

I want to share part of a recent experience to reassure others about God's love and his intent to bring us to Him. If you think you know me (based upon anything that I share), please do not disclose my name. If you need, you may simply call me Joshua.

My purpose is to lead people to their Heavenly Father and to their Savior Jesus Christ. I want you to know I love them. I want to help connect people to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ so that they will receive their calling and election made sure. We need to be ready to live in Zion, the New Jerusalem, and begin the process of sanctifying our lives to be ready. This is really more about you, how you can approach Him, the Savior Jesus Christ, and how you can receive your calling and election made sure.

I believe we are living in the latter part of this dispensation. The Lord needs us to sanctify our lives and to awake. I believe that the Lord wants us to build Zion. To do so, we need enough individuals who have individually sanctified their lives, have received their calling and election made sure, and are ready to live in Zion, the New Jerusalem.

If we follow Jesus Christ, I personally know that we can progress and receive all the blessings given to ancient prophets. Receiving a calling and election made sure is NOT just for the leaders of the Church. The fullness of the gospel is so that ALL men and women may partake of ALL of the blessings of the gospel.

As I read the scriptures, I now realize how the Lord takes ordinary men and women and lifts them to spiritual levels wherein they ultimately receive their calling and election made sure. There are more people who have their calling and election made sure than the number of people who have received their calling and election made sure. Receiving is an important principle.

“For what doth it profit a man if a gift is bestowed upon him, and he receive not the gift? Behold, he rejoices not in that which is given unto him, neither rejoices in him who is the giver of the gift.”

Doctrine and Covenants 88:33

Receiving is actually one of the most important principles to grasp in all of the ordinances of the gospel. Perhaps this is why the word “receive” is used in the ordinance of confirmation and in connection with other ordinances of the gospel. There are some who “have” their calling and election made sure who

have not yet “received” their calling and election made sure. My every desire is to help others receive their calling and election. Each of us have spiritual gifts, and I need you as much as you need me if we are going to build Zion and if we are going to survive the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.

If you read the Book of Mormon with eyes to see, you will realize that the fulness of the Gospel is contained within its pages. However, the Book of Mormon does not even mention the ordinances of the temple. Maybe the Book of Mormon and the fulness of the gospel is something much, more simple – something more plain and simple for the understanding of all men and women. When we read the words of Nephi in 2 Nephi Chapter 31 we read,

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I know that if ye shall follow the Son, with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of your sins, witnessing unto the Father that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ, by baptism—yea, by following your Lord and your Savior down into the water, according to his

word, behold, then shall ye receive the Holy Ghost; yea, then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost; and then can ye speak with the tongue of angels, and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel.”

The Book of Mormon was written so that all men and women can come unto Jesus Christ and ultimately receive the Holy Ghost, who will teach us all things that we should do. When the Holy Ghost teaches us “all things,” then we will learn what we must do to be ready to receive our calling and election made sure. All things will then become our fulness of the gospel because He will teach us through the Holy Ghost.

So, who am I (without disclosing my name)? I am a devoted member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I have served several missions. I am married and have children. I felt the Spirit as a young boy when I was baptized and when I sang “I am a Child of God” in Primary. I love teaching the gospel because I experience joy in those moments when the third member of the Godhead enters into the room and testifies of Jesus Christ and the restoration.

I enjoy temporal preparations and reading about the last days. I have a canvas tent and lots of food storage. I believe some people have been and will be led to places of safety and refuge. However, I don’t believe our food storage will save

any of us if we haven't sanctified our lives. Why would the Lord save us for obeying the commandments about self-reliance and food storage if we haven't sanctified our lives or if we carry around some hidden sin?

I don't follow or associate with fringe movements in the Church. The Holy Ghost has instructed me about which books to read. The Spirit has also warned me about certain literature that is commonly held to be authoritative on certain gospel or scholarly subjects, but that content may draw us away from the gospel.

I believe we should follow the Holy Ghost; He will teach us all things that we should do.

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

John 14:26

As we seek our calling and election, I do not believe that the Lord will lead us away from the restored Church of Jesus Christ, which I testify is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I love the church, I am grateful for my membership, and I appreciate the Lord's servants.

I am also a member of the Church of the Firstborn. Everyone, who has received their calling and election made sure, is a member of the Church of the Firstborn. I am still wrapping my head around my membership in the Church of the Firstborn, and I am learning what this truly means.

