

WHY PREPARE?

By Marti Grobecker a Food Storage Specialist on 1/17/2008

Some think preparedness as either overwhelming or boring but it is neither. It is actually a spiritual journey. You may be asking how in the world can anyone have spiritual experiences relating to food storage. I am here to tell you that I have never had as many spiritual experiences as I have had over the last year and it all has to do with preparedness. I KNOW I was led by the hand of God and what I have learned has changed my life. I would like to share a personal experience because I know you can have similar experiences. Keep in mind that the first law of heaven is obedience --- that is an all-encompassing commandment that brings forth so many blessings.

There is also the Law of Mercy and the Law of Justice that the Lord Governs by. If we are disobedient we repent and Mercy (or Christ) claims us. If we are disobedient and do not repent, then Justice claims us. **As Pres. Benson said: “When obedience ceases too be an irritant and becomes our quest, in that moment God will endow us with power.”**¹

Almost two years ago I was going through an exceptionally challenging time and I received a blessing. In that blessing Lord told me he would put people in my path who would help me. At that time I had no idea the people he would be placing in my life would be preparedness people. These people are not your doom and gloom type of people ... they come from all walks of life – scholars, professors, engineers, contractors, doctors, lawyers, farmers, ranchers, military leaders, you name it, I’ve met them. I’m telling you this to dispel the idea that preparedness people are survivalists or some type of looney people. The ones I have met are highly educated, intelligent and humble. Anyway, I was given an article to read that awakened my senses and for two weeks I could hardly sleep. I wanted to be obedient, I believed it was important, but how in the world could I afford a year supply? How could I be obedient to this command when I struggle financially? I finally went to the Lord and asked and pleaded. Shortly thereafter he awakened me in the middle of the night and told me exactly what to do ... and he has done this several times since. Never before have I awakened in the middle of the night with the words in my mind telling me what to do when I had asked for answers. When I did as I was told He gave me further instructions – this is the principle of seeking for further light and knowledge, combined with obedience. So this is a clue for you ... you ask, you receive, you obey and then more revelation comes. But there were also times the Lord was silent and those are the times I had to come to an understanding of how important repenting is on a daily basis.

About 4 months ago I was called to be in preparedness at the ward level ... but before I was actually sustained I went again to the Lord and asked Him how I could motivate my ward members. He very softly but strongly said testify. I thought – they are not going to want to hear why I’m into preparedness, and I heard – no testify of the Christ. And I thought – I can do that so I started reciting the different titles of Christ – Jehovah, the Savior, The Good Shepherd, the Redeemer, the Word, The Great I Am, the Lawgiver and by the time I got to the Messiah, the Anointed One, tears were streaming down my cheeks and then I had what I call a remembrance. It wasn’t a vision, but more like remembering when we were in the Great Council and witnessed our Father in Heaven place his hands on the head of Christ, anointing him to be the Savior of all mankind ... and then I knew exactly what I was to testify of. Bros. And Sisters, the church is preparing to receive our King for His Millennial Reign. The earth is preparing to receive her creator. I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that he is coming ... that before he comes the world will experience more trials and tribulations than ever before – it is

prophesied, it is in the scriptures and the Brethren have been warning us very strongly lately. In order for Our King, Our Master to come there will be many calamities that we need to go through in order to refine us and make us a Zion people. We are not a Zion people ... he will refine us and test us. He wants each of us there to greet Him but if we aren’t obedient we may not survive the coming events. We cannot rely upon the Church or our neighbors to save us. Christ will save us through our obedience and part of that obedience is having our food storage.

Paraphrasing Vaughn J. Featherstone “Before the Savior comes the world will darken. Then will come a period of time where even the elect will lose hope if they do not come to the temples. ... Our garments worn as instructed will clothe us in a manner as protective as temple walls. The covenants and ordinances will fill us with faith as a living fire. In a day of desolating sickness, scorched earth, barren wastes, sickening plagues, disease, destruction, and death, we as a people will rest in the shade of trees, we will drink from the cooling fountains. We will abide in places of refuge from the storm.... They will bathe His feet with tears and He will weep and bless them for having suffered through the greatest trials ever known to man. His bowels will be filled with compassion and His heart will swell wide as eternity and He will love them. He will bring peace that will last a thousand years and they will receive their reward with Him.”²

I pose this question, are you prepared to take care of yourself and your family? Is it a priority for you to be obedient to the commandment to have food storage? Pres. Kimball made it very clear that food storage is a commandment³. In his book, The Miracle of Forgiveness he stated: Do we lose faith, do we lose patience, do we lose hope, do we get weary in waiting, because the day is long and the event delayed? It is difficult to be prepared for an event so long delayed. Many have found it too difficult and they slumber without due preparation. Hundreds of thousands of us today are in this position. Confidence has been dulled and patience worn thin. It is so hard to wait and be prepared always. **BUT WE CANNOT ALLOW OURSELVES TO SLUMBER**”. (emphasis added)

