

Ethical Leadership - Making the Public Life Consistent with the Private Life

Jesus operated from a base of fixed principles or truths rather than making up the rules as He went along. Thus, His leadership style was not only correct, but also constant. So many secular leaders today are like chameleons; they change their hues and views to fit the situation -- which only tends to confuse associates and followers who cannot be certain what course is being pursued. Those who cling to power at the expense of principle often end up doing almost anything to perpetuate their power. . . . Those individuals whom we most love, admire and respect as leaders of the human family are so regarded by us precisely because they embody, in many ways, the qualities that Jesus had in His life and in His leadership.

Spencer W. Kimball¹

The ethical environment in any organization, whether it be a family or a large corporation, is significantly impacted by the leaders of the organization. The essence of ethical leadership is embodied in the following two ideas - 1) the leader strives to actively develop the characteristics and attributes of God as defined in Chapter 4; and 2) the leader employs a single standard in his/her private life and public life. Jesus set the example of leadership by operating *from a base of fixed principles* and a *constant leadership style*. Unfortunately, too many people who believe in the ideas of relativism seek leadership positions to satisfy their pursuit of pleasure and power. The Lord told us the results of this kind of leadership in Section 121 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson—That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness. That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man. Behold, ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks, to persecute the saints, and to fight against God. We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. Hence many are

called, but few are chosen. (D&C 121:34-40)

In contrast, President Spencer Kimball reminds us that the leaders that *we most love, admire, and respect* are those that try to follow the Savior's example both in acquiring His attributes and in emulating His leadership style.

In his talk, "Jesus: The Perfect Leader", which was addressed to future civic leaders, President Kimball went on to say,

I make no apology for giving something of the accomplishments of Jesus Christ to those who seek success as leaders. If we would be eminently successful, here is our pattern. All the ennobling, perfect, and beautiful qualities of maturity, of strength, and of courage are found in this one person.¹

In this chapter, we will look at examples of leadership from the Savior's life in relationship to the characteristics and attributes of God.

Omnipotent. Jesus demonstrated His omnipotence early and often during His ministry. From His first miracle of transmuting the water to wine at the wedding feast, His power was evident. He also demonstrated His control over the elements by walking on the surface of the Sea of Galilee and later calming the troubled sea as the disciples struggled to keep their ship afloat.

There are three aspects concerning His omnipotence that relate to leadership: 1) He never abused His power; 2) He sought ways to strengthen Himself; and 3) He empowered others.

Even though He was omnipotent, He never used His power to take advantage of other people. His power was only used to promote His Father's work. When Peter cut off the ear of one of the men who had come to arrest the Savior, He simply healed the man and then admonished Peter and the others with him, by saying,

Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? (John 18:11)

He could have called for legions of angels to prevent His arrest, but He knew what His mission was and was committed to accomplishing it. The Savior was the perfect example of the principles taught in D&C 121 mentioned above. Since His mission involved protecting and upholding our agency, He never did anything to limit it. A recent edition of the General Handbook of the Church suggests how church leaders should act to preserve the agency of members.

A distinguishing characteristic of the Church organization lies in its balance of authority and individual rights. Priesthood is a brotherhood, and in its operation the highest capacities of man -- his capacity to act as a free agent and his capacity to be spiritual -- must be respected and enlarged. Leaders invite, persuade, encourage, and recommend in a spirit of gentleness and meekness. Members respond freely as the Spirit guides. Only this kind of response has moral value. An act is moral only if it expresses the character and

disposition of the person, that is, if it arises out of knowledge, faith, love, or religious intent. Fear and force have no place in the kingdom because they do not produce moral actions and are contrary to God's gift of free agency.²

The same principles regarding the safekeeping of other peoples' agency apply to all leadership positions.