The Church of the Firstborn is not in conflict with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in any way. To compare the two churches is like comparing the orders of the priesthood. The comparison is similar to how the Melchizedek Priesthood works in concert with the Aaronic Priesthood – neither is in conflict with the other. Both are important, but there is a difference in priesthood administration. I am active in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and I don't expect this to ever change. I also

readily recognize that I have received a witness that I am a member of the Church of the Firstborn, whose head is Jesus Christ.

I believe Jesus Christ is our Savior, our Redeemer and our Eternal King. I love Him, and I will now share how I came to receive my calling and election made sure.

I have spent a large part of my life pondering and praying about my standing before the Lord. Around the age of 17 and 18, I started to pray and ask Heavenly Father whether I could receive my calling and election made sure. I wanted to have experiences like Nephi, Alma, and the Brother of Jared in the Book of Mormon. I would pray for hours in my efforts. Most of the time I would ultimately either give up or wake up.

I felt discouraged thinking I was just not good enough or worthy. Embedded in those thoughts were false beliefs that prevented me in my efforts to receive this blessing. I will address false beliefs later since they are a stumbling block to our progress. At the age of 17 and 18, I had a testimony of the restoration of the gospel and many other truths but, I was discouraged that I could not pierce the veil and have the experiences that I desired.

During this time of intense spiritual growth, I left home to attend BYU. Shortly after arriving, I was invited to attend a family get-together with a girl that I dated occasionally. Since I enjoyed spending time with the girl and her family, I agreed to go to the family get-together. I enjoyed my time with my friend and her family at the get-together.

As the evening progressed, I was approached by an elderly member of her family and started a conversation. As I recall, the man was her grandfather and I believe he was an ordained Patriarch. At some point in the conversation, the man mentioned something to the effect of, "I've been instructed to speak with you." Those words and the rest of what I will share may not have been his exact words, but I will share his overall message to me that evening.

This kind elderly man then told me that there are individuals on the earth today who do, in fact, receive their calling and election made sure. He had received his calling and election made sure. He said that even though people have received this blessing, they don't often speak about the experience (particularly the details) openly. At times, however, the Spirit directs these individuals to speak about this to others. For me, there was no vow of silence – only an understanding of sacredness and reverence.

The man encouraged me to stay on the course, but taught me that I was not yet ready. I was very drawn into the conversation with this elderly man. We probably spoke for at least an hour. He explained that there are some things that cannot be shared with others. There are also some things which can be shared when directed by the Holy Ghost. He was very careful with what he shared, but he tried to be as open as possible.

He explained that there are multiple events that happen which members of the church mistakenly combine to characterize what individuals consider “receiving their calling and election made sure.” However, each of these experiences are different in their nature and purpose.

For example, he explained that there is a temple ordinance (usually given later in life) after receiving the endowment and the sealing ordinance which some individuals receive from a member of the First Presidency or the Quorum of the Twelve.

I have studied various historical records about this ordinance in church. I have learned a great deal about this ordinance. The ordinance is given to married couples who have been previously sealed to one another. However, I have not personally received this ordinance with my wife in the temple from a member of the Twelve Apostles or the First Presidency. I also do not feel that I should discuss the sacred nature of this ordinance. I respect the sacredness of temple ordinances and our temple covenants.

This elderly family member of my friend taught me that this ordinance does NOT, by itself, constitute receiving your calling and election made sure. However, receiving this ordinance may lead to a series of events wherein one does receive their calling and election made sure. This higher ordinance in the temple is given to certain couples in the temple today. Most likely, this ordinance is given to help couples progress towards receiving their calling and election.

This higher temple ordinance may lead someone to a series of events wherein the Holy Ghost ultimately bears witness to an individual that their calling and election is made sure.

And verily I say unto you, that the conditions of this law are these: All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances,

connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise ... are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead.

Doctrine and Covenants 132:7

The man also explained that there is an experience known as the second comforter. I remember that he implied, but he directly did not speak about whether he had, in fact, received this blessing. I do know people who have received the second comforter.

From my recollection, the man taught me that receiving the second comforter often occurs AFTER one receives their calling and election made sure. I mistakenly believed that receiving one's calling and election always happens simultaneously to receiving the second comforter. I believe these two events sometimes do happen simultaneously; however, the elderly family member of my friend seemed to teach me that this is not always the case.

Often, one receives their calling and election made sure, and then, at a subsequent time, they receive the second comforter. Consider the words of the prophet Joseph Smith in this matter:

“After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands), which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted.

When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and his election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter, which the Lord hath promised the Saints, as is recorded in the testimony of St. John, in the 14th chapter, from the 12th to the 27th verses.”

