

Faith and Doubt Meeting for Swedish members

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April 29, 2018

Introduction

I thank you for being here. I know you all had other things to do. Tonight you will have fun and laugh as much as you want to try to speak in Swedish. It has been decades since I have spoken Swedish really. However, I have learned French. Therefore when I try to come up with a word that is not in English, a French word first comes out.

I'm grateful to be here. Two and a half years of my birth was in Sweden. Then I was a missionary here for two years. I feel deep love, respect and admiration for Sweden and its people. I love my Swedish relatives. My mother was born in Stockholm's archipelago to ride on the island of Högmarsö. My father was born in Finland on an island called Larsmo. He was Swedish to the birth and Swedish speaking. My parents met in the church in Stockholm, on Svartensgatan 3. They decided to marry, but only in a temple. Therefore they traveled to Salt Lake City, Utah, where I was born. If there had been a temple here at that time, I suppose I would have been born in Sweden and grown up as whole Swedish.

But I'm not here because of my Swedish heritage. I am here as one of the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am here to bear a testimony of the name of Jesus Christ, that he lives and is the Savior of the world. I testify of his outstanding compassion, love and care for all the children of God. I testify of his incomparable reconciliation offerings for you and for me. Meanwhile I have come to know the Savior, I have learned about his great desire to arrange things, help wounds to heal and to make broken hearts. These are among his outstanding qualities.

The similarity of the worn, creepy boat with flaking color

Imagine you capsized in a boat, in the middle of the ocean. You have a lifeboat with you and have been swimming for hours against what you think is the closest beach, but you can not be sure. You are completely dehydrated so every time you start swimming you do not feel so well. Your best estimate is that the beach is about 3 miles away. You fear for your life. At a distance you hear a small engine. The sound seems to come against you, so the hope of rescue rises. When you look, you'll see a fishing boat approaching.

Oh, thank you, the fisherman sees you! The boat stays and a friendly weathered fisherman will help you on board. Thankfully you crawl to a seat in the back of the boat. The fisherman gives you a dunk of water and a few biscuits. The water and biscuits give you exactly the nutrition you need to recover. You are so relieved and so happy. You're on my way home.

When you begin to feel better, you notice things you had not seen before. The water you drink comes from a dunk and is not what you would have preferred, Evian or Perrier . The nourishment you would prefer to have was a few delicacies, with a chocolate coconut afterwards. You also notice that the friendly fisherman is old, has worn boots and jeans. The sweat belt on his hat is spotted, and he seems to hear bad.

You also notice that the boat is tired and there are buckles on the right side of the bow. Some of the paint is cracked and tired and is flipping off. You also notice that when the fisherman releases the grip of the helm, the boat pulls to the left. You are starting to worry that this boat and the fisherman who controls it can not provide the rescue you need. You ask the old fisherman about the bumps and the rudder. He says he did not worry so much for these things because he has steered his boat to and from the fishing waters the same way day in and day out for decades. The boat has always taken him wherever he wanted and in safety back to the beach.

You're stupid! How can not you worry about the stomachs and control? And why was not the food more like you wanted it? The more you think of the boat and the fisherman, the more worrisome you will be. You start to question your decision to board at all. Your anxiety begins to grow. In the end you require the fisherman to stop the boat and let you go back into the water. Even though you are now more than two miles from the country, you do not stand out with the idea of being in the boat. The fisherman helps you back into the ocean.

This boat represents the church, and the fisherman represents those who serve in the church. The whole purpose of the Church is to help our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ in their efforts to bring about eternal life for our Heavenly Father's children. What does the boat and the fisherman learn about the church? Does the church's bobbins and flattering color change its ability to receive authorized salvation executions that help us to become like our Father in Heaven? If the fisherman has to hold the rudder with both hands to prevent it from pulling to the left, does it inhibit his ability to get where we are going? You do not have to be a prescribed seer to know that it's unwise to slip back into the water instead of staying in the boat.

