

Nourish the Roots, and the Branches Will Grow

By Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Faafailele A'a, ona Ola ai lea o Lala

Saunia e Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf
O Le Korama a Aposetolo e Toasefululua

October 2024 general conference

The branches of your testimony will draw strength from your deepening faith in Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son.

O le a utu mai e lala o lau molimau le malosiaga mai lou faatuatua ua faalolotoina i le Tama Faalelagi ma Lona Alo Pele.

An Old Chapel in Zwickau

The year 2024 is something of a milestone year for me. It marks 75 years since I was baptized and confirmed a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Zwickau, Germany.

My membership in the Church of Jesus Christ is precious to me. To be counted among God's covenant people, with you, my brothers and sisters, is one of the greatest honors of my life.

When I think about my personal journey of discipleship, my mind often goes back to an old villa in Zwickau, where I have cherished memories of attending sacrament meetings of the Church of Jesus Christ as a child. It is there where the seedling of my testimony received its earliest nourishing.

This chapel had an old air-driven organ. Every Sunday a young man was assigned to push up and down the sturdy lever operating the bellows to make the organ work. I sometimes had the great privilege of assisting in this important task.

While the congregation sang our beloved hymns, I pumped with all my strength so the organ would not run out of wind. From the bellows operator seat, I had a great view of some stunning stained-glass windows, one depicting the Savior Jesus Christ and another portraying Joseph Smith in the Sacred Grove.

O Se Falesa Tuai i Zwickau

O le tausaga 2024 o se mea pei o se tausaga faasolopito mo a'u. Ua faailoga ai le 75 tausaga talu ona papatisoina ma faamauina a'u o se tagata o Le Ekalesia a Iesu Keriso o le Au Paia o Aso e Gata Ai i Zwickau, Siamani.

O lo'u ave'a ma tagata o Le Ekalesia a Iesu Keriso o le Au Paia o Aso e Gata Ai e pele ia te a'u. O le faitauina faatasi ma le nuu o le feagaiga a le Atua, faatasi ma outou, o'u uso ma tuafafine, o se tasi o faamamaluga aupito silisili o lo'u olaga.

Pe a ou mafaufau i la'u faigamalaga patino o le ave'a ma soo, e tele ina faafoi lo'u mafaufau i tua i se tama'i fale tuai i Zwickau, lea ou te faamemelo ai i manatuaga o le auai i sauniga faamanatuga a le Ekalesia a Iesu Keriso o se tamaitiiti. O iina le mea sa uluai faafailele ai le fatu o la'u molimau.

O le falelotu lea sa i ai se okeni pamu tuai lava. O Aso Sa uma lava e tofi ai se alii talavou na te tuleiina i luga ma lalo le vae e pamu ai le ea e ola ai le okeni. O nisi taimi sa ou maua ai lea avanoa silisili e lagolago ai i lena galuega taua.

A o usuina e le aofia a matou viiga faapelepele, ou te pamuina ma lo'u malosi atoa ina ia 'a'ua lava ne'i leai se ea i le okeni. Mai le nofoa sa faagaoioia ai pamu nei, sa maua ai sa'u vaaiga manaia o nisi o faamalama tioata felanulanua'i mata'ina, o le tasi sa faaalua ai le Faaola o Iesu Keriso, ae o le isi o le ata o Iosefa Samita i le Vao Paia.

I can still remember the sacred feelings I had as I looked at those sunlit windows while listening to the testimonies of the Saints and singing the hymns of Zion.

In that holy place, the Spirit of God bore witness to my mind and heart that it was true: Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. This is His Church. The Prophet Joseph Smith saw God the Father and Jesus Christ and heard Their voices.

Earlier this year, while on assignment in Europe, I had the opportunity to return to Zwickau. Sadly, that beloved old chapel isn't there anymore. It was torn down many years ago to make room for a large apartment building.

What Is Eternal, and What Is Not?

I admit that it's sad to know that this beloved building from my childhood is now just a memory. It was a sacred building to me. But it was just a building.