Notice the timing suggested by the Prophet Joseph Smith. First, the calling and election is made sure, “then it will be his privilege to receive the other comforter.”

So what does it mean to receive your calling and election made sure? Elder

Bruce R. McConkie taught

To have one's calling and election made sure is to be sealed up unto eternal life; it is to have the unconditional guarantee of exaltation in the highest heaven of the celestial world; it is to receive the assurance of godhood; it is, in effect, to have the day of judgment advanced, so that an inheritance of all the glory and honor of the Father's kingdom is assured prior to the day when the faithful actually enter into the divine presence to sit with Christ in his throne, even as he is 'set down' with his 'Father in his throne.' (Rev. 3:21.)

Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, Bookcraft, 1973, 3:330–31

About 33 years have now passed since I listened intently to the words of the elderly family member of my friend. Since that conversation, I have tried many times to pierce the heavenly veil. I have pled with the Lord, I have prayed, and I have asked.

During the last year, I was introduced to another man that has received his calling and election made sure. He's a quiet, active Latter-day Saint. He has served as a Bishop, and in other capacities in the Church. He taught me many of the same principles as the first man.

We would talk for long periods of time. I would share spiritual experiences that I have experienced, and he would share his. Based upon our conversations, he would ask, "(Joshua), are you sure don't have your calling and election made sure?" He would tell me that he felt like I was at his level as a spiritual peer. As much as I wanted to have the same blessings as this man, I would respond, "no." At that time, to claim such an experience would have been untruthful from my perspective.

He taught me that some people have their calling and election, but do not know they have it (in effect, they haven't received their calling and election). He taught me some things about how to "receive" this blessing, but he mostly taught me how to ask the Lord. He taught me to seek for the Holy Ghost's guidance in this matter.

He reassured me and encouraged me to try again. I started to pray earnestly – sometimes for hours. I experienced more discouragement. After praying for lengthy periods, I usually found myself, once again, giving up or waking up.

At his suggestion, I started to quietly ask if I had my calling and election made sure. I sought for a simple answer by the witness of the Holy Ghost. For a long time, I received no answer to this question.

Next, I started to ask what I needed to do to receive my calling and election made sure. At times, I would get “small” answers. On other occasions, I would receive “simple and quiet” guidance. I was given occasional instruction like “Trust Me” and “Be Humble.” I didn’t think I was proud, but I started to work on this principle.

I was given tremendous trials and tests. At times, I thought I would lose everything. I followed God’s revelation to do or not to do specific things even when the probable outcome looked like I would ruin my life or by following His guidance that I would lose everything.

Someday, I may share the Abrahamic tests, but suffice to say, I passed through incredible adversity. If I had trusted Him more, I believe the awful Gethsemanes through which I passed could have ended sooner. I believe that I would have received my calling and election sooner if I knew what I know now. I am certain that you and others can receive this blessing sooner.

One impression given to me was that I needed to work on anger. I was shown how I had hurt others through my anger. I couldn’t even fix this for there are so many people who I have hurt over the years that I don’t even know how to reach them - customer service operators, unknown drivers on roads in big cities, wicked politicians, and people just doing their jobs. Even though the Lord was gentle in his reproof, I knew my weakness and my guilt. I was ashamed and embarrassed. I have worked on my anger, but I need to say I am not yet perfect with this principle. It’s best to say I am focusing on progress not perfection.

I asked for forgiveness for my anger. I asked the Lord to bless and heal those that I had hurt through my impatience and anger. I constantly work on controlling any degree of anger.

One of the last, but vitally important, pieces of revelation came just prior to receiving my calling and election. I have mentioned in this narrative a little about false beliefs. One day, the Lord revealed to me that I carried a number of false beliefs. I was a little surprised because I didn’t even think that I had false beliefs. I believe in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. I believe there is a living

prophet, President Thomas S. Monson. Sometimes, we blindly believe everything we're told or given and learn to doubt later.

The danger is that false beliefs are worse than lies. The Lord taught me that false beliefs are based upon lies. All of my faith and my actions were centered on the lies embedded in my false beliefs. Just like the Pharisees in Christ's day, we have many false traditions and beliefs even though we think we're doing what's right. We go to church, we pray, we read the scriptures. What could possibly be false?

I started to ask the Lord, "what are my false beliefs?" He started to show me. For example, I experienced a fair amount of physical, verbal, and emotional abuse growing up. As I worked with the Lord, I realized that my self-esteem and my sense of self-worth were in the toilet. Throughout my life, I had also felt tremendous rejection. I often felt alone and neglected.

