

Smith Family Devotional

Nauvoo, Illinois – Smith Family Cemetery
Saturday, August 6, 2016

Executive Secretary for the Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith Family Foundation, Karl Anderson:

It is a privilege to be to this family meeting. I want to first respond to what Elder Ballard said to me this morning in the cemetery. He should have said, "This is where we want to put Karl." I would say that Elder Ballard's remarks were directed for the time that I have been privileged to serve with the family than to my actual contributions. One thing I want to make absolutely clear is that those who have done the most for the family are sitting out amongst you and up here on the stand with Frances and with Steve Orton. They are the ones that are the workers. Unfortunately some of the credit has fallen without merit to me but I am privileged to work with Steve and Frances. I am privileged to be able to work with all of the committee members that are here with both of the Foundation and of the Association. I am sure that must be a little confusing that we have a Foundation and an Association. Tonight after we have a little dinner we are going to have a presentation of Lach. Lach are you here? Lach we need you up here so come on up. If I have to be up here so do you. Anina are you here? Ok. You come up with him Christin. I have known Lach from when he met and married Christin. I shouldn't divulge any of that history. Tonight you are going to a Lach before he was un-Locked.

Could I have all of the members of the Association Committee stand up? There you go. Now, there are more committee members who were not able to be here. Elder Ballard, these are the people that deserve the credit along with Frances and Steve. Thank you. Thank you for all that you do. It is you that have brought the Foundation and the committee together.

I want to say a few words. I am a non-family member. Only Elder Ballard knows how I got here. He is responsible – right? If anyone has a problem you know the source of the responsibility. Since becoming involved over 30 years ago, in the family as an assignment, which I consider an assignment from the Lord, which also considers the source from where the call came. I have gotten to know Mother and Father Smith during this time I believe. I have gotten to know Hyrum Smith and I have gotten to know Joseph Smith. Now I am based in Kirtland and so, my experience is primarily in Kirtland. I have stood in their home. I have stood in the room of the School of Prophets where Lucy Mack Smith describes coming and joining with the Brethren after the first ordinance of washing the feet was introduced in the Whitney Store in the School of the Prophets room. But most of all I have been in the temple and I have had experiences too sacred to share. I know of their concern for you as a posterity.

I have to share with you that some of the feelings that I have had that within the last half hour we walked down along the trail of tears. I couldn't help but think that they were nearby and they were saying to Elder Ballard's grandchildren, be faithful. And to all of you, I think this is the message that I feel very strongly from today that I think they are saying, "Be faithful. Keep up. Keep going. Look at what we sacrificed. What are you sacrificing? Are you enduring? When others are falling by the way are you standing by the prophet, and by Hyrum, and by Samuel, and Don Carlos, and each of the children and daughters." As with Elder Ballard I can feel and see Mother Smith shaking her finger. I have sensed very strongly that shaking of a finger every once and a while.

I am reminded of a time when Mother Smith went to Detroit with Joseph and Hyrum. She got herself in trouble because she was preaching the Book of Mormon on the boat going from Cleveland up to Detroit. She got some aristocratic women upset with her and the aristocratic women said some derogatory things about Joseph and Hyrum. You didn't do that in Mother Smith's presence. Only she could discipline I think. The Elders held a council. They asked, "What do we do with Mother Smith?" The conclusion was Hyrum announced, "Let Mother Smith say and do whatever she wants and the Elders are going to get her out of it." I think she would be very stern with all of us at this reunion because that was her nature.

Mother Smith although she gave leadership her mission was really her family. One statistic that just melted me is that she had 11 children but 7 preceded her in death. How many of you have lost your children in this life just by a show of hands? How many have lost two children? How many three? Only you have lost children know the heart ache and here is Mother Smith who lost 7. She watched six children and one grandchild die as a result of ruthless

actions and persecutions. Can you picture the sorry and grief that she had to go through. She knew that was going to happen when she was young. She made a covenant and a commitment that governed her life and reflected in Joseph and Hyrum and the other children and the church. She was very ill. She made a solid covenant with God that if He would spare her life and let her live she would endeavor to serve Him according to her best abilities. Well, a voice assured her that she would live. Then she told her mother this? "The Lord will let me live if I am faithful to the promise which I made to Him. To be a comfort to my mother, to my husband, and my children." That was her mission to be a comfort to each of those mentioned.

There are many other stories that we could tell about Mother Smith but I would like to pay tribute for one particular thing that has lasted and is available to each one of you. That was her constant commitment to testify of the truth. To testify of the restoration. One of the biggest means by which she did this and still does it through writing the history of the prophet Joseph Smith. Now, I am not going to ask how many of you have read that history. Mother Smith would do this? Do you see my finger? If she found out you - not read her history. Elder Ballard went to a missionary meeting yesterday and challenged the missionaries – the senior couples – to write to their grandchildren and to strengthen their grandchildren. I think the message Mother Smith would have me give you today is that she wrote a history that she wants you to read and understand because she testify' s throughout. She was a firsthand witness. We wouldn't have most of the details of Joseph's life without her. I think in her name I give you a challenge to go and reread the history of Joseph Smith by his mother Lucy Mack. It is in fact a letter to each of you. It is if she was writing to you. I hope that you don't let the next year go by without sitting down with your family and you need to understand what she would tell you. It is all in that history of Joseph Smith.

Thank you for all that you are doing. The thing I think you need to understand the love of Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack for each of you. As I serve as a Patriarch in the church I want you to know that your Heavenly Father and your Savior love each of you and what you are trying to do and would have you draw close to Him. As you grow close to Him you will grow close to Joseph, Hyrum, and each of the other children of Lucy Mack. I know that the work that Joseph, Hyrum, and Emma tried to do is establish firmly the restoration of God's Kingdom on earth for the second and last time before the coming of the Savior. That is what they were all about. It is true. It came from heaven through the Smith family. I bear that witness in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.