

“Courage, Brethren”

Very often, life is less than ideal. If we wait until all is right to be happy, we may spend our lives waiting. The Lord commanded, “Be of good cheer.” He said that on the darkest night of His life.

Around noon, on September 3, 1842, three men came to the door of the home of Joseph and Emma Smith in Nauvoo. They were there to arrest Joseph on charges originating with the attempted assassination of former Missouri Governor, Lilburn W. Boggs, earlier that year. John Boynton, a friend of the prophet, delayed them at the door, giving Joseph a moment to slip out the back door, through his cornfield, and into the home of Newel

K. Whitney. With no warrant, the officers searched the house twice that day looking for Joseph. That night under cover of darkness, Joseph went to the home of Edward Hunter.

Hunter took Joseph through his house and through a trapdoor that led into a little room in the attic story, so cramped and confined that Joseph could not stand up straight. There, Joseph would remain in hiding for the next week, cut off from family, friends, and the busy, active work he so loved. Joseph was not one to be confined and made a prisoner. And so would be the Prophet’s lot for the next three months—in and out of hiding, unable to be with his family and lead the church in person and public, as he loved to do.

From the time Moroni informed Joseph that his “name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues,” Joseph had suffered unremitting persecution. Brigham Young once described Joseph’s persecution by saying, “If a thousand hounds were on this Temple Block [Temple Square], let loose on one rabbit, it would not be a



bad illustration of the situation at times of the Prophet Joseph. He was hunted unremittingly.”

The Prophet Joseph said this of the persecution: “Deep water is what I am wont to swim in. It all has become second nature to me” (DC 127:2).

By any standard, Joseph’s life was “deep water.” It was not an easy one, and yet, it was he who penned these glorious words so filled with joy, faith, power, and encouragement. “Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory! Let your hearts rejoice and be exceedingly glad. Let the earth break forth into singing. Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel!” (DC 128:22). On the prophet goes, pouring forth hope, encouragement, and words of praise.

To me, where and when Joseph wrote those words is almost as significant as the words themselves. You see, Joseph dictated those words September 7, 1842, while cut off from his people and confined in the cramped attic story of Edward Hunter’s home.

Joy is to be found in the climb up the mountain and not just with the view at the top.



Source:

<https://www.gospeldoctrine.com/doctrine-covenants/sections-121-138/section-128>

Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, comp. John A. Widtsoe (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1941), 464.

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