

# The Next Hard Thing

7 April 2024

Dear Sisters and Elders,

What an amazing weekend of General Conference! I hope you will make sure to watch or listen to each of the 5 sessions. The repeated focus on covenants and especially temple covenants, cannot be ignored. To be more faithful covenant keeping disciples, our greatest need is to increase our faith in Jesus Christ, the focus of this week's letter.

Some time ago, I was speaking with a friend about what things we might do to help the missionaries increase their faith in Jesus Christ. It was his very first statement that unlocked an important principle for me. He said, *"Every missionary has the next hard thing that they need to do to grow their faith in Jesus Christ."* The more we talked about what he meant by that statement, the more the Spirit enlightened my mind.

Consider the story of Moses and the children of Israel. As they were leaving Egypt, they were pursued by Pharaoh and his great army. Exodus 14:10 tells us how the Israelites felt about their impending doom, *"And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord."* In verses 13-14, we read Moses' response to the people, *"And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."*

And yet the people were still unsure. Every step that they took forward was a step of faith. It was also true for Moses. Did he have enough faith to stretch forth his hands and part the Red Sea? If the sea didn't part, they would all die at the hands of the Egyptians. As they drew closer to the water, Moses realized, as Sister Holland says *"[faith isn't really faith if you have anything else to hold on to](#)"* and at this point there was nothing else to hold onto, so he *"...stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left."* (see Exodus 14:21-22)

So, my question to each of you today is what is the next hard thing you need to do to grow your faith in Jesus Christ? For Nephi, it may have been the slaying of Laban, and then building the ship, and then departing out of the land of Nephi after Lehi died. For King Benjamin, it may have been getting on that tower for two days and speaking so candidly to the people despite his ailments of age. For Alma the elder, it may have been defying King Noah and gathering believers at the Waters of Mormon. For the Sons of Mosiah, it may have been leaving on a mission to the Lamanites after their conversion. For Helaman, it may have been leading the

2000 stripling warriors, knowing they had never fought in a battle. For Mormon, it may have been the task of abridging all the records onto the gold plates. For Moroni, it may have been finishing the record and burying it in the ground while being hunted by the Lamanites. The examples are endless!

We have been focusing a lot of effort on the Topical Guide scriptures on Christ. I am grateful for all of you who are studying these scriptures and coming to District Council prepared with a memorized scripture and an inspired question. Could it be for some that focusing more on these scriptures each week is the next hard thing you need to do? Could it be a challenge for you to focus on having powerful personal study every day? Could it be that you are struggling to proselyte for 9 hours on the Sabbath or from 4 pm to 7 pm on Mondays? Could you be struggling to do your daily planning promptly after District Council on Tuesday and then immediately going to work? Could you be struggling to wear your missionary attire on Preparation Day when you go to the market? Is your monthly, weekly, and daily planning inspired or is it mundane and repetitive? Is your companionship study regular and motivating? Are you consistently praying for 10 minutes? Are there points of obedience among the 17 that are not important to you? Is the Savior the one you look to for vertical approval or is the phone and social media your horizontal approval master? Is there a “favorite” sin that is holding you back? Are you struggling to decide to place your will on the altar?

**What is your next step towards your own “Red Sea”, knowing there is nothing else to hold onto except faith in Jesus Christ?**

To progress in the gospel and move along the covenant path, we must have ever increasing faith in Christ. To navigate the challenges of the coming days, we will need to grow our trust in the Savior and understand how to receive personal revelation. Both require increased faith in Christ. Are you ready? Whether you are progressing on the path or feeling stalled and standing in stagnant water with little left to give, I invite you to take a step forward towards your own “Red Sea” experience. This means trusting that Jesus Christ will indeed make a way for you to cross. As you move forward in faith, the light will also move forward, just like the headlamps on a car on a dark country road. My promise is that your increasing faith in Jesus Christ will be answered by miracles, both individually, as companionships, and as an entire mission. May we all join together in our quest to increase our faith in the Savior and open the windows of heaven for ourselves, for the members of the Church in our mission, and most importantly, for the elect of scattered Israel we are gathering into the safety of gospel covenants.

All My Love,

President Kunz