

# Jesus Christ at the Center of Our Lives

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The profound questions of the soul, those that surface in our darkest hours and highest trials, are addressed through the unwavering love of Jesus Christ.

As we journey through mortality, we are at times beset by trials: the severe pain of the loss of loved ones, the arduous fight against illness, the sting of injustice, the harrowing experiences of harassment or abuse, the shadow of unemployment, familial tribulations, the silent cry of loneliness, or the heartrending consequences of armed conflicts.<sup>1</sup> In such moments, our souls yearn for refuge.<sup>2</sup> We seek earnestly to know: Where may we find the balm of peace?<sup>3</sup> In whom can we place our trust to help us with the confidence and strength to surmount these challenges?<sup>4</sup> Who possesses the patience, the encompassing love, and the omnipotent hand to uplift and sustain us?

The profound questions of the soul, those that surface in our darkest hours and highest trials, are addressed through the unwavering love of Jesus Christ.<sup>5</sup> In Him, and through the promised blessings of His restored gospel,<sup>6</sup> we find the answers we seek. It is through His infinite Atonement that we are offered a gift beyond measure—one of hope, healing, and the assurance of His constant, enduring presence in our lives.<sup>7</sup> This gift is available to all who reach out with faith, embracing the peace and redemption He so freely offers.

The Lord extends His hand to each of us, a gesture that is the very essence of His divine love and kindness. His invitation to us transcends a simple call; it is a divine pledge, reinforced by the enduring power of His grace. In the scriptures, He lovingly assures us:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”<sup>8</sup>

The clarity of His invitation “come unto me” and “take my yoke” affirms the profound nature of His promise—a promise so vast and complete that it embodies His love, offering us a solemn guarantee: “Ye shall find rest.”

As we diligently seek spiritual guidance,<sup>9</sup> we embark on a deeply transformative odyssey that strengthens our testimonies. As we comprehend the vastness of our Heavenly Father’s and Jesus Christ’s perfect love,<sup>10</sup> our hearts are filled with gratitude, humility,<sup>11</sup> and a renewed desire to pursue the path of discipleship.<sup>12</sup>

President Russell M. Nelson taught that “when the focus of our lives is on God’s plan of salvation ... and Jesus Christ and His gospel, we can feel joy regardless of what is happening—or not happening—in our lives. Joy comes from and because of Him.”<sup>13</sup>

Alma, speaking to his son Helaman, declared: “And now, O my son Helaman, behold, thou art in thy youth, and therefore, I beseech of thee that thou wilt hear my words and learn of me; for I do know that whosoever shall put their trust in God shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions, and shall be lifted up at the last day.”<sup>14</sup>

Helaman, speaking to his sons, taught about this eternal principle of putting the Savior at the center of our lives: “Remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation.”<sup>15</sup>

In Matthew 14 we learn that after hearing of John the Baptist’s death, Jesus sought solitude. However, a large crowd followed Him. Moved by compassion and love, and not allowing His grief to distract Him from His mission, Jesus welcomed them, healing the sick among them. As evening approached, the disciples faced a daunting challenge: a multitude of people with scant food available. They proposed that Jesus send the crowd away to procure food, but Jesus, with high love and high expectations, asked the disciples to feed them instead.

While the disciples were preoccupied with the immediate challenge, Jesus demonstrated His trust in and love for His Father, coupled with an unwavering love for the people. He directed the crowd to sit on the grass, and taking only five loaves and two fish, He chose to give thanks to His Father, acknowledging God’s provision over His authority and power.

After He gave thanks, Jesus broke the bread, and the disciples distributed it to the people. Miraculously, the food not only sufficed but was abundant, with 12 baskets of leftovers. The group fed included five thousand men, along with women and children.<sup>16</sup>

This miracle teaches a profound lesson: when confronted with challenges, it’s easy to become engrossed in our difficulties. However, Jesus Christ exemplified the power of focusing on His Father, offering gratitude, and acknowledging that solutions to our trials do not always lie within ourselves but with God.<sup>17</sup>

When we encounter difficulties, we naturally tend to concentrate on the obstacles we face. Our challenges are tangible and command our attention, yet the principle of surmounting them is in our focus. By placing Christ at the core of our thoughts and deeds, we align ourselves with His outlook and strength.<sup>18</sup> This adjustment does not discount our struggles; instead, it helps us to navigate through them under divine guidance.<sup>19</sup> As a result, we discover solutions and support that arise from a higher wisdom. Adopting this Christ-centric perspective empowers us with the fortitude and insight to turn our trials into victories,<sup>20</sup> reminding us that with the Savior, what seems like a major problem can become a pathway to greater spiritual progress.

