

Be Peaceable Followers of Christ

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I testify that “peaceable followers of Christ” will find personal peace in this life and a glorious heavenly reunion.

We live in a time when “peaceable followers of Christ”¹ experience unique challenges. Those who believe in, humbly worship, and testify of Jesus Christ have always experienced trials, tribulation, and adversities.² My wife, Mary, and I are no different. In the last few years, we have seen many of our close high school friends, missionary companions, some of their precious wives, and former work associates pass away, or, as President Russell M. Nelson has said, graduate to the other side of the veil. We have seen some who were raised in faith and belief step off the covenant path.

Sadly, we lost a grandson of 23 who died in a tragic single-car accident. Some dear friends, family members, and colleagues have also endured significant health challenges.

Whenever trials occur, we mourn and strive to bear one another’s burdens.³ We lament things that will not be accomplished and songs that will not be sung.⁴ Bad things happen to good people on this mortal journey. The devastating fires on Maui in Hawaii, southern Chile, and Canada are examples of horrendous events good people sometimes face.

We read in the Pearl of Great Price that the Lord revealed to Abraham the eternal nature of spirits. Abraham learned of our pre-earth life, foreordination, the Creation, the choosing of a Redeemer, and this mortal life, which is the second estate of man.⁵ The Redeemer declared:

“We will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

“And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them.”⁶

Now all of us are here in the second estate of our journey of progression toward a kingdom of glory as part of God’s great plan of salvation and exaltation. We are blessed with agency and subject to the trials of mortality. This is the time allotted for us to prepare to meet God.⁷ We are blessed to know of Jesus Christ and His role in the plan. We have the privilege to become members of His restored Church—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As peaceable followers of Christ, we strive to live His commandments. It has never been easy for His followers. Nor was it easy for the Savior to faithfully fulfill His mortal mission.

The scriptures are clear: many will succumb to an “eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die” approach.⁸ Other nonbelievers retreat to somber enclaves of like-minded participants who

advocate for the next “new thing”⁹ and philosophies of men.¹⁰ They know not where to find the truth.¹¹

Peaceable followers of Christ do not follow either path. We are warm, engaged members of the communities where we live. We love, share, and invite all of God’s children to follow Christ’s teachings.¹² We follow the counsel of our beloved prophet, President Nelson: we choose the role of “a peacemaker, now and always.”¹³ This inspired approach is consistent with both the scriptures and prophetic direction.

In 1829 the restored Church had not yet been organized, nor had the Book of Mormon been published. A small group of struggling people, moved by the Spirit of God, followed the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Lord revealed to Joseph counsel for difficult times: “Fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail.”¹⁴ He also counseled them:

“Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not.

“... Be faithful, keep my commandments, and ye shall inherit the kingdom of heaven.”¹⁵

Clearly, our heavenly destiny is not altered when we suffer adversity. In Hebrews we are counseled to “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”¹⁶ Jesus Christ is “the author of eternal salvation.”¹⁷

I love the words of Mormon, quoted by his son Moroni, commending “the peaceable followers of Christ ... because of your peaceable walk with the children of men.”¹⁸

For those of us in the Church striving to be peaceable followers of Christ, a brighter day awaits us as we focus on our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Trials are a part of mortality and occur in everyone’s life throughout the world. This includes major conflicts between countries and individuals.

Church leaders are frequently asked, “Why does a just God allow bad things to happen, especially to good people?” and “Why are those who are righteous and in the Lord’s service not immune from such tragedies?”

We do not know all the answers; however, we do know important principles that allow us to face trials, tribulation, and adversities with faith and confidence in a bright future that awaits each of us. No better example exists in scripture with respect to passing through tribulation than the word of the Lord to Joseph Smith, the Prophet, while he was a prisoner in Liberty Jail.

The Lord in part declared:

“If the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.

“The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?

“... Fear not what man can do, for God shall be with you forever and ever.”¹⁹

It is clear we have a Father in Heaven who knows and loves us personally and understands our suffering perfectly. His Son, Jesus Christ, is our Savior and Redeemer.

President Russell M. Nelson and President M. Russell Ballard have both strongly emphasized the significance of the new second edition of *Preach My Gospel*.²⁰ I share their enthusiasm. This new edition, amplifying sacred scripture, powerfully proclaims:

“In His atoning sacrifice, Jesus Christ took upon Himself our pains, afflictions, and infirmities. Because of this, He knows ‘according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities’ (Alma 7:12; see also verse 11). He invites, ‘Come unto me,’ and as we do, He gives us rest, hope, strength, perspective, and healing (Matthew 11:28; see also verses 29–30).

“As we rely on Jesus Christ and His Atonement, He can help us endure our trials, sicknesses, and pain. We can be filled with joy, peace, and consolation. All that is unfair about life can be made right through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.”²¹

We can joyfully be peaceable followers of Christ.

Our Father’s plan of happiness for His children includes not only a premortal and mortal life but also a potential for eternal life, including a great and glorious reunion with those we have lost. All wrongs will be righted, and we will see with perfect clarity and faultless perspective and understanding.

Church leaders have compared this perspective with someone walking into the middle of a three-act play.²² Those without knowledge of the Father’s plan do not understand what happened in the first act (or the premortal existence) and the purposes established there; nor do they understand the clarification and resolution that come in the third act, which is the glorious fulfillment of the Father’s plan.