By contrast, the spiritual witness I gained from the Holy Ghost those many years ago has not passed away. In fact, it has grown stronger. The things I learned in my youth about the fundamental principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ have been my firm foundation throughout my life. The covenant connection I forged with my Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son has stayed with me—long after the Zwickau chapel was dismantled and the stained-glass windows were lost.

“Heaven and earth shall pass away,” Jesus said, “but my words shall not pass away.”

“The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord.”

One of the most important things we can learn in this life is the difference between what is eternal and what is not. Once we understand that, everything changes—our relationships, the choices we make, the way we treat people.

Knowing what is eternal and what is not is key to growing a testimony of Jesus Christ and His Church.

Don't Mistake the Branches for the Roots

Ou te manatua pea lagona paia sa ou maua a o ou vaavaai atu i na faamalama o suluia i le la a o ou faalogologo atu i molimau a le Au Paia ma vivii i viiga o Siona.

I lena nofoaga paia, na molimau mai ai le Agaga o le Atua i lo'u mafaufau ma le loto e moni lava: o Iesu Keriso o le Faaola o le lalolagi. O Lana Ekalesia lenei. Sa vaaitino le Perofeta o Iosefa Samita i le Atua le Tama ma Iesu Keriso ma na faalogologo atu i o La'ua si'ufofoga.

I le amataga o lenei tausaga, a o ou i ai i se tofiga i Europa, sa ou maua ai le avanoa e tofoi atu ai i Zwickau. O le mea e faanoanoa ai, o lena falesa tuai ua le toe i ai iina. Sa talepeina i lalo i le tele o tausaga talu ai ina ia faaavanoa e fau ai se fale mautotogi tele.

O Le A le Mea e Faavavau, ae O Le A le Mea e Le Faavavau?

Ou te tautino atu ou te faanoanoa lava i le iloaina o lenei fale faapelepele mai lo'u tamaitiiti ua na o se manatuaga nei. Sa avea o se fale paia ia te a'u. Ae sa na'o se fale.

I se faatusatusaga, o le molimau faaleagaga na ou maua mai le Agaga Paia i na mau tausaga e le i mavae ese atu lava. O le mea moni, ua tupu a'e ma le malosi atili. O mea na ou aoaoina i lo'u talavou e uiga i mataupu faavae autu o le talalelei a Iesu Keriso ua avea pea ma o'u faavae mautu i lo'u olaga atoa. O le sootaga faalefeagaiga na ou faia ma lo'u Tama Faalelagi ma Lona Alo Pele ua tumau pea ia te a'u—tusa lava pe ua malepe i lalo le falesa o Zwickau ma ua le o toe i ai foi faamalamatiao felanulanua'i.

“E mavae atu le lagi ma le lalolagi,” na fetalai ai Iesu, “ae le mavae atu lava la'u upu.”

“Ona o le a o ese mauga, ma sii ese mautua, ae o le a le alu ese lava lo'u agalelei mai ia te oe, pe o le a aveesea foi le feagaiga o lo'u filemu, ua fetalai mai ai le Alii.”

O se tasi o mea sili ona taua e mafai ona tatou aoaoina i lenei olaga, o le eseesea lea i le va o le mea e faavavau ma le mea e le faavavau. A tatou malamalama loa i le mea lena, e suia mea uma—a tatou mafutaga, o filifiliga tatou te faia, o le auala tatou te taulima ai tagata.

O le iloaina o le mea e faavavau ma le mea e le faavavau o le ki lea i le tuputupu a'e o se moli-mau ia Iesu Keriso ma Lana Ekalesia.

Aua Ne'i Aveseseina Lala mo A'a

The restored gospel of Jesus Christ, as the Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “embrace[s] all, and every item of truth.” But that doesn’t mean that all truth is of equal value. Some truths are core, essential, at the root of our faith. Others are appendages or branches—valuable, but only when they are connected to the fundamentals.

The Prophet Joseph also said, “The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.”

In other words, Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice are the root of our testimony. All other things are branches.