Good leaders need to be at their best, to have physical, emotional, and spiritual strength to accomplish their tasks. Jesus again set a good example in this regard by taking time to renew Himself. When the tempest arose while the disciples were guiding their ship across the Sea of Galilee, Jesus was attempting to get some rest. He was exhausted and sought to refresh Himself by sleeping. We are told in the scriptures that He also prayed for strength on several occasions to help meet the challenges of His mission, including the terrible ordeal in Gethsemane and on Golgotha. Proper nourishment, rest, and exercise are critical to our physical health. It is interesting to observe the many fitness centers and wellness programs that business establishments have created within the walls of their offices and factories to facilitate their employees need for physical exercise and mental and emotional health. When we are tired, we are less tolerant of our brothers and sisters shortcomings and imperfections. Parents are frequently at their worst in dealing with their children when sick or weak from physical or mental stress.

While Jesus, because of His omnipotence, could have conducted His work all on His own, He did not. He called other people to the work and taught the leadership principles of delegation, stewardship, and accountability. He knew that His disciples would grow only when they were involved directly in the work. To be effective, leaders in all organizations need to incorporate these principles. Parents teach the value of work by delegating chores and requiring an accounting. Steven Covey tells a wonderful story of how he assigned one of his sons the upkeep and care of their yard.³ Even though the yard began to look a little ragged, Brother Covey did not step in and assume his son's delegated responsibility. The son eventually learned that he could call on his father and others to help him with the work. The yard became neat and trim as per the initial charge. A department chair of an academic department at a university quickly learns that all of the resources of the department, faculty and staff, are needed to make the department run smoothly. Leaders and managers in business organizations that involve their people in the operation of the businesses by giving them responsibilities, requiring an accountability, and then following up to assess their performances accomplish more and have a more satisfied personnel than those who don't practice these principles.

Changes not. At the beginning and at the end of His ministry, Jesus was tempted. His reaction to the temptations by Satan illustrated the constancy of His life. President Kimball said that His constancy was due to His adherence to fixed principles. Thus, not only was He constant but He was correct. He did not say something to one group of people and something else to a different group. Leaders must be consistent. They cannot change with every wind of fortune, or rely on polls to dictate policy and what is important for the moment. When leadership behaves this way, the followers are unsure of the direction they should take. Parents will find their children

confused as to what the rules are. Employees will not clearly see the direction of the company and therefore will struggle to focus on goals and policy.

Keshavan Nair in his book, *A Higher Standard of Leadership*, which was drawn from lessons that he learned from the life of Mohandas Ghandi, wrote about the negative affect that leaders' inconsistent standards have on their followers. He called for a single standard, which he referred to as a 'higher standard.'⁴ The following is taken from his book.

We have been led to believe that there is one standard for private morality and conduct and another for public morality and conduct. We have come to accept that a lower moral standard is necessary to get things done in the real world of politics and business. This is the gospel of expediency --the double standard of conduct. It is fueled by the idea of winning at all costs: that results are the only things that count. The evidence that many subscribe to the double standard is everywhere. Politicians ask us to judge them on their legislative accomplishments, not on their personal conduct. Social activists who claim the high moral ground in their personal philosophy use violence to obtain results. Business executives do not want their conduct examined but ask us instead to focus exclusively on the bottom line. And many journalists who maintain a personal commitment to the truth succumb to the pressures of wanting to be first and, rather than wait for the whole story, publish half-truths. . . Leaders who do not command our respect reduce the legitimacy of their leadership and lose our trust. Leaders who are not trusted find it difficult to challenge others to greatness. This not only makes leadership less effective, but leads to a general decline in the hopes of society. We feel helpless and get cynical because we cannot trust our leaders. There is a deterioration of our soul. . . To increase legitimacy and respect for leadership and for the system in which we live, we must acknowledge Gandhi's ideal of a single standard -- a single standard of conduct in both public and private life.⁴

The United States has had time periods when leaders have betrayed the trust that had been placed in them. Citizens have felt the double standard and seen the fruits of it first hand.

Jesus did not perform for people—what He said, was what He was. There was no hypocrisy in Him. He warned of the evil of being a hypocrite in His sermon on the mount.

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (Matt 6:1-5)

A footnote in the 1979 edition of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Bible, suggests that the Greek translation of the word hypocrite is identical to the word pretender and in Greek means 'a play actor' or 'one who feigns, represents dramatically, or exaggerates a part'.⁵ Young

people are particularly affected by hypocrisy. Not only do they become untrusting of people who live a double standard, but they also become disillusioned with the values that hypocrites profess to teach.

