



OCTOBER 2026 GENERAL CONFERENCE · SUNDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

Quick to Help, Slow to Judge

Elder Paul H. Sinclair · General Authority Seventy

Words to remember

- *“Jesus Christ reminds us that to help people transform their lives, we must look not only to their past—we must look to their possible.”*
- *“I testify that when we help people, one by one, in our own small and simple ways, rather than judge them, we are preparing the world for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.”*

In Elder Paul H. Sinclair’s own words, from the talk.

Elder Paul H. Sinclair, a General Authority Seventy, opened with Isaiah’s line, “And a little child shall lead them,” a scripture that truly came alive for him during a ward Primary program. His young friend James, wearing a new suit, was examining its features: buttons on his sleeves but no holes, and a buttonhole on his left lapel but no button. “Neither the buttons nor the buttonhole seemed to be serving any real purpose. Well, James cleverly devised a purpose for both.” He buttoned his right sleeve to his left lapel.

“Being pleased with himself quickly gave way to being panicked, because once James had buttoned his arm to his chest, even with the flexibility of a Primary child, he could not get himself loose.” He had unintentionally but quite successfully created a one-armed straight jacket. As James became more stuck, Elder Sinclair became more aggravated; the baffling buttons had been put to an uncomfortable and, to him, irritating purpose. He was shaking his head as James was about to go to the pulpit.

Then he noticed the little girl next to James, who had also seen his predicament. “But instead of being aggravated, she wanted to help.” Quickly discerning what was needed, she reached up with her tiny, non-judgmental fingers and popped the button out of the button hole. James was rescued and the program saved. Elder Sinclair felt relief, and also “I recognized the quiet rebuke of a misplaced button and tiny fingers reminding me that I should be trying to be more like Jesus.” The moment helped him embrace what Elder Patrick Kearon has called a radical reorientation of my soul. He doesn’t recall the program’s topic, but the Holy Ghost taught him that a true disciple of Jesus Christ is quick to help and slow to judge.

The Savior taught this from the start of His ministry. In John 4 He ministers to a Samaritan woman whose name we do not know. Weary, He unexpectedly asks her for a drink. Elder Sinclair said, “We can only imagine how many days this woman had been coming to this well at this hour, alone—until this day.” “In her ordinary days, she may have endured many judging eyes but few helping hands—

until this day.” She may have done more to warrant judgment than buttoning a sleeve to a lapel; apparently she had a series of broken relationships and was living with a man who was not her husband. “But what do we actually know about her circumstances? Was she widowed? divorced? abandoned? We do not know.” Her story matters, he said, but these are not the details we need.

“What did Christ focus on instead?” The offer of living water. The Redeemer knows absolutely everything about her and comes to be a living witness of living water. He offers her grace and transformative help. He spoke to her with dignity, listened earnestly to her questions, and responded with teaching. “He did not hold her hostage to her history. He trusted her with truth. Jesus Christ reminds us that to help people transform their lives, we must look not only to their past—we must look to their possible.” She left the well changed. “That is precisely what ‘quick to help and slow to judge’ looks like.”

Every day missionaries meet people at modern-day wells all around the world, declaring that Jesus is the Christ, and they find, teach, baptize, and confirm people who may be in fear of judgment but in need of help. We are invited to reorient our souls to help friends and new members in more Christlike ways. President Dallin H. Oaks has invited us to “seek to be holy, like our Savior.” “Being quick to help and slow to judge is a simple and deeply encouraging way for each of us to be more holy, to be more like our Savior, to be His true disciples.”

He prayed that when modern-day men and women at the well meet us, they will know that they have come home, and recognize in us striving disciples ready to fill them with living and loving water. “I testify that when we help people, one by one, in our own small and simple ways, rather than judge them, we are preparing the world for the Second Coming of 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/2026/10/56sinclair](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2026/10/56sinclair)