This is not to say that the branches are unimportant. A tree needs branches. But as the Savior told His disciples, “The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine.” Without a connection to the Savior, to the nourishment found in the roots, a branch withers and dies.

When it comes to nourishing our testimonies of Jesus Christ, I wonder if we sometimes mistake the branches for the roots. This was the mistake Jesus observed in the Pharisees of His day. They paid so much attention to the relatively minor details of the law that they ended up neglecting what the Savior called “the weightier matters”—fundamental principles like “justice and mercy and faith.”

If you want to nourish a tree, you don’t splash water on the branches. You water the roots. Similarly, if you want the branches of your testimony to grow and bear fruit, nourish the roots. If you are uncertain about a particular doctrine or practice or element of Church history, seek clarity with faith in Jesus Christ. Seek to understand His sacrifice for you, His love for you, His will for you. Follow Him in humility. The branches of your testimony will draw strength from your deepening faith in Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son.

For example, if you want a stronger testimony of the Book of Mormon, focus on its witness of Jesus Christ. Notice how the Book of Mormon testifies of Him, what it teaches about Him, and how it invites and inspires you to come unto Him.

O le talalelei toefuataiina a Iesu Keriso, e pei ona aoao mai le Perofeta o Iosefa Samita, “e opomauina mea uma, atoa ai ma mea uma o le upumoni.” E le faapea la o upumoni uma e tutusa lo latou taua. O nisi upumoni e autu, taua, e i le a’a o lo tatou faatuatuaga. O isi o faaopoopoga po o ni lala—taua, ae faato’a taua pe a fesootai i latou i mea faavae.

Na saunoa foi le Perofeta o Iosefa, “O mataupu faavae autu o lo tatou talitonuga o molimau a le au Aposetolo ma Perofeta, e faatatau ia Iesu Keriso, e faapea na maliu o Ia, ma tanumia, ma toetu mai i le aso tolu, ma afio a’e i le lagi; ma o isi mea uma e faatatau i lo tatou talitonuga ua na o ni faaopoopoga i ai.”

I se isi faaupuga, o Iesu Keriso ma Lana taulaga togiola o le a’a lea o la tatou molimau. O isi mea uma o ni lala.

E le o faapea atu la e le taua ia lala. E manao-mia e se laau ia lala. Ae e pei ona ta’u atu e le Faaola i Ona soo, “Faapei o le lala e le mafai ona fua pe a na o ia, pe afai e le mau i le vine.” A aunoa ma se fesootaiga i le Faaola, i le faafailelega lea e maua i a’a, e mago le lala ma mate.

Pe a oo mai i le faafaileleina o a tatou molimau ia Iesu Keriso, ou te tomanatu pe o tatou aveseseina i nisi taimi ia lala mo a’a. O le mea sese lea sa matauina e Iesu i le Au Faresaio o Ona aso. Sa gauai tele atu i latou i faamatalaga iti o le tulafoa ae ua latou lafoa’ia ai le mea na ta’ua e le Faaola “o mea silisili”—o mataupu faavae autu e pei o le “faamasinotonu ma le alofa mutimutivale ma le faatuatua.”

Afai e te manao e faafailele se laau, e te le fuiina lala i le vai. E te fuiina ia a’a. E faapena foi, afai e te manao i lala o lau molimau ia ola ma fua mai ni fua, ia faafailele ona a’a. Afai e te le o mautonu e uiga i se aoaoga faavae patino po o se faatinoga po o se elemene o le talafaasolopito o le Ekalesia, saili le faamaninoga ma le faatuatua ia Iesu Keriso. Saili ia malamalama i Lana taulaga mo oe, o Lona alofa mo oe, ma Lona finagalo mo oe. Mulimuli ia te Ia i le lotomaulalo. O le a utu mai e lala o lau molimau le malosiaga mai lou faatuatua ua faalolotoina i le Tama Faalelagi ma Lona Alo Pele.