Because of His constancy, Jesus had a strong commitment to the task at hand and never wavered. Leaders must demonstrate commitment to their objectives and communicate those objectives to their people. Obviously, needs may vary from time to time within an organization. If so, then it is certainly appropriate to rewrite objectives, but they should be articulated to the organization constituency whom leaders are accountable. But once the objectives have been modified, leaders must commit themselves to them and not be whimsical in their application. President Kimball, in the quote at the beginning of the chapter, warned about the “chameleon” who “change their hues and views to fit the situation.”¹

Omniscient. The Lord had all knowledge. Because of this, He had a perspective concerning people and situations that we do not. Luke recorded an act that took place early in Jesus’ life that indicated that He knew and understood His calling at a very young age. In Luke 2, we read:

And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not [of it]. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day’s journey; and they sought him among [their] kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business? (Luke 2:42-49)

He had a vision of His mission and remained focused on that vision. He constantly communicated that vision to others and invited others to participate in the vision by asking them to follow Him. He told Peter, Andrew, James, John, and others that He would make them fishers of men and invited them to *Come, follow me* (see Matt. 4:17-22). Leaders need to know and understand their organization’s goals and mission and help others to see the same vision. We also need to empower others in our organizations by inviting them to be involved in the success of the organization. For instance, many leaders involve their work force in the development and writing of mission statements. When all of the work force has a knowledge of the institution mission statement, people can become united in a quest to achieve those goals. As another example, children are more apt to respond to the rules in a home when they are involved in the creation of the rules. Knowledge is power and a real motivator.

His omniscience also allowed Him to know and understand His people. His analogy of the shepherd and his sheep was a powerful metaphor. He truly was the Good Shepherd and knew His

sheep. He knew the weaknesses and the strengths of each of His followers. He knew of Thomas' doubt concerning His resurrection and gave him an experience to help strengthen his testimony. He also provided direction when it was needed. He knew of the rich man's obedience to the commandments and offered him a challenge to perform at the next level by telling him to:

. . . .go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poorcome, take up the cross, and follow me. (Mark 10:21)

Unfortunately, the rich man found this to be too hard at the time of the challenge but at least Jesus knew what the man needed to be stretched and offered it to him. And when His followers fell short of the task, He did not leave them alone. He offered encouragement. When Peter attempted to walk on the water to where He was, the winds came up, Peter became afraid, and cried out for the Lord to save him. His faith had been tried and in the midst of the trial, Peter's faith wavered because he feared.

And immediately Jesus stretched forth [his] hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? (Math 14:31)

We would do well to emulate His example in our own leadership positions by learning about our people, providing direction and counsel, and offering encouragement. Bishops who earn the respect of their ward members do so by visiting the members, showing an interest in their lives, and offering counsel and encouragement. Athletic coaches that are successful learn their players' strengths and weaknesses, offer suggestions to improve, and use individual players' strengths to help their teams compete.

Truthful and cannot lie. The Savior demonstrated that He was truthful and could not lie throughout His life. In particular, His answers to the Jewish leaders during His ministry and to Annas, Caiaphas, and Pilot during His trial illustrated His commitment to honesty and integrity. His honesty allowed others to believe Him and never doubt His word. This attribute empowered those who followed Him with a knowledge that He would never do or say anything that would lead them astray.

Leaders in any organization lose their credibility when they are not honest. Nothing they say can be relied upon. Their words are always held up to public scrutiny and therefore their leadership ceases to be effective. Parents lose the respect of their children. Leaders lose the trust of their people. If an employee knows that a boss has lied to obtain a lucrative contract to build a facility, how can that employee have confidence in the boss that he/she will be dealt with honestly? How can the public rely on the company to build a safe edifice? When leaders of countries are caught in a lie, how can leaders of other countries expect honest negotiations? There will always be a sense of mistrust. When a father promises a reward for good behavior and a child acts on that promise, the father must remain true to his promise. If not, the child will begin to have mistrust in the father and will think twice about acting on a promise from that father in the future. If it

happens repeatedly, the child will lose complete confidence in the father.