Pres Kimball continues ... “I believe that the Ten Virgins represent the people of the Church of Jesus Christ and not the rank and file of the world. All of the virgins, wise and foolish, had accepted the invitation to the wedding supper; they had knowledge of the program and had been warned of the important day to come. They were not the gentiles or the heathens or the pagans, nor were they necessarily corrupt and reprobate, but they were knowing people who were foolishly unprepared for the vital happenings that were to affect their eternal lives. They had the saving, exalting gospel, but it had not been made the center of their lives. They knew the way but gave only a small measure of loyalty and devotion. I ask you: What value is a car without an engine, a cup without water, a table without food, a lamp without oil? The foolish asked the others to share their oil, but spiritual and temporal preparedness cannot be shared in an instant. The wise had to go, else the bridegroom would have gone unwelcomed. They needed all their oil for themselves; they could not save the foolish. The responsibility was each for himself. **THIS WAS NOT SELFISHNESS OR UNKINDNESS**”. (emphasis added)

Pres. Kimball further states “The foolish virgins were not averse to buying oil. They knew they should have oil. They merely procrastinated, not knowing when the bridegroom would come. The day of the marriage feast approaches. The coming of the Lord is nigh. And there are many among us who are not ready for the great and glorious event.”⁴

Many in the church believe that those who have stored a year supply will share with those who have not. Though that is a nice thought, this is what Pres. Packer said to dispel that notion: "When people are able but unwilling to take care of themselves we are

responsible to employ the dictum of the Lord that the idler shall not eat the bread of the laborer.”⁵ In other words, do not expect your neighbor to feed you. For if he has obeyed the counsel to store up for his family, and you have had the resources to but instead procrastinated, which one of his children should he let starve in order to feed you? If it is not a priority for you to save yourself and your family, why should another family have to take on that responsibility? The Law of Mercy and Justice also apply to food storage ... Some confuse the commandments of sharing and taking care of the poor and needy with sharing their food with the rebellious. There is a huge difference in sharing with the poor and needy and sharing with the rebellious - those who could afford to get their food storage, but don't because other things, buying big screens, vacations, the latest fashions, take precedence over obeying the commandment to store food.

If you are spiritually prepared you will be temporally prepared. You cannot obtain a testimony of tithing unless you pay tithing, you cannot obtain a testimony of prayer unless you pray. The same holds true for food storage. It's the doing that brings forth the blessings of heaven and the testimony.

Now let's look at what our current prophet has said recently. Paraphrasing Pres.

Hinckley, he said:

“I wish to speak to you about temporal matters. As a backdrop for what I wish to say, I read to you a few verses from the 41st chapter of Genesis. Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, dreamed dreams which greatly troubled him. . . . ‘And I saw in my dream . . . seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good: And, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them: . . . (Joseph’s interpretation) Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: And there shall arise after them seven years of famine. . . And god will shortly bring it to pass.’ (Gen. 41:20, 26, 30, 32). **Now, brethren, I want to make it very clear that I am not prophesying, that I am not predicting years of famine in the future. But I am suggesting that the time has come to get our houses in order. There is a portent of stormy weather ahead to which we had better give heed...That’s all I have to say about it, but I wish to say it with all the emphasis of which I am capable.** (Emphasis added)”⁶

I want to point out two things. First of all Pres. Hinckley said he was not prophesying but said it was time to get our houses in order. He emphasized that a portent storm was coming. What does portent mean – it means something momentous or calamitous is about to occur – an evil omen, prophetic or threatening significance. And then 9-11 happened. It is noteworthy that in the Oct. General Conference following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack, Pres. Hinckley quoted D&C 112:24. “Behold vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth, a day of wrath, a day of burning, a day of desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth saith the Lord. And upon my house shall it begin and from my house shall it go forth, saith the Lord. First among those among you, saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me, and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house, saith the Lord.”⁷

And then President Hinckley again references Pharaoh’s dream...“I do not know what the future holds. I do not wish to sound negative, but I wish to remind you of the warnings of scripture and the teachings of the prophets which we have had constantly before us. I cannot forget the great lesson of Pharaoh's dream of the fat and lean kine and of the full and withered stalks of corn. I cannot dismiss from my mind the grim warnings of the Lord as set forth in the 24th chapter of Matthew. I am familiar, as are you, with the declarations of modern revelation that the time will come when the earth will be cleansed and there will be indescribable distress, with weeping and mourning and lamentation (see D&C 112:24).”⁸

