It is a privilege to be here-especially with President and Sister Gilbert. They are dear friends and remarkable exemplars.

Now, we are not here today to listen to me speak. We are here to receive revelation. I invite you to invite the Holy Ghost to speak to you so that you hear what you need to hear.

A couple of years ago a reporter from an international broadcasting network visited Salt Lake City researching a story on women in the Church. She was intrigued that a female was leading a Church-owned media company and asked me for an interview.

I liked this reporter. She'd done her homework and asked good questions, though one of them was predictable: "How do you feel about not being eligible for priesthood ordination?" I outlined the extensive leadership opportunities women have in the Church and then explained that, as a woman endowed with power in the temple, I had complete access to God's power-or priesthood power-for my own life. And I explained that my focus had long been on learning how to gain full access to that power.

She paused and then asked: "Are you saying that you believe you have more access to God's power than I do?"

What a loaded question! My brain began to spin in search of a truthful but politically correct answer. But I couldn't bring myself to sell our doctrine or our privileges as women short. So finally I said, "Well, actually ...yes."
"Now, do not misunderstand what I'm saying," I quickly added. "I am not saying the Lord loves me more than He loves you or that I'm better than you. I'm not saying that He is more likely to bless me than you. But if you're asking if I believe I have greater access to God's power than you do, the answer is yes! That is one of the blessings of joining this Church. We believe that when we make promises to God to follow His Son, He in turn makes promises to us. And one of those promises is that He will give us greater access to His power."

As I spoke, the Spirit filled the room and disarmed her. Her demeanor softened, and then she asked how the gospel affects me personally. She basically opened the door for me to testify.

I told her that Jesus Christ hasn't just made a difference in my life, He has made all the difference. That every good thing that has ever happened to me has come because of my membership in His Church. And that I have experienced the Savior's healing, enabling power again and again.

At that point, the Spirit flooded the room and we were both in tears. She finally said, "That is beautiful." That day I experienced the sublime beauty of standing as a witness and bearing witness of truth.

Consider the miracle of it! Through the power of the Holy Ghost,[i] we can know what is true with enough surety to testify of truth.

We can only bear witness of what we know. We can't testify of a wish or a hope or even a belief. We can express a hope, a wish, or a belief. But we cannot stand as witnesses of Jesus Christ unless we can bear witness of Him.[ii] We can defend the faith only if we have faith.

Our society seems determined to set aside any semblance of faith or right and wrong. But the world's condition today is no surprise to the Lord, who told the Prophet Joseph that we are living in the "eleventh hour," that this is the last time He will call laborers into His vineyard, and that His vineyard has become "corrupted." But the Lord also declared that in the midst of all this moral and spiritual chaos, the fullness of His gospel would be "proclaimed by the weak and the simple unto the ends of the world." And He promised that if we would open our mouths, they would be filled.

You and I are "the weak and the simple," but we are not here now by accident or without the Lord's endorsement. President George Q. Cannon taught that "because of the...magnitude of the work to be accomplished...[it] has required apparently the most valiant men and women to come forth...[now]...God has reserved spirits for this dispensation who have the courage and determination to face the world and all the powers of the evil one...and [to] build up the Zion of our God fearless of all consequences." Make no mistake about it: You are here now because in the beginning our Father chose you to be here now. And He has hard work for you to do.
How, then, do we strengthen our faith so that we can defend the faith?

Four years ago, a marvelous young woman who had just graduated with honors from BYU called me, distraught. Through sobs she blurted, "I'm not sure I believe the Church is true anymore, and I'm scared. What if my family isn't going to be together forever?"

I asked, "Do you want a testimony?" "Yes," she said.

"Are you willing to work for it?" Again, "Yes."

And she was. She had a great bishop and an off-the-charts Relief Society president, both of whom worked with her. Friends and family came to her rescue. And she and I began to meet for gospel study sessions. I told her, "Bring your scriptures and every question you have. Questions are good. Let's see what the Lord will teach us."

She took me at my word and brought one thorny question after another. We searched the scriptures and the teachings of prophets for answers. Little by little, she began to realize that just because she had questions didn't mean she didn't have a testimony. The scriptures are filled with accounts of prophets who had questions. And she began to recognize when the Spirit was bearing witness to her—including bearing witness that prophets, seers, and revelators are truly prophets.

Her testimony began to grow, and time passed. Then about a year ago she called again. "I wanted you to be one of the first to know that I am holding in my hand a temple recommend. Will you come when I receive my endowment?" Then she added, "Do you know what you said that helped me the most? You told me that questions are good, and that allowed me to see myself as a seeker rather than a doubter."