History is replete with examples of honest and dishonest leaders in all fields of endeavor. Watergate illustrated what can happen when leaders lie to a nation. To prevent the public from knowing, an elaborate cover up was perpetuated. Frequently when an act of dishonesty occurs, another one follows in an attempt to cover up the first. The Lord spoke of the evils of covering up our sins in D&C 121. Leaders often use their privilege or power to do so.

Just. In two interesting incidents, Jesus demonstrated the attribute of being just when He cleansed the temple and when He asked His Father to forgive those that put Him to death for they knew not what they did.

The first example, of cleansing the temple, illustrated that He wasn't afraid to rebuke when it was necessary. Leaders are frequently called upon to point out shortcomings of others in order to help them improve their performance. But in doing so, they need to apply the following principles:

Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy; That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death. (D&C 121:43-44)

Too many children feel rejected by their parents because of too harsh and too frequent criticism. Children need to know that they are loved, even when they have misbehaved. Employees need to know managers appreciate them even though they occasionally make mistakes. If there is need for chastisement and instruction, it should be done carefully, thoughtfully, and with the idea of inspiring change in the employee.

The second incident is a great example of how we should be tolerant blah, blah, blah

**add something here about the fact that training and skills
need to be in place before we can properly assess/judge
another's contribution**

No respecter of persons. When Jesus washed the disciples' feet and gave the parable of the good Samaritan, He provided examples of how we should be no respecter of persons. From this attribute and the previous one of being just, grows the ideas of selfless-service, equality, fairness, and impartiality.

As Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, He taught them and us the importance of the leader being of service to those who are being led.

Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord . . . If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. (John 13:12-15)

Good leaders work hard to do what they can to provide for the needs of the people whom they serve. Church leaders spend countless hours of selfless-service for the people within their stewardship. Spencer W. Kimball recalled this quality in Jesus when he said,

The Savior's leadership was selfless. He put Himself and His own needs second and ministered to others beyond the call of duty, tirelessly, lovingly, effectively. So many of the problems in the world today spring from selfishness and self-centeredness in which too many make harsh demands of life and others in order to meet their demands. This is a direct reversal of the principles and practices pursued so perfectly by the perfect example of leadership, Jesus of Nazareth.¹

The people of Palestine in Jesus' time thought the people of Samaria to be of a lower class. Hence, the Samaritans were usually treated with contempt by the Jewish people. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, a man (although not stated, the implication is that the man was Jewish) was attacked, robbed, and left to die on the roadside. Two travelers, one a priest and the other a Levite, both of which were countrymen, came upon him but quickly passed by without providing assistance. Later, a Samaritan saw the man and had compassion on him. The Samaritan treated his wounds, took him to an inn, gave money to the innkeeper for his care, and instructed the innkeeper to look after the man. The Savior intentionally used a Samaritan as the person who had compassion to teach the concepts of equality, fairness, and impartiality. Good leaders have these qualities as a basis for how they treat their people. Without these qualities, leaders will lose the confidence of their people like the athletic coach who favors a player because of a friendship with the players' family. When this happens, the coach often subsequently loses credibility and respect with other players. Hugh Nibley, in his classic talk, *Leaders and Managers*, given at a commencement address at Brigham Young University in August 1983, said the following:

The leader, for example, has a passion for equality. We think of great generals from David and Alexander on down, sharing their beans or maza with their men, calling them by their first names, marching along with them in the heat, sleeping on the ground, and first over the wall. A famous ode by a long-suffering Greek soldier, Archilochus, reminds us that the men in the ranks are not fooled for an instant by the executive type who thinks he is a leader. For the manager, on the other hand, the idea of equality is repugnant and indeed counterproductive. Where promotion, perks, privilege, and power are the name of the game, awe and reverence for rank is everything, the inspiration and motivation of all good men. Where would management be without the inflexible paper processing, dress standards, attention to proper social, political, and religious affiliation, vigilant watch over habits and attitudes, and so forth, that gratify the stockholders and satisfy security?⁶