Now exactly 7 years from the date that President Hinckley first gave his 7 years of plenty talk, he again mentioned the dream of Pharaoh in October 2005. “Let us never lose sight of the dream of Pharaoh concerning the fat cattle and the lean, the full ears of corn and the blasted ears, the meaning of which was interpreted by Joseph to indicate years of plenty and years of scarcity.”⁹

Here we have 3 reminders from our prophet of the biblical famine. Pres. Hinckley mentions it in 1998, 2001 and 2005. Of particular note, in his 2001 talk Pres. Hinckley did NOT say, “...I want to make it very clear that I am not prophesying,....” Though Pres. Hinckley thought it important enough to mention that it wasn't a prophecy in 1998, he did NOT say that in 2001. Could this have been an inspired warning that a seven year clock was officially starting in 2001? In any event, I testify that these 3 reminders were warnings for us and we better give heed.

In April 2004 General Conference Elder Dallin H. Oaks said: “Four matters are indisputable to Latter-day Saints: (1) The Savior will return to the earth in power and great glory to reign personally during a millennium of righteousness and peace. (2) At the time of His coming there will be a destruction of the wicked and a resurrection of the righteous. (3) No one knows the time of His coming, but (4) the faithful are taught to study the signs of it and to be prepared for it.”¹⁰ He goes on to say “We are living in the prophesied time when peace shall be taken from the earth (D&C 1:35), when all things shall be in commotion and men’s hearts shall fail them (D&C 88:91). These signs of the Second Coming are all around us and seem to be increasing in frequency and intensity....the accelerating pattern of natural disasters in the last few decades is ominous. While we are powerless to alter the fact of the Second Coming and unable to know its exact time, we can accelerate our own preparation and try to influence the preparation of those around us. Are we preparing? We need to make both temporal and spiritual preparation for the events prophesied at the time of the Second Coming.”¹¹ Elder Eyring in 2005 said “The giant earthquake, and the tsunamis it sent crashing into the coasts around the Indian Ocean, is just the beginning and a part of what is to come, terrible as it was. You remember the words from the Doctrine and Covenants which now seems so accurate: (Doctrine and Covenants 88: 88-91) As the challenges around us increase, we must commit to do more to qualify for the companionship of the Holy Ghost. Casual prayer won't be enough. Reading a few verses of the scripture won't be enough. Doing the minimum of what the Lord asks of us won't be enough. Hoping that we will have the Atonement work in our lives and that we will perhaps sometimes feel the influence of the Holy Ghost won't be enough. And one great burst of effort won't be enough.”¹²

Now I want to turn to the story of Noah. Remember Noah preached repentance for hundreds of years while he was building the ark. It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark. The world was beautiful, the sun was shining, life seemed “normal”. It is important to note that the people who didn't get on the ark suffered and died by the very calamity that for 300 years had been prophesied would come. Noah pleaded with the people to repent of their disobedience so that Mercy would claim them instead of Justice. All they had to do was repent and begin being obedient. This is a story for our time ... The ramifications of disobedience may be the same as in Noah's time. It's our human nature that we think terrible things will not happen to us, but if you believe in the scriptures and our prophet it is undeniable that calamities are here and they are beginning to touch our lives and they will increase.

Pres. Benson said “The revelation to produce and store food may be as essential to our temporal welfare today as boarding the ark was to the people in the days of Noah.”¹³ Can you imagine how hard it must have been for Noah, his wife and sons and their wives

to listen to the wailing and pounding on the ark as the rains fell. I'm sure when the rains began falling the people began repenting, but it was too late at that point. They had been warned and forewarned to repent of their disobedience so that mercy could claim them but now justice had to be employed. Noah had daughters that married wicked men and I cannot imagine how his heart must have ached when the doors were shut, the rains came and the wailings began. How hard it must have been for Noah not to extend mercy to his daughters. But he could not, the Lord would not allow him to because even the Lord is governed by the Law of Mercy and the Law of Justice. Did the Lord put Noah and his sons' families at risk by opening the ark for the disobedient who were suddenly repenting? No. If a terrible disaster happens and we do not have services for weeks, maybe months, would the disobedient be putting the obedient at risk of starving. Obedience brothers and sisters is so very important.

There is a law irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world upon which all blessings are predicated. And when we obtain any blessing from God it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated. (D&C 130:20-21) Those who are disobedient to the law receive the consequences of their disobedience or rebellious actions. I for one do not want to listen to the cries of my children because I had been disobedient and did not have food for them to eat.