I was overjoyed! But two days later, I received a much different call from another BYU graduate. "Sister Dew," she said, "before you hear it from someone else, I want you to know that I'm pregnant." She said that for several years she had doubted the truthfulness of the gospel and had finally decided there was no reason to live the law of chastity.

I told her that I was not her judge and that I loved her. Then I asked her if she would like to have a testimony. "No, I don't think so," she said.

The contrast was stunning. At about the same time, these two young women had questions that threatened their testimonies. One of them sent out a cry for help, and family, friends and leaders followed President Monson's counsel and went to her rescue. The other girl nursed her doubt and convinced herself that her immoral choices were acceptable. I love and care about this girl. But for now, she has chosen a spiritually perilous path.
One girl's questions propelled her to become a seeker of truth. The other girl used her questions to justify her immorality.

My dear friends, questions are good. Questions are good if they are inspired questions, asked in faith, and asked of credible sources where the Spirit will direct and confirm the answer.[vii] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_edn7)

Nephi asked an inspired question in faith when he asked the Lord if he could see what his father saw. The Lord responded by showing Nephi the tree of life, the iron rod, the great and spacious building and mists of darkness, and the fruit of the tree, which is "sweet above all that is sweet." [viii] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_edn8)

And the vision didn't stop there. Nephi saw the birth, ministry, and Crucifixion of the Savior. He saw the coming forth of latter-day scripture, the Restoration, and the building of latter-day Zion.

Nephi saw all this and much more, only to return to his father's tent and find Laman and Lemuel arguing about the meaning of their father's vision. When Nephi asked them, "Have ye inquired of the Lord?" they gave the classic response of doubters: "We have not; for the Lord maketh no such thing known unto us"-as though nothing was required of them.[ix] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_edn9)

None of us are entitled to revelation without effort on our part. Answers from God don't just magically appear. If we want to grow spiritually, the Lord expects us to ask questions and seek answers. "If thou shalt ask," He promised, "thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge...."[x] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_edn10) How much clearer can it be? The Lord loves inspired questions asked in faith because they lead to knowledge, to revelation, and to greater faith.

We all have questions. Some are doctrinal, historical, or procedural. Some are intensely personal. Here are just a few of the questions men and women your age have asked me recently:

Why am I the only one in my family who struggles to believe?

Should I serve a mission if my parents don't want me to?

Why did I spend all that time on a mission and not convert anyone?

Why can't I find "the one?"

If I go to graduate school, will the Lord think that means I don't want to get married? Will I be able to provide for a family today?

Will the Lord ever forgive me for breaking my covenants?
I came home early from my mission. What do I do now?

Is a prophet infallible?

Did Joseph Smith really have more than one wife?

How do I know if I'm receiving revelation?

Do I dare get serious with a guy who has struggled with pornography?

Why can't women be ordained to the priesthood?

What if the Church's position on gay marriage bothers me?

How do I understand the temple when I can't ask questions about it?

May I answer these questions, and any questions you may have, by posing a question: Are you willing to engage in the wrestle? In an ongoing spiritual wrestle?

Enos described the "wrestle that he had before God to obtain a remission of his sins."[xii] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_edn11) And Alma "[wrestled] with God in mighty prayer."[xii] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_edn12)

Champion wrestlers tell me that it isn't necessarily the strongest wrestler who wins. It is the wrestler who knows how to leverage his strength to overpower his opponent. Spiritual wrestling leverages the strength of true doctrine to overpower our weaknesses, our wavering faith, and our lack of knowledge. Spiritual wrestlers are seekers. They are men and women of faith who want to understand more than they presently do and who are serious about increasing the light and knowledge in their lives.

I recently engaged in a wrestle. When the policy was announced that the children of gay parents might not be eligible for baptism at age eight, I was confused. I did not question the Brethren or doubt their inspiration, but neither did I understand the doctrinal basis for the policy. So I asked the Lord to teach me. I prayed, searched the scriptures, studied the teachings of prophets, and pondered my question in the temple. This went on for several months. Then one day a colleague made a statement that sparked a new thought for me, and in that moment the Spirit illuminated the doctrine in my heart and mind. I consider that answer personal revelation and not something I should teach. Though I have wept with friends to whom this policy directly applies, the doctrine gave me peace and understanding.[xiii] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_edn13)

When we have unresolved questions, our challenge doesn't lie in what we think we know. It lies in what we don't yet know.
The Lord has promised to open the "eyes of our understandings"[^xlv] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_edn14) and to reveal "all mysteries."[^xvi] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_edn15) But He isn't likely to do either of these unless we seek to know. Truman Madsen taught that he could find "nothing in the scriptures...to excuse anyone from brain sweat and from the arduous lifetime burden of seeking 'revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge.'"[^xvii] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_edn16) He was describing an ongoing spiritual wrestle.

