

Lord is my Shepherd. He has, indeed, made me lie down in green pastures and has led me beside the still waters. Jesus

is the Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. I so testify in His holy name, amen.

Elder Lowell D. Wood

Coming unto Christ is a process

"The Lord declared that it is his work and his glory 'to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man' (Moses 1:39). He has established his Church to help in this great work. Accordingly, the Church's mission is to 'invite all to come unto Christ' (D&C 20:59) and 'be perfected in him' (Moroni 10:32)" (*Melchizedek Priesthood Leadership Handbook* [1990], p. 3).

I would like to discuss at least in part what The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints asks people to do when inviting them "to come unto Christ" (D&C 20:59).

It should be understood that this invitation is not a request to participate in a single event, but to participate in a process. This process leads individuals to eternal life, which "is the greatest of all the gifts of God; for there is no gift greater than the gift of salvation" (D&C 6:13).

"Hear ye him"

How do we begin this most exciting and important process? The Book of Mormon records the events that occurred when Christ, following his resurrection, visited the people of Nephi in the land Bountiful. So important was this event that his Father introduced him, saying, "Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—*hear ye him*" (3 Nephi 11:7; italics added).

From this introduction we learn the first required action: "*hear ye him*." If we are to come unto Christ, we must first listen to him. We must learn who he is.

Following his Father's introduction, he told the people:

"Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.

"And behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning" (3 Nephi 11:10-11).

He then invited them to come forth one by one and "see with their eyes and . . . feel with their hands" (3 Nephi 11:15). These people experienced personal knowledge of who he was. However, Jesus reminded them that coming to him through faith is even more desirable.

"And again, *more blessed* are they who shall believe in your words because that ye shall testify that ye have seen me, and that ye know that I am. Yea, blessed are they who shall believe in your words" (3 Nephi 12:2; italics added).

We are fortunate to have the scriptures, which contain the words of ancient Apostles and prophets, and to have the privilege of listening to modern-day Apostles and prophets testify of Christ.

Repent and be baptized

What were the next words Jesus gave to the people in Bountiful? Think of all he could have said. He is the creator of this earth and countless others; he had just wrought the infinite atonement; he had just broken the bonds of death; he had just visited with his Father in Heaven. He could have discussed many, many

wonderful and important subjects, but he chose to teach his doctrine, which is:

“And again I say unto you, ye must repent, and be baptized in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and whoso buildeth upon this buildeth upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them” (3 Nephi 11:38–39).

Not only did the Lord teach the need for baptism, but he called special disciples and gave them power to baptize. He also taught them the correct manner of baptism.

Receive the Holy Ghost

Clearly it is vital on the journey to eternal life to exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repent of our sins, and be baptized in the proper manner by those holding the proper authority and using the proper prayer. After this kind of baptism we can “be visited with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and . . . receive a remission of . . . sins” (3 Nephi 12:2). However, in order to progress we must yield “to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and [put] off the natural man and [become] a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord” (Mosiah 3:19).

As we come unto Christ, we must surrender our worldly ways, our pride, and our selfishness. As we yield to the promptings of the Holy Ghost, we should experience a “mighty change in [our] hearts” and become willing to submit to or accept “all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon [us]” (Alma 5:14; Mosiah 3:19).

Turn life over to God

Life is often difficult. There are trials, disappointments, challenges, sickness, and unemployment even for the Saints. These must be borne with submissive patience, for often these trials are evidence of the Lord’s hand preparing us

to be worthy of living with him. To yield to Christ means to put him and his teachings first. The total submission of our will to his is one of the most difficult obstacles we face on our journey toward eternal life. The rewards of this submission are beautifully described by President Ezra Taft Benson:

“Men and women who turn their lives over to God will discover that He can make a lot more out of their lives than they can. He will deepen their joys, expand their vision, quicken their minds, strengthen their muscles, lift their spirits, multiply their blessings, increase their opportunities, comfort their souls, raise up friends, and pour out peace” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], p. 361).

“Son, remember who you are”

Self-control and self-discipline are important virtues that need to be developed in the process of coming unto Christ. In my teenage years, when I was going out to an activity my parents would say, “Son, remember who you are.” Is this phrase familiar to you? This short statement effectively reminded me of the trust my parents had in me and of the expectations of loving grandparents and concerned uncles, aunts, and priesthood leaders. It reminded me of my responsibility to be a good example to younger brothers and sisters.

Heavenly Father provides us with a similar request. He asks us to “always remember him” (D&C 20:77, 79) and “to stand as witnesses of [him] at all times and in all things, and in all places that [we] may be in” (Mosiah 18:9).

These reminders provide a simple but effective decision-making tool that can help us develop needed self-control and self-discipline.

Any thought, activity, or action that is compatible with the name, the life, or the teachings of Jesus Christ is acceptable. Any behavior that is not compatible

with his name, his life, or his teachings is not acceptable and should be avoided.

Come to the temple

The process of being perfected requires that we receive special instruction, make sacred covenants, and receive the highest ordinances of the priesthood. These blessings are available only in the temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Individuals who come unto Christ must come to his temple.

Invitation to all

It is my prayer that all of us will examine our lives and evaluate where we are in the process of coming unto Christ and being perfected in him. The Book of Mormon promises that if we "come unto him, and offer [our] whole souls as an offering unto him, and *continue in fasting and praying, and endure to the end . . . [we] will be saved*" (Omni 1:26; italics added).

If you have not yet accepted the invitation to come unto him, please do so now. Missionaries of The Church of Jesus

Christ of Latter-day Saints are prepared and eager to teach you the doctrine of Christ. They hold the proper authority, baptize in the proper manner, and use the proper prayer.

If you previously began the process of coming unto Christ but lost your way or took a detour, do not despair; begin again. Come back; come back now! Come unto Christ and enjoy the "fruit of the Spirit," namely "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, [and] temperance," and begin to "walk in the Spirit" and "lay hold upon every good gift" (Galatians 5:22-23, 25; Moroni 10:30).

I testify that he lives, that he is the light and life of the world, that he is our Savior and our Redeemer, and I do it in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just listened to Elders Kwok Yuen Tai and Lowell D. Wood of the Seventy.

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us.

Elder L. Tom Perry

President Hinckley and President Monson, Tabernacle Choir, thank you for that inspiring session this morning. I only hope that the spirit of that session will hover over us as we continue this afternoon.

In the Doctrine and Covenants we read, "That they themselves may be prepared, and that my people may be taught more perfectly, and have experience, and know more perfectly concerning their duty, and the things which I require at their hands" (D&C 105:10).

How grateful we are for the scriptures, which contain the Lord's instructions to His children. They help us to better understand the course He has designed as a sure guide to lead us through this period of our mortal probation.

Gospel basics bring change in Peru

Until recently, part of my assignment has included the country of Peru, an area of the world that is experiencing great turmoil. Inflation and internal strife have been robbing the Peruvian people of almost any hope of stability in their lives.

It has been difficult for my Brethren and me to visit Peru regularly because of the dangers of traveling there. It has been necessary for the Peruvian members to assume much more responsibility for priesthood and auxiliary leadership and for full-time missionary service.

The Area Presidency recognized the need to fortify the members of the Church in this country and, after much prayer and fasting, decided to emphasize