Every prophet over the last 60 years has talked about having the Church members get a bare minimum of at least one year's supply of basic food items, and now has suggested 3 months. **Does that mean they have rescinded the one year of food storage?** No. The three months of food we normally eat was specifically instituted to prepare the Saints in the event of a major pandemic. It also serves as a spring-board for the years storage. Once again, it was a divine program called All Safely Gathered In.

Presiding Bishop David H. Burton said "Keep your eye on the Prophet. Being self-reliant has always been part of the church. Statistics show that no matter what the Church does, no higher than 15% have storage. We are not going to say any more, but our people are going to need to be prepared. For example, what if somebody released a virus? What if it caused a pandemic? What if that led to a quarantine? What if the quarantine was enforced? The office of the presiding bishopric has tried to come up with a plan, but we don't know what we could do. The responsibility lies with the head of each family."¹⁴ It's hard to understand why or how so many good and wonderful people can discount what the prophets have said again and again and again concerning what will suddenly happen to the world in the near future. Are we listening to their voices of warning, to their plea for our repentance?

Brothers and sisters, I promise you that if you begin making preparations and begin your food storage, that the Lord will draw close to you because you are demonstrating that you are drawing close to Him. You will not only be secure in knowing that you are able to feed your family, but you will have spiritual experiences, and you will have a deeper love for Him and for your family.

Preparedness is like a treasure hunt, a beautiful and wonderful path of seeking and receiving further light and knowledge. We as a Stake want you to be prepared, but you must first take the step of asking God to give you a witness as to the importance of being obedient to the command of having food storage and then ask Him to help you in this endeavor. When you receive that witness then you are not left alone.

Let me quote once again Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone as if he were talking to you directly: (We) will bathe His feet with (our) tears and He will weep and bless (us) for having suffered through the greatest trials ever known to man. His bowels will be filled with compassion and His heart will swell wide as eternity and He will love (us). He will bring peace that will last a thousand years and (we) will receive (our) reward with Him.

Elder Featherstone continues: I bear my humble witness to you that the great God of heaven will open doors and means in a way we never would have supposed, to help all those who truly want a years supply" All we have to do is to decide, commit to it, and then keep the commitment. Miracles will take place.

I leave you with my witness that I know Jesus is the Christ. I know that he is the Redeemer of all mankind, that our King and Master will reign supreme. I hope that I am worthy to be here when he comes, so that I can be among those who fulfill the prophesy that "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is the Christ". May we all have that witness. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

References and Suggested Reading:

- 1 <http://speeches.byu.edu/reader/reader.php?id=444> Achieving Your Full Potential by DONALD L. STAHELI Quoting President Ezra Taft Benson and "Obedience - Life's Great Challenge", April Conference, 1998 . Donald L. Staheli was a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this fireside address was given at Brigham Young University on 2 March 2003. Also Ensign May, 1998.
- 2 Vaughn J. Featherston "Prophecy About Temples" – Temple Statement for Utah South April 1987 (given in Solemn Assembly in Manti Temple 7:00 am Sunday)
- 3 Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, pg. 174
- 4 Pres. Kimball "Miracle of Forgiveness", page no. _____
- 5 Elder Boyd K. Packer "Solving Emotional Problems In the Lord's Own Way", Ensign May 1978
- 6 President Hinckley, Priesthood Session October Conference 1998 "To the Boys and Men"
- 7 President Hinckley, October Conference, 2001, "The Times in Which We Live"
- 8 President Hinckley, October Conference, 2001, "The Times in Which We Live"
- 9 President Hinckley, October Conference, 2005, "If Ye Are Prepared Ye Shall Not Fear"
- 10 Elder Dallin H. Oaks, April Conference, 2004, "Preparation for the Second Coming"
- 11 Elder Dallin H. Oaks, April Conference, 2004, "Preparation for the Second Coming"
- 12 Elder Eyring, "Raise the Bar", Brigham Young University–Idaho Devotional, January 25, 2005
- 13 President Benson, Ensign, November, 1987, pg. 49 and President Monson Quoting President Benson in General Conference, October, 1980
- 14 Sept. 1, 2006 South Jordan Leadership Meeting (official record does not exist – this comes from someone who attended the meeting)

P.S. I gave the above talk in sacrament meeting on January 13, 2007 as Stake Food Storage Specialist. Please feel free to share with as many people as you would like. I would suggest that you read the complete articles I have quoted from in order to receive your own tutoring from the spirit. I would invite you to seek confirmation from the spirit as to the importance of being prepared in all things. Ask, Receive and Obey and the Lord will bless your life with further light and knowledge and protection.

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