

# The Alpine Rescue

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February 6th, 2022

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# Introduction

On February 6th, 2022 Bradley R. Wilcox, who has served on the Sunday School General Board, is the second counselor in the Young Men general presidency, and is a BYU professor in the Department of Ancient Scripture, gave what has been called “The Alpine Rescue”.

This talk was given at a tri-stake fireside geared towards youth in Alpine, Utah with the goal of keeping them in the church. If you would like to listen to this whole fireside you can download the video [here](#).

Brother Wilcox said many controversial things, including race. This caused such a controversy that [he actually issued an apology](#).

# FSY Pitch

I'm just excited to spend some time with you today. I know two of the stakes are going to be going to FSY this summer. Raise your hand if you're going to be attending FSY this summer. Great. Well, if you've ever wanted to make history, this is your summer to make history. This will be the first time that FSY will be kicked off in North America.

Some of your older brothers and sisters went to a program at BYU called EFY. That program, sponsored by the university, was actually reaching at its height – at the height of the effort, they were reaching about 35,000 young people every summer, and everybody thought that was big. This summer, there will be 150,000 teenagers who will experience FSY. Now, they won't all be in your session, so you don't have to dance with 150,000 teenagers, but they will be led by 3,000 young adult counselors. And this is going to be historic.

FSY has been going on internationally for many years in the Church. And finally, the domestic Church, the Church in North America, is going to be catching up to the international Church and giving you a chance to have that experience. What your older brothers and sisters paid \$450 to attend, you will now attend for \$75 because the Church is subsidizing so much of this experience.

You'll be able to go. You're going to have a blast. You're going to have fun times. You're going to dance together, you're going to play games together out on the field, you're going to have a big talent show. Jackson is going to be performing, and all the women are going to love him. And you're just going to have a great time with lots of fun.

But you're also going to have spiritual experiences. You're going to hear from some great dynamic teachers. You're going to be able to strengthen your testimony, to bear your testimony with each other, and to be able to

have some regular scripture study with your peers. And it's going to be a time where you're going to get away for long enough from the world that you'll be able to establish some good habits, see some good role models, those young single adults that are being chosen to be your counselors, they're going to be like heroes to you. You're going to look at them, they're just enough older than you that you're going to understand how cool they are. And then you're going to say, "wow, they can dance like maniacs and they can still love the gospel", "they can have fun and they can cheer", and "they can lose their voices screaming and yelling, but they can study their scriptures every day".

And for many of you, you'll see for the first time that having a strong testimony of the gospel and having fun can actually be the same thing. And you're going to come away from that experience very changed and very uplifted.

When they started doing FSYS in Korea, they had about 4% of their youth going on missions, and now they've got about 40% of their youth going on missions. So there are miracles that are happening all over the Church. And you're going to see some of those miracles happen right here this summer.

I was in a meeting with elder Uchtdorf a couple of weeks ago, and he said, we need FSYS not only to bolster and strengthen the youth, but we need this to be able to strengthen their parents. He says when the teenagers come home this summer from FSYS and they're standing at their pulpit, in their home ward in their baring testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel, he says "maybe that's going to get the parents to quit fighting about vaccines and masks long enough to remember they're members of the true Church of Jesus Christ".

Young people, you're not just going to have a great experience; you're going to be part of a turning point for the entire Church, young, single adults and adults. And you're going to see this difference that this can make this summer, and you're going to be part of it. And you're going to be able to tell your great grandkids, "I was part of the very first FSU that they did in North America", and all your grandkids are going to go, "oh, my gosh, Grandma, you are so cool", "grandpa, you are so cool", and they're going to be very impressed that you are part of making history.

So the long and the short of it is if your summer is this summer, man you need to walk through fire to get to FSU. I don't care what kind of arrangements you have to make it work. I don't care what kind of schedules you have to change to get away from your family reunion. I don't care what has to happen, but I need you to be at FSU. The Lord needs you to be there at FSU. So don't wait until it's over and then hear how great it was decide now to go and decide that that's going to be an experience you're simply not going to miss and I promise you that when that's all over this summer you're going to come back to me and you're say "brother Wilcox, thanks for making me go thanks for encouraging me to go" because it will truly change your life and I'm excited for that.

