



OCTOBER 2026 GENERAL CONFERENCE · SATURDAY MORNING SESSION

The Sculpting of Our Souls

Sister Tamara W. Runia · First Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency

Words to remember

- *“Let’s choose Christ, who can heal the wounds of this world while carving out room for joy!”*
- *“Consider this: Christ’s work in your life and His love for you are bigger than your present story. And He can fix what feels badly broken.”*

In Sister Tamara W. Runia’s own words, from the talk.

Sister Tamara W. Runia, First Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency, began with a confession: she loves fixing things. Knots, tangled necklaces, stains (she has been called “the stain whisperer”). It’s human nature, she said, to want to fix things and to become frustrated when something comes along that we cannot fix.

Then she told of the thing she could not fix. Thirteen years ago, her oldest son, Ryan, woke on a Monday morning, kissed his wife and four young children goodbye, and left for work. A few hours later he collapsed and died from an undetected heart condition. “His heart simply stopped.” The next day was his two-year-old daughter Piper’s birthday. As the family lit candles and sang, Piper looked for her dad, and Sister Runia realized this was something she would never be able to fix.

The scripture that changed the lens through which I view my life comes from Liberty Jail. Joseph Smith pleaded for a reprieve, and was told instead, “All these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good” (D&C 122:7). “God’s answer implies that experience is valuable, and I’m learning the only way to get it is to go through it. Can’t we skip over it? Is there some other way? No, there isn’t another way.” It is as though we studied these lessons in a premortal classroom and are now living them in this laboratory of life. This is where we put on Christ. She quoted C. S. Lewis: “God intends to give us what we need, not what we now think we want.”

She asked the question many of us ask: how can a loving Father watch us go through heartbreaking experiences? Part of her surprise, she said, came from growing up with promises like “If you keep the commandments, you’ll be blessed.” Those are true promises. But the gospel had felt like an umbrella held overhead to keep the rain off. “But I’ve learned from experience that we’re all going to get rained on. And sometimes we’re going to get pelted!” She taught, “The gospel isn’t the umbrella; it’s the solid rock we’re standing on during the storm—that ‘sure foundation ... whereon if men build they cannot fall.’” (Helaman 5:12)

When the angel asked Nephi, “Knowest thou the condescension of God?” he answered, “I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things” (1 Nephi 11:16–17). God’s love has moved Sister Runia from questions that begin with why to reflections that begin, “I know that God loves me, so what is supposed to be happening here?” It is precisely because He loves us that we have tempering, refining experiences. A godlike life is carved from the very things that make it hard, including the painful things that happen and the righteous desires that haven’t. From outside, a life in that process may look like it’s unraveling. But “God is shaping us into something only He knows we can become.”

At Ryan’s funeral she looked at his wife, Carrie, and their four children and said, “I don’t understand why this happened.” Then: “Not understanding is not the same as not believing.” She absolutely believes God sees you, loves you, and knows your story, a story that is both personal (so we needn’t look sideways and compare) and purposeful. Our suffering “It’s not a detour from the path; it gives purpose to our path.”

Ryan’s oldest son, seven-year-old Jack, gave a Primary talk at the funeral that he and his dad had prepared. He lays out Lego pieces and follows the instructions, just as Heavenly Father’s plan guides us so we can build hard things. Carrie asked what he would do with only the instructions and no picture on the box. “Yes, because you can trust the one who designed it, and it always turns out.” For anyone who has had to surrender the story they thought their life would tell, she acknowledged, “That sting is real, and that wound is wide.” It takes our finest faith to keep assembling the pieces that make sense and the ones that don’t. “Consider this: Christ’s work in your life and His love for you are bigger than your present story. And He can fix what feels badly broken.”

The day before he died, Ryan was set apart as elders quorum president and visited a neighbor whose wife and children had just left. He told him, “Brother, you have a choice right now, and it’s a big one. You can curse God and blame Him, or you can turn to Him and let Him heal you.” Sister Runia applied it to all of us: “Let’s choose Christ, who can heal the wounds of this world while carving out room for joy!” God is saying “Trust me,” and we are learning to say yes. She described a sort of divine mending that changes what’s happening to you into something happening for you.

