: What is the source of all moral and spiritual power? This power comes from our Father in Heaven. He is the source of power, and we access that power by making and keeping sacred covenants with Him. What is a covenant? It is an agreement between God and man whose terms are set by God.⁷ We enter covenants through priesthood ordinances.

Such was the case of the people in the Book of Mormon who were taught by Alma. They desired with all their hearts to become members of the Savior's Church, and so at the peril of their lives, they gathered at the waters of Mormon and there at the water's edge, they covenanted to stand as a witness of the Savior “at all times and in all things, and in all places”⁸ by taking upon themselves His name. They clapped their hands and shouted for joy and exclaimed that this was the desire of their hearts. Later it is recorded that a mighty change of heart occurred, and because of this first covenant, nothing was ever the same. It is recorded: “Yea, the place of Mormon, the waters of Mormon, the forest of Mormon, how beautiful are they to the eyes of them who there came to the knowledge of their Redeemer.”⁹

Baptism

Emi: Our baptism initiates our covenant relationship with God. When we are baptized, we are washed, not only outwardly, but inwardly as well.

The Christmas before our daughter Ella (who is now 11) was baptized, she requested one gift: a heart-shaped locket. Inside she placed a painting of Jesus and a picture of the

temple. She wore this to her baptism, and I am confident that she realized, even at a young age, that her baptism was a first step, a covenant commitment, leading her toward our Savior and the temple.

I thrill with our daughter Louisa, who recently turned seven years old and is counting down the months until her baptism. She cannot wait to follow in the footsteps of Jesus by being obedient. She wants to be cleansed and become a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I remember those same feelings from when I was baptized—excitement mixed with fear that I might stick my knee or big toe out of the water! And I will never forget the sweet, clean feeling that accompanied my baptism and the bestowal of the gift of the Holy Ghost by my father.

A special part of my baptism day was a gift given to me by my Grandma Dalton. She gave me a copy of her baptism memories, which I promptly glued in my new white journal.

My grandmother was baptized almost 70 years prior to me in 1913, at the age of nine. Time and circumstances differentiated her experience from mine, and yet, with the commonality of the gospel ordinances as stepping-stones toward eternal salvation, our shared experiences help to solidify the bonds I feel with her.

She was baptized in a creek rather than a font. Her mother made her a white gown from two sun-bleached flour sacks. The girls undressed behind a clump of wild rose bushes, and the boys (including my grandmother's older brother Clair) undressed behind another clump. When my grandma emerged from the water, traces of lettering on her gown announced the contents to be "Grade A, Four Star."

Elaine: Is not everyone who is baptized with an understanding of the sacred covenants made "Grade A, Four Star?"

Think with me for a moment on the day you were baptized. Do you remember where you were and the people who surrounded you? Do you remember details? Do you remember how you felt and the things you thought? I don't know about you, but even to this day, I remember my baptism as if it were yesterday. I remember details, like the shoes I wore, the feeling I had as I came up out of the water, how it felt to have my father's and grandfathers' hands placed on my head when I was confirmed, and especially the feeling I had when the words "receive the Holy Ghost" were pronounced. I remember telling my cousins at a gathering at our home afterward that I could not play with them any more because somehow we always got in trouble and I was trying to be perfect! I remember never wanting the feeling I had that day to leave me. I was happy, I felt peace, and I felt close to the Savior.

The covenant of baptism is the covenant of salvation. It is a covenant we enter individually—one by one. It is the covenant that opens the door to personal righteousness and power. When a person keeps the baptismal covenant, which is to always remember

Him and keep His commandments and endure to the end in faith, then salvation is assured.¹⁰

Emi: This first covenant not only *cleanses* us but *enables* us. And in return for making this covenant, we are promised the companionship of the third member of the Godhead and the power to receive personal revelation for our lives. Thus, in the ordinance of baptism, we are cleansed, and by covenant we agree to keep the commandments and to take upon ourselves the name of Christ, and we promise that we will always walk in the footsteps of the Savior by always remembering Him. When we step out of the waters of baptism, we step out of the world and into the kingdom of our Heavenly Father, and our lives can never really be the same again.¹¹ That is power!

