

# Making Our Calling and Election Sure

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● Brethren and sisters: I stand before you today in deep humility. The words I intend to speak will have little meaning unless they are impressed upon our souls by the power of the Holy Spirit. I sincerely invite you to join with me in praying that they will be so impressed.

The theme I have in mind to discuss is "Making One's Calling and Election Sure." To do this one must receive a divine witness that he will inherit eternal life. The supreme objective of men who understand God, their relationship to him, and his designs for them is to gain eternal life. This is as it should be, for eternal life "... is the greatest of all the gifts of God." (D&C 14:7.) To bring men to eternal life is God's "work and glory." To this end he conceives, brings into being, directs, and uses all his creations. (Moses 1:38-39.)

Eternal life is the quality of life which God himself enjoys. The gospel plan, authored by the Father and put into operation by the atonement of Jesus Christ, brings eternal life within the reach of every man. The Lord gave this assurance when he said, "... if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, ..." (D&C 14:7.)

The fullness of eternal life is not attainable in mortality, but the peace which is its harbinger and which comes as a result of making one's calling and election sure is attainable in this life. The Lord has promised that "... he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come." (*Ibid.*, 59:23.)

I think the peace here referred to is implicit in the Prophet's statement, "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter, but I am calm as a summer's morning. I have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward all men." (*DHC*, 6, 555.)

I also think it is implicit in this statement of the late Apostle Alonzo A. Hinckley which he wrote in a letter to the First Presidency after he had been advised by his physician that his illness would be fatal: "I assure

you I am not deeply disturbed over the final results. I am reconciled and I reach my hands to take what my Father has for me, be it life or death. ...

"As to the future, I have no misgivings. It is inviting and glorious, and I sense rather clearly what it means to be saved by the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ and to be exalted by his power and be with him ever more." (*The Deseret News Church Section*, March 27, 1949, p. 24.)

Now I come directly to my theme:

I take my text from Second Peter, and as he did, I direct my remarks "... to them that have obtained like precious faith with us. ..." (2 Peter 1:1.)

Peter, having put the Saints in remembrance of gospel fundamentals, admonished them to "... give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall!" (*Ibid.*, 1:10.)

By making their calling and election sure, the Saints were to gain entrance "... into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." To this fact Peter bore powerful witness. He reviewed his experience on the Mount of Transfiguration with James and John, where, he says, they heard the voice of "... God the Father ..." declare of Jesus, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Then by way of instruction that such an experience did not of itself make one's calling and election sure, he added, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; ..." (*Ibid.*, 1:11, 17, 19.)

Speaking on Sunday, the 14th of May, 1843, the Prophet Joseph Smith took this statement of Peter for his text. From the Prophet's sermon I quote:

"Notwithstanding the apostle exhorts them to add to their faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, etc., yet he exhorts them to make their calling and election sure. And though they had heard an audible voice from heaven bearing testimony that Jesus was the Son of God, yet he says we have a more sure word of prophecy. ... Now wherein could they have a more sure word of prophecy than to hear the

voice of God saying, This is my beloved Son, etc." Answering his own question, the Prophet continued, "Though they might hear the voice of God and know that Jesus was the Son of God, this would be no evidence that their election and calling was made sure, that they had part with Christ, and were joint heirs with Him. They then would want that more sure word of prophecy, that they were sealed in the heavens and had the promise of eternal life in the kingdom of God. Then, having this promise sealed unto them, it was an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast. Though the thunders might roll and lightnings flash, and earthquakes bellow, and war gather thick around, yet this hope and knowledge would support the soul in every hour of trial, trouble and tribulation."

Then speaking directly to his listeners, the Prophet continued:

"... I would exhort you to go on and continue to call upon God until you make your calling and election sure for yourselves, by obtaining this more sure word of prophecy, ..." (*DHC*, 5, 388-389.)

A week later, May 21, 1843, the Prophet preached another sermon on the same text, from which I quote:

"We have no claim in our eternal compact, in relation to eternal things, unless our actions and contracts and all things tend to this end. But after all this, you have got to make your calling and election sure. If this injunction would lie largely on those to whom it was spoken," he said, "how much more those of the present generation!" And then in conclusion, "It is one thing to be on the mount and hear the excellent voice, etc., etc., and another to hear the voice declare to you. You have a part and lot in that kingdom." (*Ibid.*, 5, 403.)

