

The Beauty of Holiness

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Our Father in Heaven has provided for us all that is required so that we can become holy as He is holy.

As I have prepared for this meeting, my heart has turned to the many faithful sisters whom I have met, near and far. For me, they are best described in a psalm of thanksgiving by King David: "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."¹

I see the beauty of holiness in sisters whose hearts are centered on all that is good, who want to become more like the Savior. They offer their whole soul, heart, might, mind, and strength to the Lord in the way that they live every day.² Holiness is in the striving and the struggle to keep the commandments and to honor the covenants we have made with God. Holiness is making the choices that will keep the Holy Ghost as our guide.³ Holiness is setting aside our natural tendencies and becoming "a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord."⁴ "Every moment of [our lives] must be holiness to the Lord."⁵

The God of heaven commanded the children of Israel, "For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves."⁶

Elder D. Todd Christofferson has taught: "Our Heavenly Father is a God of high expectations. ... He proposes to make us holy so that we may 'abide a celestial glory' (D&C 88:22) and 'dwell in his presence' (Moses 6:57)."⁷ *Lectures on Faith* explains, "No being can enjoy his glory without possessing his perfections and holiness."⁸ Our Father in Heaven knows us. He loves us, and He has provided for us all that is required so that we can become holy as He is holy.

We are daughters of Heavenly Father, and each of us has a divine heritage of holiness. Our Father in Heaven has declared, "Behold, I am God; Man of Holiness is my name."⁹ In the premortal world, we loved our Father and worshipped Him. We desired to be like Him. Out of perfect paternal love, He gave His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Savior and Redeemer. He is the Son of Man of Holiness.¹⁰ His "name is Holy,"¹¹ "the Holy One of Israel."¹²

Our hope for holiness is centered in Christ, in His mercy and His grace. With faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, we may become clean, without spot, when we deny

ourselves of ungodliness¹³ and sincerely repent. We are baptized by water for the remission of sins. Our souls are sanctified when we receive the Holy Ghost with open hearts. Weekly, we partake of the ordinance of the sacrament. In a spirit of repentance, with sincere desires for righteousness, we covenant that we are willing to take upon us the name of Christ, remember Him, and keep His commandments so that we may always have His Spirit to be with us. Over time, as we continually strive to become one with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, we become partakers of Their divine nature.¹⁴

Holiness Is Keeping Our Covenants

We recognize the multitude of tests, temptations, and tribulations that could pull us away from all that is virtuous and praiseworthy before God. But our mortal experiences offer us the opportunity to choose holiness. Most often it is the sacrifices we make to keep our covenants that sanctify us and make us holy.

I saw holiness in the countenance of Evangeline, a 13-year-old girl in Ghana. One of the ways she keeps her covenants is by magnifying her calling as the Beehive class president. She humbly explained that she goes to the homes of her friends, the less-active young women, to ask their parents to allow them to come to church. The parents tell her that it is difficult because on Sunday the children must do household chores. So Evangeline goes and helps with the chores, and by her efforts her friends are often permitted to come to church.

If we will keep the associated covenants, the sacred priesthood ordinances will change us, sanctify us, and prepare us to enter the presence of the Lord.¹⁵ So we bear one another's burdens; we strengthen one another. We retain a remission of sins when we give spiritual and temporal relief to the poor, the hungry, the naked, and the sick.¹⁶ We keep ourselves unspotted from the world when we keep the Sabbath day and worthily receive the sacrament on the Lord's holy day.¹⁷

We bless our families and make our homes holy places. We bridle our passions so that we may be filled with pure and lasting love.¹⁸ We reach out to others in kindness, with compassion, and stand as witnesses of God. We become a Zion people, of one heart and one mind, a pure people who dwell together in unity and righteousness.¹⁹ "For Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness."²⁰

Sisters, come to the temple. If we are to be a holy people prepared to receive the Savior at His coming, we must arise and put on our beautiful garments.²¹ In strength and honor, we forsake the ways of the world and keep our covenants, that we may be "clothed with purity, yea, even with the robe of righteousness."²²

Holiness Is Taking the Holy Ghost as Our Guide

Holiness is a gift of the Spirit. We accept this gift when we choose to do those things that will increase the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost in our lives.

When Martha received Jesus Christ into her home, she felt a tremendous desire to serve the Lord to the best of her ability. Her sister, Mary, chose to sit "at Jesus' feet" and to hear His word. When Martha felt burdened about serving without any help, she complained, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?"

I love the words of the most gentle rebuke that I can imagine. With perfect love and infinite compassion, the Savior admonished:

"Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

"But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."²³

Sisters, if we would be holy, we must learn to sit at the feet of the Holy One of Israel and give time to holiness. Do we set aside the phone, the never-ending to-do list, and the cares of worldliness? Prayer, study, and heeding the word of God invite His cleansing and healing love into our souls. Let us take time to be holy, that we may be filled with His sacred and sanctifying Spirit. With the Holy Ghost as our guide, we will be prepared to receive the Savior in the beauty of holiness.²⁴

Holiness Is Becoming a Saint through the Atonement of Jesus Christ

According to the inspired words of King Benjamin, those who become saints through the Atonement of Jesus Christ are those who are submissive, meek, humble, patient, and full of love, as the Savior is.²⁵ He prophesied that Jesus Christ, "the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay." He came to bless the sick, the lame, the deaf, and the blind and to raise those who had died to life. And yet He suffered "more than man can suffer, except it be unto death."²⁶ And though He is the only one through whom salvation comes, He was mocked, scourged, and crucified. But the Son of God rose from the grave, that we may all overcome death. He is the one who will stand to judge the world in righteousness. He is the one who will redeem us all. He is the Holy One of Israel. Jesus Christ is the beauty of holiness.

When King Benjamin's people heard his words, they fell to the ground, so great was their humility and reverence for the grace and the glory of our God. They recognized their carnal state. Do we see our utter dependence on the grace and mercy of Christ, our Lord? Do we recognize that every good gift, temporal and spiritual, comes to us through Christ? Do we remember that according to the Father's eternal plan, peace in this life and the glories of eternity are ours only in and through His holy Son?

May we join with the people of King Benjamin as they cried aloud with one voice, "O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified; for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things."²⁷

I testify that as we come unto the Holy One of Israel, His Spirit will come upon us, that we may be filled with joy and receive a remission of sins and peace of conscience.

Heavenly Father has given each of us the capacity to become holy. May we do our best to keep our covenants and take the Holy Ghost as our guide. With faith in Jesus Christ, we become saints through His Atonement, that we may receive immortality and eternal life and give God our Father the glory due His name. May our lives ever be a sacred offering, that we may stand before the Lord in the beauty of holiness. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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