Her final image came from her brother Kent’s college sculpting class. The assignment was a clay bust of himself. The eyes were terrible, and though the instructor was helping others, Kent wanted it to be his own piece. After struggling alone, he humbled himself and asked. The instructor carved so aggressively and abruptly that it startled me, digging deeper than Kent had dared, and within minutes the eyes came to life. It was still uniquely me, yet a master’s hand had shaped what mine could not.

So it is with our souls. Inviting the Savior in is hard; pride gets in the way. He lovingly chastens us to get our attention, but waits for an invitation before he can really go to work. Sometimes His carving feels abrupt. In time we see the work of His hand. One day, when the suffering and loneliness have ended, we will look into the mirror of our souls, “stand all amazed” and thank Him for all of it. The

molding, the shaping, the pain and adversity that helped us become more like him. For we shall see him as he is, and we shall be like him (1 John 3:2).

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/2026/10/13runia](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2026/10/13runia)



OCTOBER 2026 GENERAL CONFERENCE · SATURDAY MORNING SESSION

The Gift of Testimony

Elder Gérald Caussé · Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Words to remember

- *“Our testimony is not a talent to be hidden. It is a gift to be shared—with grateful hearts and in a spirit of humility and love.”*
- *“There is great power in a sincere, humble, and heartfelt testimony. It need not be long, eloquent, or dramatic—it only needs to be true.”*

In Elder Gérald Caussé’s own words, from the talk.

Elder Gérald Caussé of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles began eighteen years back, when he and his wife, Valérie, received a phone call from President Thomas S. Monson calling him as a General Authority Seventy. They accepted in faith, knowing it would profoundly change their lives. The next morning, praying for comfort and guidance, he felt prompted to open a Church magazine on the kitchen table, and his eyes found this promise: “Be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ” (D&C 68:6). He realized his primary responsibility was simply to bear witness of the Savior. “Everything else would be in His hands.”

Eleven months before this talk, he was reminded of that promise again. Newly called as an Apostle, he was invited into the sacred meeting room of the First Presidency and the Twelve, and President Dallin H. Oaks asked him to bear testimony of Jesus Christ. Astonished and humbled, he felt peace, and the familiar words returned with power. “In that sacred moment, I knew that nothing could be more meaningful, as my first act as a newly ordained Apostle, than to bear witness of the Redeemer of the world.”

Before His ascension, the resurrected Savior charged His Apostles, “Ye shall be witnesses unto me” (Acts 1:8). The apostolic witness remains central in the restored Church. Joseph Smith taught that the fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and prophets concerning Jesus Christ. Apostles hold keys to be special witnesses of His name in all the world, bearing a unique authoritative divinely empowered witness of His reality, gospel, Atonement, and Resurrection.

“Yet the sacred responsibility to bear witness of Jesus Christ is not limited to prophets and apostles. It extends to all His disciples.” The truth of the restored gospel is visible in the lives of millions, whose testimonies in word and deed show the reality of a loving Savior. Bearing witness is a foundational responsibility of discipleship. Having taken His name upon us, we keep that covenant partly by

sharing our witness, standing as witnesses of God at all times, in all things, and in all places (Mosiah 18:9).

Testimony is deeply personal. It is received in the intimacy of our relationship with God and shaped by our unique experiences, circumstances, and needs; it grows through faith, earnest seeking, gospel living, and the quiet influence of the Holy Ghost. “Your testimony may be different from mine or that of other family members or fellow Saints. Please trust it, nurture it, and bear it, because it is uniquely yours.”

He confessed that he had often wondered, Why me? and never found a fully satisfying answer. So he asked a better question: “What does the Lord expect me to do with this gift?” He taught, “Our testimony is not a talent to be hidden. It is a gift to be shared—with grateful hearts and in a spirit of humility and love.” He also said, “Testimony and love are deeply connected gifts that echo and strengthen one another.” To say “I know” is a tender expression of love toward our neighbor, because love makes us want to share our most precious gift. And saying “I love you” with a pure heart is itself a way of bearing testimony of Christ, the source of all perfect love. He hoped we would fill our lives with many heartfelt I knows alongside many I love yous, creating an environment where the Spirit can dwell.