Power of Purity and the Holy Ghost

Elaine: *There is power in purity, and there is power in having the companionship of the Holy Ghost!* This is a power that the world does not have nor understand. Those who are baptized are eligible to speak with the tongue of angels and to speak the words of Christ.¹² “The gift of the Holy Ghost comes after one repents and becomes worthy. It is received after baptism by the laying on of hands by those who have the authority.”¹³ As we live in such a way that we are worthy of the guidance and tutoring of a member of the Godhead, we can go forward confidently because the promise we receive is that the Holy Ghost will “tell you all things what ye should do.”¹⁴ And what that means is that we are never alone, and knowing what is right and wrong is always possible. That is power!

Virtue and Purity

Emi: As the Young Women general president, my mom has championed a return to virtue. She lives and teaches that at the very core of power is virtue and that virtue is chastity and moral purity. She has said, “I believe that the disintegration of faith and families . . . [is] directly related to a lack of virtue in our society. And I believe that a return to virtue could save an entire nation.”¹⁵

Elaine: You have heard me talk about the importance of virtue on many occasions and to many different audiences. Why is virtue, meaning moral purity, so important in today's world? Because, simply stated, it is only through virtue and purity that we can receive the companionship of the Holy Ghost. It can be conferred upon us, but we must remain pure, because the Holy Ghost does not dwell in unclean temples. That means in our hearts and in our homes. Is it possible that in these latter days, when temptations and evil surround us and our families, that we do not fully take advantage of this great gift and power? In the world in which we live, is it possible that we make small compromises justifying these on the scale of descending mediocrity by rationalizing that “it is not as bad as . . . ?” The world may be *here* [lower] and we may be *here* [a little bit higher], but we just very well may be heading in the same direction! Thus it is of supreme importance that our homes be places in which the Spirit can dwell.

I have discovered, as I am sure you have also, that this takes constant vigilance and work. The Internet, media, and more infiltrate the very walls of our homes. We simply cannot afford as women and mothers to be lured away from our homes or to allow things to enter our homes that will not invite the Spirit to be there. We know this, and yet evil is very patient and waits for a weak moment or a weak spot to manifest itself.

Emi: There is no greater blessing that can come into our lives than to have the Holy Ghost for our constant companion. President James E. Faust once said: “I believe the Spirit of the Holy Ghost is the greatest guarantor of inward peace in our unstable world. It can be more mind-expanding and can make us have a better sense of well-being than any chemical or other earthly substance. It will calm nerves; it will breathe peace to our souls. This Comforter can be with us as we seek to improve. It can function as a source of revelation to warn us of impending danger and also help keep us from making mistakes. It can enhance our natural senses so that we can see more clearly, hear more keenly, and remember what we should remember. It is a way of maximizing our happiness.”¹⁶

Elaine: And I agree! That is power! Brigham Young once lamented, “[We] may have the Spirit of the Lord to . . . direct [us]. . . . I am satisfied, however, that in this respect, we live far beneath our privileges.”¹⁷

Why does God require us to make covenants? Covenants are a blessing provided by our Heavenly Father to give us power over evil, deception, and those things that will detract from our happiness as individuals and as families. It is because He loves us and wants us to return to His presence proven, pure, and sealed.

Emi: Integral to returning to His presence pure is our opportunity to personally embrace the redeeming power of the Atonement through the sacrament.

One characteristic of taking the sacrament that gives it great power is that we have the opportunity to partake over and over, for ourselves, week in and week out. About the sacrament, Elder Russell M. Nelson has said: “When we partake of the sacrament, we renew [our baptismal] covenant and declare our willingness to take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ. Thereby we are adopted as His sons and daughters and are known as brothers and sisters. He is the father of our new life.”¹⁸

Just as we spoke earlier about the sweet, clean feeling that accompanied our baptisms, the sacrament also holds the power for bringing about a newness of life. President Spencer W. Kimball taught: “Remembering covenants prevents apostasy. That is the real purpose of the sacrament, to keep us from forgetting, to help us to remember . . . [that which we have] covenanted at the water’s edge or at the sacrament table and in the temple.”¹⁹

There is power in the sacred ordinance of the sacrament! This power is available weekly. Our souls are fed when we partake with a determination to unite our actions with God’s. Our paths are made straight when we approach the sacrament with the plea of “more holiness give me,”²⁰ desiring above all, the companionship of His Spirit to be our guide.