Many do not appreciate that under His loving and comprehensive plan, those who appear to be disadvantaged, through no fault of their own, are not ultimately impacted.²³

The scriptures are clear: peaceable followers of Christ who are righteous, follow the Savior, and keep His commandments will be blessed. One of the most important scriptures for those who are righteous, regardless of their situation in life, is part of King Benjamin’s address to his people. He promises that those who faithfully keep the commandments are blessed in all things in this life and “are received into heaven ... [and] dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness.”²⁴

We recognize that almost all of us have experienced physical and spiritual storms in our lives, some devastating. A loving Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, who is the head of His restored Church, have provided us scriptures and prophets to prepare us, warn us about dangers, and give us guidance to prepare and protect us. Some directions require immediate action, and some provide protection for many years in the future. The Lord’s preface to the Doctrine and Covenants, section 1, admonishes us to “give heed to the words of the prophets.”²⁵

Section 1 also cautions us, “Prepare ye, prepare ye for that which is to come.”²⁶ The Lord provides His people a chance to prepare for the challenges they will face.

The Lord gave a powerful revelation to President Brigham Young on January 14, 1847, at Winter Quarters.²⁷ This revelation is a classic example of the Lord preparing people for that which is to come. The faithful Saints had begun their exodus to the mountain sanctuary of the Salt Lake Valley. They had successfully built the Nauvoo Temple and received sacred saving ordinances.

They had been driven out of Missouri, and their persecutors had driven them out of Nauvoo in a terrible winter season. The revelation to Brigham gave practical counsel on how to prepare for the exodus. The Lord placed special emphasis on taking care of the poor, the widows, the fatherless, and the families of those serving in the Mormon Battalion as the main body of Saints proceeded on their perilous journey.

In addition to providing other advice to live righteously, the Lord emphasized two principles that continue to be applicable today.

First, He encouraged them to “praise the Lord with singing, with music, with dancing, and with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving.”²⁸

Second, the Lord counseled if they were “sorrowful, call on the Lord thy God with supplication, that your souls may be joyful.”²⁹

These two admonitions are great counsel for our own day. Lives full of praise, music, and thanksgiving are uniquely blessed. Being joyful and relying on heavenly help through prayer is a powerful way to be peaceable followers of Christ. Striving always to be of good cheer helps avoid being cast down in spirit.

The final line of a perceptive hymn conveys the ultimate answer in a beautiful fashion: “Earth has no sorrow that heav’n cannot heal.”³⁰

As an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, I testify that “peaceable followers of Christ” will find personal peace in this life and a glorious heavenly reunion. I bear a sure witness of the Savior’s divinity and the reality of His Atonement. He is our Savior and Redeemer. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. Moroni 7:3.
2. See John 16:33.
3. See Mosiah 18:8–9; see also 2 Nephi 32:7.
4. See Quentin L. Cook, “The Songs They Could Not Sing,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 104–7.
5. See the chapter heading for Abraham 3.
6. Abraham 3:24–25.
7. See Alma 12:24.
8. See 2 Nephi 28:7–9.
9. Acts 17:21.
10. See Russell M. Nelson, “Overcome the World and Find Rest,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2022, 96.
11. See Doctrine and Covenants 123:12.

12. “Missionaries return home with a love for the people they have served and taught. They are true ambassadors spreading goodwill for the peoples in whose countries they have lived and worked. They are not concerned with income levels and have no racial bias. They are not out to build any worldly kingdoms. They are, in the words of Mormon, ‘the peaceable followers of Christ’ [Moroni 7:3]” (L. Tom Perry, “The Peaceable Followers of Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 71).
13. Russell M. Nelson, “Peacemakers Needed,” *Liahona*, May 2023, 100.
14. Doctrine and Covenants 6:34.
15. Doctrine and Covenants 6:36–37.
16. Hebrews 4:16.
17. Hebrews 5:9; see also the chapter heading.
18. Moroni 7:3–4.
19. Doctrine and Covenants 122:7–9.
20. See Scott Taylor, “President Nelson Introduces New Edition of ‘Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ,’” *Church News*, June 22, 2023, [thechurchnews.com](https://www.thechurchnews.com); see also Sarah Jane Weaver, “Video: 3 Apostles Talk about the Impact of ‘Preach My Gospel,’” *Church News*, Aug. 10, 2023, [thechurchnews.com](https://www.thechurchnews.com).
21. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ* (2023), 56.
22. See Boyd K. Packer, “The Play and the Plan” (Church Educational System fireside for young adults, May 7, 1995 [printed 1997]), 2: “In mortality, we are like actors who enter a theater just as the curtain goes up on the second act. We have missed act 1. ... ‘And they all lived happily ever after’ is never written into the second act. That line belongs in the third act, when the mysteries are solved and everything is put right.” See also Neal A. Maxwell, *All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience* (1979), 37: “[God] sees the beginning from the end. ... The arithmetic ... is something we mortals cannot comprehend. We cannot do the sums because we do not have all the numbers. We are locked in the dimension of time and are contained within the tight perspectives of this second estate.”
23. Those who die before reaching the age of accountability are saved in the celestial kingdom (see Doctrine and Covenants 137:10). Those who have died without knowledge of the gospel and would have received it if they had been given the opportunity will also be heirs of the celestial kingdom (see Doctrine and Covenants 137:7).
24. Mosiah 2:41.
25. Doctrine and Covenants 1:14.
26. Doctrine and Covenants 1:12.
27. See Doctrine and Covenants 136.

28. Doctrine and Covenants 136:28.
29. Doctrine and Covenants 136:29.
30. “Come, Ye Disconsolate,” *Hymns*, no. 115.