

Lucy Mack Smith by Margaret Penfield

I was asked to speak about my great, great, great, great grandmother, Lucy Mack Smith. I've always felt very close to her and perhaps most of you feel the very same way. I guess it is because of her indomitable spirit, her fortitude in the face of adversity, and her can-do attitude.

Reading from her book "History of Joseph Smith By His Mother"

I came to understand Lucy's commitment to God, and how she was prepared for the restored Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It was the fall of 1802, in Randolph, Vermont. She had only lived there 6 months. It was decided that Lucy was going to die from consumption. A Methodist exhorter came to visit her and seemed to sit pondering for something he wished to say. Lucy thought, "He will ask me if I am prepared to die." I dreaded to have him speak to me, for I said to myself, "I am not prepared to die, for I do not know the ways of Christ" and it seemed to me as though there was a dark and lonely chasm between myself and Christ that I dared not attempt to cross. I thought as I strained my eyes towards the light that I could discover a faint glimmer.

The minister left, and my husband came to my bed and caught my hand and exclaimed as well as he could amidst sobs and tears, "Oh Lucy! My wife! You must die. The doctors have given you up, and all say you cannot live."

I then looked to the Lord and begged and pled that he would spare my life that I might bring up my children and comfort the heart of my husband. Thus I lay all night, sometimes gazing gradually away to heaven, and then reverting back again to my babies and my companion at my side, and I covenanted with God that if he would let me live, I would endeavor to get that religion that would enable me to serve him right, whether it was in the bible or wherever it might be found, even if it was to be obtained from heaven by prayer and faith. At last a voice spoke to me and said, "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Let your heart be comforted. Ye believe in God, believe also in me."

In a few moments my mother came in and looked upon me and cried out, "Lucy, you are better." My speech came and I answered, "Yes, Mother, the Lord will let me live. If I am faithful to my promise which I have made to him, he will suffer me to remain to comfort the hearts of my mother, my husband and my children."

From this time forward I gained strength continually. I said but little upon the subject of religion, although it occupied my mind entirely. I thought I would make all diligence, as soon as I was able to seek some pious person who knew the ways of God to instruct me in the things of heaven.

In the anxiety of my soul to abide by the covenant which I had entered into with the almighty, I went from place to place to seek information or find, if possible, some congenial spirit who might enter into my feelings and sympathize with me.

At last I heard that one noted for his piety would preach the ensuing Sabbath in the Presbyterian church. Thither I went in expectation of obtaining that which alone could satisfy my soul- the bread of eternal life. When the minister commenced, I fixed my mind with breathless attention upon the spirit and matter of the discourse, but all was emptiness, vanity, vexation of spirit, and fell upon my heart like the chill, untimely blast upon the starting ear ripening in a summer sun. It did not fill the aching void within nor satisfy the craving hunger of my soul. I was almost in total despair, and with a grieved and troubled spirit I returned home, saying in my heart, there is not on earth the religion which I seek.

I must again turn to my Bible, take Jesus and his disciples for an example. I will try to obtain from God that which man cannot give nor take away. I will settle myself down to this. I will hear all that can be said, read all that is written, but particularly the word of God shall be my guide to life and salvation, which I will endeavor to obtain if it is to be had by diligence in prayer.

This course I pursued for many years, till at last I concluded that my mind would be easier if I were baptized. I found a minister who was willing to baptize me and leave me free from membership in any church, a course I continued until my oldest son attained his twenty-second year.

This was just the first of many sacred experiences Lucy had in her life, but I believe it was the foundation for everything that followed.

The sign that we just posted in her honor reads as follows:

Lucy Mack Smith was born near this spot, on July 8, 1775, to Solomon and Lydia Gates Mack. In 1796, she married Joseph Smith, Sr., and became the mother of eleven children. She was taught by a saintly mother to love God and revere scripture. Lucy taught her own children to love scripture and to seek God in prayer. Lucy's fourth son, Joseph Smith, Jr., restored in 1830 what would become The Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-Day Saints. Lucy sustained her prophet son, and provided leadership and succor to the growing body of converts. She counseled the women of the church, "We must cherish one another, watch over one another, comfort one another, and gain instruction that we may all sit down in heaven together."

How many people do you know who have received such wonderful counsel from their grandparents, let alone 4 generations removed?

I would like to add my testimony to Lucy's that I know this is the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. I know the Book of Mormon contains the fullness of the gospel and that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God. I know my Savior, Jesus Christ, lives and loves me. I know we all have a work to do as did Lucy and all who came before us. May we strive to be worthy of the heritage we have been blessed with is my prayer. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.