



OCTOBER 2026 GENERAL CONFERENCE · SATURDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

Divine Appointments

President Timothy L. Farnes · Young Men General President

Words to remember

- *“It means that when someone encounters us, they should experience something of Jesus Christ—His kindness, His patience, His hope, His love, His compassion.”*
- *“Brothers and sisters, let us pray every day for eyes to see the divine appointments God places before us!”*

In President Timothy L. Farnes's own words, from the talk.

President Timothy L. Farnes, Young Men General President, began with a Saturday almost twenty years earlier. Newly called to a stake presidency and not yet released as bishop, with five young children and a business to run, he faced meetings from 8:00 a.m. through a ward temple night. “It was a busy time, and I wanted to give my all to the Lord, but I was never sure if I had enough to give.”

At a midday leadership meeting the presiding authority invited questions. He gathered his courage and asked about an administrative matter that was troubling him. “Instead of getting a helpful answer, I felt like my question was dismissed.” Disheartened, he questioned why he was sacrificing so much, and lost all desire to attend the temple. He called his wife: “Let’s go to dinner instead of the temple.” Lindsay replied, “No, I think you need to be in the temple. We’ll talk after.”

He went, but not with the best attitude. Entering the dressing room, grumbling, he heard, “How are you, brother?” It was Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve. They had never met, and he wasn’t about to tell a member of the Quorum of the twelve apostles how discouraged I felt, so he forced a smile: “Everything’s great!” When he came out, Elder Oaks was waiting. “Brother, tell me how you are really doing.” Something in his compassion opened him up. Elder Oaks listened, expressed sincere gratitude, encouraged him, even answered his administrative question, and then gave him a big hug. “In an instant I went from feeling like giving up to feeling like I could give my whole soul in service to the Lord.”

Five years later he and Lindsay met Elder Oaks in his office. Eager to reminisce, he asked, “Do you remember the conversation we had in the temple?” “I don’t think so,” he said. “Have we met before?” After hearing the story, Elder Oaks said, “I’m sorry, brother. I don’t remember that.” Then, sensing his disappointment: “But it’s what we do. Isn’t it?” The line became the talk’s refrain. “That is what we do. As covenant followers of Jesus Christ, we minister with compassion to whomever God places in our path. We do it because that’s what the Savior did. And we’ve made a covenant to follow Him.”

He connected ministering to the sacrament covenant. Each Sabbath we witness our willingness to take upon us Christ's name: "That means we choose to see as He sees, feel as He feels, and do as He would do. His life should be reflected in ours." When someone encounters us, they should experience something of Jesus Christ, his kindness, his patience, his hope, his love, his compassion. Our promise of willingness is met by the Lord's promise that we may always have His Spirit, and with that gift we can minister with His power. "We make the covenant during sacred time with God every Sunday. A way we keep the covenant is by ministering to God's children every day."

Often, he said, God places someone in our path, and we have eyes to see them. He calls these divine appointments. When asked, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered with the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37). "Where others saw an inconvenience or an interruption, one man saw an opportunity to minister—a divine appointment." Seeing awakened compassion, compassion moved him to act, and his actions changed a life. That pattern defined the Savior's ministry: "He turned ordinary encounters with people into extraordinary moments of healing, encouragement, and transformation." "To Jesus, these people were not interrupting His mission. They were His mission." When we use our God-given eyes, "What once looked like random encounters become invitations from the Lord to minister with compassion."

Then came his own lesson in slow seeing. Waiting early for a vacation flight, earbuds in and book open, he glanced up at a young missionary across from him: eyes closed, rocking, tears streaming, clutching a boarding pass and a digital alarm clock. "After briefly imagining the various reasons a missionary might look so anxious, I returned to my book." The Spirit prompted him to look again, and the elder's tear-filled eyes were pleading for help. "Are you OK?" he asked. In broken, timid English, the missionary explained he was headed to his mission, a long way from his home country, flying alone for the first time, and terrified; the alarm clock was to make sure he didn't miss the plane.

"Embarrassed by how slow I had been to help this elder, I explained that my wife and I would be on the same flight, and we would make sure he made it on the plane." The Farneses walked him to the gate, then had to board first. As the plane filled, the missionary didn't appear, and President Farnes feared they'd made a big mistake. Finally, like every missionary, the last one to board, he made his way to the only empty seat at the back, which was right beside President Farnes. They marveled at how God arranged even that detail. The elder fell asleep. After landing, panic returned, so they walked him arm in arm, not to lose him again, to baggage claim, where his mission leaders waited. Instead of running to them, he dropped his bags and gave Lindsay and me a big hug.

"What we did for that elder didn't require much of us, but this ordinary encounter became a divine appointment we will always treasure. All we had to do was see the person God had placed in our path, look with compassion rather than judgment, and then act." His invitation: Let us pray every day for eyes to see the divine appointments God places before us. Let us put compassion into action and minister to the person in front of us. It's what Jesus did and it's what we do in the sacred name we take upon ourselves by covenant, even Jesus Christ.

Let's talk about it

What did this talk teach us about the Savior? What is one small thing our family can do this week?

Kid-friendly summary in our own words · Read or watch the full talk: [churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2026/10/22farnes](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2026/10/22farnes)