The seeking of items on Nibley's list of promotion, perks, privilege, and power (a fifth one can be added—possessions) causes leaders to treat people differently. The scriptures contain many examples of individuals, who in the pursuit of these worldly things, caused them to lose their

sense of fairness and impartiality. These include:

- Saul keeping back some of the animals and possessions with the excuse that he was going to offer them up as a sacrifice. This led to Samuel's comment that it was better to hearken than to sacrifice (See 1 Samuel 15:22).
- David, who after observing Bathsheba,
- Jared, made secret covenants with Satan as he attempted to win the heart of a lady.
- Amalickiah in his search for power committed murder

Nair writes of the necessity of freeing oneself from 'attachments'.⁴ Included in attachments, are the worldly pursuits mentioned above as well as relationships that might lead to these. When people try to use relationships to boost their own career, they feel obligated to reward their friends within those relationships. These 'attachments' frequently lead to problems for both parties, such as the illegal offering and receiving of bribes.

Merciful and gracious. The Savior demonstrated this quality throughout His ministry. For instance, when a group of rabbis and priests brought to Him a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery, He listened and then told the people that whoever was free of sin should cast the first stone which was the punishment for adultery. One by one, her accusers left the scene and then He told the woman to go and sin no more. (see

During His act of mercy to the woman taken in adultery, He proved the value of providing second chances thereby building self-confidence in others. Good leaders provide these chances when people are honestly seeking to change and improve.

Love. There are many examples of the Savior's infinite capacity to love. When He was told of Lazarus' death and became aware of Mary and Martha's sorrow, He wept. He knew He could bring Lazarus back to life but He wept because Mary and Martha were hurting (see Mark 8:2-3). His love was genuine and offered to all. He also demonstrated this attribute when He visited the Nephites after His death in Jerusalem. During His visit, He allowed each of the 2500 people in attendance to feel His wounds and the love that He had for them. He blessed and healed all those in need and added a special blessing to each of the little ones.

Among other things, an ability to love and to be merciful allows us to possess the leadership principles of: understanding the needs of others; having a commitment to help; and being positive in our interactions with others.

His actions when visiting the Nephites, pointed out the importance of paying special attention to every person for which leaders have responsibility and obtaining an understanding of the needs of all of their followers. Stephan and Pace wrote the following in their book, *The Perfect Leader*:

Jesus' personal influence and power with His followers came from His deep,

sympathetic understanding of their needs, and His constant and patient efforts to respond appropriately.⁷

In the business world, a leader through interviews, one-on-one talks, etc. learns the needs of the people in the organization and offers suggestions as to how each might be more productive and happy. Parents need to be personally involved with each of their children and give time to each child. Good leaders practice the art of good listening. In *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephan Covey discusses the need to “seek to understand before being understood.”⁸ This involves listening empathetically which is the ability to be able to listen with the heart as well as the mind. This allows a person to understand another’s feelings and to communicate that understanding to them.

By blessing each of the Nephites with their individual needs upon His visit to the American continent following His crucifixion, Jesus exemplified the desirable characteristic of a commitment to help his/her followers. An interesting example of this occurred when Peter and John were approaching the temple and passed by a man who had been lame from birth. When the man asked for alms, Peter said to him:

Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted [him] up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. (Acts 3:6-8)

It is important to note that Peter didn’t just give him a blessing but *lifted him up*. As leaders, we need to be ready and able to lift people, to help them with their shortcomings. This requires that leaders be standing on higher ground. Harold B. Lee said the following:

I read again and again the experience of Peter and John, as they went through the gate beautiful on the way to the temple. Here was one who had never walked, impotent from his birth, begging alms of all who approached the gate. And as Peter and John approached, he held out his hand expectantly, asking for alms. Peter, speaking for this pair of missionaries—church authorities—said, *Look on us*. And, of course, that heightened his expectation. Then Peter said, *Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. (Acts 3:4, 6)*

Now in my mind's eye I can picture this man and what was in his mind. "Doesn't this man know that I have never walked? He commands me to walk." But the biblical record doesn't end there. Peter just didn't content himself by commanding the man to walk, but he *took him by the right hand, and lifted him up. . . (Acts 3:7)*

Will you see that picture now of that noble soul, that chiefest of the apostles, perhaps with his arms around the shoulders of this man, and saying, "Now, my good man, have courage. I will take a few steps with you. Let's walk together, and I assure you that you can walk, because you have received a blessing by the power and authority that God has given us as men, his servants." Then the man leaped with joy.

