

12 February 2023

The Power of Covenants

Dear Sisters and Elders:

In the Bible Dictionary we read this about covenants.

*“Sometimes denotes an agreement between persons (1 Samuel 23:18) or nations (1 Samuel 11:1); more often between God and man; but **in this latter case** it is important to notice that the two parties to the agreement do not stand in the relation of independent and equal contractors. **God in His good pleasure fixes the terms, which man accepts**. The same word is sometimes rendered ‘testament’.*

In the April 2009 General Conference, Elder Christopherson clarifies God’s role in these covenants. *“In these divine agreements, God binds Himself to sustain, sanctify, and exalt us in return for our commitment to serve Him and keep His commandments.”*

He then goes on to state the 3 ways that covenants strengthen us:

- 1) Blessings flow to us as we obey the commandments
- 2) Covenants supply the strength to produce the faith necessary to do all that the Lord asks us to do
- 3) There is a bestowal of divine power of godliness that flows into our lives

Elder Christopherson went on to say *“...as we participate in ordinances, the actions we take demonstrate to God that we are prepared to accept additional responsibility that comes with additional light and spiritual power.”*

Today I want to elaborate about how covenants strengthen us based on these three ways mentioned by Elder Christopherson.

First, there are always blessings that flow to us as we obey the commandments and the covenants we make are always attached to commandments. For example, the baptismal covenant binds us to take upon ourselves the name of Christ. The Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood binds us to obtain and then magnify both the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood. Our temple covenants bind us to obey the laws of Obedience, Sacrifice, the Gospel, Chastity, and Consecration. Can you see how keeping these commandments will always bring the flow of blessings into our lives? Such is the case with every commandment given us of God.

Second, covenants supply strength to produce the faith needed to place our will upon the altar. How does this work? Sister Jean Bingham, former General President of the Relief Society stated, *“In keeping our covenants, we have the opportunity to receive revelation about our lives, about our families, jobs, school – everything for which we seek guidance.”* (January 2021 YSA weekly). As we receive and then follow through with revelation received, our faith grows stronger. The more experience we have with personal revelation, the more

we desire to additional experiences with God. This leads us to grow our trust in Jesus Christ until we are willing and able to place our wills completely on the altar. Elder Bednar said, *"We take the Savior's yoke upon us as we learn about, worthily receive, and honor sacred covenants and ordinances. ... And that bond with Him is the source of spiritual strength in every season of our lives."* (October 2021 General Conference). Each time we feel of the Savior's strength and power in our own lives, our faith increases, and our desire to be like Him grows.

Third, when we make and keep covenants, there comes into our lives divine power. Elder Richard G. Scott said that the Power of God is the *"power to do more than we can do by ourselves."* (April 2013 General Conference "For Peace at Home") Perhaps you feel this power now in your call as a missionary. I know we do. In our recent zone conferences, Sister Kunz referred to 1 Nephi 14:14 in her discussion about righteousness. This scripture takes on new meaning as we contemplate the divine power that comes to us through our covenants. *"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."* Armed with this righteousness and covenant power, we can simply do more. It shows in our professions, our church responsibilities, and our families. In his travels around the world, Elder Bednar testifies of this power as he has seen it in countless Latter-day Saint lives, *"I have witnessed faith, courage, perspective, persistence, and joy that extend far beyond mortal capacity – and that only God could provide."* (Bednar, October 2021 General Conference. "With the Power of God in Great Glory")

Let me recap. Covenants strengthen us through blessings from keeping commandments, an increase in our faith sufficient to completely submit ourselves to God, and a bestowal of divine power upon us that enables us to do things we otherwise could not do. These are powerful promises and powerful blessings. May we claim them. May we know, review, remember, and keep the covenants we have made.

Hurrah for Israel!

Love,
President Kunz