His niece illustrated the point. At Young Women camp, just beginning to gain a testimony, she was so nervous that she managed only two sentences: “I know that God loves me” and “I know that God has a plan for me.” Afterward she was discouraged because she couldn’t speak like the other girls. Her mother asked, “Do you believe what you said?” “Yes.” “Then that’s all that matters.” Elder Caussé agreed: “There is great power in a sincere, humble, and heartfelt testimony. It need not be long, eloquent, or dramatic—it only needs to be true.” It is the Spirit, not words, that testifies, and the Lord promised that the Holy Ghost will bear record of what is spoken by His power (D&C 100:8).

Throughout history, seekers have been transformed by the testimonies of those the Lord calls “the weak and the simple” (D&C 1:23), from Enoch and Moses to Joseph Smith and more than 90,000 missionaries today. Their speech may be imperfect, but their witness carries divine power. And sharing changes us as well: “As you share it freely, your own testimony will grow stronger.” He pointed to Alma the Younger, who in deep anguish remembered his father’s prophecy of “one Jesus Christ” (Alma 36:17). That remembered witness was the spark that led him to repent. “How many ‘Almas’ are there around you waiting to hear your witness and discover, or rediscover, the hope that is found in Jesus Christ?”

His invitation: if you have received a testimony, even if it is only the beginning of one, it is your duty and your privilege to share it. Look each day, as the Holy Ghost prompts, for opportunities to bear witness, even a minute or two, at home, in testimony meeting, in ministering, in missionary lessons, on social media, or in everyday conversation, in simple words like “I love our Savior, Jesus Christ” or “The gospel brings joy to my heart.” Imagine millions of disciples doing that consistently. He closed with his

apostolic witness that we have a loving Heavenly Father and that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world and the source of every good gift.

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/2026/10/14causse](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2026/10/14causse)



OCTOBER 2026 GENERAL CONFERENCE · SATURDAY MORNING SESSION

Prophets, Seers, and Revelators

Elder Vaiangina Sikahema · General Authority Seventy

Words to remember

- *“What a blessing it is to live in a time when apostles and prophets are on the earth.”*
- *“I witness of the truths of the restored gospel and of living prophets, seers, and revelators in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.”*

In Elder Vaiangina Sikahema's own words, from the talk.

Elder Vaiangina Sikahema, a General Authority Seventy, opened with a family story from 1947. His maternal grandparents were serving a full-time mission on a small, isolated volcanic island in the Kingdom of Tonga. They were poor farmers with no formal education: Grandpa was 28, Grandma 25. With them were three children, including two daughters, ages four and three (one was his mother), and a 10-month-old son, at the time their only boy. Because visas for Americans were limited, Tongan couples like them were routinely called to serve on neighboring islands.

That June, Elder Matthew Cowley, the Apostle over the Pacific, was coming to Tonga. Only twice before had an Apostle visited, David O. McKay in 1921 and George Albert Smith in 1938. For Saints scattered across the Pacific, being in an Apostle's presence was a chance of a lifetime. Reaching him meant sailing across open ocean to the main island of Tongatapu, stopping midway at their home island of Vava'u.

The Pacific is known for fickle weather, and they sailed into a storm. A 16-hour trip became two and a half brutal days at sea. Grandma's journal reads: “We were completely soaked, ... battered, and sick, ... too weak to eat. ... I held Vilimanulea to my chest until finally arriving to Vava'u.” She held her baby boy to her chest the whole way. But the storm left him severely dehydrated, and with no medicine, he died of exposure. Within two days they buried their son and continued the voyage. Elder Sikahema compared them to pioneers who buried children on the trail and, like those pioneers, yearned to hear and be in the presence of an apostle. Grieving with empty arms, they got back on the boat.

He explained their motive. “They were sailing toward an Apostle, who held priesthood keys, held the authority for the ordinances that would later seal them as an eternal family.” They sailed to sit at the feet of an apostle who would teach them their duty so they could bless others on their island. They understood that the gospel restored through Joseph Smith revealed truths previously withheld, and that restored prophets, seers, and revelators held the keys that would one day bind them together as a family forever.

