



Valiant in the Cause of Christ

“I am a lover of the cause of Christ.”

From the Life of Joseph Smith

In October 1838, conflict between the Saints living in northern Missouri and the local mobs and militia reached a critical point. On the 27th of that month, Missouri governor Lilburn W. Boggs issued an infamous order to a commander of the state militia: “The Mormons must be treated as enemies and *must be exterminated* or driven from the state, if necessary for the public good. Their outrages are beyond all description.”¹ Three days later, a large group of armed militia encamped near Far West, Missouri, the location of Church headquarters, and prepared to attack the city.

Gravely concerned for the safety of the Latter-day Saints, Joseph Smith and other Church leaders agreed to meet with officers of the militia on October 31 to negotiate for peace. However, as they approached the camp of the militia, the Prophet and his companions were suddenly arrested. They were then marched into the camp, where they were forced to lie all night on the cold ground in a freezing rainstorm while the guards shouted and cursed at them. When the officers decided to take the prisoners to Independence, Missouri, Joseph and his companions begged to be allowed to see their families.

“I found my wife and children in tears,” the Prophet wrote, “who feared we had been shot by those who had sworn to take our lives, and that they would see me no more. . . . Who can realize the feelings which I experienced at that time, to be thus torn from my companion, and leave her surrounded with monsters in the shape of men, and my children, too, not knowing how their wants would be supplied; while I was to be taken far from them in order that my enemies might destroy me when they thought



In Richmond, Missouri, a group of imprisoned Church leaders listened for hours as their guards boasted of attacks on the Saints. Suddenly Joseph Smith rose and said, "In the name of Jesus Christ I rebuke you, and command you to be still."

proper to do so. My partner wept, my children clung to me, until they were thrust from me by the swords of the guards.”²

After a short detainment in Independence, the Prophet and several other Church leaders were taken to Richmond, Missouri, where they were confined in an old log house, chained together, and kept under heavy guard. The Prophet would remain imprisoned in Richmond for about three weeks before being transferred to the jail in Liberty, Missouri. Although the circumstances were grim, the Prophet wrote to Emma shortly after arriving in Richmond: “We are prisoners in chains and under strong guards, for Christ’s sake and for no other cause. . . . Brother [George W.] Robinson is chained next to me; he has a true heart and a firm mind. Brother [Lyman] Wight is next, Brother [Sidney] Rigdon next, Hyrum [Smith] next, Parley [P. Pratt] next, Amasa [Lyman] next, and thus we are bound together in chains as well as the cords of everlasting love. We are in good spirits and rejoice that we are counted worthy to be persecuted for Christ’s sake.”³

During one of the cold, tedious nights, the men lay on the floor until past midnight, unable to sleep because the guards were boasting of their recent attacks on the Saints, including acts of robbery, rape, and murder. Elder Parley P. Pratt recounted: “I had listened till I became so disgusted, shocked, horrified, and so filled with the spirit of indignant justice that I could scarcely refrain from rising upon my feet and rebuking the guards; but had said nothing to Joseph, or any one else, although I lay next to him and knew he was awake. On a sudden he arose to his feet, and spoke in a voice of thunder, or as the roaring lion, uttering, as near as I can recollect, the following words:

“*‘SILENCE. . . . In the name of Jesus Christ I rebuke you, and command you to be still; I will not live another minute and hear such language. Cease such talk, or you or I die THIS INSTANT!’*

“He ceased to speak. He stood erect in terrible majesty. Chained, and without a weapon; calm, unruffled and dignified as an angel, he looked upon the quailing guards, whose weapons were lowered or dropped to the ground; whose knees smote together, and who, shrinking into a corner, or crouching at his feet, begged his pardon, and remained quiet till a change of guards.”⁴

Teachings of Joseph Smith

**The valiant cheerfully do all they can,
even during times of trouble.**

In September 1839, when the Saints were beginning the difficult work of building the city of Nauvoo, Illinois, the Prophet wrote to a Church member in Kirtland, Ohio: “As to the situation of the Church here, matters go with us as well as can reasonably be expected. . . . There have quite a number of families gathered up here already; and we anticipate a continuance, especially as upon inquiry we have found that we have not had more than [the usual] ratio of sickness here, notwithstanding the trials we have had, and the hardships to which we have been exposed. Calculating as we do, upon the mercy and power of God in our behalf, we hope to persevere on in every good and useful work, even unto the end, that when we come to be tried in the balance we may not be found wanting.”⁵

In September 1842, the Prophet wrote the following in a letter to the Church, later recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 128:19, 22: “Now, what do we hear in the gospel which we have received? A voice of gladness! A voice of mercy from heaven; and a voice of truth out of the earth; glad tidings for the dead; a voice of gladness for the living and the dead; glad tidings of great joy. . . . Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory! Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad.”⁶

