

Jesus Christ: The Caregiver of Our Soul

By Elder Ulisses Soares
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

As we genuinely repent of our sins, we allow the atoning sacrifice of Christ to become wholly effective in our life.

My dear brothers and sisters, on this radiant Easter morning my heart rejoices upon remembering the most marvelous, the most majestic, the most immeasurable act that has occurred in all of human history—the atoning sacrifice of our Lord, Jesus Christ. The eminent words of the prophet Isaiah magnify the greatness and selflessness of the Savior’s condescension and sacrifice in behalf of all the children of God:

“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”¹

By voluntarily taking upon Himself the sins of all mankind, being cruelly nailed to the cross, and victoriously conquering death on the third day,² Jesus gave a more sacred significance to the Passover ordinance that had been bestowed upon Israel in ancient times.³ In fulfillment of prophecy, He offered His own body and precious blood as the great and last sacrifice,⁴ validating the traditional symbols used in the celebration of the Lord’s Passover.⁵ In so doing, Christ experienced physical and spiritual suffering that is incomprehensible to the human mind. The Savior Himself said:

“For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, ...

“Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

“Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.”⁶

Christ graciously fulfilled the will of the Father⁷ through His infinite and merciful sacrifice. He overcame the sting of physical and spiritual death,⁸ introduced to the world through the Fall,⁹ offering us the glorious possibility of eternal salvation.¹⁰

Jesus was the only Being capable of realizing this eternal and perfect sacrifice for all of us.¹¹ He was chosen and foreordained in the Grand Council in Heaven, even

before the world was formed.¹² Furthermore, being born of a mortal mother, He inherited the physical death, but from God, as the Only Begotten Son of the Father, He inherited the power to lay down His own life and then to take it up again.¹³ Additionally, Christ lived a perfect life that was without blemish and, therefore, was exempt from the demands of divine justice.¹⁴ On some occasions the Prophet Joseph Smith taught:

“Salvation could not come to the world without the mediation of Jesus Christ.

“God ... prepared a sacrifice in the gift of His own Son, who should be sent in due time to ... open a door through which man might enter into the Lord’s presence.”¹⁵

While through His sacrifice the Savior unconditionally removed the effects of physical death,¹⁶ He did not eliminate our personal responsibility to repent for the sins we commit.¹⁷ Rather, He extended to us a loving invitation to be reconciled to our Eternal Father. Through Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice, we can experience a mighty change of mind and heart, bringing a fresh attitude, both toward God and toward life in general.¹⁸ When we sincerely repent of our sins and turn our hearts and will to God and His commandments, we can receive His forgiveness and feel the influence of His Holy Spirit in greater abundance. Mercifully, we avoid having to experience the depth of suffering the Savior endured.¹⁹

The gift of repentance is an expression of God’s kindness toward His children, and it is a demonstration of His incomparable power to help us overcome the sins we commit. It is also an evidence of the patience and long-suffering our loving Father has for our mortal weakness and frailties. President Russell M. Nelson, our beloved prophet, referred to this gift as “the key to happiness and peace of mind.”²⁰

My dear friends, I testify to you that as we genuinely repent of our sins,²¹ we allow the atoning sacrifice of Christ to become wholly effective in our life.²² We will become free from the bondage of sin, find joy in our earthly journey, and become eligible to receive eternal salvation, which was prepared from the foundation of the world for all who believe in Jesus Christ and come unto Him.²³

In addition to providing the majestic gift of salvation, the Savior offers us relief and comfort as we face our afflictions, temptations, and weaknesses of mortal life, including the circumstances we have experienced recently in the current pandemic. I can assure you that Christ is ever aware of the adversities we experience in mortality. He understands all of the bitterness, agony, and physical pain as well as the emotional and spiritual challenges we face. The Savior’s bowels are filled with mercy, and He is always ready to succor us. This is possible because He personally experienced and took upon Himself in the flesh the pain of our weakness and infirmities.²⁴

With meekness and humility of heart, He descended below all things and accepted being despised, rejected, and humiliated by men, having been wounded for our transgressions and iniquities. He suffered these things for all, taking upon Himself the sins of the world,²⁵ thus becoming our ultimate spiritual caregiver.

As we draw nearer to Him, surrendering ourselves spiritually to His care, we will be able to take upon ourselves His yoke, which is easy, and His burden, which is light, thus finding that promised comfort and rest. Furthermore, we will receive the strength we all need to overcome the hardships, weaknesses, and sorrows of life, which are exceedingly difficult to endure without His help and healing power.²⁶ The scriptures teach us to “cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.”²⁷ “And then may God grant unto [us] that [our] burdens may be light, through the joy of his Son.”²⁸

Near the end of last year, I learned of the passing of a dear couple, Mario and Regina Emerick, who were very faithful to the Lord and passed away four days apart from one another due to complications from COVID-19.

One of their sons, who is currently serving as a bishop in Brazil, related the following to me: “It was so difficult to see my parents depart from this world in that condition, but I could clearly feel the hand of the Lord in my life amidst that tragedy, because I received strength and peace that transcended my understanding. Through my faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, I received divine help to strengthen and comfort my family members and all those who helped us during this trying experience. Even though the miracle that everyone hoped for did not occur, personally I am a witness of many other miracles that have occurred in my own life and in the lives of my family members. I felt an inexplicable peace that penetrated the depths of my heart, giving me hope and confidence in the love of the Savior for me and in the plan of happiness of God for His children. I learned that on the very most grief-filled days, the loving arms of the Savior are always extended when we seek Him with all our heart, power, mind, and strength.”

My dear brothers and sisters, on this Easter Sunday, I bear my solemn witness that Jesus rose from the dead and that He lives. I testify to you that through Him and His infinite Atonement, the Savior provided us the way to overcome death, both physically and spiritually. In addition to these great blessings, He also offers us comfort and assurance in difficult times. I assure you that as we put our trust in Jesus Christ and in His supernal atoning sacrifice, enduring in our faith to the end, we will enjoy the promises of our beloved Heavenly Father, who does everything within His power to help us return to His presence one day. This is His work and His glory!²⁹ I testify to you that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer of the world, the promised Messiah, the Resurrection and the Life.³⁰ And I share these truths with you in His holy name, the Only Begotten of the Father, our Lord, Jesus Christ, amen.