The eating of the bread and the drinking of water are outward manifestations of our inward, soul-felt desire for renewal and holiness.

I am grateful that partaking of the sacrament is an opportunity that is repeatedly given. Partaking over and over again of the sacrament can assist us in remembering the life of our Savior, remind us of the necessity of repentance and wholehearted devotion to God, and call us to a deeper commitment to life in the covenant.

Endowed with Power

Elaine: As a mother and as the Young Women general president, my vision is the temple. The desire of my heart is to assist parents and priesthood leaders in helping each young woman remain worthy to make and keep sacred covenants and receive the ordinances in the temple. It is in the temple that we are endowed with power from on high. We understand that those who are endowed in the temple are to “be taught from on high.”²¹ When we receive our temple endowment, which means “gift,”²² we are “filled with light” and are able to “[comprehend] all things.”²³ Thus when we receive our endowment in the temple, we also receive the key that unlocks the powers of godliness and the ability to receive knowledge we can obtain in no other way.²⁴ The temple is the reason for everything we do.

Emi: One highlight of my childhood was weekly night rides past the Salt Lake Temple. In an effort to prepare us for bedtime and perhaps just to keep us contained and off our usual paths of destruction, we would pile into the family Pinto and head downtown. On those nights, we would watch for the illuminated spires of the temple, and my older brothers, always first to see the building, would shout, “the temple, the temple!” My mom would ask each of us, “Where do you want to get married?” When she asked, “Emi, where do you want to get married?” I always responded, “The temple!” Night rides, walks around the temple grounds, and watching my parents prepare to attend the temple on their date night all provided simple preparation in the form of exposure to the value of covenants.

Elaine: I don't think I will ever forget the day when I went to the temple to receive my own endowments. My mother tried to prepare me as best she could on the ride from Ogden to the Salt Lake Temple. She explained to me that in the temple there was a lot of symbolism, that I would not understand everything the first visit and would want to return to the temple often to gain more understanding. I didn't know what to expect. But when I came out of the temple that evening, I was filled with joy. My mother asked me how I felt, and I told her that everything I had ever wanted was given to me that day in the house of the Lord. And it was.

Emi: I feel like, with life experience, I continue to unfold layer upon layer of the value of covenants.²⁵ Why do we make covenants? Why are we a covenant people? It is because these covenants give us power, protection, peace of mind, and even confidence as we

journey through life. With the backing of covenants, we can embark upon uncharted territory with a confidence that affects how we deal with the challenges of life.

When Steve and I were married, I felt so grateful to be sealed and to pledge our love and loyalty for time and all eternity. Yet, I gained a new perspective on the sealing covenant that binds Steve and me and our children when our first daughter was stillborn. Years before, I felt like I understood the impact of eternal marriage, of our hearts being turned to our fathers, and of our children sealed to us through the sacred ordinances of the temple. Now I understand this more. As a family, we have both the motivation as well as the solace that comes of knowing that, if we live worthily, we can be together in the eternities. Peace comes from the promise of being together.

Elaine: When we attend the temple, the Lord promises each of us that we will come forth from His holy house “endowed with power from on high.”²⁶ We will receive protection from heavenly hosts and “angels [shall have] charge concerning [us].”²⁷ This means that we need never face the adversary alone. It means we never have to go through trials, discouragements, or disappointments alone. The promise given from the Lord assures each of us that “I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up.”²⁸

These are the promises to the Lord's covenant people—the house of Israel. And I testify that they are true and that they apply here and now and not to some distant future. As the Prophet Joseph Smith dedicated the Kirtland Temple, he prayed that we might have the power of the covenants. Listen to these beautiful words and promises in the dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple: “We ask thee, Holy Father, that thy servants may go forth from this house armed with thy power, and that thy name may be upon them, and thy glory be round about them, and thine angels have charge over them; . . . That no weapon formed against them shall prosper; . . . And if any people shall rise against this people, that thine anger be kindled against them; And if they shall smite this people thou wilt smite them; thou wilt fight for thy people . . . that they may be delivered from the hands of all their enemies.”²⁹