I had even developed an almost unconscious feeling that maybe the Lord didn't love me or care about me. At times, I felt loved, but I also felt that the Lord had more important things to do than help me with my trials and afflictions. Sometimes, I even interpreted the quiet of unanswered prayers that He had rejected me. All of these were false beliefs. All of these were based on lies.

I worked on these feelings. Then, I even experienced more rejection. One feeling of rejection came immediately before I received my calling and election made sure. I was serving on a High Council in our stake. I have served on multiple High Councils. Each time, I have been told, the Lord was preparing me to be a Bishop. I have had a father and a brother serve as Bishops. My patriarchal blessing led me to believe I would serve as a Bishop. Each time I have served on a High Council, most of the men in front of me had either served as a Bishop or were later called as a Bishop when the Bishop of their home ward was released. Ultimately, I found myself serving as the senior high counselor, and I was released to serve in another calling.

I have held a position of leadership in the church where individuals ordinarily have served as a Bishop prior to being extended such a calling. In that calling, I often trained Bishops and Stake Presidents, but I felt awkward since I did not have the experience or wisdom normally gained from serving as a Bishop.

Shortly before receiving my calling and election, I was again serving as a high

councilor. I received many indications that I would be called as the next Bishop. I was worthy of my temple recommend. I have received impressions that I would be called as a Bishop some day, but I am getting older and that day is quickly passing. My Bishop, at the time, would spend time talking with me. He is one of my dear friends. As his time was coming to a close, the Bishop would say “I would soon know his burdens and responsibilities.” He seemed to clearly indicate what was coming. I am also good friends with my stake president. I respect and love him as a man of God.

Notwithstanding the clear signals being given, I tried earnestly to put aside the thoughts that I might be called as the Bishop, even though nearly every man on the High Council before me had been called to serve as the Bishop. I thought I was totally fine not to be called. I didn't even necessarily want the assignment, but as the days passed I started to prepare for what looked like an assignment that would likely fall on my shoulders.

The man who was ultimately called as our new Bishop is a dear friend. I love him. I know he was called by revelation. I sustain him, and he is doing a wonderful work. Although I was totally supportive of this change, I realized this subconscious false belief of again being rejected and possibly even being unloved by the Lord. I hurt inside and pondered if I had somehow offended the Lord or if had truly been rejected of Him.

Time passed, I continued to work on my false beliefs. Finally, I had to ask the Savior to take my pain and remove my false beliefs of rejection or of being unloved. I am not perfect in having removed my false beliefs, but I and the Savior are working on clearing out the false beliefs.

On March 22nd of this year, I came home from a business trip. All afternoon I had been feeling the Spirit. I felt tremendous love for God. My whole being felt illuminated by the Spirit. I spent some time with my wife and family that evening. I stayed up after my family went to bed to spend some time with the Lord. The Spirit continued to just glow all about my entire being during the entire afternoon and evening.

Finally, I got tired, and I went to my bedside. I knelt down. I wept over the continued false beliefs of rejection. But, I also praised and thanked my Heavenly Father for all of my blessings. I told Him how much I loved Him. I told Him how much I loved my wife, and how grateful I am for her.

Finally, I just brought forth gratitude from the depths of my soul and with great sorrow, I told the Lord how much I loved Him. I explained that if I was indeed rejected by Him, I would continue to worship Him and love Him. I told Him that even if he hadn't forgiven me for some of my sins or weaknesses, I would always try to repent.

From the depths of agony, I said that even if, at the final bar of God, I had somehow missed my exaltation by one small mistake or weakness, I would ask for a do over or another opportunity. If I was rejected in that moment, I would beg and plead for another chance. If rejected in my request, I would still worship and love Him, and I would never stop asking for any opportunity to try again.

I explained that I would never stop trying to repent and work on myself. Further, I would always ask for another opportunity for exaltation – even if I was denied. I wept, but I also praised Him and told Him that I would do this even if He didn't love me or He had somehow rejected me. I told Him I would always love Him.

The Spirit was so strong in the quiet of that beautiful night while I kneeled at my bed. I had not come to this prayer asking, once again, about my calling and election. I just felt that Heavenly Father needed to know that if He had given up on me, I would still repent and love Him. I would still try. I would always try.