The Lord wants us to ask every probing question we can muster because not asking questions can be far more dangerous than asking them.[^xviii] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_edn17) In other words, sin makes you stupid—and so does refusing to seek after truth.

Remember my friend who thought she'd lost her testimony? Her doubt was triggered by a television drama featuring a scientist who didn't believe in God. I said, "You mean that a fictional character fabricated by a Hollywood writer has obliterated 24 years of gospel teaching?" "But she's so smart," my friend said.

There have always been and will always be charismatic men and women who can launch what sound like, on the surface, reasoned arguments against the Father and the Son, the Restoration, the Prophet Joseph, the Book of Mormon, and living prophets. But doubters and pundits never tell the whole story, because they don't know the whole story—and don't want to know. They opt for clever sound bites, hoping no one digs deeper than they have.

Sound bites will never lead to a testimony. As seekers of truth, our safety lies in asking the right questions, in faith, and of the right sources—meaning those who only speak truth: such as the scriptures, prophets, and the Lord through the Holy Ghost.

President Spencer W. Kimball declared, "Why, oh, why do people think they can fathom the most complex spiritual depths without the necessary...work accompanied by compliance with the laws that govern it? Absurd it is, but you will...find popular personalities, who seem never to have lived a single law of God, discoursing...[about] religion. How ridiculous for such persons to attempt to outline for the world a way of life!...One cannot know God nor understand his works or plans unless he follows the laws which govern."[^xviii] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_edn18)

Questions are not just good, they are vital, because the ensuing spiritual wrestle leads to answers, to knowledge, and to revelation. And it also leads to greater faith.

Men and women of faith are expected to have faith. While the Lord will reveal many things to us, He has never told His covenant people everything about everything. We are admonished to "doubt not, but be believing."[^xix] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_edn19) But "doubting not" does not mean understanding everything.
Doubting is not synonymous with having questions. To doubt is to reject truth and faith. As covenant sons and daughters, we are required to have faith, live by faith, "ask in faith, nothing wavering," \footnote{devotionals/sheri-dew#_edn20} and "overcome by faith." \footnote{devotionals/sheri-dew#_edn21} Learning by faith is as crucial as learning by study, because there are some things we cannot learn from a book. \footnote{devotionals/sheri-dew#_edn22}

Elder Dallin H. Oaks underscored this truth: "[A]fter all we can publish, our members are sometimes left with basic questions that cannot be resolved by study...Some things can be learned only by faith. Our ultimate reliance must be on faith in the witness we have received from the Holy Ghost." \footnote{devotionals/sheri-dew#_edn23}

Thus, once the Spirit has borne witness to you that God is our Father and Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph Smith was a prophet called to restore the gospel, and that we are led by a prophet today, then you know the gospel is true because the Spirit has borne witness of the foundational truths that comprise a testimony. You have a testimony!

At that point, when questions arise or when blessings you've been pleading for remain unfulfilled, they are not an indication that you don't have a testimony or that the gospel isn't true. They are an invitation for you to grow spiritually.

I repeat, once you have received a spiritual witness of the truths that form a testimony, even your thorniest questions about our doctrine, history, positions on sensitive issues, or the aching desires of your hearts, are about personal growth. They are opportunities for you to receive personal revelation and increase your faith.

We don't have to have answers to every question in order to receive a witness, bear witness, and stand as a witness.

But questions, especially the tough ones, propel us to engage in a spiritual wrestle so that the Lord can lead us along. Without plain old spiritual work, even God can't make us grow-or at least, He won't. \footnote{devotionals/sheri-dew#_edn24}

My life has been filled with spiritual wrestling-not because of any great valor on my part but because I have yearned to understand why certain things were happening to me, and why others were not. For decades I have fasted, prayed and pleaded for a husband. I've asked who he is, where he is, and when he's coming. As of today, I still don't know the answer to any of those questions. But the wrestle has blessed me with the knowledge that Jesus Christ is my Savior, that His gospel is filled with power, and that God will talk to and direct me.