Eternal Marriage

An integral part of the new and everlasting covenant, which is the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, is the covenant of celestial marriage—the covenant of exaltation. When we are sealed in the temple, ultimately we may become joint heirs to the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, some of which include an eternal family, the blessings of power and glory and exaltation.³⁰ Through the covenant of celestial marriage we become joint heirs to all the blessings promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob if we are faithful³¹ I will never forget the day my husband, Steve, and I knelt across the altar from each other and looked into each other's eyes. As I knelt in the temple that day, dressed in white, I heard words and made covenants that thrilled me. I felt a powerful connection with the eternities. At the time, I didn't fully comprehend, however, what those covenants meant or would mean in my life, but upon returning to the temple in subsequent years, I grew in my understanding as I witnessed other marriages and sealings. When I entered the temple

and saw our sons and our daughter, Emi, dressed in white, kneeling at that same altar, making those same covenants, I understood more clearly what covenants really mean in this journey through mortality. And as your mother, Emi, I was so grateful that you had lived your life in such a way that you would now be given the protection, the power, and the promise associated with making and keeping sacred covenants.

The Savior is the center of a covenant marriage in the temple. Elder David A. Bednar taught that as a husband and wife individually draw closer to the Savior, they also come closer together in their marriage relationship.³² The covenants we make are not restrictive as some might suppose but are actually enabling and expanding. They make us free to receive more and more of the blessings that our Father has in store to bestow upon us. Our covenants are like armor. Our Heavenly Father has prepared them for us to protect us and defend us against evil.

Emi: My parents would often talk with us about their wedding day—the day they were sealed for time and all eternity. My dad still jokes about the work he had to do to convince Mom to marry him and the associated heel marks that he claims are still on the sidewalk to this day outside the temple where he dragged my mom inside on that Friday the 13th wedding day so many years ago. Mom, you and dad sure have come a long way from the heel marks!

Elaine: Well, I did get a little nervous at the last minute. But we didn't have any problem getting a time at the temple. No one else was there, and Friday the 13th is now our lucky day!

Now I am experiencing another wonderful blessing. My husband, Steve, is a sealer in the Salt Lake Temple. There is no greater power on the earth. Each time I attend a wedding or go to the temple to do sealings for our ancestors, I am overcome with a realization of the eternal blessings of covenants found in the temple, as I see my husband dressed in white performing these sacred ordinances. I hear the covenant blessings in an entirely different way.

Emi: I learned on the day my Steve and I were married in the Salt Lake Temple (yes, I also married a Steve!) the key to the visions of eternity—of generations linked both forward and backward in time. And I learned this by looking through the reflective glass of temple mirrors. As Steve and I knelt at the altar, if I focused my sights on myself (or my hair, which I was particularly concerned about that day), I was able to see only the two of us and our immediate surroundings. Yet as I focused on the mirrors and the reflections, I could see that the generations that preceded us and the generations that followed would be impacted by our choices.

Another temple experience occurred when I was able to attend the dedication of the Jordan River Temple as an eight-year-old. I had seen the amazing architecture of many temples but was mostly intrigued with all I had heard about the beautiful interiors, complete with sparkly chandeliers and reflective mirrors. Yet on this special day when I was seated with my family, I found myself in an area composed completely of exposed

concrete. I think I took part in the dedication from the confines of the temple parking garage! I saw nothing special, yet still felt the Spirit and the significance of a temple dedicated to the Lord's work.

Similarly, my daughter Ella had the opportunity, at the age of eight, to attend the Draper Temple dedication. Unlike my experience in the parking garage, she was seated in a light-filled room with sparkling chandeliers and mirrors. Of this experience she wrote, "I want to remember this moment. During the dedication, I could hear more than I could see; meaning there was only a choir of 30, but I could hear thousands singing beautifully. I could really feel the Spirit. Today I learned that temples always are peaceful places and the Spirit of God can come and attend with us."

Elaine: The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that the divine purpose of God is to gather his people so that they can build temples and receive the highest ordinances and gain eternal life.³³ In the Book of Mormon we learn of the latter days. Elder Neal A. Maxwell explained that "when we baptize, our eyes should gaze beyond the baptismal font to the holy temple. The great garner into which the sheaves should be gathered is the holy temple."³⁴ The temple thus becomes a refuge and a protection to all who are worthy to enter these sacred doors.