Then he traced the doctrine. For centuries after the ancient Apostles died, until Joseph knelt in a grove in Palmyra, New York, there was no revelation to guide the Church. Amos called it a famine: not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord, when people shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it (Amos 8:11–12). The same prophet declared, “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). Paul warned that grievous wolves would enter the flock after his departure (Acts 20:29). Medieval reformers yearned for prophetic voices but could not find them, and even today many thirst for prophetic direction.

Here he raised a pointed warning from D&C 90:5: those who receive the oracles of God should beware how they hold them, lest they are accounted as a light thing. He suspected that the Lord knew that even with devices that let us easily see and hear His servants, many of us would still take them for granted. He quoted Elder Jeffrey R. Holland: “Are the heavens open? Does God reveal His will to prophets and apostles as in days of old? That they are and that He does is the unflinching declaration of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to all the world.”

He recounted Joseph Smith’s description of the First Vision: “When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air.” One of them, pointing to the other, said, “This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!” (Joseph Smith—History 1:17). With that clear, simple, and understated introduction, the Father and the Son began restoring the Savior’s Church through a teenage boy. In the years that followed, priesthood authority, ordinances, additional scripture, and knowledge of the plan of salvation were restored or rediscovered.

Perhaps, he said, we can appreciate why his grandparents were so eager to be with one of the Lord’s anointed, even in their despair. “What a blessing it is to live in a time when apostles and prophets are on the earth.” As the conference began, he said, “As we begin this opening session of the 196th Semiannual General Conference of the Church, let us not be guilty of holding ‘the oracles of God ... as a light thing’” (Doctrine and Covenants 90:5).

He added a historical note: when the Church was only about a year and a half old, some early leaders opposed publishing Joseph’s revelations, the future Doctrine and Covenants, partly because they were embarrassed by his poor writing skills. Perhaps that is why the Lord declared, “What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38). He closed with gratitude for noble progenitors who left me in my posterity a legacy of faith and courage in the face of difficulties and obstacles, and with his witness of living prophets, seers, and revelators.

Let's talk about it

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OCTOBER 2026 GENERAL CONFERENCE · SATURDAY MORNING SESSION

Jesus Christ Is the Great Deliverer!

Elder Kevin J. Hathaway · General Authority Seventy

Words to remember

- *“To Kenzie and all who wait for divine deliverance, I testify that the Lord is not delayed, distracted, or derelict in His deliverance. He has not forgotten you. He does not take joy in your suffering.”*
- *“Some miracles are immediate, some come after long waiting, and some await the Resurrection.”*

In Elder Kevin J. Hathaway's own words, from the talk.

Elder Kevin J. Hathaway, a General Authority Seventy, opened with a string of questions: “Have you ever felt left out, wondered if you were enough, lost someone you loved, faced illness, experienced family difficulties, or carried a burden no one else could see?” His message: Jesus Christ delivers the righteous from these and every other affliction of mortality. Because the Savior descended below all things and suffered “pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind” (Alma 7:11–12), He comprehends our suffering, is filled with mercy, and knows how to succor us. “His deliverance is certain; the question for most righteous followers is not if He will deliver but how and when He will do so.”

His family experienced both trial and deliverance as they drove in two cars to begin service as mission leaders. In a construction zone, two large tires came loose from a semi-truck and struck both cars at high speed. Airbags deployed, the cars were destroyed, and they were left stranded on the roadside wondering why this had happened when we had left everything to serve the Lord. In that moment the Spirit brought peace that everything would be all right. They were not immediately delivered, but the assurance gave them hope, and with help from many people they began their mission on time and without serious injury.

From that freeway experience he drew a scriptural pattern of divine deliverance in four parts. First, opposition brings heart-rending questions and emotions. It comes to all, even the righteous, as with Joseph Smith's cry in Liberty Jail, “O God, where art thou?” (D&C 121:1), or the grief and fear of Helaman's stripling warriors (Alma 56–58). Such questions and emotions are not sin or weakness. They create a sacred space where agency is activated and we choose whether to turn toward Jesus.

