

What Has Our Savior Done for Us?

By President Dallin H. Oaks
First Counselor in the First Presidency

Jesus Christ has done everything that is essential for our journey through mortality toward the destiny outlined in the plan of our Heavenly Father.

In a Saturday evening meeting at a stake conference many years ago, I met a woman who said her friends had asked her to come back to church after many years of inactivity, but she could not think of any reason why she should. To encourage her, I said, “When you consider all of the things the Savior has done for you, you have many reasons to come back to worship and serve Him.” I was astonished when she replied, “What’s He done for me?”

What has Jesus Christ done for each of us? He has done everything that is essential for our journey through mortality toward the destiny outlined in the plan of our Heavenly Father. I will speak of four of the principal features of that plan. In each of these, His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, is the central figure. Motivating all of this is “the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men; wherefore, it is the most desirable above all things” (1 Nephi 11:22).

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Just before Easter Sunday, it is timely to speak first of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Resurrection from the dead is the reassuring personal pillar of our faith. It adds meaning to our doctrine, motivation to our behavior, and hope for our future.

Because we believe the Bible and Book of Mormon descriptions of the literal Resurrection of Jesus Christ, we also accept the numerous scriptural teachings that a similar resurrection will come to all mortals who have ever lived upon this earth.¹ As Jesus taught, “Because I live, ye shall live also” (John 14:19). And His Apostle taught that “the dead shall be raised incorruptible” and “this mortal shall have put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:52, 54).

But the Resurrection gives us more than this assurance of immortality. It changes the way we view mortal life.

The Resurrection gives us the perspective and the strength to endure the mortal challenges faced by each of us and those we love. It gives us a new way to view the

physical, mental, or emotional deficiencies we have at birth or acquire during mortal life. It gives us the strength to endure sorrows, failures, and frustrations. Because each of us has an assured resurrection, we know that these mortal deficiencies and oppositions are only temporary.

The Resurrection also gives us a powerful incentive to keep the commandments of God during our mortal lives. When we rise from the dead and proceed to our prophesied Final Judgment, we want to have qualified for the choicest blessings promised to resurrected beings.²

In addition, the promise that the Resurrection can include an opportunity to be with our family members—husband, wife, children, parents, and posterity—is a powerful encouragement to fulfill our family responsibilities in mortality. It also helps us live together in love in this life, and it comforts us in the death of our loved ones. We know that these mortal separations are only temporary, and we anticipate future joyful reunions and associations. The Resurrection provides us hope and the strength to be patient as we wait. It also prepares us with the courage and dignity to face our own death—even a death that might be called premature.

All of these effects of the Resurrection are part of the first answer to the question “What has Jesus Christ done for me?”

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For most of us, the opportunity to be forgiven of our sins is the major meaning of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. In worship, we reverently sing:

His precious blood he freely spilt;
His life he freely gave,
A sinless sacrifice for guilt,
A dying world to save.³

Our Savior and Redeemer endured incomprehensible suffering to become a sacrifice for the sins of all mortals who would repent. This atoning sacrifice offered the ultimate good, the pure lamb without blemish, for the ultimate measure of evil, the sins of the entire world. It opened the door for each of us to be cleansed of our personal sins so we can be readmitted to the presence of God, our Eternal Father. This open door is available to all of the children of God. In worship, we sing:

I marvel that he would descend from his throne divine
To rescue a soul so rebellious and proud as mine,
That he should extend his great love unto such as I.⁴

The magnificent and incomprehensible effect of the Atonement of Jesus Christ is based on God’s love for each of us. It affirms His declaration that “the worth of souls”—every one—“is great in the sight of God” (Doctrine and Covenants 18:10). In the Bible, Jesus Christ explained this in terms of our Heavenly Father’s love: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever

believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). In modern revelation, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, declared that *He* “so loved the world that he gave his own life, that as many as would believe might become the sons of God” (Doctrine and Covenants 34:3).

Is it any wonder, then, that the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ concludes with the teaching that to become “perfect” and “sanctified in Christ,” *we* must “love God with all [our] might, mind and strength”? (Moroni 10:32–33). His plan motivated by love must be received with love.

III.

What else has our Savior, Jesus Christ, done for us? Through the teachings of His prophets and through His personal ministry, Jesus taught us the plan of salvation. This plan includes the Creation, the purpose of life, the necessity of opposition, and the gift of agency. He also taught us the commandments and covenants we must obey and the ordinances we must experience to take us back to our heavenly parents.

In the Bible, we read His teaching: “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). And in modern revelation, we read, “Behold, I am Jesus Christ, ... a light which cannot be hid in darkness” (Doctrine and Covenants 14:9). If we follow His teachings, He lights our path in this life and assures our destiny in the next.

Because He loves us, He challenges us to focus on Him instead of the things of this mortal world. In His great sermon on the bread of life, Jesus taught that we should not be among those who are most attracted to the things of the world—the things that sustain life on earth but give no nourishment toward eternal life.⁵ As Jesus invited us again and again and again, “Follow me.”⁶

IV.

Finally, the Book of Mormon teaches that as part of His Atonement, Jesus Christ “suffer[ed] 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” (Alma 7:11).

Why did our Savior suffer these mortal challenges “of every kind”? Alma explained, “And he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor [which means to give relief or aid to] his people according to their infirmities” (Alma 7:12).

Our Savior feels and knows our temptations, our struggles, our heartaches, and our sufferings, for He willingly experienced them all as part of His Atonement.

Other scriptures affirm this. The New Testament declares, “In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2:18). Isaiah teaches, “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: ... I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee” (Isaiah 41:10). All who suffer any kind of mortal infirmities should remember that our Savior experienced that kind of pain also, and that through His Atonement, He offers each of us the strength to bear it.

The Prophet Joseph Smith summarized all of this in our third article of faith: “We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.”

“What has Jesus Christ done for me?” that sister asked. Under the plan of our Heavenly Father, He “created the heavens and the earth” (Doctrine and Covenants 14:9) so that each of us could have the mortal experience necessary to seek our divine destiny. As part of the Father’s plan, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ overcame death to assure each of us immortality. Jesus Christ’s atoning sacrifice gives each of us the opportunity to repent of our sins and return clean to our heavenly home. His commandments and covenants show us the way, and His priesthood gives the authority to perform the ordinances that are essential to reach that destiny. And our Savior willingly experienced all mortal pains and infirmities that He would know how to strengthen us in our afflictions.

Jesus Christ did all of this because He loves all of the children of God. Love is the motivation for it all, and it was so from the very beginning. God has told us in modern revelation that “he created ... male and female, after his own image ... ; and gave unto them commandments that they should love and serve him” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:18–19).

I testify of all of this and pray that we all will remember what our Savior has done for each of us and that we all will love and serve Him, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.