

Pure Love: The True Sign of Every True Disciple of Jesus Christ

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The gospel of Jesus Christ is centered on the love of the Father and the Savior for us and our love for Them and for one another.

We love and miss President Thomas S. Monson, and we love and sustain President Russell M. Nelson. President Nelson has a special place in my heart.

When I was a young father, our little son, who was five, came home from school one day and asked his mother, "What kind of work does Daddy do?" He then explained that his new classmates started debating about their fathers' jobs. One said that his father was the chief of the city police, while another proudly declared that his father was the chief of a big company.

So when asked about his father, my son simply said, "My father works in an office on a computer." Then, noticing that his answer did not impress his new little friends much, he added, "And by the way, my father is the chief of the universe."

I guess that was the end of the conversation.

I told my wife, "It's time to teach him some more details of the plan of salvation and who is really in charge."

But as we taught our children the plan of salvation, their love for Heavenly Father and for the Savior grew as they learned that it is a plan of love. The gospel of Jesus Christ is centered on the love of the Father and the Savior for us and our love for Them and for one another.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland said: "The first great *commandment* of all eternity is to love God with all of *our* heart, might, mind, and strength—that's the first great commandment. But the first great *truth* of all eternity is that God loves *us* with all of *His* heart, might, mind, and strength. That love is the foundation stone of eternity, and it should be the foundation stone of our daily life."¹

Being the foundation stone of our daily life, pure love is a requirement for every true disciple of Jesus Christ.

The prophet Mormon taught, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ."²

Love indeed is the true sign of every true disciple of Jesus Christ.

True disciples love to serve. They know that serving is an expression of true love and a covenant they made at baptism.³ Regardless of their callings in the Church or their role in the

community, they feel an increasing desire to love and serve the Lord and one another.

True disciples love to forgive. They know that the Atonement of the Savior covers all sins and mistakes of each one of us. They know that the price He paid is an “all-inclusive price.” Spiritual taxes, fees, commissions, and charges related to sins, mistakes, or wrongdoings are all covered. True disciples are quick to forgive and quick to ask for forgiveness.

My dear brothers and sisters, if you are struggling to find the strength to forgive, don't think of what others have done to you, but think of what the Savior has done for you, and you will find peace in the redemptive blessings of His Atonement.

True disciples love to submit themselves to the Lord with peace in their heart. They are humble and submissive because they love Him. They have faith to fully accept His will, not only in what He does but also in how and when. True disciples know that the real blessings are not always what they want but rather what the Lord wants for them.

True disciples love the Lord more than the world and are steadfast and immovable in their faith. They stay strong and firm in a changing and confusing world. True disciples love to listen to the voice of the Spirit and of the prophets and are not confused by the voices of the world. True disciples love to “stand in holy places”⁴ and love to make holy the places where they stand. Wherever they go, they bring the love of the Lord and peace to the hearts of others. True disciples love to obey the Lord's commandments, and they obey because they love the Lord. As they love and keep their covenants, their hearts are renewed and their very nature changes.

Pure love is the true sign of every true disciple of Jesus Christ.

I learned about pure love from my mother. She was not a member of the Church.

One day many years ago, I visited my mother, who was struggling with cancer. I knew that she was going to die, but I was concerned that she was suffering. I didn't say anything, but knowing me well, she said, “I see that you are concerned.”

Then to my surprise, she asked me with a feeble voice, “Can you teach me how to pray? I want to pray for you. I know you start by saying, ‘Dear Heavenly Father,’ but then what should I say?”

As I knelt next to her bed and she prayed for me, I felt a love never felt before. It was simple, true, pure love. Although she didn't know about the plan of salvation, she had in her heart her personal plan of love, the plan of love of a mother for her son. She was in pain, struggling to even find the strength to pray. I could barely hear her voice, but I surely felt her love.

I remember thinking, “How can someone who is in such great pain pray for someone else? She is the one in need.”

Then the answer came clearly to my mind: pure love. She loved me so much that she forgot about herself. In her most critical hour, she loved me more than herself.

Now, dear brothers and sisters, isn't this what the Savior did? Of course, in an eternal and much broader perspective. But in the midst of His greatest pain, in the garden that night, He was the one who needed help, suffering in a way that we cannot even imagine or comprehend. But in the end, He forgot about Himself and prayed for us until He paid the full price. How was He

able to do it? Because of His pure love for the Father, who sent Him, and for us. He loved the Father and us more than Himself.

He paid for something that He had not done. He paid for sins that He had not committed. Why? Pure love. Having paid the full price, He was in the position to offer us the blessings of what He paid for if we would repent. Why did He offer this? Again, and always, pure love.

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President Thomas S. Monson said: "May we begin now, this very day, to express love to all of God's children, whether they be our family members, our friends, mere acquaintances, or total strangers. As we arise each morning, let us determine to respond with love and kindness to whatever might come our way."⁵

Brothers and sisters, the gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of love. The greatest commandment is about love. For me, it's all about love. The love of the Father, who sacrificed His Son for us. The love of the Savior, who sacrificed all for us. The love of a mother or a father who would give anything for his or her children. The love of those who serve silently and are not known to most of us but are well known to the Lord. The love of those who forgive all and always. The love of the ones who give more than they receive.

I love my Heavenly Father. I love my Savior. I love the gospel. I love this Church. I love my family. I love this wonderful life. For me, it's all about love.

May this day of remembrance of the Resurrection of the Savior be a day of spiritual renewal for each one of us. May this day be the beginning of a life full of love, "the foundation stone of our daily life."

May our hearts be filled with the pure love of Christ, the true sign of every true disciple of Jesus Christ. It is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.