Second, sincere seeking invites assurances. Seeking means turning to the Father and the Son through heartfelt prayer, purposeful fasting, and scripture study. Alma's people in bondage “began to cry

mightily to God” (Mosiah 24:10). King Darius fasted through the night awaiting Daniel’s deliverance from the lions’ den (Daniel 6:18). As we humbly and patiently keep our covenants, the Savior visits us in our afflictions with assurances of peace, faith, and hope.

He told of Sister Kenzie Brinkerhoff, one of his missionaries. On her last preparation day, her father, Kelly, called early in the morning to tell her he loved her, was proud of her, and was excited to hug her soon. Driving home from work that night, he was killed in an accident. When Elder and Sister Hathaway arrived, she asked through tears, “President, how could this happen when I was one week away from hugging my dad?” Weeks later she told him: “The past few weeks have been the most awful and the most sacred time in my life. I have never clung so tightly to my covenants. I know that Jesus knows what this feels like, and He will heal me.”

Third, Christ’s grace enables us to endure and grow. Enabled enduring strengthens us to “cheerfully do all things that lie in our power” and then stand still, with the utmost assurance to see the salvation of God (D&C 123:17). “This grace does not remove the pain and difficulty of affliction; it is an enabling power that allows us, after all we can do, to receive divine strength beyond our own and lay hold on eternal promises through Jesus Christ.” As Kenzie binds herself to God through prayer, obedience, and covenant keeping, He helps her endure what she cannot bear alone, and that grace is available to all who turn to Him.

Fourth, deliverance comes in the Savior’s time and way. As we wait upon Him, needed growth and spiritual stretching come, and He consecrates our afflictions for our gain (2 Nephi 2:2). He testified: The Lord is not delayed, distracted, or derelict in his deliverance. He has not forgotten you. He does not take joy in your suffering. But lessons learned while waiting can bring converting growth that an earlier rescue might not.

What about when the hour seems too late, the loss too final, and deliverance appears impossible? Jairus surely felt that when he heard his daughter had died. But Jesus said, “Be not afraid, only believe” (Mark 5:36), and Jairus watched Him raise her, showing that no mortal timeline can place us beyond Christ’s power to deliver. Elder Hathaway quoted Elder Patrick Kearon: “Jesus specializes in the seemingly impossible. He came here to make the impossible possible, the irredeemable redeemable, to heal the unhealable, to right the unrightable, to promise the unpromisable. And He’s really good at it. In fact, He’s perfect at it.”

To all still facing pain, fear, and loneliness, he echoed the Savior: “Be not afraid, only believe.” Some miracles are immediate, some come after long waiting, and some await the life to come. He invited us to hear, believe, and act on the Great Deliverer’s words: “I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick” (Ezekiel 34:16). He testified that Jesus Christ is the Great Deliverer, now and forever.

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?

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OCTOBER 2026 GENERAL CONFERENCE · SATURDAY MORNING SESSION

A Higher and Holier Fast

Elder Ulisses Soares · Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Words to remember

- *“His example teaches us that fasting and prayer may not remove every burden from our path, but they draw heaven near and endow us with divine power to overcome or endure whatever circumstances we may face, giving us the spiritual fortitude to remain faithful to the Father’s will.”*
- *“As you do so, I promise, in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ, that miracles will come into your life.”*

In Elder Ulisses Soares’s own words, from the talk.

Elder Ulisses Soares of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said he had prayerfully pondered the sacred blessings the Father and the Son offer as we draw near to Them through sincere and faithful observance of the law of the fast. From the bottom of his heart, he testified of the sanctifying spiritual power that flows into our lives as we seek to live this law in a higher and holier way, a divine pattern of devotion that brings strength, guidance, peace, and help throughout mortality.

The Lord’s call to fast in the latter days, he said, echoes His message through Isaiah, a message of healing, covenant power, and blessing still offered to all of God’s children. In Isaiah 58, the Lord lifted His people’s vision beyond outward observance and revealed fasting’s purpose as an act of worship that shapes and refines our discipleship. Isaiah recorded the blessings: “Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily. ... Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am.” (Isaiah 58:8–9). “What a tender promise: light after darkness, healing after weariness, and the comforting assurance that when we call upon the Lord, He is near.”