You cannot lift another soul until you are standing on higher ground than he is. You

must be sure, if you would rescue the man, that you yourself are setting the example of what you would have him be. You cannot light a fire in another soul unless it is burning in your own soul. You teachers, the testimony that you bear, the spirit with which you teach and with which you lead, is one of the most important assets that you can have, as you help to strengthen those who need so much, wherein you have so much to give. Who of us, in whatever station we may have been in, have not needed strengthening?⁹

Too many people try to help others and lead others out of trouble without being on higher ground and soon find themselves pulled down instead of lifting the other person up.

The Savior was always positive in His interactions with others unless there was a need for rebuke as in the case of the money changers that were desecrating the temple. In the case of the rich, young man that came to Him to ask what he might do to obtain eternal life, the record says that the Savior looked upon the man and loving him gave him the instructions for which he had asked. Leaders need to be positive in their dealings with their people.

Summary. We are all leaders. As parents, church leaders, employers, friends, etc., we all have interactions with others in which there is the responsibility or the opportunity to help. Pursuing the characteristics and attributes that the members of the Godhead possess will help us in those times.

President Hinckley said the following in a devotional address at Brigham Young University:

I recently reread a statement given on this campus years ago by Charles H. Malik, then secretary general of the United Nations. He said:

“I respect all men, and it is from disrespect for none that I say there are no great leaders in the world today. In fact, greatness itself is laughed to scorn. You should not be great today--you should sink yourself into the herd, you should not be distinguished from the crowd, you should simply be one of the many. The commanding voice is lacking. The voice which speaks little, but which when it speaks, speaks with compelling moral authority--this kind of voice is not congenial to this age. The age flattens and levels down every distinction into drab uniformity. Respect for the high, the noble, the great, the rare, the specimen that appears once every hundred or every thousand years, is gone. Respect at all is gone! If you ask whom and what people do respect, the answer is literally nobody and nothing. This is simply an unrespecting age--it is the age of utter mediocrity. To become a leader today, even a mediocre leader, is a most uphill struggle. You are constantly and in every way and from every side pulled down. One wonders who of those living today will be remembered a thousand years from now--the way we remember with such profound respect Plato, and Aristotle, and Christ, and Paul, and Augustine, and Aquinas. If you believe in prayer, my friends, and I know you do, then pray that God sends great leaders, especially great leaders of the spirit.”¹⁰

It is in harmony with that profound statement that I wish to say a few words to you today. You are good. But it is not enough just to be good. You must be good for something. You must contribute good to the world. The world must be a better place for your presence. And the good that is in you must be spread to others.¹¹

The Lord has also spoke of the special responsibilities of His covenant people when He said:

Therefore, thus saith the Lord unto you, with whom the priesthood hath continued through the lineage of your fathers—For ye are lawful heirs, according to the flesh, and have been hid from the world with Christ in God—Therefore your life and the priesthood have remained, and must needs remain through you and your lineage until the restoration of all things spoken by the mouths of all the holy prophets since the world began. Therefore, blessed are ye if ye continue in my goodness, a light unto the Gentiles, and through this priesthood, a savior unto my people Israel. (D&C 86:8-11)

and

For of him unto whom much is given much is required; and he who sins against the greater light shall receive the greater condemnation. Ye call upon my name for revelations, and I give them unto you; and inasmuch as ye keep not my sayings, which I give unto you, ye become transgressors; and justice and judgment are the penalty which is affixed unto my law. Therefore, what I say unto one I say unto all. . . . (D&C 82:3-5)

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