

# That Your Joy Might Be Full

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Jesus Christ is the source of all healing, peace, and eternal progress.

Brothers and sisters, it is a joy to be with you. And that's what I would like to talk with you about this morning—having a fulness of joy.

A recent news headline reads, "Disasters rock the nation [and] world."<sup>1</sup> From hurricanes and floods to heat waves and droughts, from wildfires and earthquakes to wars and devastating diseases, it seems "the whole earth [is] in commotion."<sup>2</sup>

Millions of people have been displaced, and countless lives have been disrupted by these challenges. Contention in families and communities as well as inner struggles with fear, doubt, and unfulfilled expectations also leave us in turmoil. It can be difficult to feel the joy that Lehi taught is the purpose of life.<sup>3</sup> We have all asked at times: "Where can I turn for peace? Where is my solace ... ?"<sup>4</sup> We wonder, how do I find joy despite the difficulties of mortal life?

The answer may seem too simple, but it has proven true from the days of Adam. Lasting joy is found in focusing on our Savior, Jesus Christ, and living the gospel as demonstrated and taught by Him. The more we *learn about, have faith in, and emulate* Jesus Christ, the more we come to understand that He is the source of all healing, peace, and eternal progress. He invites each of us to come unto Him,<sup>5</sup> an invitation that President Henry B. Eyring has characterized as "the most important invitation anyone could accept."<sup>6</sup>

### Learn of Jesus Christ

How do we come unto Him? Last April, President Russell M. Nelson and Elder M. Russell Ballard encouraged us to study "The Living Christ"<sup>7</sup> as part of learning about the Savior. Many have accepted the challenge and been blessed. Not long ago a dear friend gave each of her adult children copies of the document with gospel pictures to illustrate each phrase. She encouraged her children to help her grandchildren understand and memorize it. Sometime later my friend shared a video of her six-year-old granddaughter, Laynie, reciting her memorized version with enthusiasm and poise. I realized that if a six-year-old could do it, so can I!

As I have studied the life and teachings of Jesus Christ with more focus and committed “The Living Christ” to memory, my gratitude and love for our Savior have increased. Each sentence of that inspired document contains a sermon and has enhanced my understanding of His divine roles and earthly mission. What I have learned and felt through this period of study and reflection confirms that Jesus truly “is the light, the life, and the hope of the world.”<sup>8</sup> Ancient scripture and latter-day prophets’ words written or spoken in praise of Him bear witness that “His way is the path that leads to happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come.”<sup>9</sup>

## Have Faith in Jesus Christ

As you study Christ’s life and teachings in a myriad of ways, your faith in Him will increase. You will come to know that He loves you individually and understands you perfectly. In His 33 years of mortality, He suffered rejection; persecution; bodily hunger, thirst, and fatigue;<sup>10</sup> loneliness; verbal and physical abuse; and finally, an excruciating death at the hands of sinful men.<sup>11</sup> In the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross of Calvary, He felt all of *our* pains, afflictions, temptations, sicknesses, and infirmities.<sup>12</sup>

No matter what we have suffered, He is the source of *healing*. Those who have experienced any manner of abuse, devastating loss, chronic illness or disabling affliction, untrue accusations, vicious persecution, or spiritual damage from sin or misunderstandings can all be made whole by the Redeemer of the world. However, He will not enter without invitation. We must come unto Him and allow Him to work His miracles.

One beautiful spring day I left the door open to enjoy the fresh air. A small bird flew in the open door and then realized this was not where it wanted to be. It flew desperately around the room, repeatedly flying into the window glass in an attempt to escape. I tried to gently guide it toward the open door, but it was frightened and kept darting away. It finally landed on top of the window drapes in bewildered exhaustion. I took a broom and slowly reached the bristle end up to where the bird nervously perched. As I held the head of the broom next to its feet, the bird tentatively stepped onto the bristles. Slowly, very slowly, I walked to the open door, holding the broom as steady as I could. As soon as we reached the open door, the bird swiftly flew to freedom.