# The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Rise of the “Nones”

Well, today I want to talk to you a little bit about the gospel. We sang about it;

We sang about it as we sang, “We thank thee, oh God, for a Prophet”. We heard the word “gospel” in that hymn, and we’re going to talk a little bit about the gospel, because you know that – I want to read you something that I read in the newspaper. (holds up newspaper)

This children, is called a newspaper. We used them in the olden days. Look how we scroll down. (unfolds newspaper) Whoa. Did you see that? Whoa.

(Based on the video and the stats he gives, I believe the article he is referring to is [“Millennials and religion: why they leave”](#) By [Kristina Smith, published February 2, 2016](#) in BYU’s newspaper “The Daily Universe”)

Well, in the newspaper, it says that young people are leaving religion. And it compared your generation to my generation on four important questions:

- Number one, is religion very important? 59% of my generation said yes. 41% of your generation said yes.
- Do you attend weekly religious services? 38% of your generation said yes. 27% of my generation said yes.
- Do you pray at least once a day? 61% of my generation said yes; 42% of your generation said yes.
- And do you believe in heaven? 74% of my generation said yes, and 67% of your generation said yes.

Now, you can see that those numbers are going down in every category. And you don't need a newspaper to tell you that, because how many of you know somebody who used to go to Church who no longer goes to Church?

Raise your hands if you know somebody. Yeah, look at all those hands. Now, let me tell you two things about that:

Number one, our Church is doing much better than many churches, as people are turning away in a secular world from all things religious, many churches are being hurt by it. Our Church is weathering that storm much better than most churches and especially much better than most Christian churches.



# Apostates

I know you think, “Whoa, but everybody’s leaving the Church,” – no.

If you actually look at the numbers, there’s not any more leaving now than have left to any generation in the history of the Church. People left in Kirtland, Ohio. People left once the Saints moved to Salt Lake. I mean, people have left the Church in every generation, and the numbers aren’t that different. The difference is that now people leave very publicly where people used to just step away and nobody knew about it. Now they leave on TikTok, and thousands of people watch them as they sit and gripe about the Church.

And so because it’s so public, then we think, “oh, everybody’s doing it”, but that’s not the case. The Church is strong. The youth of the Church are strong. The young single adults of the Church are strong. And there’s not that many more leaving now than there were when I was growing up. It’s just happening in a much more public way.

Now, what scares me about people making the choice to leave isn’t that we have a few less people in the Church. It doesn’t bother me that we have fewer people sitting in the pews. What bothers me is that we have the Church in fewer people. That’s what bothers me, because they’re going to face the same challenges we face. They’re going to face the same struggles and the same trials and the same heartbreaks. And they’re choosing to do it in the absolute hardest way possible. They’re choosing to do it without God, without Christ, without the Church.

By leaving the Church, it doesn’t mean that they escaped the trials of life. It just means they escape the blessings that can help them deal with the trials of life. We know that the Lord said, “Come unto me all Ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and Ye shall find

rest to your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:28-29).

Now, some people, as they walk away from the Church, they think they’re losing the labor part; they think they’re losing the heavy laden part. But what they’re really losing is the light and easy part. Life is the heavy laden part, and they are losing the easy and light way of being able to face the realities of life.

# Set Up

So tonight let's talk about six different doctrines that you find here in the Church that you can't find elsewhere.

Maybe some people can leave some churches and they don't miss that much. But you leave this church, you miss everything. You miss everything. Let's talk about the blessings of the gospel that you can only find here.

We're going to tie each one up to a letter in the word gospel, G-O-S-P-E-L. As easily as you can spell the word, you're going to be able to remember what we learned. And when you go home and your mom says, "what did you learn at the fireside?", you're actually going to be able to tell her, and that will be a miracle.

# G Stands for Godhead

G stands for “Godhead”. Our view of the Godhead is very different than the view of many Christians. Most Christians believe that God and Jesus are the same being and that God/Jesus is a spirit. We don’t believe that.

We know that God and Jesus are separate beings and that they have physical, tangible, perfected bodies. Well, how do we know that? We could turn to some scriptures that talk about it, but mostly we know it because of Joseph Smith. He saw them. That’s what Jackson was playing about when he played that song. He saw them.

“Yeah, but maybe Joseph Smith lied”. If you haven’t heard that yet, you certainly will. Lots of people say, “oh, he just made it all up. He just made up that story”. But people who go there don’t understand why we lie. Because you certainly don’t lie in an effort to be found out. You don’t tell your teacher “I didn’t get my homework done because aliens beamed down and sucked it into the mothership”. No, your teacher is never going to believe that. Well, not you, because you don’t lie.