He quoted President Joseph F. Smith, who taught that proper fasting places the body in subjection to the spirit and promotes communion with the Holy Ghost, bringing us nearer to God. A faithful fast is accompanied by earnest and intentional prayer. Through the union of fasting and prayer, our faith, love, and devotion deepen; we become humbler and more aware of our complete dependence upon the Lord; our hearts soften; and we become more receptive to the Holy Ghost and better prepared for personal revelation as we move along the covenant path.

This pattern finds its highest and holiest expression in the life of Jesus Christ. The Savior did not merely teach principles; He exemplified them. Before His ministry, He withdrew into the wilderness

and spent 40 days communing with His Father (Matthew 4:1–2). Of everything the Only Begotten could have done to prepare, he chose to seek complete alignment with his father’s will through fasting and prayer. Spiritually fortified, He triumphed over the adversary’s temptations and began the ministry that fulfilled His destiny as Redeemer. The lesson: His example teaches us that fasting and prayer may not remove every burden from our path, but they draw heaven near and endow us with divine power to overcome or endure whatever circumstances we may face, giving us the spiritual fortitude to remain faithful to the Father’s will.

A holy fast, he said, is more than a physical test of restraint or a petition for a specific blessing. It is an elevating expression of faith and trust in the Lord, a way to align our desires with his purposes and our expectations with his wisdom. Even when answers don’t come as expected, fasting and prayer build confidence in the Lord, in our covenants, and in His plan, and a deeper willingness to accept His will.

Fasting also turns us outward. Isaiah taught that an acceptable fast helps “to let the oppressed go free” and “break every yoke” (Isaiah 58:6). Joseph Smith taught that “A man filled with the love of God, is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world, anxious to bless the whole human race.” So our fast becomes both personal devotion and outward charity, expressed today in generous fast offerings, each reflecting a willing heart, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a sincere desire to bless those in need.

That generosity mirrors the Savior, who came down from heaven and suffered pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind so He would know how to succor His people (Alma 7:12). As we seek to succor God’s children, our hearts open and we minister more like Him. Offerings that may seem small and simple become consecrated expressions of compassion, and as we give our means and time, we give more fully of ourselves to building God’s kingdom and become instruments in His hands.

Elder Soares said he has seen the blessings of fasting enter lives quietly and tenderly, softening hearts, strengthening testimonies, sanctifying souls, and transforming lives, and he has felt increased inspiration and revelation as he has tried to live the law more fully. Fasting observed with joy and joined with prayer and generosity brings sweeter communion with the Lord.

His invitation was to prayerfully ponder Isaiah’s teachings and more intentionally embrace the divine purpose of the law of the fast in a higher and holier way. He promised in the name of Jesus Christ that miracles will come into your life: we will draw nearer to the Savior, receive strength to overcome weaknesses, and become more sensitive to others’ needs. He closed by restating Isaiah’s promise in the first person plural: “Our ‘light [shall] break forth as the morning’; our ‘health shall spring forth speedily’; then shall we ‘call, and the Lord shall answer’; we shall cry, and He shall say, ‘Here I am.’”

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?

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OCTOBER 2026 GENERAL CONFERENCE · SATURDAY MORNING SESSION

The Hour of Your Mission Is Come

Bishop Sean Douglas · Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

Words to remember

- *“You are what you preach. You are not only the messengers but also living examples of the message.”*
- *“I wish to wholeheartedly add: There is still plenty of room and a special place reserved for each one of you! We need you! ‘Come join the ranks!’”*

In Bishop Sean Douglas's own words, from the talk.

Bishop Sean Douglas, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, serves on the Church's Missionary Executive Council and spoke with evident affection: “I have a deep love for the missionaries of the Church. They are uniquely set apart from the world and divinely commissioned by the Savior.” He quoted President Dallin H. Oaks: We invite all of God's children to come unto Christ by repentance and baptism and confirmation in order to open the doors of the celestial kingdom to the sons and daughters of God. No one else can do this. Missionaries are called to assist in this great work. Today, he reported, more missionaries are serving in more missions, and more people are entering the Church through baptism, than ever before in this dispensation.

To missionaries of every age he said: “You are an army of righteousness with the doctrine of Christ as your purpose. You are a force of faith, power, love, and joy. You are what you preach. You are not only the messengers but also living examples of the message. Make no mistake—you are doing the most important work you could be doing.”