Growing spiritually and receiving answers to our questions depends upon our ability to feel, hear, and understand the whisperings of the Spirit. It is worth engaging in a spiritual wrestle to learn to receive personal revelation, because we can only know what is true when the Spirit bears witness to our hearts and minds as only the Holy Ghost can. \footnote{devotionals/sheri-dew#_edn25}
Revelation must include both, because intellect alone cannot produce a testimony. You cannot think your way to conversion, because you cannot convince your mind of something your heart does not feel.\textsuperscript{xxvi}

The Prophet Joseph declared that "the Holy Ghost...comprehends more than all the world"\textsuperscript{xxvii} and that we must all "grow into the principle of revelation."\textsuperscript{xxviii} And President Henry B. Eyring added: "We all know that human judgment and logical thinking will not be enough to get answers to the questions that matter most in life. We need revelation from God...We need not just one flash of light and comfort, but we need the continuing blessing of communication with God."\textsuperscript{xxix} Every truth-seeking member of the Church can and should be receiving revelation for his or her life.

In my early twenties, I faced a difficult decision and asked a friend for a priesthood blessing. He asked what the Lord had already told me, and I admitted that I could feel the presence of the Spirit but couldn't discern specific revelation. He then asked if I had ever asked the Lord to teach me what it felt like when He was speaking to me? I hadn't. But that night, I began to ask the Lord to teach me the language of revelation.

That was forty years ago, and over time I have come to know that what President Boyd K. Packer taught is true: That "if all you know is what you see with your natural eyes and hear with your natural ears, then you will not know very much."\textsuperscript{xxx}

Seekers have certain habits that are key to learning to communicate with God. For starters, they engage in the wrestle, meaning they work at it. They immerse themselves regularly in the scriptures, because the scriptures are the textbook for the Lord's language. They also work to be increasingly pure-pure in their heart and thoughts, pure in what they say, watch, read, and listen to. Purity invites the Spirit. And then, pure seekers listen. One of my former institute students periodically turns everything electronic off. TV off. Music off. Phone off. Computer off. She says, "I like to let the Lord know I'm listening."

As you cultivate these spiritual habits, there are two questions that will help open the heavens. First, ask the Lord to teach you what it feels and sounds like for you when He is speaking to you via the Holy Ghost, and then watch how He tutors you. And, second, if you've never asked the Lord how He feels about you, that is a great question to ask. In time, He will tell you, and as He does, you'll learn more about speaking His language.

When the Lord sees that you want to communicate with Him, He will teach you how.

Recently, a friend working on her Ph.D. received an impression during a Relief Society conference to shift the focus of her dissertation. She also felt prompted to go directly to the temple to ask the Lord further questions. She said, "While there, I was told how to make [this new focus] work...[and] how I could be both academically unbiased and spiritually honest. I occasionally receive
clear words from the Spirit, but never have I been given such clear instructions....The task ahead feels incredibly difficult, but I know what direction to go and that the Lord expects it of me, and that makes all the difference.^[xxx] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_edn31)

Receiving revelation is the key to receiving answers to our questions. Joseph Smith promised that "even the least Saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them."^[xxxii] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_edn32)

My dear friends, make no mistake about it: we are here now because we're supposed to be here now. And we each have a mission to fulfill. Part of that mission requires us to stand as witnesses of truth. And that means we must receive a witness that Jesus is the Christ and that His gospel has been restored.

I invite you to decide today that you will pay the price to wrestle with difficult questions, to become lifetime seekers of truth, to learn to speak the Lord's language, and to receive a witness of Jesus Christ and the Restoration of His gospel.

If you will, you'll have the privilege of helping prepare the earth for His return. You'll be able to defend the faith because of your ever-increasing faith.

The Savior is going to come again. May we stand for Him and with Him.

Jesus is the Christ. This is His Church, and it is filled with His power. Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