How to know

The beginning of a testimony I received when I lived in Gothenburg. I was 11 years old. The mission president had called on all young people to read the Book of Mormon. My older brother, as I always admired, had followed the

call. I wanted to be like him, so I also started reading the Book of Mormon. Somewhere along the way, maybe when I was in the book of Alma, one of the mission president's counselors - either Bo Wennerlund or Gösta Malm - told us we should ask for it. I remember the night I followed that call very well. I remember the apartment we lived in and the room my brother and I slept in. When he was asleep, I got out of bed and kneeled next to the bed and began to ask a simple prayer to know if the Book of Mormon was true.

I did not hear any voice, but it was as if God told me: "I've told you all the time it's true." That experience changed me. It changed my life. It started a process of faith, being on the federal path and trying to do more and trying to do better. It was in Gothenburg I learned to repent. It was in Gothenburg I began to look up to people who honored their callings and worked hard to build up the kingdom of God. That's where I learned to admire God's faithful holy wherever they lived.

For me, Gothenburg is always something special. The building we had meetings in on Viktoriagatan became a special place for me. We read about the converted in Alma's time in Mosiah 18:30, we read:

"And now it came to pass that all this happened in Mormon, indeed, at the waters of Mormon, in the forest that was near the waters of Mormon, yes, the place of Mormon, the waters of Mormon, the forest of Mormon, how lovely are these to their eyes as There came to the knowledge of his Redeemer. Yes, and how blessed are they not, for they will sing to his law forever."

It was in Gothenburg that I learned about my Redeemer. Gothenburg and Viktoriagatan became my "water of Mormon". Where did you get knowledge about your Redeemer? If you have forgotten, I urge you to keep in mind that you should remember.

Faith is a choice that every one must do, and doubt is not a precursor to faith. Belief is not that something is true and something is true and, with the help of the imagination, convince itself that it is so. Faith is the assurance that something exists, though we have not seen it physically. It is also an action principle. Perhaps one can say that faith is a kind of memory of our extraterrestrial existence.

"Tron must have Christ at the center to lead to salvation. . . . Tron is awakened by hearing the gospel taught by authorized servants, sending of God. Wonders do not create faith, but strong faith is developed through obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Faith comes in other words through righteousness." Faith does not come from asking for signs from God, but by obeying and following his laws.

Alma taught the humble zoramites about this process. You need to decide that you want faith and then act in faith before it can grow. God wants us to have faith so that he can bless us. We read in Alma 32:22:

"And behold, now I say to you, and I want you to remember that God is merciful

to all who believe in his name. Therefore, in the first place, he wants you to believe, yes, in his words.”

He wants to be merciful, the key that opens that door is true.

In verse 27, Alma continues:

“But see if you wake up and awake your minds so that you can test my words and exercise a little faith, yes, even if you can do nothing but wish to believe, let this desire work until you think so much that you can place in the heart for some of my words.”

In order for faith to grow, one must choose to have faith. One must wish to have faith. You have to act in faith. This is a promise in the Book of Mormon, which I followed as eleven years old. In Moroni chapter 10 verse 4 it says:

“And I urge you that, when you receive these records, you ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, unless these records are true. And if you ask with a sincere heart, with honest intent and faith in Christ, he will reveal the truth about them for you through the power of the Holy Ghost.”

One starts with the question “are these records true”? and not the question “are these records fake”? If you start with doubts, you are never led to faith. The question “can this be true?” Is the one who leads to faith. The question “may this be fake?” Is the one that leads to doubts.

Once upon a visit to a stake conference in Montana, a stake president asked me to speak to a man whom I would call Stephen. Stephen had been a faithful member of the Church. He was a returned missionary and married in the temple. He had served faithfully for many years, but began to doubt the church. When I spoke to Stephen, he said he was having trouble with the fact that Joseph Smith had written or dictated four versions of the first sight. He thought it might mean that Joseph Smith had found it all. This was before we had the essays about the Gospel topics we have now available. He started with the question, could this be fake?

I helped Stephen get in touch with a man who worked at the Church’s Historical Department who had investigated these four versions ten-year-olds earlier. Stephen talked with the researcher. Next time I talked to Stephen, I said, “What do you think about the first sight?”

He said, “Yes, it feels okay because my questions were answered. It does not bother me anymore. But now I have problems with the multiplication that was practiced in Nauvoo and after the publication of the Manifesto in 1890. It really worries me.”

I asked Stephen to talk to the church historian. After that conversation, I contacted Stephen and asked how it went.