But people who go there don’t understand why we lie. Because you certainly don’t lie in an effort to be found out. You don’t tell your teacher I didn’t get my homework done because aliens beamed down and sucked it into the mothership. No, your teacher is never going to believe that. Well, not you, because you don’t lie. But what do your friends tell the teacher? “Yeah, the dog ate my homework”, “Oh, my gosh, my mom washed it in the washing machine”, the one I hear at BYU where little children have signed an honor code is, “my printer broke” every time a paper is due. You have no idea how many broken printers fill Utah Valley. It’s just an epidemic.

Now, why do they say that to me? Because it’s something I might believe. Do you think Joseph Smith was that different? If he were lying,

then he would have said what everybody wanted to hear. He would have said, “I saw God and God and Jesus are one being, and God and Jesus are spirit”. That’s what people wanted to hear. That’s what they would have believed. And yet he didn’t say that.

He said, “God and Jesus are separate beings with physical, tangible, perfected bodies”. Whoa. That is so far out of the realm of believability that Joseph Smith proves himself either a horrible liar – I mean he was bad at it – or a speaker of truth.

Joseph Smith himself taught that true faith isn’t just believing there’s some God out there in the universe. True faith isn’t just believing in some higher power. True faith is knowing God; knowing his attributes; what He’s like; knowing his plan for us; and knowing that our lives are being lived in accordance with that plan.

So you want to walk away from the Church? Say goodbye to your whole concept of God. I had some kid at BYU say to me, “I don’t believe in Joseph Smith anymore, but I still believe in God and Jesus”. And I said, “Look, I don’t mean to be rude, but do you realize how stupid you just sounded?” He’s like “What?” I said, “you don’t believe in Joseph Smith, but you still believe in God and Jesus. You separated them. Who taught you to do that? Who taught you that they’re separate beings? Joseph Smith. So don’t tell me you don’t believe in Joseph Smith anymore when your whole concept of God, your whole covenant relationship with Him is thanks to Joseph Smith”.

My son, served a mission in Japan, and I said to him, “wow, that must have been really interesting to teach people who don’t have a Christian background”. He says, “Oh, yeah, it was because they don’t know the Bible stories. They don’t celebrate Christmas, they don’t celebrate Easter”. I said, “How on Earth did you get them to join the Church?” He

said, “They read the Book of Mormon. And then when they gained a testimony that Joseph Smith was a Prophet, then they believed any being who happened to come to Joseph Smith, and we know that that being was Jesus Christ.” You hear people say, “I believe in Jesus, but I don’t believe in Joseph Smith”. But there are people in Japan who say, “The only reason I believe in Jesus is because of Joseph Smith”.

What do you get here that you don’t get anywhere else? A knowledge of God and their Covenant relationship with Him that suddenly allows this higher power to have power in your life. And I don’t want to walk away from that. I don’t want to say goodbye to that.

G stands for Godhead.

# O Stands for “Only True Church”

O stands for only true Church. O stands for....?

How many of you have ever heard somebody testify that this is the only true church? How many have ever said those words? Yeah, we hear them. We say them all the time. But some people get kind of bent out of shape when you say those words.

If you haven't yet run into somebody who gets a little uptight when you say “This is the only true Church”, then you will run into somebody who will get uptight because they don't like that. They don't think that sounds very tolerant. And in today's world, tolerance trumps all. So by hang, we better be tolerant. And we sure don't want anybody to feel bad because we say we're the only true Church.

The reason that people get uptight is because they don't understand why we say it. We're not having a competition. How many of you have ever gone to a high school game? How many have ever yelled these words? “We're number one; we're number one”, how many have ever yelled those words? Do you realize that every high school in the nation yells those words? I have never been to a high school game and heard people scream, “We're number 439; we're number 400—”, No; everybody's number one. Why? Because it's a spirit of competition. But we're not screaming “We're number one”, saying we're better than everybody else. We're saying “We're the only true Church” in a spirit of invitation.

President Boyd K. Packer used to say “Truth is like a piano keyboard; some churches play a few notes, some churches play several octaves, but we're the only church that has a whole piano.” So when we are saying we're the only true church, we're just inviting people to come and see what we can add to the truths that already fill their lives. If they think they can play some pretty music now, then we want them to know that

they can play like Jackson. I mean, we want them to know that they can play with the whole piano.