[i] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref1) 1 Nephi 13:37. [ii] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref2) Further, we can only bear witness if we have received a witness from the Holy Ghost. [iii] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref3) See D&C 33:4. [iv] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref4) See D&C 1:23. [v] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref5) See D&C 33:8. [vi] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref6) George Q. Cannon, Gospel Truth, 1957, Deseret Book. [vii] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref7) "Searching diligently in the light of Christ" is the only way to "know good from evil." (Moroni 7:19.) [viii] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref8) Alma 32:42. [ix] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref9) Nephi went on to teach his brothers, "Do ye not remember the things which the Lord hath said? If ye will not harden your hearts, and ask me in faith, believing that ye shall receive...these things shall be made known unto you. (See 1 Nephi 15:8, 9, 11.) [x] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref10) D&C 42:61. [xi] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref11) Enos 1:2. [xii] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref12) Alma 8:10. Paul told the Ephesians that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Ephesians 6:12-13.) [xiii] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref13) Look at the life of any prophet, and you'll find lots of spiritual wrestling. Imagine the pleadings of Joseph, sold into Egypt by jealous brothers; or Brigham Young's, as he led a band of beleaguered converts on a trek through uncharted territory to a place he'd only seen in vision.
[xiv] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref14) D&C 76: 19. [xv] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref15) See D&C 76: 7, 8. [xvi] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref16) Truman G. Madsen, Defender of the Faith, Bookcraft, 1980, 387. Elder Richard G. Scott taught that "the Lord will not force you to learn. You must exercise your agency to authorize the Spirit to teach you. (21 Principles: Divine Truths to Help you Live by the Spirit, Deseret Book, Salt Lake City.) The scriptures repeatedly urge us to "ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (See Matthew 7:7; 3 Nephi 14:7; 3 Nephi 27:29.) [xvii] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref17) The scriptures are filled with warnings like this one: "Wo be unto him that saith: We have received, and we need no more." (2 Nephi 28:27.) The Lord also said, as a further example of this point, "Wo unto the deaf that will not hear; for they shall perish. Wo unto the blind that will not see; for they shall perish also." (2 Nephi 9:31-32.) A pattern of not seeking help from heaven blocks revelation and leaves a person alone with downward spiraling thoughts or seeking out like-minded doubters in the blogosphere. [xviii] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref18) Spencer W. Kimball, "Absolute Truth," BYU Devotional, 6 September 1977, found at www://speeches.byu.edu. [xix] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref19) Mormon 9:27-28. [xx] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref20) Joseph went to the grove after reading, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God...." The very next verse admonishes us to "ask in faith, nothing wavering." (James 1: 5, 6.) [xxi] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref21) D&C 76:53. [xxii] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref22) See D&C 88:118. Faith does not stand still. It is either increasing or disappearing. As President Henry B. Eyring has said, "Faith has a short shelf life." ("Spiritual Preparedness: Start Early and Be Steady," Ensign, November 2005.) [xxiii] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref23) Dallin H. Oaks, "Opposition in All Things," April 2016 General Conference. President Harold B. Lee said something similar: "It is not the function of religion to answer all the questions about God's moral government of the universe, but to give one courage, through faith, to go on in the face of questions he never finds the answer to in his present status." (Conference Report, October 1963, 108.) [xxiv] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref24) President Howard W. Hunter explained that "the development of spiritual capacity does not come with the conferral of authority. There must be desire, effort, and spiritual preparation. This requires, of course, fasting, prayer, searching the scriptures, experience, meditation, and a hungering and thirsting after the righteous life." (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Howard W. Hunter, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2015, 82.) Sometimes we look upon those who have strong testimonies and wonder if faith somehow comes "naturally" for them. But even those blessed with the gift to believe must wrestle for revelation and greater faith. In fact, it is likely because of their challenges that their testimonies have been forged and usually in the "furnace of affliction." (See Isaiah 48:10.) [xxv] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref25) DYC 8:2-3. [xxvi] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref26) Abinadi told the wicked priests of King Noah that they had not applied their "hearts to understanding; therefore, ye have not been wise" (Mosiah 12:27; 13:11). King Benjamin told his people that true followers of Christ would have His name written in their hearts. (See Mosiah 5:12.) One way to know you're receiving revelation is that you will have both clarity of thought and feel peace. [xxvii] (/devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref27) This quote in context reads: "I have an old edition of the New Testament in the Latin, Hebrew, German and Greek languages. I thank God that I have got this old book; but I thank him more for the gift of the Holy Ghost....The Holy
Ghost...comprehends more than all the world; and I will associate myself with him." (Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2007, 132.) Joseph Smith also said, in a frequently quoted but important statement: "God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what He will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least Saint may know all things as fast he is able to bear them, for the day must come when no man need say to his neighbor, Know ye the Lord; for all shall know Him...from the least to the greatest." (Ibid., 268.) [xxviii] (devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref28) Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 151. The Apostle Paul taught, "Ye may all prophesy....Covet to prophesy." (See 1 Corinthians 14:31, 39.) [xxix] (devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref29) Henry B. Eyring, "Continuing Revelation," October 2014. [xxx] (devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref30) As quoted by David A. Bednar, "Quick to Observe," BYU Devotional, 10 May 2005. [xxxi] (devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref31) Email, Susannah Bingham Buck to SLD, 18 February 2016. [xxxii] (devotionals/sheri-dew#_ednref32) TPJS, 149. Elder Heber C. Kimball declared that "the Church has before it many close places through which it will have to pass before the work of God is crowned with victory....The time will come when no man nor woman will be able to endure on borrowed light." (Orson F. Whitney, Life of Heber C. Kimball, 3d. edition, Salt Lake City, Bookcraft, 1945, 50.) for transcript.