Suddenly, the Spirit seemed to increase in intensity as I expressed my love for God. Something started to happen which I did not fully understand, and I even questioned what was taking place. Nevertheless, the Spirit burned as I felt Heavenly Father and my Redeemer enter the room. I sensed their hands placed upon my head, and a blessing flowed into the depths of my soul from them.

Here is a part of the message that was given. You are now promised exaltation and eternal life. You will be given all that the Father has. You are ordained to be a King and a Priest unto the Most High God. I was instructed to see myself as a King and a Priest and to see my wife as a Queen and a Priestess. I was given a brief vision about the meaning of the titles of King and Priest unto the Most High God. They have little to do with dominion, but much to do with serving and blessing others. The concept of a servant- king is probably more accurate to describe the nature of this promise.

I was given wonderful revelation regarding my wife. I was told how beloved she is by God. I was told that she already has her calling and election made sure, but she has not yet personally received this blessing. Nevertheless, she will receive eternal life and exaltation.

I was told that my wife and I are part of the Church of the Firstborn. I was taught that I am redeemed from the fall, and that the veil will now be lifted by degree. I was promised many things that cannot be spoken because they are similar to sacred words spoken in the temple.

I was so surprised and perplexed at what was happening that I asked questions. One of my biggest questions came quickly. To explain my first question I need to share that you are instantly aware of your weakness and unworthiness before God when you are suddenly outside the veil like I found myself. You are very aware of your own nothingness. I had no idea how unworthy I was until this experience. I asked why this was happening now because I felt unworthy.

Heavenly Father and the Savior are so warm in their communication (it almost seemed like humor, but humor is the wrong word to describe how I felt). I felt their humor/joy/warmth at my expressions of unworthiness. They communicated what seemed like a question and an answer at the same time. The question seemed to be, "Do you think this is happening because you are worthy?" This doesn't happen because you are worthy. The answer seemed to be more because I was now ready. The Savior is the only worthy person that has lived in this mortality. Because of Him, I was worthy, but I alone was not worthy. Only the Lamb of God is worthy, I was nothing before them. They simply bestow their blessings upon us out of absolute love.

A surprising part of my experience came when I was told that I was being given the sealing power. I was taught that whatever I seal upon earth will now be sealed in heaven and whatever I loose upon the earth will now also be loosed in heaven. I was told not to use this power unless the use of this power

was in accordance with the will of God. I was also taught not to use this power to satisfy any selfish want. Nevertheless, I was told they were confident that I would only use this power appropriately.

Receiving the sealing power raised many questions. I asked how this could be. I accept the Prophet, Seer, and Revelator as the only one on the earth who holds

the keys to this authority. I was told not to worry, the prophet is aware that this happens. He agrees with and ratifies such occurrences. I had a lengthy conversation about this matter, but I was simply reassured that the sealing power was now being given to me. I was also told that I should study righteous kings and priests in the scriptures, but that I would be taught by heavenly messengers such as former prophets who would help me learn how to use this sacred power.

I will mention that the sealing power has been the hardest part of the blessing to understand and accept. However, shortly after receiving these blessings, I was discussing the experience with a friend who has also received his calling and election. While explaining the sequence of events, he interrupted me and asked if I had received the sealing power. I was a little surprised by his question and replied that I had indeed been given this power.

My friend shared that he had also received the sealing power and that some men, but not all men, who receive their calling and election also receive the sealing power at that same time. Others do not receive the sealing power, and some men receive the sealing power at a later date. I'm not sure why this happens, but I believe it may have to do with future responsibilities.

I was told that I would be taught by revelation and heavenly visitors how to use the sealing power. I had the opportunity only a few days later while praying about a difficult matter. I was taught how to use the sealing power to resolve the matter, and I was told I could use the sealing power for that purpose. I have to acknowledge that the sealing power worked in a seemingly miraculous way. The sealing power is very real, but I am very careful in its use. I wait for the Lord to instruct me when I am to use this power.

Since receiving my calling and election made sure, I am very aware of who has their calling and election made sure and who is close to receiving that blessing. Remember having and receiving your calling and election made sure are two completely different things. Some people already have the blessing, but have not sought to receive the blessing similar to how many of ancient Israel would not look up to the brass serpent to be healed.

In our church traditions, people are often discouraged from seeking the blessing of receiving their calling and election made sure. I have heard many church members (and even leaders) mistakenly counsel others not to pursue this path

because they knew someone who fell away while they were seeking this blessing. Embedded in these traditions is a false belief.