And I don't want to lose the whole piano. You walk away from the Church, say goodbye to the whole piano. Have fun playing Chopsticks the rest of your life. I don't want to play Chopsticks the rest of my life. I want to play like Jackson. And to do that, you have to have the whole piano.

So G stands for...

O stands for...



## S Stands for “Spirit”

S stands for Spirit.

Now, I had a fight with a missionary companion once because he said that Latter-day Saints are the only ones who can feel the Spirit. And I said, “nu-uh”, and he said, “uh-huh”, and I said, “nu-uh”, and he said, “uh-huh”, and I said, “nu-uh”, and that’s how missionaries fight.

And I said, “Look, if they can’t feel the Spirit, what do they feel on Christmas Eve when they’re singing Silent Night, and the little kids are all dressed in bathrobes doing the manger scene? What do they feel?” He says, “The spirit of the devil”. I said, “No! You can’t feel the spirit of the devil when little kids are dressed in bathrobes! You can’t feel the little spirit of the devil when they’re singing ‘Silent Night’!”

What my companion was trying to say is that we do have something that sets us apart, but it’s not the Spirit. Muslims feel the Spirit. Hindus feel the Spirit. Jews feel the Spirit. Catholics feel the Spirit. The Spirit will come and go in their lives. What we have that they don’t have is the gift of the Holy Ghost, and that’s the chance to have the Spirit with you always.

Come on up here, buddy. I told you I was going to pick on you. What’s your name? Jake. Come on up here. Is it “Jay” or “Jake”? (A kid name Jake comes to the podium) All right, Jake is going to be my balloon. I’m going to blow up the balloon, and you’re going to make the sound effect. Are you ready? Here we go. (Jake makes a whooshing noise) Good! Gosh, it’s like we practiced this, man. Oh, he’s been practicing for three days. All right, so if I don’t tie a knot at the, uh, end of the balloon, what’s going to happen? Make the sound effects. (Jake makes another whooshing noise) Good!

And that's how the Spirit kind of goes in and out of people's lives, but when we are baptized, then we get the knot in the end of the balloon. That's called the gift of the Holy Ghost. And it allows us to keep the spirit with us all the time. Thank you, Jake (jakes goes and sits down).

Now, the good news is that most of you received that gift when you were eight years old. The bad news is that most of you received that gift when you were eight years old. And then young people say to me, "Brother Wilcox, I've never felt the spirit". And I say, "Yeah, you have", and they go "nu-uh", and then I go "uh-huh", and they go "nu-uh", then we're fighting again!

"I've never felt the spirit."? No, of course you felt the Spirit. Steven Covey used to tell students at BYU when they'd say, "I've never felt the Spirit", he'd say, "You're like a fish – you're swimming around in the water, and you're going, 'Water? What water? I don't see any water.'" When does the fish notice the water? When he's out of the water. And then he goes, "Whoa, I was in the water all the time".

Sometimes that's what has to happen with young Latter-day Saints; they have to do something stupid. Distance themselves from the spirit. And then they say, "I was feeling it all the time. I just didn't recognize it".

We sing, "The Spirit of God, like a...? Fire, is burning". I've felt that fire, but I don't feel it every day. I'm kind of glad I don't feel it every day. I mean, you couldn't even get through your morning for Pete's sake. The alarm would go off, and you'd be like, "OOOOHHH! Feeling the Spirit! Yeah!" And you'd be in the shower going, "OHH!", and you'd be pouring your Captain Crunch "OOOOH!!". You couldn't even get through the morning. So it's a good thing you're not feeling the spirit "like a fire" all the time.

Sometimes I think maybe we ought to sing “The spirit of God like a furnace is working”. See, when it’s a cold day outside and you walk into your house, you don’t notice the furnace. None of you walk in your house and go, “The furnace is working”. When do you notice the furnace? When it’s not working. And then you don’t sit there and say, “I guess this is my new normal,”, No! You call somebody, because you want to get it fixed. Because you want to feel – catch the word – comfortable. You want to feel comfortable. And that’s how the Spirit helps us feel. We don’t always notice it, but it lets us get on with our lives. It lets us get on with what we’re here and mortality to learn and to do. So just recognize that sometimes it’s “like a fire”, most times it’s like a furnace. But you are feeling the Spirit because it surrounds you. You have the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Now you want to leave the Church? Well, say goodbye to the knot in the end of your balloon. Say goodbye to the gift of the Holy Ghost. Oh, you’ll feel the Spirit now and then, but you’re not going to be able to feel it always, and that means you’re going to miss the guidance; you’re going to miss the testimony; you’re going to miss the direction; the peace; the comfort; the sanctification that that Spirit can bring into your life. I don’t want to miss those things; I need them too desperately.