In the Young Women auxiliary, Personal Progress helps a young woman focus on and prepare for the ordinances of the temple. Mothers, you would be wise to assist your daughters with this preparation. Your love of your daughter and your eternal bonds will be increased as you study scriptures together and learn doctrines and principles that will strengthen your home and your family. And the eternal bonds you share will be strengthened.

I recently found one of Emi's old Personal Progress books. It was a sweet experience for me to read her goals and to now realize how those small and simple commitments she made then formed and molded her testimony and her desire to make and keep sacred covenants.

Emi: Personal Progress really helped me to stay on the right track. From Personal Progress and the Young Women program, I learned about making commitments—commitments to family, friends, and myself as well as commitments to my Heavenly Father. Goals made in Personal Progress encouraged me to pray, to be protected, and to read my scriptures, which brought the guidance of the Spirit into my life and prepared me to remain pure and worthy to enter the temple. Those choices help to remind us as women and young women about our baptismal covenants, to refine and prepare us to return to our heavenly home.

Elaine: Now with all this talk of the power of covenants and covenant making, I know there are those here today whose hearts are broken because covenants have been broken. You may not have a perfect family. Neither do we. But we are striving and trying and seeking after righteousness. We know that we cannot force others to keep their covenants, but we can keep ours. The power of your covenant and worthy life will pull

down blessings on you and on your wayward children. Your covenants will help you know what to say and what to do. The Prophet Joseph Smith plainly taught, “When a seal is put upon the father and mother, it secures their posterity so that they cannot be lost, but will be saved by virtue of the covenant of their father and mother.”³⁵ “Covenants remembered by parents will be remembered by God.”³⁶

As Elder Jeffrey R. Holland so beautifully taught in April general conference, I now repeat here to you: “So if you have made covenants, keep them. If you haven’t made them, make them. If you have made them and broken them, repent and repair them. It is *never* too late so long as the Master of the vineyard says there is time.”³⁷ Elder M. Russell Ballard said it best when he said: “Every sister who stands for truth and righteousness diminishes the influence of evil. Every sister who strengthens and protects her family is doing the work of God. Every sister who lives as a woman of God becomes a beacon for others to follow and plants seeds of righteous influence that will be harvested for decades to come. Every sister who makes and keeps sacred covenants becomes an instrument in the hands of God.”³⁸ That is power. That is our power.

Emi: Every gospel ordinance—every covenant made—focuses on the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Last year my family and I attended the Carl Bloch art exhibit *The Master's Hand*. As we entered the gallery, there was a hushed reverence and a feeling as if we were in the presence of greatness. Through the artist’s magnificent work, we could feel the Spirit of the great individual portrayed, that of Jesus Christ.

The first painting we viewed was *The Doubting Thomas*. Rather than depicting Thomas’s act of touching the resurrected Savior’s wounds, Bloch captures the moment when Thomas first recognized Jesus as his personal Redeemer.

We were among a crowd and stood at a respectful distance. Yet my daughter Ella, compelled by the image, separated herself from the crowd to closely approach the Savior as depicted in the larger-than-life mural. I watched as she studied the Savior. I marveled at how children are so close to the Savior; they often set the example and show us the way we should be. I grew in my appreciation of the Savior, whose sacrifice unleashed the power of the Atonement and the Resurrection.

Making and keeping covenants provide opportunities for me—for each of us—to approach the Savior. Our Savior, Jesus Christ, stands preeminent in my life. I hope to reflect His light, to be armed with the power of God in great glory, and to emulate His life through the soul-refining process of making and keeping sacred covenants.

Let me share with you a true story. A friend of ours was on a humanitarian trip to build new classrooms in rural South America. While he was flying to a remote Guatemalan village in a single-engine plane, the engine died. All 14 passengers aboard knew that a crash landing on the dense jungle floor below was imminent. For minutes there was silence and an eerie calm as the plane glided and lost altitude. Our friend was left to his

thoughts about his family and his life. He and those aboard braced themselves for the inevitable, and in his mind, he realized, "I am going to die." His next thought was, "It's OK." He turned to his coworker, friend, and seatmate, and his friend's last words were, "If it's our time, it's our time." He nodded in agreement and then thought to himself, "I have kept my covenants." The plane crashed. Eleven of the 14 aboard did not survive. Our friend—badly injured—was pulled by men working in the fields nearby from the wreckage just before the plane burst into flames.