The false belief unknowingly created in the Church is that if you pursue your calling and election you will fall away. “May” fall away and “will” fall away are two completely different possibilities. Just to be clear, we had the potential to fall away as soon as we received our agency. We chose Christ’s plan even though many held the false belief that everyone would be saved if they followed Lucifer’s plan. The Father’s plan required faith. While we “may” fall away while pursuing our calling and election, we can just as easily fall away in following the preexistent Plan of Happiness by coming to this earth. Not pursuing our calling and election because we “will” fall away is a huge lie. Unfortunately, many people have mistakenly created false beliefs that prevent people from spiritual progress.

From what I have observed, the reason some individuals fall away when they finally pursue their calling and election is that they are tried and tested in the fiery furnace of affliction. The tests often involve the greatest trials that we will ever experience. However, we must be tested to show the Lord and ourselves that we will place everything on the altar. We have to be willing to give up everything. That is the test we will be called upon to endure if we really want eternal life.

Abraham had to be willing to sacrifice Isaac. Isaac had to be willing to surrender his own life. The widow of Zarephath had to be willing to give up her own life and the life of her son to feed a prophet. The poor widow who quietly cast two mites into the temple treasury gave all of her living. Heber C. Kimball brought his own wife Vilate to the prophet in the ultimate test of sacrifice and consecration. Joseph and Hyrum Smith gave their lives in testament to the restoration.

I was taught this morning that our trials and adversity in life are comparable to a fast. Like a fast, we seek spiritual growth for a period of time in which we abstain from some comfort like food. We also make a sacrifice (a fast offering) in connection with our fasts. Adversity is designed for our spiritual growth, we agreed to fast from deliverance for a period of time in a fallen state until we experienced the intended growth. At the end of our adversity and afflictions, our need for growth and food (deliverance) becomes intense. Our fast from deliverance and divine help ultimately brings the intended spiritual growth and

the Lord finally intercedes.

What are you most afraid to give up or lose? What is your Abrahamic test? Ultimately, you will be given the test to see if you will truly consecrate everything. Don't worry, I have been through horrible trials, and I testify that the Holy Ghost will comfort you and guide you. If you have to ultimately grab the rod of iron and pass through the mists of darkness, please have faith and know that the Holy Ghost will guide you. The Savior may even carry you. But, have faith. You can overcome the tests that you will surely face. Please ... have the faith that caused you to originally choose the Savior's plan.

Here's a quote from Joseph Smith that should settle the matter, "I would exhort you to go on and continue to call upon God until you make your calling and election sure for yourselves, by obtaining this more sure word of prophecy, and wait patiently for the promise until you obtain it."

One of the last messages given to me on the night of March 22nd was that my wife and I would live in Zion, the New Jerusalem. The Lord wants me to help others learn about receiving their calling and election. We need to prepare to build Zion by helping those who are close to receive their calling and election. Calling and election made sure still happens to ordinary people. If it happened to me, I know others can also receive this blessing.

My head is still spinning after receiving my calling and election. Much has happened since that day.

In summary, my whole view of coming events has changed. I don't think about places of safety and refuge like I did. I'm no longer worried about food storage, tents, and temporal preparations. I am thinking about Zion, the New Jerusalem, not tent cities. I will still prepare temporally, but I am more aware of the spiritual preparation that is needed for the coming days.

I used to think calling and election made sure was close to the end of the journey. Today, my perspective is that there is a long road ahead after receiving this blessing. Individuals who have received their calling and election made sure are very aware of their weaknesses and their own nothingness before God.

There is a lot of progress required after receiving your calling and election. Calling and election may be closer to the beginning than to the end of the journey.

The Prophet Joseph said:

“When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the Gospel— you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave.”

As I have pondered my own calling and election, there is something important to recognize. While there are similarities, every experience with calling and election made sure is different. Someone recently shared an experience related by an individual who received this blessing in a manner that was a little different than my own personal experience.

I recently spoke with someone who received their calling and election made sure a few weeks after my personal experience. Their experience was also little different than mine. I believe each of these experiences are valid even though they were both different than my own experience.

I believe that **you should not base your expectations or your experience** with my experience of receiving my calling and election made sure (or anyone else's). **A simple spiritual witness received from the Holy Ghost that your calling and election is made sure is just as valid as my experience**—even if you do not have the same experiences that I received.

Trust the Lord and the revelation that is given to you by the Spirit. As I ponder my own experience, I realize that I needed something that was different than others receive for a purpose known only to Heavenly Father. Nevertheless, I am expected to exercise faith in any spiritual witness given to me at whatever level it is given.

