

The Prophet Joseph Smith prepared this remarkable statement on the principle of sacrifice for the Lectures on Faith:

“Let us here observe, that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation” (Lectures on Faith, 6:7).

Yes, as I contemplate the faith, devotion, and sacrifices of thousands—even tens of thousands—of faithful Saints who have preceded us, I am in complete accord with this statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“It is in vain for persons to fancy to themselves that they are heirs with those . . . who have offered their all in sacrifice . . . unless they, in like manner, offer unto him the same sacrifice (Lectures on Faith, 6:8; italics added).

I repeat: This is a day of sacrifice, and the opportunities are ever present. Today, I mention just four ways in which this principle may be practiced...

First: To sacrifice, deny yourself all ungodliness.

Second: To sacrifice, be willing to serve a mission.

Third: To sacrifice, solemnize your marriage in the house of the Lord.

Fourth: To sacrifice, serve with your time and means to build the kingdom of God on earth.

President Harold B. Lee said, “I [am] persuaded of one great truth: Whenever the Lord has a great blessing for one of his children, he puts that son or daughter in the way to make a great sacrifice.” (In Conference Report, Apr. 1947, p. 50.)

Yes, I testify that sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven. This is “a day of sacrifice” for the people of the Lord!

I testify to you that this is a day of sacrifice, that it is part of the Lord’s plan to bless us, His children. I pray we will do as the Psalmist exhorted—“offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put [our] trust in the Lord” (Psalm 4:5). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Apr. 1979, 48; or Ensign, May 1979, 34

C. S. Lewis indicated there is often pain in change when he wrote of God's expectations for His children:

“Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on: you knew those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently he starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of—throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were going to be made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace” (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, New York: MacMillan Co., 1960, p. 160).

Marvin J. Ashton, in *Conference Report*, Oct. 1980, 83; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 60

Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, Pg.323

Youth leaders, are you holding aloft our standards, or have you compromised them for the lowest common denominator in order to appease the deceived or vile within the Church? Are the dances and music in your cultural halls virtuous, lovely, praiseworthy, and of good report (Article of Faith 13), or do they represent a modern Sodom with short skirts, loud beat, strobe lights, and darkness? (God, Family, Country, p. 229.)

The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, Pg.283

Assess television entertainment. Be concerned about the types of programs your family is watching on television or hearing on radio. There is so much today that is unsavory and degrading, so much that gives the impression that the old sins of Sodom and Gomorrah are the "in thing" to do today. (78-07)

Spencer W. Kimball, The Miracle of Forgiveness, Pg.79

But let us emphasize that right and wrong, righteousness and sin, are not dependent upon man's interpretations, conventions and attitudes. Social acceptance does not change the status of an act, making wrong into right. If all the people in the world were to accept homosexuality, as it seems to have been accepted in Sodom and Gomorrah, the practice would still be deep, dark sin.

Bruce R. McConkie, Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, Vol.3, Pg.359

4-8. If God cast one-third of the hosts of heaven down to eternal damnation, for their rebellion; if in the flood he destroyed all but Noah and his family, for rejecting the divine will; if he rained brimstone and fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah, utterly destroying all, save Lot and his family only, that dwelt therein, for their sins and abominations -- why should false prophets and teachers expect to escape the wrath of Him who is no respecter of persons?

Spencer W. Kimball, Faith Precedes the Miracle, Pg.154

Because of this widespread tolerance toward promiscuity, this world is in grave danger. When evil is decried and forbidden and punished, the world still has a chance. But when toleration for sin increases, the outlook is bleak and Sodom and Gomorrah days are certain to return.

Neal A. Maxwell, Look Back at Sodom, Introduction

The Savior has warned that his second coming will occur (1) just as did the flood in Noah's time and also (2) as the raining of fire and brimstone on Sodom -- as a surprise (except to the very faithful). We would do well, therefore, to ponder the lessons of the past as well as the possible parallels between our own society and the society of Sodom, for Sodom was not just a place, but a way of life.

