

Light Cleaveth unto Light

By Elder Timothy J. Dyches
Of the Seventy

As we intensify our faith in Christ, we receive light in intensifying measure until it dispels all darkness.

My dear brothers and sisters, I rejoice with you on this blessed Easter Sunday in contemplating the glorious light that dawned on the earth with the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

During His mortal ministry, Jesus declared, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”¹ The Spirit of Christ “is in all things [and] giveth life to all things.”² It conquers the darkness that otherwise would surround us.

Years ago, in search of adventure, my two sons and I accompanied a Young Men group to the Moaning Cavern, so named for a sound that at one time echoed out of its mouth. The cavern is a chimney cave which opens into a 180-foot-deep (55 m) vertical chamber, the largest single-cave chamber in California.

There are only two ways down: the safe circular staircase or rappelling to the cavern’s floor; my sons and I chose to rappel. My older son went first, while my younger son and I purposely went last so that we would descend together.

After our guides instructed and secured us with harness and belay gear to a strong rope, we inched backward until we stood on a small ledge and gathered our confidence, as this was the last place to turn around and the last place we could see any sunlight from the mouth of the cave.

Our next step backwards plunged us into a cathedral cavern so tall and wide that it could swallow the Statue of Liberty. There we dangled in a slow spin as our eyes adjusted to the relative darkness. As we continued our descent, the glow of electric lights illuminated an amazing wall of glistening stalagmites and stalactites.

Without warning, the lights suddenly went completely out. Suspended above the abyss, we were engulfed in a darkness so profound that we could not even see our hands on the ropes in front of us. A voice instantly called out, “Dad, Dad, are you there?”

“I’m here, Son; I’m right here,” I responded.

The unexpected loss of light was designed to show that without electricity, the darkness of the cavern was impenetrable. It succeeded; we “felt” the darkness.

When the lights did return, the darkness instantly surrendered, as darkness must always surrender, to even the faintest light. My sons and I have been left with a memory of a darkness we had never known, a greater appreciation for light we will never forget, and the assurance that we are never all alone in the dark.

Our descent into that cavern in some ways parallels our journey through mortality. We departed from the glorious light of heaven and descended through a veil of forgetfulness to a darkened world. Our Heavenly Father did not abandon us to darkness but promised us light for our journey through His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

We know that sunlight is vital to all life on earth. Equally vital to our spiritual life is the light that emanates from our Savior. In His perfect love, God grants the Light of Christ to every person “that cometh into the world”³ that they may “know good from evil”⁴ and be prompted “to do good continually.”⁵ That light, revealing itself through what we often call our conscience, beckons us ever to act and be better, to be our best self.

As we intensify our faith in Christ, we receive light in intensifying measure until it dispels all darkness that might gather around us. “That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.”⁶

The Light of Christ prepares us to receive the ministering influence of the Holy Ghost, which is “the convincing power of God ... of the truth of the Gospel.”⁷ The third member of the Godhead, the Holy Ghost “is a personage of Spirit.”⁸ The greatest source of light that Heavenly Father imparts to you in mortality comes through the Holy Ghost, whose influence “shall enlighten your mind [and] fill your soul with joy.”⁹

In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, through restored priesthood authority, you are baptized by immersion for the remission of sins. Then hands are laid upon your head and this wonderful, “unspeakable gift”¹⁰ of the Holy Ghost is bestowed upon you.

Thereafter, when your desires and actions are centered on the covenant path, the Holy Ghost, as a light within you, will reveal and testify of truth,¹¹ warn of danger, comfort¹² and cleanse,¹³ and provide peace¹⁴ to your soul.

Because “light cleaveth unto light,”¹⁵ the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost will lead you to make choices that will tend to keep you in the light; conversely, choices made without the Holy Ghost’s influence will tend to lead you into shadows and darkness. Elder Robert D. Hales taught: “When light is present, darkness is vanquished and must depart. ... When the spiritual light of the Holy Ghost is present, the darkness of Satan departs.”¹⁶

May I suggest that perhaps this is the time to ask yourself: Do I have that light in my life? If not, when was the last time I did?

Just as sunlight daily bathes the earth to renew and sustain life, you can daily brighten the light within you when you choose to follow Him—Jesus Christ.