G stands for...

O stands for...

S Stands for...

Now you realize what I’m doing is planning your next Sacrament meeting talk. So next time the Bishop says, “Will you speak in Sacrament meeting”? say “Yes, Bishop. I’d love to. I’ll speak about the gospel” and then stand up and say, “G stands for.... O stands for... S stands for...”, then just talk about those things.

## P Stands for “Priesthood”

P stands for priesthood. Priesthood.

How many of you used to play school? Okay, good. I’m glad to see those hands up. How many of you used to play Church? I’m glad to see a few hands go up. My kids played Church. They’d pull out the stuffed animals, they’d put them on the couch, they’d sing the song, they’d do the talk, [I] got a little nervous when my daughter started blessing the sacrament, but they played church. And I used to think, “Oh, that’s so cute. It’s so cute.”

But now I’m older, and I realized it wasn’t just cute. It’s actually what most people in the world are doing. They’re playing Church. They’re sincere, they want it to count, but they don’t have the authority. They don’t have God’s permission. So that the things they do really count on Earth and in eternity. Man, I want what I’m doing to count. And to be able to have that, we have to have the priesthood. We have to have that.

I lived in Wyoming while I was getting my PhD, and I was working at the University in what they called “the writing center”. And in the writing center, people would come and get help with their papers, and I would supervise a few tutors who worked there with me. One girl came late to work, and I said, “Where have you been?”, she says, “I’m sorry, but I was at my wedding rehearsal, and I’m just so upset.” I said, “Maybe you shouldn’t marry him”, and she said, “I’m not upset at my fiancé; I’m upset at the preacher.” I said, “How can you be mad at a preacher; they’re nice.” She said, “Well, I’m not mad at the preacher; I just don’t like those words.”

What words is she talking about? “Till death do you part”. Most churches don’t say that anymore; now they say, “As long as you both shall live” – it’s the same thing.

And she didn't like those words. She said, "I feel like I'm getting divorced. The day I'm getting married", I was like, "This is like a missionary moment. This is a missionary moment. I mean, Brad, come on. Don't blow it. Don't blow it." So I said, "In my Church, we get married in the temple, where we are sealed for time and all eternity", and she went, "Oh! I love that!"

And I said, "Fill the font! I'm going to baptize this girl right now!" No, she didn't want to get baptized. She didn't even want to meet the missionaries. But she did want to rewrite her wedding ceremony. So she went to the minister, and she said, "May I write my own ceremony?", and he said, "For an extra fee". So she paid the extra money, and she wrote her own ceremony. And I sat there in that Protestant church and listened as the preacher sealed them for time and all eternity.

(Pantomimes having his mind blown)

I couldn't believe it. I mean, I'm freaking out. I'm like, "Whoa!" Everybody in the church was like, "That is so special", I was like, "That is so wrong! That's just, like, wrong!. Like lightning bolt wrong." Why? It's a free country. They can say whatever they want to say. Why did I feel it was wrong? Authority. No authority. They just didn't have permission to say those words. And so did it count eternally? No, because they were playing church, and in our church, we don't play church. We have the authority to make that count on Earth and in heaven. And that is something I don't want to say goodbye to.

Now, sadly, you live in a time where a lot of people get uptight about priesthood issues. It's one of the most glorious things we have in the church, and yet people want to sit and fight about it and get uptight about it. Now, I don't mean to oversimplify a complex issue, but I sure think we make it a little harder than it needs to be. "How come the

blacks didn't get the priest until 1978? What's up with that, Brother Wilcox? What? Brigham Young was a jerk? Members of the Church were prejudiced?" Maybe we're asking the wrong question.

Maybe instead of saying, "Why did the Blacks have to wait until 1978?", maybe what we should be asking is "Why did the whites and other races have to wait until 1829?" 1,829 years they waited. And why did the Gentiles have to wait until after the Jews? And why did everybody in the House of Israel except the tribe of Levi have to wait until —

when you look at it like that, then instead of trying to feel like you have to figure out God's timeline, we can just be grateful. Grateful right down to our socks that the blacks received the priesthood in '78. Grateful, right down to our socks that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had the priest to restore to them in 1829. Maybe we should just feel grateful.