A few months earlier he had attended a sacrament meeting where two great-nephews, brothers, spoke before leaving for missions at opposite ends of the earth. They were beaming and eager. The distance might explain some of the excitement, he joked, but their desire to serve was genuine. They reminded him of the sons of Mosiah, who “were desirous that salvation should be declared to every creature, for they could not bear that any human soul should perish” (Mosiah 28:3). That desire, rising above every personal ambition, is what makes missionaries special. It's why they radiate the light of Christ and teach with convincing power.

For a season, all else takes a backseat: education, dating, careers, family time, and even sleeping in on Saturday. He was honest about the cost: “Yes, the Lord's expectations are high for you! But, oh, is it worth it!” He quoted President Russell M. Nelson on the gathering of Israel: “Nothing else compares in magnitude, nothing else compares in importance, nothing else compares in majesty.” God held this

generation in reserve; they were “You were taught and prepared, before you were born, to invite God’s children to come unto Christ.” His counsel: “Take care not to become distracted. Prioritize it; don’t let anything get in the way. You are needed!”

Then he told of Elder Merlin Sanchez, from the Peru Lima mission where he and Sister Douglas served as mission leaders. Merlin was baptized at nearly 24 and, as some do, stopped participating for a time. A faithful friend helped him begin his mission papers and schedule a physical, even before Merlin had decided to serve. With help from friends and leaders, he returned to church at 25, and “A desire to serve a mission suddenly swelled in his heart.” His papers were well advanced, and once he decided, the Lord removed seemingly insurmountable obstacles one by one. Asked why he wanted to serve, he said, “I only want to be close to Jesus Christ and to follow Him.”

He became a wonderful missionary converted to Jesus Christ and His doctrine. Every experience, trial, and companion was consecrated for his good. He served twice with the same companion, eight months total; though opposite in personality, they became united in purpose, assigned together by divine design. A few months after his mission he met his eternal companion. On their wedding day he was called as a bishop (Quite the wedding gift), and today, with three children, he serves as a stake president. A mission, Bishop Douglas noted, is one of many steps on the path of lifelong discipleship. Merlin and his wife “They cannot fathom what their lives would be if Merlin had not served a mission.”

He spoke directly to two groups. To converts: A mission may not have been on your radar, but it ought to be now. To the rising generation: Place serving a full-time mission high on your list. Don’t be distracted by alternatives of far less worth. Some might be like Amulek, who confessed, “For I was called many times and I would not hear” (Alma 10:6). Prophets strongly reaffirm that the Lord has asked every worthy able young man to prepare for and serve a mission; for young men it is a priesthood responsibility, while for young and able sisters it is a powerful but optional opportunity. Pray to know if the Lord would have you serve.

He rejoiced in the response to the prophet’s call: record numbers of missionaries of all ages are finding joy in service. “There is still plenty of room and a special place reserved for each one of you! We need you! ‘Come join the ranks!’” Each has a testimony of Christ and His Atonement that can bless a world suffering without knowledge of his divine mission.

He closed with the Lord’s words to Thomas B. Marsh in 1830 (D&C 31:3–7), inviting each of us to substitute our own name: “Lift up your heart and rejoice, for the hour of your mission is come; and your tongue shall be loosed, and you shall declare glad tidings of great joy unto this generation.” The Lord promised that the missionary’s family would be cared for (I will prepare a place for them) and that He would “I will open the hearts of the people, and they will receive you.”

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/2026/10/18douglas](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2026/10/18douglas)



OCTOBER 2026 GENERAL CONFERENCE · SATURDAY MORNING SESSION

O Be Wise

President D. Todd Christofferson · Second Counselor in the First Presidency

Words to remember

- *“Gambling is built on the desire to obtain something for nothing. Its structure requires that any gain comes at others’ expense.”*
- *“Remembering President Oaks’s comments about ‘opportunity cost’ and the opportunities lost when a person devotes time and money to gambling, my plea again is not only to refrain from gambling but to use the time and resources saved thereby for doing good.”*

In President D. Todd Christofferson’s own words, from the talk.