Neal A. Maxwell, Look Back at Sodom, Introduction

A modern prophet, President Spencer W. Kimball, has warned us: when toleration for sin increases, the outlook is bleak and Sodom and Gomorrah days are certain to return."

Neal A. Maxwell, Look Back at Sodom, Introduction

His predecessor, President Harold B. Lee, warned of the growing social acceptance of "that great sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. . . adultery; and beside this, the equally grievous sin of homosexuality, which seems to be gaining momentum with social acceptance in the Babylon of the world..."

Neal A. Maxwell, Look Back at Sodom, Introduction

While it was tragic for Lot's wife to look back, for our generation a hard look back at Sodom could save us from impending tragedies!

One of the iniquities of Sodom was pride. I have never seen pride as fierce or as unjustified as the pride of the Sodomites. They were proud of their riches; they were proud of their wealth; they were proud of their injustice toward men. They were even proud of their pride. Do not pride and wickedness go hand-in-hand? For as surely as the proud elevate themselves in their own eyes, their neighbors disappear from view. The proud not only fail to look up to God, but the proud look down on their neighbors.

Neal A. Maxwell, Look Back at Sodom, Pg.10

Another sin of Sodom was idleness. Idleness brings about idolatry and increase in iniquity. There is something holy about work; even in times of plenty, it is a necessity. While work is not all of life, it nevertheless can keep us mindful of our blessings.

Neal A. Maxwell, Look Back at Sodom, Pg.11

In their leisure, the Sodomites never thought to render service to others; they sought some new sensation or a new manner of an old sensation. They were turned inward on themselves. Their hardness of countenance was matched by their hardness of words, for their conversations were filthy. When I was with my master in Egypt I saw some civility and gentility, but these qualities disappeared in but one decade in Sodom.

The children born into these cities had no choice at all left to them. Such was the conformity in wickedness that babes could be born free, but not remain agents unto themselves. My bowels were moved within me to see innocent children not born of goodly parents, but trapped in families where fathers lived in the depths of wickedness -- and the mothers likewise, for the women of Sodom became even more hard and more raucous than the men, once they gave way to wickedness. Children grew old before their time, but it could not be otherwise in families filled with fornication or in neighborhoods aggrieved by adultery. Boys learn to be men by watching their fathers, but what choice had these boys in the haven of homosexuality that was Sodom?

When there are not enough good men to leaven a people, that people are deaf to the things of the Spirit. There was in this land of plenty a famine of righteous examples, and Lot was a solitary example. Thus did the people pattern themselves after the examples of evil, and the voice of the people did choose iniquity. Where there are enough good men to bear witness by their lives and their works that God lives (for in such cities some righteous works are done), these cities may have less mercy in the day of judgment than Sodom, which had fallen into a state of spiritual darkness such that the inhabitants could scarcely tell good from evil.

We saw together how, once the constraints of conscience are swept away, there are no barriers in the pathway of those who plunge toward the gulf of misery and endless woe. Once men cease to hearken to the counsels of God, they first say that whatsoever they do is no crime, and then they say boldly there is no crime. Truly, whatsoever a man really believeth makes determination of his deeds, and whensoever men cease to believe in God and his judgments, they cease not only to be accountable to God, but also to their fellowmen. Many such evidences were seen by me and my family in the chronicle of evil in the cities of the plain.

Hence it was better to destroy a few individuals, than to entail misery on many. And hence the inhabitants of the old world and of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, because it was better for them to die, and thus be deprived of their agency, which they abused, than entail so much misery on their posterity, and bring ruin upon millions of unborn persons. (John Taylor, *The Government of God* [Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1852], p. 53.)

Neal A. Maxwell, *The Smallest Part*, Pg.11

We do not have much history about "things as they were" in the sensuous society that once was Sodom, but it is not likely that the citizens of Sodom decided at one gigantic civic rally to become the most wicked city in the world. The Sodomites simply sought pleasure, and things got out of control, and there followed lasciviousness, arrogance, idleness, and, significantly, a profound neglect of the poor and the needy. Indeed, sensuous souls often love their neighbors as themselves -- i. e. not at all! Thus, Sodom was a free-wheeling, but very unfree society!