Mo se faataitaiga, afai e te manao i se molimau malosi atu o le Tusi a Mamona, ia tulaui atu i lana molimau ia Iesu Keriso. Ia matau le auala o loo molimau mai ai le Tusi a Mamona ia te Ia, o mea na te aoao mai e uiga ia te Ia, ma le auala na te valaaulia ai ma musuia oe ia e sau ia te Ia.

If you're seeking a more meaningful experience in Church meetings or in the temple, try looking for the Savior in the sacred ordinances we receive there. Find the Lord in His holy house.

If you ever feel burned out or overwhelmed by your Church calling, try refocusing your service on Jesus Christ. Make it an expression of your love for Him.

Nourish the roots, and the branches will grow. And in time, they will bear fruit.

Rooted and Built Up in Him

Strong faith in Jesus Christ doesn't happen overnight. No, in this mortal world, it's the thorns and thistles of doubt that grow spontaneously. The healthy, fruitful tree of faith requires intentional effort. And a vital part of that effort is making sure we are firmly rooted in Christ.

For example: At first, we may be drawn to the Savior's gospel and Church because we are impressed by the friendly members or by the kind bishop or the clean looks of the chapel. These circumstances are certainly important to grow the Church.

Nevertheless, if the roots of our testimony never grow deeper than that, what will happen when we move to a ward that meets in a less impressive building, with members who aren't so friendly, and the bishop says something that offends us?

Another example: Doesn't it seem reasonable to hope that if we keep the commandments and are sealed in the temple, we will be blessed with a large, happy family with bright, obedient children, all of whom stay active in the Church, serve missions, sing in the ward choir, and volunteer to help clean the meetinghouse every Saturday morning?

I certainly hope that all of us will see this in our lives. But what if it doesn't happen? Will we stay bound to the Savior regardless of circumstances—trusting Him and His timing?

We must ask ourselves: Is my testimony based on what I hope to happen in my life? Is it dependent on the actions or attitudes of others? Or is it firmly founded on Jesus Christ, "rooted and built up in him," regardless of life's changing circumstances?

Afai o loo e sailia se aafiaga sili atu ona anoa i sauniga a le Ekalesia po o totonu o le malumalu, taumafai e saili le Faaola i totonu o sauniga paia tatou te maua iina. Ia maua le Alii i totonu o Lona maota paia.

Afai o loo e lagonaina le matua gapelu pe lofituina i ou valaauga o le Ekalesia, taumafai e toe taulai atu lau auaunaga ia Iesu Keriso. Ia faia o se faailoaga o lou alofa mo Ia.

Faafailele a'a, ona ola ai lea o lala. Ma e oo mai le taimi latou te fua mai ai.

Ia Mauaa ma Atiina A'e ia te Ia

O le malosi o le faatuatua ia Iesu Keriso e le tupu i se po. Leai, i lenei lalolagi faaletino, o laau talatala ma laau tuitui o le masalosalo ua matua ola lauusi. O le laau maloloina ma taufuifui o le faatuatua e manaomia ai se taumafaiga ma le loto i ai. Ma o se vaega taua o lenei taumafaiga o le faamautinoa lea ua maua'a ma le mausali i tatou ia Keriso.

Mo se faataitaiga: I le taimi muamua, atonu tatou te ta'aina atu i le talalelei ma le Ekalesia a le Faaola ona ua faagaetiaina i tatou i ni tagata faauo o le au paia pe ona o le epikopo agalelei po o vaaiga mama o le falesa. O nei tulaga e mautinoa le taua i le tuputupu a'e o le Ekalesia.

Ae ui i lea, afai e le taitai loloto atu le ola o a'a o a tatou molimau nai lo lenei, o le a se mea e tupu pe a tatou masii atu i se uarota e lolotu i se fale e le manaia tele, faatasi ma ni tagata o le au paia e le fia faauo, ma ua fai mai e le epikopo se tala tatou te tiga ai?