He said, “No, it does not feel so wrong anymore. I understand and my problems have resolved. But now I am really concerned that the priesthood was kept away

from the black ones.”

Then I realized a thing about Stephen. Stephen had chosen to be a constant doubler. As time went by and a question was resolved, he found another. How I tried to answer these questions, he chose to be a doubt. Stephen left the church.

This is quite different from a woman I met in Lubumbashi, in Congo Kinshasa. Her name is Angelique. She is a faithful return missionary. She had a strong testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith. She loved the Book of Mormon. She loved everything that had to do with the church.

She read a book written by one of the church leaders before becoming president of the Church. The book was written before the revelation of the priesthood in 1978. This past leader in the church had said that because of things that had happened in the prehistoric existence, blacks could not reach an elevation. Angelique asked for help to understand why it could be so. She was told by a current apostle that this past leader in the church was wrong and that he simply put forward an opinion that proved to be wrong. Angelique pleased with it, and is faithful than today. Angelique, who is black, chose as opposed to Stephen, who is white, to be a person of faith.

Doubt is no precursor to faith. Peter did not hear when he slipped into the water after trying to go on it: “Oh, Peter, if you had more doubt.” No, he was told, “So little faith you have! Why did you doubt?” The light is not dependent on the darkness to be created.

The Prophet Joseph Smith explained the difference between faith and doubt. Let me read the following from Lectures on Faith , number 6.

“Where doubt and uncertainty prevail there is no faith, nor can it be. For doubt and faith do not exist simultaneously in one and the same person. Thus, people whose minds are burdened with doubts and fear can not have unobtrusive confidence, and where there is no unobtrusive confidence, faith is weak, and when faith is weak people can not fight the resistance, the trials and the misery they have to face to be the heirs of God and the fellow human beings of Jesus Christ. And they get tired of the mind, and the opponent gains power over them and destroys them.”

That was exactly what happened to Stephen. He left doubt and insecurity on his mind. Over time, he no longer had the strength to face the challenges faced as a member of the church. His mind was tired and he could not fight more.

Having a question is no problem

Having a question is no problem. Choosing to be a constant doubler is a problem. Joseph Smith read in Chapter 1 of James the following:

“If any of you are lacking in wisdom, he shall pray to God who gives to all willing and without criticizing and he shall receive.”

But it continues in verse 6:

“But he will pray in faith, without doubt.”

In other words, without doubting that God can answer. And the verse continues:

“He who doubts resembles the wave of the sea driven and whipped by the wind. Such a person should not think that she can receive anything from the Lord, split as she is and unstable in all her ways.”

In order to receive the kind of wisdom that Joseph Smith sought for the kind of wisdom we lack, we need to approach God with believing hearts and a mind that wishes that what belongs to God will be made known to us.

I love these words by Elder John A. Widtsoe, one of the early apostles from Norway. Over the years, we have seen many visa Norwegians, and Elder Widtsoe was really wise. He said the following:

“Doubt, if it does not lead to investigation [in the correct sources], has no value in the world. . . . To be proud of being doubtful . . . satisfied with himself, unwilling to do [the right] effort, to pay the price of a [divine] discovery, endlessly ending in unbelief and sorrowful darkness. His doubts grow like poisonous mushrooms in the dark shadows of the mental and spiritual chamber. In the end, blind as the mull in his hole, he usually replaces sense of mockery and work with laziness. The simplest truth is worth the sum of all such doubts. . . .

Doubt is not wrong unless it becomes one of life’s purposes. It rises in value when it leads to an active [divine] search for and exercise of truth. . . . But the doubt that grows and grows on itself and, with stubborn loyalty, raises more doubt, is of evil.”

We can come to the knowledge that the Savior, Jesus Christ, is real. We can come to realize that a good and loving Heavenly Father is real. We can come to realize the truth of this great work in the last days, but it requires us to choose faith and not doubt and to go to the right sources to get answers. It requires us to realize that the election is ours. There is no external force that forces us to either accept the reconciliation of Jesus Christ and the saving salvation of life, or not. It is our own choice.

Sometimes we are not sure if something is true. The Book of Mormon gives us a pattern to follow. In Moroni 7, beginning in verse 12, we read:

“Therefore, all that is good from God comes, and what is evil comes from the devil . . .

