

maining distance and stop, then repeat the process over and over, theoretically will you ever really get to the mailbox?" One bright student said, "No, but you'll get close enough to mail the letter."

You young people will get close enough to perfection to have a life that is filled with challenges and troubles, with inspiration and happiness and eternal joy.

The spirit of revelation

The Lord promised, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."⁷

"I will tell you in your *mind* and in your *heart*, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart.

"... This is the spirit of revelation. . . .

"Therefore this is thy gift; apply unto it, and blessed art thou, for it shall deliver you."⁸

May God bless you. Already you sang to us, "I know who I am. I know God's plan."⁹ Someday you can bear your testimony to your grandchildren, and they to theirs, and they to another generation, and another.

You look ahead to a long life, to the long, long future before this Church, before the children and youth, before all of us as Latter-day Saints. And I bear witness to you, our youngsters, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. As a grandfather, and as a great-grandfather, I know how much we love you. I tell you how

much we love you, how much you are loved in this Church, and invoke the blessings of the Lord upon you as you face the wonderful life before you as young Latter-day Saints. This I do as a servant of the Lord and in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. See Gerald Astor, *The Mighty Eighth: The Air War in Europe Told by the Men Who Fought It* (1997).
2. Doctrine and Covenants 121:45–46.
3. John 14:26.
4. Author unknown, "All the Water in the World," in *Best-Loved Poems of the LDS People*, ed. Jack M. Lyon and others (1996), 302.
5. 1 Timothy 4:12.
6. "My Little Kingdom," *Louisa May Alcott—Her Girlhood Diary*, ed. Cary Ryan (1993), 8–9.
7. John 14:18.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 8:2–4; italics added.
9. "The Church of Jesus Christ," *Children's Songbook*, 77.

President Monson

Thank you, President Packer. Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We will now hear from Elders Alexander B. Morrison and Adhemar Damiani of the Seventy.

Elder Alexander B. Morrison

"To this end was I born"

When Jesus was arraigned before Pilate, after a dark, hate-filled night of insult and abuse, the haughty Roman procurator quickly discerned that this was no ordinary mortal. Jesus displayed none of the cringing servility or false

bravado characteristic of those who pled for their lives before the power of imperial Rome. He stood quietly before the proud Roman, unbowed, majestic, His demeanor mild yet regal. "Art thou a king then?" Pilate inquired (John 18:37).

Jesus, the King of Kings, whose Father would have provided for the ask-

ing “more than twelve legions of angels” (Matthew 26:53), whose glory and majesty transcended anything Pilate—or any mortal man—could even comprehend, answered simply: “Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth” (John 18:37).

Pilate, a weak and vacillating man, devoid of integrity and not overly burdened by principles, retorted cynically, “What is truth?” (John 18:38). Then, though he found no fault in Jesus and knew of a certainty that He was no political firebrand nor threat to Roman power and authority, Pilate yielded to the bloodlust of the crowd and delivered Christ to His crucifiers.

Jesus came to earth to ransom us

“For this cause came I into the world.” What *was* that cause? Why did Jesus, the Lord God Omnipotent who sits at the right hand of the Father, creator of worlds without number, lawgiver and judge, condescend to come to earth to be born in a manger, live out most of His mortal existence in obscurity, trudge the dusty roads of Judea proclaiming a message which was violently opposed by many, and finally, betrayed by one of His closest associates, die between two malefactors on Golgotha’s somber hill? Nephi, who gloried “in . . . Jesus, for he hath redeemed my soul from hell” (2 Nephi 33:6), understood Christ’s motivation: “He doeth not anything save it be for the benefit of the world; for he loveth the world, even that he layeth down his own life that he may draw all men unto him” (2 Nephi 26:24).

It was love for all of God’s children that led Jesus, unique in His sinless perfection, to offer Himself as ransom for the sins of others. In the words of the beloved hymn, “Jesus died on Calvary, That all thru him might ransomed be” (“’Tis Sweet to Sing the Matchless Love,”

Hymns, no. 177). This, then, was the consummate cause which brought Jesus to earth to “suffer, bleed, and die for man.” He came as “a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:19) to atone for our sins, that He, being raised on the cross, might draw all men unto Him (see 3 Nephi 27:14). In Paul’s felicitous phrase, “as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22).

The symbol of His triumph over death is the empty tomb. He whom “God raised up the third day” (Acts 10:40) loosed the “bands of . . . temporal death, that *all* shall be raised” (Alma 11:42; italics added) and “gained the victory over the grave” (Mormon 7:5). In Him “the sting of death is swallowed up” (Mosiah 16:8).

The gift of eternal life

Jesus came to bring not only immortality but also eternal life to our Father’s children. Though Christ’s Atonement provides a universal resurrection to all, regardless of merit, the gift of eternal life—life with the Father and Son in Their perfected presence—is reserved for the faithful, for those who show their love for Christ by their willingness to follow His commandments and to make and keep holy covenants. “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them,” Jesus reminded us, “he it is that loveth me” (John 14:21). As the prophets throughout the ages have declared, it is only as we make and keep holy covenants—those sacred celestial agreements between God and man—that we may become “partakers of the divine nature” and escape “the corruption that is in the world” (2 Peter 1:4).