His life in the years that have passed has been shaped by this experience. He still suffers effects of the injuries sustained on that day, and yet he moves forward with a renewed power and an enhanced perspective of the grand experience of earth life. This is the kind of confidence we can carry into daily decisions when our choices are accompanied with the most important declaration that can be made, that of: "I have made and kept sacred covenants."

It is my prayer that each of us will leave today with this determination: "And this shall be our covenant—that we will walk in all the ordinances of the Lord."³⁹

Elaine: The greatest compliment that can come to us in this life is to be known as a covenant keeper. It was said of a group of valiant young men in the Book of Mormon that "they were . . . true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted."⁴⁰ They kept their covenants. May it also be recorded that each of us kept our covenants. Now Emi and I and Ella and Louisa join that long line of women that cherished and cleaved to their covenants. My mother Emma is now 91 years old. Half of those 91 years, she has lived as a widow. Emi was named after her. Today we would like to pay her the ultimate compliment—she is a covenant keeper.

Our family motto simply states—*we will be true*. It is my prayer for my family and for each of us here today that our lives will be centered on the Savior and keeping our covenants.

I am grateful for a Savior and the redeeming and enabling power of His infinite atoning sacrifice. I am grateful that He was true at all times and in all things and in all places and for the example He set as He marked the path and led the way. I am grateful for His light and life. I am grateful for the blessings I receive because He kept His premortal covenants with the Father. I shall ever owe to Him my gratitude, my love and my life. Today, we testify that He lives! In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

- ¹ See 1 Nephi 8:27–28, 33.
- ² 1 Nephi 14:14.
- ³ Doctrine and Covenants 25:2.
- ⁴ Doctrine and Covenants 25:10.
- ⁵ Doctrine and Covenants 25:13.
- ⁶ “Come, Come, Ye Saints,” *Hymns*, no. 30.
- ⁷ See Bible Dictionary, “Covenant.”
- ⁸ Mosiah 18:9.
- ⁹ Mosiah 18:30.
- ¹⁰ See 2 Nephi 31; Mosiah 18:8–10; and Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., “Covenants” (1966) 166–68.
- ¹¹ See Robert D. Hales, *Return* (2010), 60.
- ¹² See 2 Nephi 32:2–3.
- ¹³ James E. Faust, “The Gift of the Holy Ghost—A Sure Compass,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1996, 4.
- ¹⁴ 2 Nephi 32:3
- ¹⁵ Elaine S. Dalton, “Zion Is the Pure in Heart,” *Church News*, Sept. 13, 2009.
- ¹⁶ James E. Faust, *Ensign*, Apr. 1996, 5.
- ¹⁷ *Discourses of Brigham Young* (1973), 32.
- ¹⁸ Russell M. Nelson, “Covenants,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 88.
- ¹⁹ *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (1982), 112.
- ²⁰ “More Holiness Give Me,” *Hymns*, no. 131.
- ²¹ Doctrine and Covenants 43:16.
- ²² See Robert D. Hales, “Blessings of the Temple,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2009, 46–49.
- ²³ Doctrine and Covenants 88:67–68.
- ²⁴ See Doctrine and Covenants 132:18–19.
- ²⁵ Richard G. Scott, “The Eternal Blessings of Marriage,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 84–97.
- ²⁶ Doctrine and Covenants 38:32.
- ²⁷ Matthew 4:6.
- ²⁸ Doctrine and Covenants 84:88.
- ²⁹ Doctrine and Covenants 109:22, 25, 27–28.
- ³⁰ See Doctrine and Covenants 132: 19–20.
- ³¹ See Russell M. Nelson, *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 86–89.
- ³² See “Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan,” Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting, Feb. 11, 2006, 2–7.
- ³³ See *Teaching of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 415–17.
- ³⁴ Neal A Maxwell, in John L. Hart, “Cake Calling Focus of Your Mission,” *Church News*, Sept. 17, 1994, 4.
- ³⁵ *History of the Church*, 5:530.
- ³⁶ James E. Faust, “The Greatest Challenge in the World—Good Parenting,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 35.
- ³⁷ Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Laborers in the Vineyard,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 33.
- ³⁸ Russell M. Ballard, “Women of Righteousness,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2002, 70.
- ³⁹ Doctrine and Covenants 136:4.
- ⁴⁰ Alma 53:20.