The story of Alma the Younger in the Book of Mormon presents a compelling narrative of redemption and the profound impact of centering one’s life around Christ. At first, Alma stood as an opponent of the Lord’s Church, leading many astray from the path of righteousness. However, a divine intervention, marked by an angelic visitation, awakened him from his wrongdoings.

In his darkest hour, tormented by guilt and desperate to find a way out of his spiritual anguish, Alma remembered his father's teachings about Jesus Christ and the power of His Atonement. With a heart yearning for redemption, he earnestly repented and pleaded fervently for the Lord's mercy. This crucial moment of complete surrender, bringing Christ to the forefront of his thoughts as Alma earnestly sought His mercy, triggered a remarkable transformation. The heavy chains of guilt and despair vanished and were replaced by an overwhelming sense of joy and peace.<sup>21</sup>

Jesus Christ is our hope and the answer to life's greatest pains. Through His sacrifice, He paid for our sins and took upon Himself all of our suffering—pain, injustice, sorrow, and fear—and He forgives and heals us when we trust in Him and seek to change our lives for the better. He is our Healer,<sup>22</sup> comforting and repairing our hearts through His love and power, just like He healed many during His time on earth.<sup>23</sup> He is the living water, fulfilling the deepest needs of our souls with His constant love and kindness. This is like the promise He made to the Samaritan woman at the well, offering “a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”<sup>24</sup>

I bear solemn witness that Jesus Christ lives, that He presides over this, His sacred Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.<sup>25</sup> I testify that He is the Savior of the world, the Prince of Peace,<sup>26</sup> the King of kings, the Lord of lords,<sup>27</sup> the Redeemer of the world. I affirm with certainty that we are ever present in His mind and heart. As a testament to this, He has restored His Church in these latter days and has called President Russell M. Nelson as His prophet and the President of the Church at this time.<sup>28</sup> I know that Jesus Christ gave His life so that we might have eternal life.

As we strive to place Him at the center of our lives, revelations unfold to us, His profound peace envelops us, and His infinite Atonement brings about our forgiveness and healing.<sup>29</sup> It is in Him that we discover the strength to overcome, the courage to persevere, and the peace that surpasses all understanding. May we strive each day to draw nearer to Him, the source of all that is good,<sup>30</sup> the beacon of hope in our journey back to the presence of our Heavenly Father. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### Notes

1. See Psalm 23:4; 2 Corinthians 1:3–4.
2. See Psalm 46:1.
3. See Jeremiah 8:22.
4. See Isaiah 41:10; Ether 12:27.
5. See John 3:16; Romans 8:38–39.
6. See Acts 3:20–21; 3 Nephi 20:29–31.
7. See Isaiah 53:5; Alma 34:10–14.
8. Matthew 11:28–30.
9. See Proverbs 3:5–6; James 1:5.
10. See Romans 8:39; 1 John 4:16.

11. See 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Mosiah 4:11.
12. See Matthew 16:24; 2 Nephi 31:19–20.
13. Russell M. Nelson, “Joy and Spiritual Survival,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 82.
14. Alma 36:3.
15. Helaman 5:12.
16. See Matthew 14:13–21.
17. See Proverbs 3:5–6; Philippians 4:6–7.
18. See 2 Corinthians 12:9–10.
19. See Psalm 32:8; Ether 12:27.
20. See Romans 8:28; 1 Nephi 3:7.
21. See Alma 36:5–20.
22. See Psalm 147:3; 1 Peter 2:24.
23. See Isaiah 53:4–5.
24. John 4:14; see also Isaiah 12:3.
25. See Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22–23.
26. See Isaiah 9:6.
27. See 1 Timothy 6:15.
28. See Amos 3:7; Doctrine and Covenants 1:38.
29. See John 3:16; Alma 34:14.
30. See Deuteronomy 31:6; Philippians 4:13; Moroni 10:32.