Like that bird, sometimes we are afraid to trust because we don’t understand God’s absolute love and desire to help us. But when we study Heavenly Father’s plan and Jesus Christ’s mission, we understand that Their only objective is our eternal happiness and progress.<sup>13</sup> They delight to help us when we ask, seek, and knock.<sup>14</sup> When we exercise faith and humbly open ourselves to Their answers, we become free from the constraints of our misunderstandings and assumptions, and we can be shown the way forward.

Jesus Christ is also the source of *peace*. He invites us to “lean on [His] ample arm”<sup>15</sup> and promises the “peace ... which passeth all understanding,”<sup>16</sup> a feeling that comes when His Spirit “speak[s] peace to our souls”<sup>17</sup> no matter what challenges surround us. Whether they are personal struggles, family troubles, or community crises, peace will come as we trust that God’s Only Begotten Son has power to soothe our aching souls.

Snježana Podvinski, one of a small number of Saints in Karlovac, Croatia, leaned on the Savior when her husband and both of her parents died within a six-month period last year. Grief-stricken, but having a testimony that families are forever, she used all of her savings to travel to the temple, where she was sealed to her husband and parents. She shared that those days in the temple were a highlight in her life. Because of her firm testimony of Jesus Christ and His Atonement, she has felt peace and experienced healing that have also been a strength to those around her.

Faith in Jesus Christ brings even more gifts than healing and peace. As President Henry B. Eyring shared: “I have been thankful for the many ways the Lord has visited me with the Comforter when I needed peace. Yet our Father in Heaven is concerned not just about our comfort but even more about our upward progress.”<sup>18</sup>

Because of Jesus Christ’s Atonement, which includes the gifts of redemption and resurrection, we are able to repent, change, and *progress eternally*. Because of the power He gives us as we are obedient, we are able to become more than we ever could on our own. We may not understand completely how, but each of us who has felt faith in Christ increase has also received a greater understanding of our divine identity and purpose, leading us to make choices that are consistent with that knowledge.

Despite a world that will try to knock us down to the level of “mere animals,”<sup>19</sup> knowing that God is our Father assures us that we have divine potential and royal promise. Despite a world that tells us this life is a dead end, knowing that God’s Only Begotten Son has made it possible for us to be redeemed and resurrected gives us hope for eternal progress.

## Emulate Jesus Christ

As we learn more about Jesus Christ, we develop greater faith in Him and we naturally want to follow His example. Keeping His commandments becomes our greatest desire. Our hearts yearn to relieve others’ suffering, as He did, and we want them to experience the peace and happiness we have found.

Why is trying to do as He did so powerful? Because when we put our faith into action, the Holy Ghost bears witness of eternal truth.<sup>20</sup> Jesus instructs His disciples to keep His commandments because He knows that as we follow His example, we will begin to experience joy, and as we continue on His path, we will come to a fulness of joy. He

explained, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."<sup>21</sup>

Are our testimonies built on the bedrock foundation of Jesus Christ and His gospel? When the storms of life press upon us, do we frantically look for a how-to book or an internet post for help? Taking the time to build and strengthen our knowledge and testimony of Jesus Christ will yield rich dividends in times of trial and adversity. Daily reading of scriptures and pondering the words of living prophets, engaging in meaningful personal prayer, mindfully partaking of the sacrament each week, giving service as the Savior would—each of these simple activities becomes a building block for a joyful life.

What brings you joy? The sight of your loved ones at the end of a long day? The satisfaction of a job done well? The light in someone's eyes when you share their burden? The words of a hymn that reaches deep into your heart? The handclasp of a close friend? Take a private moment to reflect on your blessings, and then find ways to share them. As you reach out to serve and lift your brothers and sisters within your neighborhood or throughout this world that is in so much commotion, you will feel greater peace and healing and even progress.

Come unto Him. I testify that as you center your life on Jesus Christ, you will find joy in your circumstances, whatever they may be. Indeed, "He, only One,"<sup>22</sup> is the answer. Make time and take time to come to know Jesus Christ through studying diligently, developing greater faith in Him, and striving to become ever more like Him. As we do so, we too will be moved to say, with little Laynie, "God be thanked for the matchless gift of His divine Son."<sup>23</sup> In the blessed and sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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