

Love One Another as He Has Loved Us

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By serving and forgiving others with real love, we can be healed and receive the strength to overcome our own challenges.

During the Last Supper, the Savior gave a new commandment to His disciples, saying:

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”¹

The Savior’s disciples were given a new commandment to do something more, something greater, and something more divine. This new commandment and invitation is summarized in the key phrase “as I have loved you.”

Love Is Action; Love Is Service

“Love is a feeling of deep devotion, concern, and affection. The greatest example of God’s love for His children is found in the infinite Atonement of Jesus Christ.”² “For God so loved the world,” John recorded, “that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”³ “Love for God and fellowmen is a characteristic of disciples of Jesus Christ.”⁴

Some years ago, when our oldest grandson, Jose, was four, he was playing with my wife. While they were laughing and having a good time together, our grandson asked her, “Grandma, do you love me?”

She answered him, “Yes, Jose, I do love you.”

Then he asked her another question: “How do you know that you love me?”

She explained to him her feelings and also told him all she had done and was willing to do for him.

Later my wife asked Jose the same questions, including this penetrating inquiry: “How do you know that you love me?”

With an innocent but sincere response, he said, "I love you because I feel it inside my heart." Jose's loving behavior to his grandmother that day and always demonstrates that love is a combination of actions as well as deep feelings.

King Benjamin taught, "Behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God."⁵

In today's world of so much suffering because of different circumstances, sending a text message with a funny emoji or posting a nice picture with the words "I love you" is good and valuable. But what many of us need to do is leave our mobile devices behind and, with our hands and feet, help others in great need. Love without service is like faith without works; it's dead indeed.

Love Is Forgiveness

The pure love of Christ, which is charity,⁶ inspires us not only to act and provide service but also to have the strength to forgive, regardless of the situation. May I share with you an experience that has impacted and changed my life. Ted and Sharon, Cooper's parents, who are here today, have given me permission to share what happened to their family more than nine years ago. I will tell the experience from the perspective of Ted, Cooper's father:

August 21, 2008, was the first day of school, and Cooper's three older brothers, Ivan, Garrett, and Logan, were all at the bus stop waiting to board buses. Cooper, who was four years old, was on his bike; my wife, Sharon, had walked.

My wife was across the street and motioned to Cooper to cross. At the same time, a car very slowly made a left turn and rolled over Cooper.

I received a phone call from a neighbor telling me Cooper had been hit by a car. I quickly drove down to the bus stop to see him. Cooper was lying on the grass, struggling to breathe, but had no visible injuries.

I knelt down by Cooper and said encouraging things like "It's going to be OK. Hang on." At that moment my high priests group leader, Nathan, appeared with his wife. She suggested we give Cooper a priesthood blessing. We laid our hands on Cooper's head. I can't remember what I said in the blessing, but I clearly remember the presence of others around us, and it was at that moment I knew Cooper was going to pass away.

Cooper was flown by helicopter to the hospital but did, in fact, pass away. I felt Heavenly Father was telling me that my earthly stewardship had ended and that Cooper was now in His care.

We were able to spend some time with Cooper at the hospital. The workers there prepared him so we could hold him and say our goodbyes and allowed us to spend as much time with him, holding him, as we desired.

On the way home, my grief-stricken wife and I looked at each other and started talking about the boy who was driving the car. We didn't know him, even though he lived just one street over and was within our ward boundaries.

The next day was very difficult for us as we were all completely overwhelmed with grief. I fell to my knees and prayed the most sincere prayer I had ever offered. I asked Heavenly Father in the name of my Savior to take away my overwhelming grief. He did so.

Later that day one of the counselors in our stake presidency arranged for us to meet with the young man—the driver of the car—and his parents at the counselor's home. Sharon and I waited for the boy and his parents to arrive. When the door opened, we met them for the first time. My bishop whispered in my ear, "Go to him." Sharon and I embraced him in a big group hug. We wept together for what seemed to be a long time. We told him we knew that what had happened was the definition of an accident.

It was miraculous to Sharon and me, both that we felt the way we did and that we still do. By God's grace, we were able to take the big path, the obvious path, the only path, and love this good young man.

We have become very close to him and his family over the years. He has shared his most precious milestone moments with us. We even went to the temple with him as he prepared for his mission.⁷

Brothers and sisters, Ted knows without any doubt that our Heavenly Father loves us. He knows that being able to forgive, and to unburden himself in that way, is as sweet as being forgiven. This sweetness comes from following the example of our greatest Exemplar. In the Book of Mormon, Alma declared of the Savior, "And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people."⁸

Brothers and sisters, what a marvelous story of real love and forgiveness. We, likewise, can have joy and happiness as we serve and forgive others. Georgy, another of our grandsons, often says, "What kind of family are we?" And he responds, "We are a happy family!"

President Thomas S. Monson has counseled us, saying, "Let us examine our lives and determine to follow the Savior's example by being kind, loving, and charitable."⁹

I know that our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, love us and are willing to help us to act as we love one another as They have loved us. And I know that by

serving and forgiving others with real love, we can be healed and receive the strength to overcome our own challenges. And I so declare in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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