Jesus calls us to follow His example

Jesus came to earth, first and foremost, as the atoning Savior, who died that all might find “peace in this world,

and eternal life in the world to come" (D&C 59:23). Yet He came for another cause as well—to serve as the example to all of man's divine potential, the standard against whom all must measure their lives. He who proclaimed His divinity to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (see John 4) calls us to become "even as I am" (3 Nephi 27:27), to become perfect "even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect" (3 Nephi 12:48). From the depths of that ineffable perfection He calls upon us to care for the sick, the poor, the afflicted; to pray for and show compassion toward all of God's children, for "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34). With Him there are no barriers of race or gender or language. As Nephi explained, "He denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God" (2 Nephi 26:33).

To those among us who wonder who is our neighbor, He spoke of the good Samaritan; of the shepherd who left the ninety and nine to seek after the one that was lost; and of the man who made a "great supper," to which were invited "the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind" (Luke 14:16, 21).

Give generously

Jesus, the Master Teacher, repeatedly taught eternal truths drawn from common experiences of life. One such lesson deals with the need to be generous in our giving—to give with the spirit of sacrifice and devout intent to bless those less fortunate than ourselves. Luke records that as Jesus sat in the temple, He observed those who cast their contributions into the treasure chests therein. Some deposited their gifts with devoutness and sincerity of purpose, but others, though they gave great sums of silver and gold, did so ostentatiously, primarily to be seen of men.

Among the long lines of contributors was a poor widow who cast into the treasure chest all that she had, two small bronze coins known as mites. Taken together they amounted to less than half a cent in American money. Noting the disparity between what she gave and the much greater contributions of some others, Jesus proclaimed, "Of a truth . . . this poor widow hath cast in more than they all." Though the rich had given from their abundance, "she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had" (Luke 21:1-4). Jesus knew it is not the amount we give that matters. In the arithmetic of heaven, value is determined not by quantity but by quality. It is the intent of the willing heart and mind that is acceptable to God (see 2 Corinthians 8:12).

Become as little children

Jesus had a special love for children. In both the Old World and the New, He called them to come unto Him (see Luke 18:16; 3 Nephi 17:21-24). The Nephite record bears tender testimony of Christ's gentle love for little ones:

"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" (3 Nephi 17:21-22).

Jesus knew that little children are pure and without sin. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children," He said, "ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). King Benjamin, the great Nephite prophet, explained what it means to become as a little child: "submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him" (Mosiah 3:19).

Help the less fortunate

In a world where we are confronted each day with so much calloused indif-

ference toward the less fortunate, Jesus spoke of the need to give meat to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, shelter to the stranger, clothes to the naked, and to visit the sick and those in prison.

In one of the most onerous tests of Christian discipleship, He called upon all to "love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). He reminded us that inasmuch as we provide acts of charity to others, even unto those considered by some to be "the least," "ye have done it unto me" (see Matthew 25:35-45). He taught not only of our obligations to help each other temporally but also of the powerful, eternal, spiritual implications of doing so. Indeed, all of His commandments, in the final analysis, are spiritual and not temporal only. Thus, the scriptures advise that "for the sake of retaining a remission of [our] sins from day to day, that [we] may walk guiltless before God, . . . [we] should impart of [our] substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath" (Mosiah 4:26).

Express true discipleship

In the final analysis, then, we show our devotion to Christ, and best express our discipleship, by the way in which we live and serve Him. The symbol of Jesus and His place in our hearts must be a life given fully to His service, to loving and caring, to an unstinting commitment to Christ and His cause, to a spiritual rebirth that produces a "mighty change" in our hearts and prepares us to receive "his image in [our] countenances" (Alma 5:13-14). To take His name upon us means a willingness to do whatever He requires of us.

Someone has said that the price of a Christian life is the same today as always: it is simply to give all that we have,

holding back nothing, to "give away all [our] sins to know [Him]" (Alma 22:18). When we fall short of that standard by reason of sloth, indifference, or wickedness; when we are evil or envious, selfish, sensual, or shallow; we, in a sense at least, crucify Him afresh. And when we try consistently to be our very best, when we care for and serve others, when we overcome selfishness with love, when we place the welfare of others above our own, when we bear each other's burdens and "mourn with those that mourn," when we "comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and . . . stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places" (Mosiah 18:8-9), then we honor Him and draw from His power and become more and more like Him, growing "brighter and brighter," if we persist, "until the perfect day" (D&C 50:24).

Testimony of Christ

Voice cannot tell nor tongue proclaim the fulness of Christ's ineffable example. In the words of John the Beloved, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25).

I finish where I began, with Christ's majestic words to Pilate: "For this cause came I into the world." How grateful we all should be that He came, two millennia ago, to atone for our sins and set the example for our lives. We proclaim that truth of truths in boldness to all the world. I testify to you that He will return again as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, with healing in His wings, to set His people free (see "Come, O Thou King of Kings," *Hymns*, no. 59). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.