

# Taking upon Ourselves the Name of Jesus Christ

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May we faithfully take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ—by seeing as He sees, by serving as He served, and by trusting that His grace is sufficient.

My fellow brothers and sisters, recently, as I was pondering President Russell M. Nelson's charge to call the Church by its revealed name, I turned to where the Savior instructed the Nephites about the name of the Church.<sup>1</sup> As I read the Savior's words, I was struck by how He also told the people that "ye must take upon you the name of Christ."<sup>2</sup> This caused me to look at myself and ask, "Am I taking upon myself the Savior's name as He would have me do so?"<sup>3</sup> Today I would like to share some of the impressions I have received in answer to my question.

**First**, to take upon ourselves the name of Christ means we faithfully strive to see as God sees.<sup>4</sup> How does God see? Joseph Smith said, "While one portion of the human race is judging and condemning the other without mercy, the Great Parent of the universe looks upon the whole of the human family with a fatherly care and paternal regard," for "His love [is] unfathomable."<sup>5</sup>

A few years ago my older sister passed away. She had a challenging life. She struggled with the gospel and was never really active. Her husband abandoned their marriage and left her with four young children to raise. On the evening of her passing, in a room with her children present, I gave her a blessing to peacefully return home. At that moment I realized I had too often defined my sister's life in terms of her trials and inactivity. As I placed my hands on her head that evening, I received a severe rebuke from the Spirit. I was made acutely aware of her goodness and allowed to see her as God saw her—not as someone who struggled with the gospel and life but as someone who had to deal with difficult issues I did not have. I saw her as a magnificent mother who, despite great obstacles, had raised four beautiful, amazing children. I saw her as the friend to our mother who took time to watch over and be a companion to her after our father passed away.

During that final evening with my sister, I believe God was asking me, "Can't you see that everyone around you is a sacred being?"

Brigham Young taught:

"I wish to urge upon the Saints ... to understand men and women as they are, and not understand them as you are."<sup>6</sup>

"How often it is said—'Such a person has done wrong, and he cannot be a Saint.' ... We hear some swear and lie ... [or] break the Sabbath. ... Do not judge such persons, for you do not know the design of the Lord concerning them. ... [Rather,] bear with them."<sup>7</sup>

Can any one of you imagine our Savior letting you and your burdens go unnoticed by Him? The Savior looked upon the Samaritan, the adulterer, the tax collector, the leper, the mentally ill,

and the sinner with the same eyes. All were children of His Father. All were redeemable.

Can you imagine Him turning away from someone with doubts about their place in God's kingdom or from anyone afflicted in any manner?<sup>8</sup> I cannot. In the eyes of Christ, each soul is of infinite worth. No one is preordained to fail. Eternal life is possible for all.<sup>9</sup>

From the Spirit's rebuke at my sister's bedside, I learned a great lesson: that as we see as He sees, ours will be a double victory—redemption of those we touch and redemption of ourselves.

**Second**, to take upon ourselves the name of Christ, we must not only see as God sees, but we must do His work and serve as He served. We live the two great commandments, submit to God's will, gather Israel, and let our light "shine before men."<sup>10</sup> We receive and live the covenants and ordinances of His restored Church.<sup>11</sup> As we do this, God endows us with power to bless ourselves, our families, and the lives of others.<sup>12</sup> Ask yourself, "Do I know anyone who does not need the powers of heaven in their lives?"

God will work wonders among us as we sanctify ourselves.<sup>13</sup> We sanctify ourselves by purifying our hearts.<sup>14</sup> We purify our hearts as we hear Him,<sup>15</sup> repent of our sins,<sup>16</sup> become converted,<sup>17</sup> and love as He loves.<sup>18</sup> The Savior asked us, "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye?"<sup>19</sup>

I recently learned about an experience in the life of Elder James E. Talmage that caused me to pause and consider how I love and serve those around me. As a young professor, before he became an Apostle, in the height of the deadly diphtheria epidemic of 1892, Elder Talmage discovered a family of strangers, not members of the Church, who lived near him and who were stricken by the disease. No one wanted to put themselves at risk by going inside the infected home. Elder Talmage, however, immediately proceeded to the home. He found four children: a two-and-a-half-year-old dead on the bed, a five-year-old and ten-year-old in great pain, and a weakened thirteen-year-old. The parents were suffering with grief and fatigue.

Elder Talmage dressed the dead and the living, swept the rooms, carried out the soiled clothing, and burned filthy rags covered with the disease. He worked all day and then returned the next morning. The ten-year-old died during the night. He lifted and held the five-year-old. She coughed bloody mucus all over his face and clothes. He wrote, "I could not put her from me," and he held her until she died in his arms. He helped bury all three children and arranged for food and clean clothing for the grieving family. Upon returning home, Brother Talmage disposed of his clothes, bathed in a zinc solution, quarantined himself from his family, and suffered through a mild attack of the disease.<sup>20</sup>

So many lives around us are at stake. Saints take the Savior's name upon themselves by becoming holy and ministering to all regardless of where or how they stand—lives are saved as we do so.<sup>21</sup>

**Finally**, I believe that to take upon ourselves His name, we must trust Him. At a meeting I attended one Sunday, a young woman asked something like the following: "My boyfriend and I recently broke up, and he chose to leave the Church. He tells me he has never been happier. How can this be?"

The Savior answered this question when He said to the Nephites, “But if [your life is] not built upon my gospel, and is built upon the works of men, or upon the works of the devil, verily I say unto you [you will] have joy in [your] works for a season, and by and by the end cometh.”<sup>22</sup> There simply is no enduring joy outside the gospel of Jesus Christ.

At that meeting, however, I thought about the many good people I know who struggle with great burdens and commandments that are daunting at best for them. I asked myself, “What else might the Savior say to them?”<sup>23</sup> I believe He would ask, “Do you trust me?”<sup>24</sup> To the woman with the issue of blood, He said, “Thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.”<sup>25</sup>

One of my favorite scriptures is John 4:4, which reads, “And he must needs go through Samaria.”

Why do I love that scripture? Because Jesus did not *need* to go to Samaria. The Jews of His day despised the Samaritans and traveled a road around Samaria. But Jesus chose to go there to declare before all the world for the first time that He was the promised Messiah. For this message, He chose not only an outcast group but also a woman—and not just any woman but a woman living in sin—someone considered at that time to be the least of the least. I believe Jesus did this so that each of us may always understand that His love is greater than our fears, our wounds, our addictions, our doubts, our temptations, our sins, our broken families, our depression and anxieties, our chronic illness, our poverty, our abuse, our despair, and our loneliness.<sup>26</sup> He wants all to know there is nothing and no one He is unable to heal and deliver to enduring joy.<sup>27</sup>

His grace is sufficient.<sup>28</sup> He alone descended below all things. The power of His Atonement is the power to overcome any burden in our life.<sup>29</sup> The message of the woman at the well is that He knows our life situations<sup>30</sup> and that we can always walk with Him no matter where we stand. To her and to each of us, He says, “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but [shall have] a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”<sup>31</sup>

In any of life’s travels, why would you ever turn away from the only Savior who has all power to heal and deliver you? Whatever the price you must pay to trust Him is worth it. My brothers and sisters, let us choose to increase our faith in Heavenly Father and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

From the very depths of my soul, I bear testimony that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Savior’s Church, directed by the living Christ through a true prophet. My prayer is that we will faithfully take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ—by seeing as He sees, by serving as He served, and by trusting that His grace is sufficient to deliver us home and to enduring joy. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.