Certainly He’s trying to tell us something; the teaching has the emphasis of multiple witnesses:

Matthew 18:11-14 “How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountain, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth… Even so, it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.” (Emphasis added.)

3 Nephi 11:14 and 15 “Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world. And it came to pass that the multitude went forth, and thrust their hands into his side, and did feel the prints of the nails in his hands and in his feet; and this they did to, going forth one by one until they had all gone forth and did see with their eyes and did feel with their hands and did know of a surety and did bear record.” (Emphasis added.)

3 Nephi 17: 21 and 22 “And when he had said these words, he wept, and the multitude bare record of it, and he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them. And when he had done this he wept again;” (Emphasis added.)

Ether 3:6: “And it came to pass that when the brother of Jared had said these words, behold, the Lord stretched forth his hand and touched the stones one by one with his finger. And the veil was taken from off the eyes of the brother of Jared.” (Emphasis added.)

“Even though multitudes followed after Him, [Christ’s] ministry always consisted of blessing people one by one.” (Carlos H. Amado, “Christ the Redeemer,” General Conference, April 2014)

He whom God has chosen as prophet and presiding high priest for our day and time leaves meetings,¹ cares for the widow ² reaches for the one.

Those types of experiences that reach and that touch usually begin by seeing people differently; seeing them through the eyes of the Master. C. S. Lewis wrote:

It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship… There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilization—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit… Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbour is the holiest object presented to your senses. (“The Weight of Glory,” (1949) pp. 39-40.)

In our setting, it might help to imagine sartorially tragic leggings exchanged for celestial robes or too-stubbly chins later celestially crowned.

Here is a story, my offering, representative of hundreds, probably thousands that happen across this campus: I saw Zach in the common area of the Austin, a place usually reserved for stressed-out engineers vectoring and whatnot. My heart recognized him before my mind did. I
knew instinctively that I liked him. I began to flip through
the Rolodex in my mind—I couldn't find a name, but
remembered I had him as a pre-missionary in Mission Prep,
but recognized a more confident set to his countenance;
he was now a returned missionary. I saw his eyes flash in
recognition and a warm handshake quickly turned to one
of those manly hugs.

This was Zach Bendixen. What I didn't remember then,
some of which I wouldn't have known, was that in 2012
he was a struggling student, unsure, and foundering in his
attendance. This is Zach's story in his words:

When you first met me about four years ago, I didn’t
really want to be here in Rexburg. I let my attitude
affect my choices. I wasn’t actively attending my
classes. I would stay up late playing video games and
watching TV, and I didn’t go to church as often as I
should have. I was wasting my time. I had roommates
who were great at trying to get me to come to church
and to help me to use my time effectively, but I
honestly didn’t want any of their help or anything to
do with BYU-I. I was debating on whether or not to
go on a mission, but I really didn’t want to, but for
some reason I decided to take a mission prep class.
You happened to be my professor, but as I had done
in past classes, I didn’t show up for class. I didn’t
wake up on time to go to class at 9 am because I was
always up so late. Instead of just leaving me to fail
however, you went out of your way to get me to
class because you wanted me there and knew that
was where I needed to be. You treated me like the one
lost sheep of the flock.

You reached out to me and invited me back to class.
You, as the Savior does, told me it would not be easy
for me after having missed so much to be able to
pass the class, but promised me that if I did as you
asked and was perfect in attendance from that point
on that I would be able to pass the class. I ended
up passing the class and learned so much from
attending and feeling the spirit that was present in
those discussions on missionary work and how we
can prepare ourselves to be missionaries. I can’t say
that I was immediately changed and stopped making
the mistakes that I had been making when I decided
to go to your class and to change, but it was a step,
one that I had needed to get me closer to the path
that I needed to be on. I am who I am today because
of the love of my friends and family, those who
didn’t give up on me despite my wrong doings. If
we are to reach out to the one, we need to do so in
love. It’s the small and little things that bring about
great things. The little daily decisions determine our
commitment to follow the Savior. I guess I could say
the thing that has changed most about me has been
my testimony of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the
power of the atonement to enable us to become
more like the Savior. (e-mail correspondence with
the author, used with permission)

Zach went on to serve well as Elder’s Quorum President
in his campus ward.

CaraMia Schaefer, mother of some current BYU–Idaho
students, tells of the reaching of her seminary teacher:

I grew up as an only child in a single parent, inactive
home. In September of 1980, I was an incoming
freshman at South High School. I was so excited to
be a part of the released time seminary program! I
was assigned to a wonderful, brand-new seminary
teacher’s class. I had no idea the impact this
placement would have on my life. It wasn’t long
before I realized just how brightly “fate” had smiled
upon me. The spirit in that classroom was tangible.
The lessons were engaging and inspiring. My
teacher had a testimony, a real one. And there was
no doubt in any of our developing freshman minds
that he loved the Savior. And exemplified Him. He
knew all of our names almost instantly, and made
us feel like we were all his most important student.
We knew him and we loved him. He shared his life
with us too. He got married and we rejoiced with
him. He experienced a tremendous loss and we
cried with him. He was the epitome of humanness
and spirituality all rolled into one. He made living
the gospel something we wanted to do, not
something we had to do.