At this time, I will share a part of my experience that I did not share originally. I cannot share all of the details with others unless I am directed. I believe there is now some guidance about certain aspects of my blessing. When I received my calling and election, I was given instruction and knowledge about certain aspects of translation. Others may not be given this instruction; however, I am coming to recognize by the things I was taught prior to and during my blessing

that I will be translated.

From my perspective, translation is a process. As we progress in certain aspects of translation then our faith and knowledge grows, and we receive more. Someone recently asked a question through a friend of mine, “Was I translated?” The question is difficult to answer. The question implies a sense of completion and finality. I can probably best answer the question by saying I was changed by degree and I am continuing to change by degree. I am not fully translated, but I have started the process by which this change fully occurs. I have already noticed physical changes.

I can share that I received a visit recently from two individuals who started the translation process several years ago. They are a married couple, and I have known them for a period of time. I had previously suspected that the husband was a translated individual. I had even asked him about translation once, but he quickly steered the conversation in another direction.

This couple called us on a Friday and told us they were coming for a visit. It was quickly revealed why they had come. They shared with me that they had started the translation process several years before. They taught my wife and I over a period of two days.

They helped me remove certain temporal aspects that relate to my physical body. I am starting to recognize the changes in my physical body. They are real, and I can literally feel the difference.

Before I close my account, I just want to say how grateful I am for my Mother. My own mother loves the Lord, and she taught me to love the Lord. My mother has been a temple worker for many years, and I am so grateful she is my mother.

I am also eternally grateful for my wife. Some time ago, I kneeled by my bed and started expressing appreciation for my wife. My prayer became totally centered on the many things I recognize in my dear wife. I believe I spent about an hour just expressing gratitude for her. In my prayer, Heavenly Father even brought my attention to great blessings that I enjoy because of our relationship. I thanked Him for those blessings.

I told him how grateful I was to be blessed with someone who has gone through the terrible trials and afflictions with me. We have lost nearly everything

together and I have struggled with a terrible disease throughout my life. I have come to understand how much she truly loves me. How much I love her. We have been married for many years. Sometimes, I cannot control my tears and the feelings of my heart with respect to my wife.

I would encourage anyone to have a very lengthy prayer and just express gratitude to your Heavenly Father for your wife or your mother.

One day the Lord invited me to ponder the heavy trials through which I have passed. I don't like to go there. Pondering my trials is not ordinarily a safe place to go. I feel vulnerable to feeling discouraged and having the false beliefs of being unloved or rejected surface once again. I consciously strive to be an upbeat, positive, and happy person.

Nevertheless, I followed the direction of the Lord to ponder my trials and affliction. I pondered my lifelong struggles with health problems. I was quickly invited to ask what blessings I had received from my health problems. I responded that I have great compassion for suffering. I have learned a measure of unconditional love. I have learned who my true friends are. The Lord encouraged me to write down the blessings of suffering with each trial individually.

I realized that I have many blessings that have come from my suffering. I learned that the price for learning compassion is a very heavy price. The pain and suffering one must go through to learn compassion are immense. In the end, what do we want and what do we choose? I don't want adversity any more than anyone else wants it. But our preexistent choice to fast from deliverance and a painless, carefree life is designed so that we might become like Him! Do we truly desire to have compassion in the fleshy tables of our heart? We may feel this is unfortunate, but there is a law irrevocably decreed...

During my trials, I realized that my true friends were very much a smaller group of individuals than I originally thought. For example, I had a close friend that I met in college. We were friends for over thirty years. We often talked. As my health challenges advanced, changes in my physical appearance happened that may have changed the relationship. I also endured a period of great financial stress.

One day, I discovered that my friend had made fun of my debilitating physical

well-being to others when I wasn't around. I was devastated when I discovered what happened. I have long since forgiven the situation, but my friend still does not recognize the deep pain that he caused me. For some time, I was unable to control the sorrow and the humiliation I felt. I thought he was my friend.

Ultimately, my life circumstances created a situation where my friend moved on to other relationships. More than many other blessings that I now enjoy, I wish that I could have the friendship back.

I knew a lady once whose son was arrested for a crime. Her son broke her heart. I am sure she has served many people throughout her life. She had taken casseroles and salads to women who were sick and dinner to the families of women who had just had a baby. She was probably a one-woman compassionate service committee.

This wise woman said something deeply profound to me one day. We were discussing the pain and sorrow of her son's choices. She said, "No one brings you a casserole when your son gets arrested. No one wants to associate with someone whose son goes to jail." I learned something about true compassion and mourning with those who mourn from this good woman.