O se isi faataitaiga: Pe le foliga ea tatou te faamoemoe lava afai tatou te tausia poloaiga ma ua faamauina i le malumalu, o le a faamanuaina i tatou i se aiga toatele ma fiafia, ma ni fanau atamamai ma usiusitai, ua toaaga ma tumau uma i le Lotu, auauna i misiona, pepese i le aufaipese a le uarota, ma ofofua atu e fesoasoani i le faamamaina o le falelotu i taeao uma o Aso Toonai?

Ou te faamoemoe o le a tatou vaai uma i lenei mea i o tatou olaga. Ae faapefea pe afai e le tupu? Pe o le a tatou piimau pea i le Faaola e tusa lava po o a tulaga e tutupu—ma faalagolago ia te Ia ma Lana taimi?

E tatau ona tatou fesili ifo ia i tatou lava: Pe o faavae ea la'u molimau i mea ou te faamoemoe e tutupu i lo'u olaga? O faalagolago ea i amioga po o uiga o isi? Pe o faavae ma le mausali i luga o Iesu Keriso, "maua'a ma atiina a'e ia te ia," e tusa lava po o a tulaga fesuisuia'i o le olaga?

Traditions, Habits, and Faith

The Book of Mormon tells of a people who “were strict in observing the ordinances of God.” But then a skeptic named Korihor came along, mocking the Savior’s gospel, calling it the “foolish” and “silly traditions of their fathers.” Korihor led “away the hearts of many, causing them to lift up their heads in their wickedness.” But others he could not deceive, because to them, the gospel of Jesus Christ was much more than a tradition.

Faith is strong when it has deep roots in personal experience, personal commitment to Jesus Christ, independent of what our traditions are or what others may say or do.

Our testimony will be tested and tried. Faith is not faith if never tested. Faith is not strong if never opposed. So don’t despair if you have trials of faith or unanswered questions.

We should not expect to understand everything before we act. That is not faith. As Alma taught, “Faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things.” If we wait to act until all of our questions are answered, we severely limit the good we can accomplish, and we limit the power of our faith.

Faith is beautiful because it persists even when blessings don’t come as hoped for. We can’t see the future, we don’t know all the answers, but we can trust Jesus Christ as we keep moving forward and upward because He is our Savior and Redeemer.

Faith endures the trials and the uncertainties of life because it is firmly rooted in Christ and His doctrine. Jesus Christ, and our Father in Heaven who sent Him, together constitute the one undeviating, perfectly reliable object of our trust.

A testimony is not something that you build once and it stands forever. It’s more like a tree that you nourish constantly. Planting the word of God in your heart is only the first step. Once your testimony starts to grow, then the real work begins! That’s when you “nourish it with great care, that it may get root, that it may grow up,

Uputuu, Mause, ma le Faatuatua

O loo ta’u mai i le Tusi a Mamona e uiga i se nuu na “anaana i le tausiga o sauniga a le Atua.” Ona sau ai lea o se tagata masalosalo e igoa ia Korioa, ua faataemu i le talalelei a le Faaola, ma ta’ua o le “mea valea” ma “uputuu faavalea a o latou tama.” Na “taitai ese atu [e Korioa] loto o le toatele, ma faaososai i latou ia faamaualuluga i lo latou amioleaga.” Ae sa le mafai ona ia faaseseina isi, ona ia i latou, o le talalelei a Iesu Keriso sa sili atu nai lo na’o se uputuu.

E malosi le faatuatua pe a maua’a i le loloto o aafiaga faaletagata lava ia, tautinoga faaletagata lava ia ia Iesu Keriso, tutoatasi e tusa ma a tatou uputuu po o tu masani po o mea e ono ta’u mai pe fai e isi.

O le a su’eina ma tofotofoina a tatou moli-mau. E le o se faatuatua le faatuatua pe afai e le’i tofotofoina lava. E le malosi le faatuatua pe afai e le’i osofa’ia lava. O lea la, aua le faanoanoa pe afai e i ai ni tofotofoga o lou faatuatua po o ni fesili e le’i taliina lava.