Then one day, he issued us a challenge, a challenge
that I’m sure he knew, if we accepted, would be a
turn key to our personal conversion. He asked us (in
a way only this wonderful, brand new teacher could
ask), with sincere love and tenderness, to spend some
time on our knees and to ask for our own witness to
know if the church was true.

I thought a lot about that assignment. Believing and
living the gospel had always come easy for me, but
did I KNOW? For the first time in my life I actually
asked the question, out loud, on my knees. “Heavenly
Father, IS the church true?” I got in my bed and I
waited. And I listened. It was dark and still in my
room. Suddenly I was filled with a familiar feeling;
the feeling that had often accompanied me in Primary
and at Mutual and walking myself to church on
Sundays; that happiness that radiated from my chest,
out to the tips of my toes and fingers; that warmth of
the Spirit. And I heard, “You already know.”

This wonderful, brand-new seminary teacher issued
a challenge to his freshman class in 1980. Although
there were many in that class, I was one of the
fortunate ones to have been there. It didn’t feel
like a group challenge. It was personal, just like the
Savior would have done it. He taught the masses,
yet reached the one. It changed my life. I am now
married in the temple. I have three children who have
also married in the temple. I have had the honor of
sending three (soon to be four) missionaries into
the field and have stayed the course of activity in
the church. When I have doubts or feel uncertainty
regarding the church, I remember that challenge, and
that night perfectly. “You already know.” CaraMia
Schaefer (e-mail correspondence with the author,
used with permission)

There are principles in there: We must prepare diligently,
invite the spirit, and inspire, consistent with our Mission
Statement, deeper testimonies of the Restored Gospel.¹
Those are bedrock, but even with those essentials in place,
not much seems to happen without a personal caring ²
being communicated. And then there should certainly be
the extension of the challenge to act, whether that’s to
gain a testimony or to get an “A” on an Anatomy and
Physiology test.

Elder Richard G. Scott (1929-2015) always admonished
us to write down the revelations the Lord gives us. He
shared the story of receiving revelation during the rough-
hewn lesson of a humble priesthood teacher in Mexico.³ As
an addendum to the story, a friend told me of Elder Scott
visiting his home sacrament meeting, telling that story, and
commenting that one of the notes he made from that day
is, “It isn’t about you, Richard.” Think of it. One of fifteen
such men in the entire world recognized that heavenly
dependence. We too must recognize the joy of being made
an instrument in His hands,⁴ and that when a difference is
made, eyes are opened, a heart is touched, it’s always Him
doing the reaching.

But what joy to be used by Him. I believe that is what He
would have us do here in this amazing place. It may well be
why we and the students are here, guided by His hand.

1. It may be wise not to begin to enumerate, but here’s one to start, “The Faith of A
Child,” Ensign, November 1975

2. Even harder! Let’s start with (“Thomas S. Monson, man of action, man of faith;
always on the Lord’s errand,” Ensign, February 1986): “When he later became
bishop of that very Sixth-Seventh Ward into which he had been born and raised,
he had 1,060 members, including some 85 widows and the largest welfare load in
the Church.

Mary may know that young Bishop Monson took a week of his personal vacation
time every Christmas season to visit all of those eighty-five widows in his ward.
Mary may not know that for the first several years the gift he would take them was
one of the Barred Plymouth Rock or Rhode Island Red hens raised and dressed out
by him in his own poultry coops. And although it has been more than thirty years
since he was released as their bishop, President Monson has taken a gift and visited
every one of those widows every Christmas for as long as he has lived. Some in
their final moments have spoken to family members of where he stood in the room
and what he said and how very much they loved him.”

3. See “Attributes and Approaches of Effective Gospel Teachers,” Religious

4. “caring” in one form or another shows up as an attribute of effective teachers
with impressive frequency in much of the literature on the scholarship of teaching,
including Barbara E. Walvoord’s fine work, Teaching and Learning in College
Introductory Courses (Blackwell Publishing, 2008)

5. “I vividly recall how a humble Mexican priesthood leader struggled to
communicate the truths of the gospel in his lesson material. I noted the intense
desire he had to share those principles he strongly valued with his quorum members.
He recognized that they were of great worth to the brethren present. In his manner,
there was an evidence of a pure love of the Savior and love of those he taught. “His
sincerity, purity of intent, and love permitted a spiritual strength to envelop the
room. I was deeply touched. Then I began to receive personal impressions as an
extension of the principles taught by that humble instructor. They were personal
and related to my assignments in the area. They came in answer to my prolonged,
prayerful efforts to learn.” “As each impression came, I carefully wrote it down. In
the process, I was given precious truths that I greatly needed in order to be a more
effective servant of the Lord.” (Richard G. Scott, “To Acquire Spiritual Guidance,”
Ensign, Nov. 2009, 7)

6. (See Mosiah 23:10, Mosiah 27:36, Alma 17:11, Alma 26:13, Alma 29:9, Alma
35:14).