But behold, that which is of God invites and encourages to constantly do good. Therefore, everything that invites and desires to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, inspired by God. . . .

For behold, my brethren, it is given to you to judge, that you may be well separated from evil. And the way to judge is so clear that you can know it with complete certainty, as well as the daylight differs from the dark night.

For, behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that she may make good from evil. Therefore, I show you how to judge, for everything that invites you to do good and which enables people to believe in Christ comes through the power and gift of Christ, why you can know with complete certainty that it is of God.

But all that causes people to hurt and to not believe in Christ, to deny him, and to not serve God, it is - and you can certainly know - by the devil.”

So when you enter the covenant you can know that what leads you away from the path that persuades you not to believe in Christ is wrong. What persuades you to believe in God, to love him, and to keep his commandments, to serve him and his children, it is of God.

Different reactions

It is interesting that how we react depends on whether we choose to have faith or to have doubts. You remember that in Acts 2, the Apostles would go out and preach. It’s in verse 2:

... everybody heard their own language spoken. Astonished and wondered, they asked: ‘Are not they gallians, all those who speak? How then can each of us hear her own native language?’ ...

In verse 13 we find another reaction that says:

“But others humbly said,” They have drunk themselves with sweet wine.””

The second was the same. This was the Holy Ghost pronounced upon these apostles who preached about Jesus. The other was extensively poured out, and yet there were those who mocked and explained what happened. That way, they missed this eventual cast of the Holy Ghost. What was the difference? It was their personal choice. The personal choice to choose faith instead of doubt and realize that doubts do not come before faith.

Alma also spoke about this. He says in Alma 12, beginning in verse 10:

“Therefore, the one who conceals his heart is a smaller part of the word, but to those who do not curse their heart, a greater part of the word is given to him, until it is given him the feeling of God’s secrets until he fully knows them.

And to those who endure their hearts, an even smaller part of the word is given until they know nothing about his secrets. And then they are taken captive by the devil and led by his will to destruction.”

To endure to the end - the promise of eternal life

Those who choose to stay on the well-used, bumpy boat with the flattering color are those who do not curse their hearts. They enter the federal road and stay on the federal road and help others on the boat to get to the beach. Then, when they end up to the end, the promise of eternal life is given. This is the greatest

gift that God can give. It is through this process that we get to know Jesus Christ. We get to know His living reality and His love and compassion. This spiritual gift is given to all who value it.

In Doctrine and Covenants, chapter 46, verses 13 and 14, it says:

“To some is through the Holy Ghost given to knowing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that He was crucified for the sins of the world.

Someone else is given faith in their words, so that they may have eternal life if they remain faithful.”

I was voted General Authorities in the Church in April 2009. In October 2009, I was asked to speak at a General Conference. I wish my father, who was 92 years old, could listen to the conference. He had worked hard as a carpenter and builder throughout his life, and at the age of 92 he had serious problems with his back. He could not get to the conference center. My sister made sure he could watch it on TV in his home in Salt Lake City.

After the conference, I went home to see what he thought about my speech. He was a very young man and not very generous with compliments.

I said, “Dad, did you see the conference?”

He said “yes.”

I said, “Dad, did you hear my speech?”

He said “yes.”

I said, “Well, Dad, what did you think?”

He said, “Yes, that was OK, I was almost proud.”

But then I learned that he was a bit distracted because he wanted to tell me about a dream he had had the night before. He was no dreamer. He never had any fantasies. As far as I know, he never lied. He had always been brutal and tactlessly honest. He said, “I dreamed that I died and saw the Savior, Jesus Christ. He took me in his arms and said that my sins were forgiven. And Dale, it felt so good.” That’s all he wanted to say and I did not ask more.

My father became a member of the church at Larsmo at the age of 24 and then lived his life according to the light and knowledge he received. He did everything he ever asked to do. He became a man worthy of the gift of the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus is Christ crucified for the sins of the world and for his sins. The right to this gift does not depend on whether you are male or female and not of office in the priesthood. It is about being worthy of gift by entering the covenant path and staying on the covenant path, and helping others in the federal state.

Other crops in Sweden

Other apostles have promised that there will be a second harvest in Sweden, to a large extent comparable to the harvest of inverse seen in the early days of the church here in Sweden. I think these promises will happen and will happen now.

