

Cemetery 25th Cemetery Anniversary Remembrance

Carthage, Illinois – Carthage jail
Saturday Morning, August 6, 2016

Elder M. Russell Ballard

Well family, I am honored to be with you this morning. This of course is a very sacred and hallowed place for anyone who is connected with the Prophet Joseph and Hyrum Who was also a prophet. My mind is on the life of Joseph F. Smith. As we went by the Nauvoo Temple and saw the statue of Joseph and Hyrum on their horses at the base of the temple. It is about that same place where Hyrum reached down and picked up his five year old son, Joseph F. He kissed him and placed him back down on the ground. That was the last time he saw his father alive. As he and his uncle whom he adored, rode off to Carthage. The next time this little boy saw his father and uncle was in the Mansion House as the martyred prophets of this dispensation of the fullness of times.

It was not until 1906 that Joseph F. Smith came here. He had been President of the Church since 1901. They climbed the stairs of the jail. As they stepped into the martyr room, at that time they had some plastic covering what the host announced to Joseph F. Smith and his friend Charles Nibley. "This is the blood of Hyrum Smith."

The record from Brother Nibley reported Joseph F. Smith sat on the bed. He placed his face in his hands and wept with tears streaming through his fingers. He then said, "He looked up and said, "Charlie, take me out of here." So, to all who are associated by blood or by testimony of the divine missions of Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, and Samuel Smith who also lost his life as a result of his efforts to reach his brothers. As their posterity, we bow our heads in quiet contemplation of our blessing to know not only the restored gospel that they gave their lives for but to also know them as our beloved forefathers, uncle, or grandfathers. Now with that knowledge comes a great responsibility. We have the responsibility as family members to live the gospel. We must testify, witness, and live as they would expect us to do. Because within those who are family members courses the blood of believing prophets. So this morning, I thought how appropriate that we would be able to hear the birds chirp as we are sitting here together at the Carthage Jail. I think even Joseph and Hyrum are smiling upon the fact that we are here, we are here as their family, we are here because we believe, we are here because we are committed, and we are here because we will serve. May the Lord bless us. Never, ever, underestimate the glorious, marvelous message of the restoration. That the heavens were opened and that Joseph and Hyrum and other prophets have been able to give to you and me an understanding of the great and important purpose of our existence here in mortality. That we know who we are, we know where we came from, we know why we are here, and we know we are trying to be worthy of eternal blessing by striving to live our lives as the Lord expects.

I would like to bear my testimony and witness, that I count one of the greatest privileges that can ever be given to a man, to be able to stand in the nations of the world and I have been to most of them, and boldly and without hesitation testify that Joseph Smith is the prophet of this the dispensation of the fullness of times. That he was chosen by God our Eternal Father before the foundations of the world to fulfill his divine purpose and responsibility. Hyrum Smith his older brother stood at his side through all

circumstances. Together they gave the fullness of the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. That's a great thing to know. It is a great thing to testify of and it is a great thing to live for. May the Lord bless each and every one of you in your individual lives, your families, your homes, your children, your grandchildren, your great grandchildren, and on and on to that day when it's our turn to join them and have them smile and greet us, embrace us, and thank us for living worthy of the great cause they gave their lives for. I bear witness in testimony to you this morning that I know Jesus Christ is the son of the living God. He lives. This is His church. Joseph and Hyrum were His prophets of this dispensation.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.