President D. Todd Christofferson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, opened by saying he felt like Jacob in the Book of Mormon, compelled by the Spirit to address a subject not particularly edifying and to use “boldness of speech” instead of feasting on the pleasing word of God (Jacob 2:7–11). “So, with a sense of duty, I turn to the subject of gambling.”

He recalled a story President Gordon B. Hinckley told more than twenty years ago about U.S. President Calvin Coolidge, famous as a man of few words. Asked by his wife what the preacher spoke about, Coolidge said, “Sin.” “Well, what did he say?” “He was against it.” President Hinckley added, “I think I could answer the question concerning gambling just that briefly. We are against it.”

Putting money or something of value at risk on an outcome has plagued mankind almost, I suppose, from the beginning of time, and time hasn’t made it any less harmful. What has changed is access. “The smartphone has transformed gambling from an occasional activity requiring a trip to a casino, racetrack, or lottery kiosk into an activity available continuously, privately, and almost anywhere.” Surveys indicate 46% of adults worldwide gambled in the past year, about 2.3 billion people, and the industry generated an estimated \$758 billion in 2025. “Of course, the industry’s revenue is the gambler’s loss. Simply put, the industry’s entire business model is built on its customers losing money.”

Three online platforms drive the growth: sports betting; casino-type games such as slots, roulette, blackjack, and poker; and prediction markets, where people bet on whether and when something will happen, tied to interest rates, elections, wildfires, or even the timing of the second coming. He wondered how anyone could ever collect on a bet like that.

Youth and young adults are disproportionately affected. Impulsivity and peer influence combine with early exposure, easy access, intense marketing, and wide social acceptance. Sports betting easily becomes consuming and “It robs time from studies, relationships, and career development. It crowds out things of value and in their place fosters greed.” In the U.S., 36% of boys aged 11 to 17 reported gambling last year, rising from 32% at age 11 to 49% at 17, and a substantial share of women 18 to 29 now gamble. People know the odds are stacked and the house always wins; they just don’t think it will win against them. The larger danger, he said, is that constant access turns occasional behavior into repeated behavior that displaces saving, increases debt, and creates far-reaching family and social costs. He agreed with George Washington, who called gambling “It is the child of avarice—the brother of inequity—and father of mischief” adding that mischief may be too mild. He also quoted a journalist in *The Atlantic* who concluded that society is betting that unlike every civilization that came before us, we can beat the house.

He drew on President Dallin H. Oaks’s counsel to ask, “Where will this lead?” and to weigh each choice’s opportunity cost: what do we give up in money, time, relationships, and worthwhile pursuits? Then he raised the matter of example. Perhaps your character and covenants feel secure enough that occasional wagers would be harmless fun. But others, especially your children and people newer or weaker in the faith, watch you. Paul taught that a believer could eat meat offered to idols without idolatry, yet should abstain: “Take heed,” Paul said, “lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.” Through such an example, shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? (1 Corinthians 8:9–11). President Christofferson’s application: “Since your recreational gambling may lead a weaker brother or sister into temptation, just don’t do it. Every soul is precious, and Christ died for him, for her, as He did for you.”

Above all, gambling is morally wrong. It is “Gambling is built on the desire to obtain something for nothing,” and its structure “Its structure requires that any gain comes at others’ expense,” which is hard to reconcile with loving our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:39). Our resources are stewardships, and the question is not merely whether something is legal, but whether it builds anything in us, in our families, or in those around us. He quoted President Oaks: taking from others to enhance our own position leads us away from the giving path of Christ toward the taking path of the adversary, and taking without giving value in return is destructive of spiritual sensitivities.

His plea was to live life on a higher plane. God has given us life and agency, and we are accountable for how we use them. A well-lived life contributes to others’ well-being; “It is being and doing better without others doing worse.” It supports and rewards work rather than idle pursuits, and work leads to prosperous, just societies. He warned, “Gambling, even for fun, leads in the opposite direction.” He asked not only that we refrain from gambling but that we use the time and resources saved for doing good, being anxiously engaged in a good cause (D&C 58:27). Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled (3 Nephi 12:6), and will put out of their lives what is incompatible with righteousness. He closed with Jacob once more: “O be wise; what can I say more?” (Jacob 6:12).

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