A drop of sunshine is added every time you seek God in prayer; study the scriptures to “hear Him”;¹⁷ act on guidance and revelation from our living prophets; and obey and keep the commandments to “walk in all the ordinances of the Lord.”¹⁸

You will invite spiritual sunlight into your soul and peace into your life each time you repent. As you partake of the sacrament every week to take the Savior’s name upon you, to always remember Him and keep His commandments, His light will shine within you.

There is sunshine in your soul every time you share the gospel and bear your testimony. Every time you serve one another as the Savior did, His warmth is felt in your heart. Heavenly Father’s light always resides within His holy temple and upon all who present themselves in the house of the Lord. His light in you is enhanced with your acts of kindness, patience, forgiveness, and charity and shows itself in your happy countenance. On the other hand, we walk in shadows when we are too quick to anger or too slow to forgive. “As you keep your face towards the sunshine, the shadows cannot help but fall behind you.”¹⁹

As you live to merit the companionship of the Holy Ghost, you truly “increase your spiritual capacity to receive revelation.”²⁰

Life presents challenges and setbacks, and we all must face some dark days and storms. Through it all, if we “let God prevail in our lives,”²¹ the light of the Holy Ghost will reveal that there is purpose and meaning in our trials, that they will ultimately transform us into better, more complete individuals with a firmer faith and brighter hope in Christ, knowing that God was there with us in our dark days all along. As President Russell M. Nelson has counseled, “The increasing darkness that accompanies tribulation makes the light of Jesus Christ shine ever brighter.”²²

Seasons of our lives can take us to places both unexpected and undesirable. If sin has led you there, pull back the curtain of darkness and begin now to humbly approach your Heavenly Father with a broken heart and a contrite spirit and repent. He will hear your earnest prayer. With courage today, “draw near unto [Him] and [He] will draw near unto you.”²³ You are never beyond the healing power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

I come from goodly parents and from faithful ancestors who responded to the light of Jesus Christ and His gospel, and it blessed their lives and the generations that have followed with spiritual resilience. My dad often talked about his father, Milo T Dyches, and shared how his faith in God was a light to him day and night. Grandpa was a forest ranger and often rode alone in the mountains, entrusting his life without question to God’s direction and care.

Late one fall, Grandpa was alone in the high mountains. Winter had already shown its face when he saddled one of his favorite horses, old Prince, and rode to a sawmill to scale and measure logs before they could be sawed into lumber.

At dusk, he finished his work and climbed back into the saddle. By then, the temperature had plummeted, and a fierce winter snowstorm was engulfing the mountain. With neither light nor path to guide him, he turned Prince in a direction he thought would lead them back to the ranger station.

After traveling miles in the dark, Prince slowed, then stopped. Grandpa repeatedly urged Prince forward, but the horse refused. With blinding snow swirling around them, Grandpa realized he needed God's help. As he had done throughout his life, he humbly "ask[ed] in faith, nothing wavering."²⁴ A still, small voice answered, "Milo, give Prince his head." Grandpa obeyed, and as he lightened his hold on the reins, Prince swung around and plodded off in a different direction. Hours later, Prince again halted and lowered his head. Through the driving snow, Grandpa saw that they had safely arrived at the gate of the ranger station.

With the morning sun, Grandpa retraced the faint tracks of Prince in the snow. He drew a deep breath when he found where he had given Prince his head: it was the very brink of a lofty mountain cliff, where a single step forward would have plunged both horse and rider to their deaths in the rugged rocks below.

Based on that experience and many others, Grandpa counseled, "The best and greatest partner you will ever have is your Father in Heaven." When my dad would relate Grandpa's story, I remember that he would quote from the scriptures:

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."²⁵

I testify that Jesus Christ is the everlasting light that "shineth in darkness."²⁶ There is no darkness that can ever suppress, extinguish, overpower, or defeat that light. Our Heavenly Father freely offers that light to you. You are never alone. He hears and answers every prayer. He has "called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."²⁷ When you ask, "Father, Father, are You there?" He will always reply, "I'm here, child of mine; I'm right here."

I bear witness that Jesus Christ fulfilled Heavenly Father's plan as our Savior and our Redeemer;²⁸ He is our light, our life, and our way. His light will never dim;²⁹ His glory will never cease; His love for you is eternal—yesterday, today, and forever. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.