"Yeah, but, Brother Wilcox, how come the girls don't have the priesthood? I mean, that's what I want to know. How come the girls don't have the priesthood? What's up with that?" Girls, you're going to hear a lot of people say a lot of things, and many of them say them with very angry voices, but just because somebody's angry doesn't necessarily make him or her right. Just because somebody's loud doesn't necessarily make him or her right.

I was at a professional conference for BYU. I had a name tag. It said, "Brad Wilcox, Brigham Young University". Some lady walked up to me that I didn't even know. Some lady walked up to me that I didn't even know, she sees my name tag. And she's like, "Oh, (shouting) WHY DON'T YOU GIVE WOMEN THE PRIESTHOOD?" , just like that. And I said, "Good to meet you, too." And then I asked, "What's the priesthood?", and she said, "...Well, I don't know, but I think the women

should have it”. Seriously? “I don’t know, but the women should have it”? What’s, malaria? “I don’t know, but the women should have it”.

I mean, I’m going to let her voice, that’s very shallow, drown out my testimony just because she’s loud? No way.

Girls, listen closely, because I don’t know that you’ll ever have somebody explain it quite this point blank again. You have access to every priesthood blessing. There is not one priesthood blessing that you are denied. And you serve with priesthood authority. When you are set apart in a class presidency or you’re set apart as a missionary or in any calling in the church, you serve with priesthood authority. You will go to temples where you will be endowed with priesthood power, and you will dress in priesthood robes.

“How come the girls don’t have the priesthood?” What the heck are they talking about? Your life exudes priesthood; it’s surrounded by priesthood; it emanates priesthood.

So what is it that women don’t have? Two things:

- One, priesthood keys and
- two, priesthood ordination.

“Well, how come women don’t have priesthood keys?” Well, how come most men in the church don’t have priesthood keys? Priesthood keys are an organizational structure. It’s how God’s house is a house of order. And so not everybody needs them; just those who are part of this organizational structure. So how many men in a ward have priesthood keys?

The Spirit is whispering... The Spirit is whispering... (shouting) Four! You knew it! You knew it. I’m so proud of you. Let’s name them:

- The Bishop
- The Elder's Quorum President
- The Teacher's Quorum President, and
- The Deacon's Quorum President.

So girls, don't mix keys up with influence. We're certainly not saying the only ones who have influence in the church are the Bishop, the Elder's Quorum President, the Teacher's Quorum President, and the Deacon's Quorum President. Surely there are others at all levels of the Church who have great influence without having keys. So don't mix those up; don't think that that's something that's needed to be able to make a difference.

What else don't women have? Priesthood ordination. They're not ordained to the priesthood. "Well, how come they're not ordained to the priesthood?" Maybe we're asking the wrong question. Maybe we should be asking, "Why don't they need to be".

Girls, how many of you have ever entered a temple to perform ordinances? Raise your hands high. Raise them high. Do you realize that you have done something that no man on this Earth can do? There is not a male on this planet who can enter a temple to perform ordinances without being ordained, and yet you just waltz right in. You just walk right in.

So what is it that sisters are bringing with them from a premortal life that men are trying to learn through ordination? Maybe that's the question that ought to be keeping us up at night.

You want to walk away from the church? Walk away from anything that lets anything in your life count or matter beyond this life? You're



walking away from priesthood, and I don't want to live in that land where purpose becomes empty and where anything good has an end. I don't want to be there. I don't want that. I want to be able to have priesthood, and that's what we've got in the Church.

G stands for... good.

O stands for...

S stands for...

P stands for...

## E Stands for “Everyone”

E? E stands for “everyone”. The gospel is for everyone, and we’re the only ones who invite others to receive the gospel through missionary work, and even those who have passed away and not had it. They can even receive the gospel in temples.

Man, Christianity has a problem. A huge problem. Jesus said, “Get baptized or you’re not going to heaven”, and yet most people in the world have never even heard the name of Jesus Christ, let alone been baptized. That’s a problem. Do you realize we’re part of the only Church that has the solution? The solution to that problem? Offering an opportunity, not forcing anyone, but offering an opportunity to everyone to receive the very ordinances that Jesus said are essential to their Salvation and progress.

Wow. I don’t know about you, but I like being part of the solution. There’s enough problems in the world. I like being part of the solution. You want to walk away from the church? Walk away from temples? And I don’t want to walk away from temples, because that’s where not only can we find Salvation, but we can offer it to everyone. And I love that.