But the second crop does not only apply to those who have never been aboard the worn and creepy boat with its flattering color. It also applies to those who dropped off the boat. It concerns them, their children, grandchildren and grandchildren's children. The Savior invited us in 3 Nephi 18:32:

“You will continue to serve them, for you do not know if they will not return and repent and come to me with wholehearted intentions, that I may all of them. And you will be able to bring salvation to them.”

They also become part of the second harvest.

The second crop is also on the other side of the veil. Faithful Saints who have gone through the veil teach our ancestors who did not receive the saving and upright ordinances while they were in mortality. These ancestors never boarded the worn, creepy boat with flattered color during its lifetime. They need us. They ask for help, and we need them. They are part of the second harvest. We have a temple here in Sweden. We should tear it out.

There is reason for great optimism about the church in Sweden. There has never been a time in Church history when we could be as optimistic as we should be now. Compare the church Joseph Smith presided over with the church now in Sweden. There are members with more church experience here. There are members with greater faith. There are members with greater loyalty. There are members with more talents. When we work together and serve more holily, as President Russell M. Nelson has urged us to, we will see that the Lord (D & C 88:73)

“... shall speed up [his] work in his day.”

We will see that the Lord of the Winery works with us. The second harvest covers those who have not yet been in the boat, those who have slipped the boat, and those who passed the veil without being in the boat.

The second harvest does not depend on the missionaries, but they need to work hard and work with greater faith than ever before. This second harvest does not depend on church leaders in the church headquarters or in Frankfurt, although they need to keep working hard and exercise even more faith in following the prophet of God.

This second crop depends on the faithfulness of the Swedish faithful members and their willingness to stay in the boat and help in the boat, sharing the message of the Savior with others. This message is not a message about a burden. No, it is a message of great joy and happiness. It includes a simple willingness to tell others about the events in your daily lives. It simply involves asking for an

opportunity to share and asking for wisdom to recognize the opportunity. We all need to be the fishermen and hunters whom Jeremiah spoke of God sending and helping in the boat.

Closing testimony

The first mission I received as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve was to go and tell the Church's Historical Department that I would replace Elder Jeffrey R. Holland as advisory to their department. As you can imagine, it became "crying, complaining and dental" when they learned that their beloved counsel had been replaced. Acute lack of paper towels occurred.

As part of my mission as an advisor to the Church's Historical Department, I have read all bands of Joseph Smith Papers . I have also read the first band of the new narrative story of the church called The Saints. Reading all that Joseph Smith's ever wrote or allegedly said has simply strengthened my testimony of his role as a prophet chosen by God to restore his work to the earth.

Joseph Smith never behaved like a fraudster who was out to be fooled. Joseph Smith clearly believed that he saw what he had said: Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, Moroni, John the Baptist, Peter, James, and John, Moses, Elias, and Elijah. He clearly appeared as one who held the gold plates and translated the ancient text with God's gift and power. He manifested himself clearly as one who received revelation from Jesus Christ himself. He clearly appeared as one who received the keys of the priesthood and the keys of the holy apostle.

I know in a more powerful and reliable way than my five senses can discover and express that Joseph Smith saw what he said he saw translating the Book of Mormon through God's gift and power and receiving the priesthood with associated keys for humanity's salvation. I know this is true. I know these keys are on Earth today and that President Russell M. Nelson is Joseph Smith's rightful successor on earth.

Many, like Stephen, have returned to the church, renamed, and have reclaimed the priesthood and temple blessings. The light comes back when they choose faith. It's as if they've never been gone.

What we see as dents and flattered paint on the worn boat can prove to be divinely confirmed and divinely ruled from an eternal perspective. The Lord has either had his hand in the pants and the flaking color or uses them for their own purposes. I know of myself that the Lord Jesus Christ is leading his work on earth today. His servants know him well. I know him.

Blessing

As one of the Lord's apostles, I bless you to remember what the Savior has done for you that you never forget how it felt when you came to know the Savior. I bless you that what's not right in your families is to be solved a little at a time

and healed. I bless you to see the hand of God in your life if you choose faith and that you will experience happiness in this life and in the life that comes. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.