

When Jesus gave His disciples a new commandment to “love one another; as I have loved you,”²⁵ He gave to them the grand key to happiness in this life and glory in the next.

Love is the greatest of all the commandments—all others hang upon it. It is our focus as followers of the living Christ. It is the one trait that, if developed, will most improve our lives.

I bear testimony that God lives. His love is infinite and eternal. It extends to all of His children. Because He loves us, He has provided prophets and apostles to guide us in our time. He has given us the Holy Ghost, who teaches, comforts, and inspires.

He has given us His scriptures. And I am grateful beyond description that He has given to each of us a heart capable of experiencing the pure love of Christ.

I pray that our hearts may be filled with that love and that we may reach out to our Heavenly Father and to others with new vision and new faith. I testify that as we do so, we will discover a greater richness in life. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. 1 Corinthians 12:31.
2. 1 Corinthians 13:1.

3. See 1 Corinthians 13:1–2.
4. Moroni 7:47.
5. Matthew 22:36.
6. See Frederic W. Farrar, *The Life of Christ* (1994), 528–29.
7. Matthew 22:37–40.
8. 1 Corinthians 8:3.
9. *History of the Church*, 4:227.
10. Galatians 5:14.
11. See Galatians 6:2.
12. *History of the Church*, 5:498.
13. See Mark L. McConkie, *Remembering Joseph: Personal Recollections of Those Who Knew the Prophet Joseph Smith* (2003), 57.
14. “Selflessness,” Sept. 23, 2007, broadcast of *Music and the Spoken Word*; available at www.musicandthespokenword.com/messages.
15. *Oedipus at Colonus*, in *The Oedipus Cycle*, trans. Dudley Fitts and Robert Fitzgerald (1949), 161–62.
16. 1 John 5:3.
17. Mosiah 5:2.
18. See John 13:35.
19. See Matthew 25:31–40.
20. See Matthew 25:40.
21. John 3:16.
22. Doctrine and Covenants 19:18.
23. See John 15:13.
24. 1 Corinthians 2:9; see also Isaiah 64:4.
25. John 13:34.

Elder Bruce D. Porter

A broken heart and a contrite spirit

How I love Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin!

The poet Rudyard Kipling wrote the following words in 1897, an admonition to the British Empire against pride:

The tumult and the shouting dies;
The captains and the kings depart.
Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
[“God of Our Fathers, Known of Old,”
Hymns, no. 80]

When Kipling spoke of a contrite heart as an “ancient sacrifice,” perhaps he had in mind the words of King David in the 51st Psalm: “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart” (v. 17). David’s words show that even in Old Testament times, the Lord’s people understood that their hearts must be given to God, that burnt offerings alone were not enough.

The sacrifices mandated during the Mosaic dispensation pointed symbolically to the atoning sacrifice of the Messiah,

who alone could reconcile sinful man with God. As Amulek taught, “Behold, this is the whole meaning of the law, every whit pointing to that great and last sacrifice; . . . the Son of God” (Alma 34:14).

After His Resurrection, Jesus Christ declared to the people in the New World:

“Your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away, for I will accept none of [them]. . . .

“And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart . . . , him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost” (3 Nephi 9:19–20).

What are a broken heart and a contrite spirit? And why are they considered a sacrifice?

The Savior’s perfect submission

As in all things, the Savior’s life offers us the perfect example: although Jesus of Nazareth was utterly without sin, He walked through life with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, as manifested by His submission to the will of the Father. “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” (John 6:38). To His disciples He said, “Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart” (Matthew 11:29). And when the time came to make the ultimate sacrifice entailed in the Atonement, Christ shrank not to partake of the bitter cup but submitted completely to His Father’s will.

The Savior’s perfect submission to the Eternal Father is the very essence of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Christ’s example teaches us that a broken heart is an eternal attribute of godliness. When our hearts are broken, we are completely open to the Spirit of God and recognize our dependence on Him for all that we have and all that we are. The sacrifice so entailed is a sacrifice of pride in

all its forms. Like malleable clay in the hands of a skilled potter, the broken-hearted can be molded and shaped in the hands of the Master.

Preconditions to repentance

A broken heart and a contrite spirit are also preconditions to repentance. Lehi taught:

“Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah. . . .

“Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered” (2 Nephi 2:6–7).

When we sin and desire forgiveness, a broken heart and a contrite spirit mean to experience “godly sorrow [that] worketh repentance” (2 Corinthians 7:10). This comes when our desire to be cleansed from sin is so consuming that our hearts ache with sorrow and we yearn to feel at peace with our Father in Heaven. Those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit are willing to do anything and everything that God asks of them, without resistance or resentment. We cease doing things our way and learn to do them God’s way instead. In such a condition of submissiveness, the Atonement can take effect and true repentance can occur. The penitent will then experience the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost, which will fill them with peace of conscience and the joy of reconciliation with God. In a wondrous union of divine attributes, the same God who teaches us to walk with a broken heart invites us to rejoice and to be of good cheer.

A divine shield against temptation

When we have received a forgiveness of sins, a broken heart serves as a divine shield against temptation. Nephi prayed, “May the gates of hell be shut continually

before me, because that my heart is broken and my spirit is contrite!" (2 Nephi 4:32). King Benjamin taught his people that if they would walk in the depths of humility, they might ever rejoice, "be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of . . . sins" (Mosiah 4:12). When we yield our hearts to the Lord, the attractions of the world simply lose their luster.

Increased gratitude for Christ's suffering

There is yet another dimension of a broken heart—namely, our deep gratitude for Christ's suffering on our behalf. In Gethsemane, the Savior "descended below all things" (D&C 88:6) as He bore

the burden of sin for every human being. At Golgotha, He "poured out his soul unto death" (Isaiah 53:12), and His great heart literally broke with an all-encompassing love for the children of God. When we remember the Savior and His suffering, our hearts too will break in gratitude for the Anointed One.

As we make the sacrifice to Him of all that we have and all that we are, the Lord will fill our hearts with peace. He will "bind up the brokenhearted" (Isaiah 61:1) and grace our lives with the love of God, "sweet above all that is sweet, . . . and pure above all that is pure" (Alma 32:42). Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Erich W. Kopischke

***Preach My Gospel*—a great resource**

Not long ago we invited two sister missionaries over for lunch. After we finished eating, we asked them to leave a spiritual thought with us. They were well prepared and introduced a scripture reading and marking exercise to us. They had brought a fresh copy of the Book of Mormon and a set of colored pencils. We accepted the invitation of the missionaries. Since then, our daily Book of Mormon family scripture reading has changed. In every chapter we mark with different colors the passages related to Jesus Christ as we discover them. Every time, this little exercise reminds us of our missionaries.

When the missionaries presented this, we immediately recognized it as a scripture study exercise suggested in *Preach My Gospel*. As a family, we are so thankful for this great and powerful missionary tool.

For the past three years missionaries have been using *Preach My Gospel* all around the world. It has truly revolution-

ized missionary work. The great vision of President Hinckley is being fulfilled: Missionaries "master the concepts of the lessons." They "teach the concepts in their own words under the guiding influence of the Holy Spirit" (see "Missionary Service," *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, Jan. 11, 2003, 19).

As the missionaries become immersed in *Preach My Gospel*, they learn and apply important doctrines and principles which make them more capable in their important service. Despite this, they still need all of our help and support. Only together can we fulfill the great charge given to the ancient and modern Apostles: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

Unifying members, missionaries

In order to be successful in these efforts, we must be one with the missionaries, and we must understand one another. Do you always understand the missionaries? I do not refer to language but rather