These two sermons were given by the Prophet just thirteen months before his martyrdom. Four years earlier, however, he had thus instructed the Twelve: "After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands), which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted. When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and his election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter, which the Lord hath promised the Saints, as is recorded in the testimony of St. John, in the 14th chapter, ..." (*Ibid.*, 3, 380.)

In the 88th section of the Doctrine

and Covenants is recorded a revelation in which the Lord, addressing some of the early Saints in Ohio, said: ". . . I now send upon you another Comforter, even upon you my friends, that it may abide in your hearts, even the Holy Spirit of promise; which other Comforter is the same that I promised unto my disciples, as is recorded in the testimony of John.

"This Comforter is the promise which I give unto you of eternal life, even the glory of the celestial kingdom;" (D&C 88:3-4.)

I should think that every faithful Latter-day Saint ". . . would want that more sure word of prophecy, that they were sealed in the heavens and had the promise of eternal life in the kingdom of God." (DHC, 5, 388.)

As I read the sacred records, I find recorded experiences of men in all dispensations who have had this sure anchor to their souls, this peace in their hearts.

Lehi's grandson Enos so hungered after righteousness that he cried unto the Lord until ". . . there came a voice unto [him from heaven] saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed." Years later he revealed the nature of this promised blessing when he wrote:

". . . I soon go to the place of my rest, which is with my Redeemer; for I know that 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." (Enos 5, 27.)

To Alma the Lord said: "Thou art my servant; and I covenant with thee that thou shalt have eternal life; . . ." (Mosiah 26:20.)

To his twelve Nephite disciples the Master said: "What is it that ye desire of me, after that I am gone to the Father?

"And they all spake, save it were three, saying: We desire that after we have lived unto the age of man, that our ministry, wherein thou hast called us, may have an end, that we may speedily come unto thee in thy kingdom.

"And he said unto them: Blessed are ye because ye desired this thing of me; therefore, after that ye are seventy and two years old ye shall come unto me in my kingdom; and with me ye shall find rest." (3 Nephi 28:1-3.)

As Moroni labored in solitude, abridging the Jaredite record, he received from the Lord this comforting assurance: ". . . thou hast been faithful; wherefore, thy garments shall be made clean. And because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father." (Ether 12:37.)

Paul in his second epistle to Timothy wrote: ". . . I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: . . ." (2 Tim. 4:6-8.)

In this dispensation many have received like assurances. In the spring of 1839, while the Prophet Joseph and his associates were languishing in Liberty Jail, Heber C. Kimball labored against odds caring for the Saints and striving to free the brethren. On the 6th of April he wrote:

"My family having been gone about two months, during which time I heard nothing from them; our brethren being in prison; death and destruction following us everywhere we went; I felt very sorrowful and lonely. The following words came to my mind, and the Spirit said unto me, 'write,' which I did by taking a piece of paper and writing on my knee as follows: . . ."

This is what he wrote as dictated by the Lord:

"Verily I say unto my servant Heber, thou art my son, in whom I am well pleased; for thou art careful to hearken to my words, and not transgress my law, nor rebel against my servant Joseph Smith, for thou hast a respect to the words of mine anointed, even from

the least to the greatest of them; *therefore thy name is written in heaven, no more to be blotted out for ever.*" (Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 1888 ed., p. 253. Italics added.)

To the Prophet Joseph Smith the Lord said: ". . . I am the Lord thy God and will be with thee even unto the end of the world, and through all eternity; for verily I seal upon you your exaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father, with Abraham your father." (D&C 132:49. Italics added.)

Now in conclusion, I give you my own witness. I know that God our Father lives, that we are, as Paul said, his offspring. I know that we dwell in his presence in pre-earth life and that we shall continue to live beyond the grave. I know that we may return into his presence, if we meet his terms. I know that while we are here in mortality there is a means of communication between him and us. I know it is possible for men to so live that they may hear his voice and know his words and that to receive "the Holy Spirit of promise" while here in mortality is possible. And so, in the words of the Prophet Joseph, ". . . I . . . exhort you to go on and continue to call upon God until [by the more sure word of prophecy] you make your calling and election sure for yourselves, . . ." (DHC, 5, 389.)

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.