STAND Firm in Covenant Keeping—The Sacrament

*WORTHILY PARTAKING OF THE SACRAMENT EACH WEEK RENEWS COVENANTS WHICH HELP US TO STAND FIRM AGAINST EVIL*

**INTRODUCTION**: At the Bartlesville, Oklahoma Stake Conference on December 4, 2016, **Elder Raymond Heyman** of the Seventy gave a specific message to the stake about the importance of the sacrament. In my notes, I wrote the following: “One of Satan’s lies is: I can be a good person and not partake of the sacrament. Every act of repentance is completed by an ordinance. Baptism follows [repenting and] accepting the gospel. We continue to sin, so we follow steps to repent and must also partake of the sacrament to renew our baptismal covenant. The presiding authority sets the example of repentance by partaking [of the sacrament] first. Do not miss sacrament meeting! The [spiritual] growth cycle is broken when we cut the sacrament out of our lives. The promise of the Holy Ghost is lost when we don’t partake of the sacrament.”

 Can we withSTAND the evils of our day and STAND firm in our covenants without the Holy Ghost?

Text of the Sacrament Prayers

D&C 20: 77,79: “O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them; that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.

 “O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this [water] to the souls of all those who drink of it, that they may do it in remembrance of the blood of thy Son, which was shed for them; that they may witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they do always remember him, that they may have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.”

WE PROMISE:

GOD PROMISES:

Ephesians 6: 11-13 “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to STAND against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withSTAND in the evil day, and having done all, to STAND.”

D&C 27:15-18 “Wherefore, lift up your hearts and rejoice, and gird up your loins and take upon you my *whole armor*, that ye may be able to withSTAND the evil day, having done all, that ye may be able to STAND. STAND, therefore, having your loins *girt* about with truth, having on the *breastplate* of righteousness, and your *feet* shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, which I have sent mine angels to commit unto you; Taking the *shield* of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; And take the *helmet* of salvation, and the *sword* of my Spirit, which I will pour out upon you, and my word which I reveal unto you…and be faithful until I come, and ye shall be caught up, that where I am ye shall be also.”

The Whole Armor of God

*How Does the Sacrament Help Us Put It On Each Week?*

 Armor What it Protects How the Holy Ghost and

 Renewing cov’ts protects us

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Helmet of Salvation |  |  |
| Breastplate of Righteousness |  |  |
| Loins Girt with Truth |  |  |
| Shield of Faith |  |  |
| Sword of the Spirit |  |  |
| Feet Shod with Preparation of the Gospel of Peace |  |  |

**CONCLUSION**: 1 Nephi 14:14—“And it came to pass that I, Nephi, 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.”

 I SUBMIT TO YOU THAT THIS FULL ARMOR OF GOD, THIS POWER THAT NEPHI SAW, IS THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY GHOST UPON THE COVENANT PEOPLE OF THE LORD, AS THEY CONTINUE TO RENEW AND KEEP THEIR BAPTISMAL AND ALL OTHER COVENANTS THEY HAVE MADE WITH THE LORD. MAY WE ALWAYS MAKE PARTAKING OF THE SACRAMENT OUR HOLIEST ACT EVERY SUNDAY.

THE LORD’S SERVANTS TEACH ABOUT THE SACRAMENT

 **Elder L. Tom Perry** taught, “The purpose of partaking of the sacrament is, of course, to renew the covenants we have made with the Lord. Elder Delbert L. Stapley instructed us in this when he said this about covenants: ‘By taking of the sacrament, we renew all covenants entered into with the Lord and pledge ourselves to take upon us the name of the Son, to always remember Him and keep His commandments.’ The sacrament is one of the most sacred ordinances in the Church.”  ***Conference Report, April 2006.***

**HELMET OF SALVATION**

 **President Brigham Young**, speaking of the sacrament, said, “Its observance is as necessary to our salvation as any other of the ordinances and commandments that have been instituted in order that … people may be sanctified” ***(Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1941], 171).***

 **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** taught in the Oct. 2008 conference, entitled “Sacrament Meeting and the Sacrament”:

 “The resurrected Lord emphasized the importance of the sacrament when He visited the American continent and instituted this ordinance among the faithful Nephites. ‘And this shall ye always do to those who repent and are baptized in my name; and ye shall do it in remembrance of my blood, which I have shed for you, that ye may witness unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you. ‘… And if ye shall always do these things blessed are ye, for ye are built upon my rock. ‘But whoso among you shall do more or less than these are not built upon my rock, but are built upon a sandy foundation; and when the rain descends, and the floods come, and the winds blow, and beat upon them, they shall fall’ (3 Nephi 18:11–13). How can we have the Spirit of the Lord to guide our choices so that we will remain “unspotted from the world” (D&C 59:9) and on the safe path through mortality? We need to qualify for the cleansing power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. We do this by keeping His commandment to come to Him with a broken heart and a contrite spirit and in that wonderful weekly meeting partake of the emblems of the sacrament.”

**BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

 **Elder Dale G. Renlund,** then of the First Quorum of Seventy, taught how to protect and maintain spiritually-changed hearts: “Enduring to the end can be challenging because the tendency of the natural man is to reject the spiritually changed heart and allow it to harden…They became casual in their worship and devotion to God, their hearts became hardened, and they thereby jeopardized their eternal salvation…

 To endure to the end, we need to be eager to please God and worship Him with fervor and passion. This means that we maintain faith in Jesus Christ by praying, studying the scriptures, partaking of the sacrament each week, and having the Holy Ghost as our constant companion. ***(October Conference, 2009)***

**LOINS GIRT WITH TRUTH**

 To have your “loins girt about with truth” ([Ephesians 6:14](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/nt/eph/6.14?lang=eng#13)) is to be clothed, wrapped, covered, and protected by truth, chastity, and virtue. *(New Testament Student Study Guide)*

 **Elder Harold B. Lee** taught, “We have the four parts of the body that … [are] the most vulnerable to the powers of darkness. The loins, typifying virtue, chastity. The heart typifying our conduct. Our feet, our goals or objectives in life and finally our head, our thoughts. … “We should have our loins girt about with truth. What is truth? Truth, the Lord said, was knowledge of things as they are, things as they were and things as they are to come. [[D&C 93:24](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/93.24?lang=eng#23).] ***(BYU Speeches of the Year, Nov. 1954)***

 **Elder Gary E. Stevenson** taught: “It is vital to our physical and spiritual safety that we keep the gift of the Holy Ghost…We should keep our thoughts, actions, and language virtuous…Stay close to the Spirit, and the Spirit will stay close to you. ***(April. conference, 2017)***

 **Elder Dallin H. Oaks** taught, “The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is a renewal of the covenants and blessings of baptism…In partaking of the bread, we witness that we are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ and always remember Him and keep His commandments. When we comply with this covenant, the Lord renews the cleansing effect of our baptism. We are made clean and can always have His Spirit to be with us.

 The administration of the sacrament and the renewal of covenants and cleansing that take place in the partaking of the sacrament are the most important acts in the Sabbath worship of Latter-day Saints. We do this in remembrance of the blood of the Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. He is at the center of our faith. He is our Savior and our Redeemer.” ***Special Witnesses of Christ, Ensign, April 2001***

**SHIELD OF FAITH**

 **Bishop Henry B. Eyring** of the Presiding Bishopric spoke in a BYU Fireside in 1989:

 “President Marion G. Romney taught it this way: “Receiving the Holy Ghost is the therapy which effects forgiveness and heals the sin-sick soul” (***Ensign, May 1974, p. 92).*** The Savior said it this way: “Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day” (3 Nephi 27:20)…

 “ Now that is a fact you can act on with confidence. You can invite the Holy Ghost’s companionship in your life…. And when he is your companion, you can have confidence that the Atonement is working in your life…you will feel the influence of the Holy Ghost helping you, and you will feel approval. And you will know that, for at least those minutes, the power of the Holy Ghost was with you. And you will know that some healing came into your soul, for the Spirit will not dwell in an unclean tabernacle. His influence cleanses.

 Not only is your feeling the influence of the Holy Ghost a sign that the Atonement, the cure for sin, is working in your life, but you will also know that a preventative against sin is working.

**SWORD OF MY SPIRIT**

 **Elder Dennis Neuenschwander** of the Presidency of the Seventy taught : “Worthy participation in sacred gospel ordinances changes our lives and brings blessings and power to us that we would otherwise not enjoy. The power of the Atonement itself is unlocked by sacred gospel ordinances that are performed under the keys of the priesthood.

 “One of the most beautiful yet most common of the gospel ordinances is that of the sacrament. We participate in it literally thousands of times throughout our lives. Yet because of its ever-present nature in our sacrament meetings, we can easily miss its supernal significance. Partaking worthily of the sacrament can bring a weekly endowment of divine power in our lives.

 “As we partake of the sacrament, we express our willingness to take the name of Christ upon us, to always remember Him, and to keep His commandments. For this, God extends His covenant that we will always have His Spirit to be with us. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter. As we come to the sacrament mourning for our sins, so may we also leave comforted and forgiven of our sins. Is it any wonder, then, that those who stay away from this sacred ordinance also estrange themselves from the covenant associated with it?

 “Sacred ordinances are ordained of God. They are essential to our salvation and exaltation. Through the sacred ordinances of the gospel, we learn of His kingdom and learn of Him, we enter into holy and eternal covenants, and we receive an endowment of divine power in our lives. All of these things bring us to Christ that we may be perfected in Him.” ***BYU Fireside Speech, reprinted in Ensign, Nov. 2001***

**FEET SHOD WITH PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE**

 Partaking of the sacrament puts us on the pathway to making further saving covenants. In April conference 2009, **Elder David A. Bednar** of the Quorum of the Twelve quoted: “Elder Dallin H. Oaks has explained that in renewing our baptismal covenants by partaking of the emblems of the sacrament, ‘we do not witness that we take upon us the name of Jesus Christ. [Rather], we witness that we are willing to do so. (See [D&C 20:77](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/20.77?lang=eng#76).) The fact that we only witness to our willingness suggests that something else must happen before we actually take that sacred name upon us in the [ultimate and] most important sense’ ***( Ensign, May 1985, 81****).* The baptismal covenant clearly contemplates a future event or events and looks forward to the temple.

 “…The process of taking upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ that is commenced in the waters of baptism is continued and enlarged in the house of the Lord. As we stand in the waters of baptism, we look to the temple. As we partake of the sacrament, we look to the temple. We pledge to always remember the Savior and to keep His commandments as preparation to participate in the sacred ordinances of the temple and receive the highest blessings available through the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, in the ordinances of the holy temple we more completely and fully take upon us the name of Jesus Christ.”