G stands for...

O stands for... good

S stands for...

P stands for...

E stands for...

# L Stands for “Living Prophets”

And L stands for “living prophets”. Living prophets.

Many people believe in Jesus because of Peter, James and John. We believe because of Peter, James, and John, but also because of Russell, Dallin, and Henry. Same priesthood authority; same special calling; same special witness of the Savior. We are to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things and in all places, and we can do that much better when we’re standing on the shoulders of special witnesses at all times and in all things and in all places.

[\(This video is the conversation that Wilcox is about to talk about\)](#)

The summer before COVID shut the world down, I was invited to go to an evangelical/Latter-day Saint conversation. It was in Idaho Falls, they got the local high school auditorium, they filled it with people. Then they had a minister from Boise represent the evangelical point of view, they had me from BYU representing the Latter-day Saints point of view. And we had a little discussion back and forth together.

[\(time stamp to this part in the discussion with the Evangelical\)](#)

He asked me, “Are you a Bible based Church?”, and I said “(hesitantly squealing)”, and I said finally I said, “No, not the way you’re thinking of it, but yes, in a way you’ve never thought of before.” The poor guy was just going (shaking face and making silly noises as if the minister was confounded). He didn’t know exactly what I was talking about. So I explained. I said “A lot of people hold the Bible up, and they say, ‘this is my religion’”. He says, “I would be one of those people”. I said, “Yeah, but the Bible is not actually religion; the Bible is a history of people who had religion. What did the people in the Bible have? They didn’t have the Bible, not the way we have it today. So what religion did they have?”

They had prophets, they had apostles, and we got the same thing today. So if you look at it like that, we're the ONLY Bible based church!"

I don't know whether I convinced him, but it's true. Back in those days, they didn't say, "Turn to John 3:5". No, they turned to John; he was right there. They didn't say, "Turn to the Epistles of Paul". No, they turned to Paul. And Joseph Smith says he was short. (gesturing downward) So they turned the Paul, and he was right there. And that's the same religion that we have today, knowing that we are led by prophets, seers and revelators men who are alive leading a living church at the direction of Jesus Christ.

Many Christians follow Christ, and they follow him very sincerely. But we are the only Christians on this planet who are led by Jesus Christ. It's one thing to follow him. It's another thing to be led by him. And he leads us as he's always led His children, through living prophets and through living apostles.

You want to walk away from a church? Well, say goodbye to living prophets. Say goodbye. You have to see Christ through a pretty small window when you're stuck with just the Bible, so say goodbye to the larger window that we have because of living prophets. Say goodbye to President Nelson. I want him to live to be 120! I don't want to say goodbye to him. Say goodbye to Elder Uchtdorf or "No!", yes! You must say goodbye. Walk away from the Church, say goodbye to Elder Holland. Say goodbye to Elder Christopherson. Say goodbye to Elder Anderson. Say goodbye to all of these leaders that I just don't want to live my life without. I just don't know what my life would be without their examples, without their teachings, without their testimonies, especially when times get hard.

I hope you realize that if you walk away from this religion, you lose everything. You lose everything. Everything that truly matters most. So stay put. Stay strong. Look for every possible reason there is to stay. And there is to share the truths we have that cannot be found elsewhere.

Okay, here's your final exam. You ready?

G stands for...

O stands for...

S stands for...

P stands for...

E stands for...

L stands for...

and R stands for... refreshments. Are we having refreshments? You're fasting today.

# Closing Testimony

I'm so grateful that you came, and I'm grateful that maybe something that's been said today might sink in and help you realize how blessed you are to be here.

I bear testimony that God is real, that Jesus is real. And I bear testimony that this is the only complete church on the face of the Earth.

And I bear testimony that we have the gift of the Holy Ghost and all the gifts of the Spirit that come with it.

I bear testimony that the priesthood is real and that the priesthood it makes everything worth it.

I bear testimony that temples are important not just because we get excited about the day that they're announced or when they're built or when there's an open house. But we can be excited, every time we go and make sure that we're offering the gospel to everyone.

And I bear testimony that President Nelson and those who serve with him in the Quorum of the Twelve and the First Presidency are prophets, seers, and revelators. And as we stay close to them, as we support them, as we sustain them, then we will be safe and we will be happy.

And I leave that testimony in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.