E le tataua ona tatou faamoemoe ia malamalama i mea uma ae tatou te le’i faatinoa. E le o se faatuatua lena mea. E pei ona aoao mai Alema, o le “Faatuatua e le o le maua lea o se malamalama atoatoa i mea.” Afai tatou te faatalitali seiloga e tali uma a tatou fesili ona faato’a faatino lea, ua tatou faatapulaaina ma le lamatia le lelei e mafai ona tatou faia, ma tatou faatapulaaina le mana o lo tatou faatuatua.

E matagofie le faatuatua aua e tumau pea e tusa lava pe le oo mai faamanuiaga e pei ona faamoemoe i ai. E le mafai ona tatou vaai atu i le lumanai, tatou te le iloa uma ia tali, ae e mafai ona tatou faalagolago ia Iesu Keriso a o tatou agai pea i luma ma agai i luga aua o Ia o lo tatou Faaola ma le Togiola.

E onosaia e le faatuatua ia tofotofoga ma mea le mautonu o le olaga, ona ua maua’a ma le mau-sali ia Keriso ma Lana mataupu faavae. O Iesu Keriso ma lo tatou Tama oi le Lagi o le na auina mai o Ia, o le faavae e tasi e le mafaagaetia, ma faatuatua ina atoatoa o lo tatou.

O se molimau e le o se mea e faa-tasi lava ona e fauina ona tu ai lea e faavavau. E pei lava o se laau lea e te tausia i taimi uma. O le totoina o le afioga a le Atua i lou loto ua na o le laasaga muamua lea. O le taimi lava e amata ola ai lau molimau, ona amata loa lea o le galuega moni! O le taimi la lena e te “tausia [ai] ma le faae-

and bring forth fruit.” It takes “great diligence” and “patience with the word.” But the Lord’s promises are sure: “Ye shall reap the rewards of your faith, and your diligence, and patience, and long-suffering, waiting for the tree to bring forth fruit unto you.”

My dear brothers and sisters, my dear friends, there’s a part of me that misses the old Zwickau chapel and its stained-glass windows. But over the past 75 years, Jesus Christ has led me on a journey through life that is more thrilling than I could ever have imagined. He has comforted me in my afflictions, helped me to recognize my weaknesses, healed my spiritual wounds, and nourished me in my growing faith.

It is my sincere prayer and blessing that we will constantly nourish the roots of our faith in the Savior, in His doctrine, and in His Church. Of this I testify in the sacred name of our Savior, our Redeemer, our Master—in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

teete tele, ina ia mafai ona mauaa, ina ia mafai ona tupu ae, ma fua mai ni fua.” E manaomia ai le “filiga tele” ma le “onosai i ana afioga.” Ae ua mautinoa folafolaga a le Alii: “O le a outou selesele ai tau i o lo outou faatuatua, ma lo outou filiga, ma le onosai, ma le tali-tiga, ma faatalitali mo le laau e fua mai fua mo outou.”

Uso e ma tuafafine pele, a’u uo pele, o loo i ai se vaega o a’u o loo misia le falesa tuai o Zwickau ma ona faamalama tioata felanulanua’i. Ae i le silia ma le 75 tausaga, o loo taitai lava a’u e Iesu Keriso i se malaga i le olaga lea e sili atu ona faa-gaeetiaina ou te le’i mafaufauina. Ua Ia faamafanafanaina a’u i o’u mafatiaga, fesoasoani ia te a’u ia iloa o’u vaivaiga, faamalolo o’u manu’aga faaleagaga, ma faafailele a’u i lo’u faatuatua o loo tuputupu a’e pea.

O la’u tatalo faamaoni ma faamanuiaga o le a tatou faafaileleina pea lava pea ia a’a o lo tatou faatuatua i le Faaola, i Lana aoaoga faavae, ma i Lana Ekalesia. Ou te molimau atu ai i nei mea, i le suafa paia o lo tatou Faaola, lo tatou Togiola, lo tatou Matai—i le suafa o Iesu Keriso, amene.