I became like a leper as greater and greater health and financial trials were placed upon me. No one goes to see the leper. I grew deeply depressed and discouraged for a time. I lost many relationships with those who I thought were my friends. I wondered, what had I done that was so terrible to offend or hurt my Heavenly Father? Do you see how my false beliefs affected my relationship with God?

I often felt so broken and alone. I learned; however, that the Lord loves broken vessels. I will talk more about broken vessels someday. I love broken vessels and broken hearts. Jesus Christ can truly bind up the wounded and heal the broken hearted. Here's how my journey to recovery began,

Probably, one of the greatest blessings of my life came while listening to an October 2007 General Conference talk from President Henry B. Eyring entitled "O Remember, Remember." President Eyring's talk was direct revelation to me. Here are a few lines from this talk,

"I would ponder this question: "Have I seen the hand of God reaching out to touch us or our children or our family today?" As I kept at it, something began

to happen. As I would cast my mind over the day, I would see evidence of what God had done for one of us that I had not recognized in the busy moments of the day. As that happened, and it happened often, I realized that trying to remember had allowed God to show me what He had done.”

I spoke with my wife. Our lives were so difficult that we needed hope. I suggested that we do exactly as President Eyring had counselled. We started to look for the Lord’s hand in our life every day.

Sometimes, I would kneel down and ask, “Heavenly Father, how were you personally involved in my life today?” “I’m so sorry that I missed recognizing your hand, please help me to recognize your blessings and your personal interaction in my life.”

I would just ponder what it was like to be in the presence of God and wait. Slowly, at first, thoughts, feelings, and impressions began to form. I started see His hand in our life. The scales of blindness began to fall from my spiritual eyes. As I took time to look for His hand, I began to recognize and see.

Recognizing is a key to receiving!

I began to express my gratitude towards Him for everything I recognized. I wanted to know when He had been involved in my life. Miracles began to happen. We noticed Heavenly Father constantly. I even began to feel as though I had been ungrateful during the previously dark period. I met President Eyring once; he is one of the most Christlike individuals I have met. But, I wish I could let him how his words pulled me from one of the darkest places in my life.

I started to notice the hand of the Lord frequently. I read a passage of scripture from the Doctrine and Covenants that spoke to my soul.

“But behold, verily, verily, I say unto you that mine eyes are upon you. I am in your midst and ye cannot see me.”

Doctrine and Covenants 38:7

I realized God’s eyes are upon us because He loves us as His children. He watches us and He wants us to be happy and have joy. I testify that I came to know that He is constantly in our midst in a way that I don’t fully understand. Nevertheless, He is there because He wants to be a part of our daily life.

I recommend reading or listening to President Eyring's talk someday. I hope his message changes your life as much as it changed mine. Here is a link to President Eyring's talk: <https://www.lds.org/general-conferen...ember?lang=eng>

Write in a journal or a notebook how the Lord has been involved in your life today. You will see his hand.

One day, I was praying and the Lord said He wanted me to have a fullness of joy. I quickly responded that I knew that was what He ultimately wanted for me. I knew that was the goal. No, He responded. He wanted me to have a fulness of joy ... now. I pondered this with Him. I discussed the great pains and sorrows that I experience. I discussed my afflictions and trials. I asked "how could I possibly have a fulness of joy with all that I bear?"

Then, He began to teach me. He shared how He bears some of the sorrows that He experiences. I felt a small measure of His sorrow for His children on the earth who don't follow Him. I didn't receive all of the answers, but...He did teach me.

I learned that exaltation does not mean an absence of sorrow; it means we can have a fullness of joy. Exalted beings choose to live in a manner where they experience a fulness of joy even when faced with immense sorrow. I realize this is a paradox, but God chooses to experience eternal life with a fulness of joy. We can choose to exercise our agency in a similar manner. I started to choose joy.

One of the keys to receiving my calling and election was to see His hand in my everyday life, to learn the role of suffering, and to choose joy in all things. These were all important trail markers in the last mile of my journey.

Probably the greatest lesson I have learned from my trials is I have learned how to receive love. Heavenly Father wants us to receive all that He has. He gives and receives the purest love in the universe. I pray that you will receive His love.

I am sharing part of my personal experiences because the Lord is allowing this. He wants others to come directly to him to receive their own personal witness of their calling and election. We need thousands

and thousands to receive their calling and election made sure to enable us to finally build Zion. I pray the Lord's blessings to be upon everyone who begins this journey.