The Prophet said about the progress of the Church in 1831: “It was clearly evident that the Lord gave us power in proportion to the work to be done, and strength according to the race set before us, and grace and help as our needs required.”⁷

**The valiant love the cause of Christ and strive
to develop Christlike qualities.**

“I am a lover of the cause of Christ and of virtue, chastity, and an upright, steady course of conduct, and a holy walk.”⁸

“I believe in living a virtuous, upright and holy life before God and feel it my duty to persuade all men in my power to do the

same, that they may cease to do evil and learn to do well, and break off their sins by righteousness.”⁹

“Strengthening our faith by adding every good quality that adorns the children of the blessed Jesus, we can pray in the season of prayer; we can love our neighbor as ourselves, and be faithful in tribulation, knowing that the reward of such is greater in the kingdom of heaven. What a consolation! What a joy! Let me live the life of the righteous, and let my reward be like his!

“. . . Righteousness must be the aim of the Saints in all things, and when the [Doctrine and Covenants is] published, they will learn that great things must be expected from them. Do good and work righteousness with an eye single to the glory of God, and you shall reap your reward when the Lord recompenses every one according to his work. . . . In the name of Jesus Christ, we entreat you to live worthy of the blessings that shall follow after much tribulation, to satiate the souls of them that hold out faithful to the end.”¹⁰

“From henceforth, let truth and righteousness prevail and abound in you; and in all things be temperate; abstain from drunkenness, and from swearing, and from all profane language, and from everything which is unrighteous or unholy; also from enmity, and hatred, and covetousness, and from every unholy desire. Be honest one with another, for it seems that some have come short of these things, and some have been uncharitable, and have manifested greediness. . . . Such characters God hates—and they shall have their turn of sorrow in the rolling of the great wheel, for it rolleth and none can hinder. Zion shall yet live, though she seem to be dead.”¹¹

“As one that greatly desires the salvation of men, let me remind you all to strive with godly zeal for virtue, holiness, and the commandments of the Lord. Be good, be wise, be just, be liberal; and above all, be charitable, always abounding in all good works. And may health, peace and the love of God our Father, and the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord be and abide with you all, is the sincere prayer of your devoted brother and friend in the everlasting Gospel.”¹²

“Be meek and lowly, upright and pure; render good for evil. . . . Be humble and patient in all circumstances of life; we shall then triumph more gloriously.”¹³

“We feel to exhort our brethren with boldness, to be humble and prayerful, to walk indeed as children of the light and of the day, that they may have grace to withstand every temptation, and to overcome every evil in the worthy name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁴

The valiant strive to improve themselves while in this life.

“The reflection that everyone is to receive according to his own diligence and perseverance while in the vineyard, ought to inspire everyone who is called to be a minister of these glad tidings, to so improve his talent that he may gain other talents, that when the Master sits down to take an account of the conduct of His servants, it may be said, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will now make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord [Matthew 25:21]. . . .

“. . . No consideration whatever ought to deter us from showing ourselves approved in the sight of God, according to His divine requirement. Men not unfrequently forget that they are dependent upon heaven for every blessing which they are permitted to enjoy, and that for every opportunity granted them they are to give an account. You know, brethren, that when the Master in the Savior’s parable of the stewards called his servants before him he gave them several talents to improve on while he should tarry abroad for a little season, and when he returned he called for an accounting [see Matthew 25:14–30]. So it is now. Our Master is absent only for a little season, and at the end of it He will call each to render an account; and where the five talents were bestowed, ten will be required; and he that has made no improvement will be cast out as an unprofitable servant, while the faithful will enjoy everlasting honors. Therefore we earnestly implore the grace of our Father to rest upon you, through Jesus Christ His Son, that you may not faint in the hour of temptation, nor be overcome in the time of persecution.”¹⁵



“He that has made no improvement will be cast out as an unprofitable servant, while the faithful will enjoy everlasting honors.”

“After this instruction, you will be responsible for your own sins; it is a desirable honor that you should so walk before our heavenly Father as to save yourselves; we are all responsible to God for the manner we improve the light and wisdom given by our Lord to enable us to save ourselves.”¹⁶

The valiant endure faithfully to the end and will receive a crown of celestial glory.

“Our trust is in God, and we are determined, His grace assisting us, to maintain the cause and hold out faithful unto the end, that we may be crowned with crowns of celestial glory, and enter into the rest that is prepared for the children of God.”¹⁷

“Fight the good fight of faith that ye may gain the crown which is laid up for those that endure faithful unto the end of their probation [see 2 Timothy 4:7–8]. Therefore hold fast that which ye have received so liberally from the hand of God so that when the times of refreshing shall come ye may not have labored in vain, but that ye may rest from all your labors and have fulness of joy in the kingdom of God.”¹⁸

“You cannot be too good. Patience is heavenly, obedience is noble, forgiveness is merciful, and exaltation is godly; and he that holds out faithful to the end shall in no wise lose his reward. A good man will endure all things to honor Christ, and even dispose of the whole world, and all in it, to save his soul.”¹⁹

Suggestions for Study and Teaching

Consider these ideas as you study the chapter or as you prepare to teach. For additional help, see pages vii–xii.

- Read the story of Joseph Smith rebuking the guards on page 351. How does this story influence your feelings about Joseph Smith?
- Joseph Smith said that the gospel is a “voice of gladness” and declared, “Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad” (page 352). In what ways can our knowledge of the gospel help us to rejoice and be “exceedingly glad” even during times of hardship?
- Read the third paragraph on page 352. What do you think it means to receive “power in proportion to the work to be done”? What examples can you recall that illustrate this truth?
- Review the fourth paragraph on page 352. What are some characteristics you would expect in someone who says he is “a lover of the cause of Christ”? (For some examples, see pages 352–54.)
- As you study the Prophet Joseph’s counsel on pages 354–55, think about something in your life that needs to improve. Determine what you will do to take responsibility for that improvement.

- Review the last two paragraphs of the chapter (page 356). What are some of the rewards of those who “fight the good fight of faith”? How do some people try to persuade us not to be “too good”? How can we respond to such pressures?

Related Scriptures: Deuteronomy 31:6; 2 Timothy 1:7–8; 2 Nephi 31:19–20; Mosiah 5:15; D&C 59:23

Notes

1. Lilburn W. Boggs, quoted in *History of the Church*, 3:175; from orders given to John B. Clark, Oct. 27, 1838, Jefferson City, Missouri.
2. *History of the Church*, 3:193; from “Extract, from the Private Journal of Joseph Smith Jr.,” *Times and Seasons*, Nov. 1839, p. 6.
3. Letter from Joseph Smith to Emma Smith, Nov. 12, 1838, Richmond, Missouri; Community of Christ Archives, Independence, Missouri.
4. Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. (1938), pp. 210–11; italics deleted.
5. *History of the Church*, 4:8–9; bracketed words in original; grammar modernized; paragraph divisions altered; from a letter from Joseph Smith to Isaac Galland, Sept. 11, 1839, Commerce, Illinois.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 128:19, 22; a letter from Joseph Smith to the Saints, Sept. 6, 1842, Nauvoo, Illinois.
7. *History of the Church*, 1:176; from “History of the Church” (manuscript), book A-1, p. 118, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
8. Letter from Joseph Smith to William W. Phelps, July 31, 1832, Hiram, Ohio; Joseph Smith, Collection, Church Archives.
9. Letter from Joseph Smith to the editor of the *Chester County Register and Examiner*, Jan. 22, 1840, Brandywine, Pennsylvania; original in private possession; the letter was published in the newspaper on Feb. 11, 1840.
10. *History of the Church*, 2:229–30, footnote; from “To the Saints Scattered Abroad,” *Messenger and Advocate*, June 1835, pp. 137–38.
11. *History of the Church*, 3:233; from a letter from Joseph Smith to Church members in Caldwell County, Missouri, Dec. 16, 1838, Liberty Jail, Liberty, Missouri.
12. *History of the Church*, 5:417; from a letter of recommendation issued by Joseph Smith to Brigham Young, June 1, 1843, Nauvoo, Illinois.
13. *History of the Church*, 6:411; from a discourse given by Joseph Smith on May 26, 1844, in Nauvoo, Illinois; reported by Thomas Bullock.
14. Letter from Joseph Smith and high priests to the brethren in Geneseo, New York, Nov. 23, 1833, Kirtland, Ohio, Church Archives.
15. *History of the Church*, 2:6, 23–24; from “The Elders of the Church in Kirtland, to Their Brethren Abroad,” Jan. 22, 1834, published in *Evening and Morning Star*, Feb. 1834, p. 135; Apr. 1834, p. 152.
16. *History of the Church*, 4:606; from a discourse given by Joseph Smith on Apr. 28, 1842, in Nauvoo, Illinois; reported by Eliza R. Snow; see also appendix, page 562, item 3.
17. *History of the Church*, 1:450; from a letter from Joseph Smith to Edward Partridge and others, Dec. 5, 1833, Kirtland, Ohio.
18. Letter from Joseph Smith and John Whitmer to the Saints in Colesville, New York, Aug. 20, 1830, Harmony, Pennsylvania; in Newel Knight, *Autobiography and Journal*, ca. 1846–47, pp. 129–30, Church Archives.
19. *History of the Church*, 6:427; from a letter from Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith to Abijah Tewksbury, June 4, 1844, Nauvoo, Illinois; Abijah Tewksbury’s last name is incorrectly spelled “Tewkesbury” in *History of the Church*.