

Father in Heaven for blessings unnumbered and incalculable, first and foremost being the gift of His Only Begotten Son, Jesus of Nazareth, our Savior and King. I testify that Christ's perfect life and loving sacrifice constituted literally a King's ransom, an atonement willingly paid, to lead us not only from death's prison but also the prisons of sorrow and sin and self-indulgence.

I know that Joseph Smith beheld the Father and the Son and that this day is a direct extension of that day. I owe much for the precious knowledge of which I testify here. I owe much for the priceless heritage that has been given to me. Indeed I owe everything, and I pledge the rest of my life in giving it—in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. "Conference Minutes," *Times and Seasons*, 1 May 1844, 522–23; see also *History of the Church*, 6:288–89.

2. *Deseret News* (weekly), 17 July 1872, 348.
3. In Conference Report, Oct. 1947, 155; or "To Them of the Last Wagon," *Ensign*, July 1997, 35–36.
4. See John 4:38.
5. Deuteronomy 6:10–11.
6. "Extracts from H. C. Kimball's Journal," *Times and Seasons*, 15 Apr. 1845, 867; see also Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 2nd ed. (1945), 67–68.
7. See Andrew Karl Larson, *The Red Hills of November* (1957), 311–13.
8. See Theodore Moyle Burton, "Two Traditions of John Rowe Moyle," in *Biographies and Reminiscences*, ed. Gene A. Sessions (1974), 202–3, from the James Henry Moyle Collection, Historical Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; see also Vaughn J. Featherstone, *Man of Holiness* (1998), 140–41.
9. Deuteronomy 6:12, 14; 7:6–9.

Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi

Teaching the gospel on an airplane

A few years ago, right before Christmas, I had a stake conference assignment in California. On the flight back to Utah, I decided to take a short nap. My seat was C, near the aisle. Just before the cabin door closed, a beautiful lady in her mid-70s stood beside me and said, "May I have my seat?" I said, "Yes, ma'am." That was the end of my nap. She loved to talk.

She said, "I don't know why I should have to fly to a cold place like Utah at Christmastime to visit my grandchildren. I hate to leave sunny California."

She went on to say, "Besides, there are strange and weird people in Utah. They call themselves 'Mormons.' My daughter married one of them."

I said, "I am sorry, but before you go any further, I should tell you that I am one of them."

Then she said, "I am sorry—I didn't mean that."

I said, "Oh, you really meant that, didn't you?"

Our conversation went on until we were above Provo. We knew we would soon be landing in Salt Lake.

"Patti"—that's her name—"you have been talking for most of the flight. I feel like I have known you from the pre-earth life. Before we land in Salt Lake City, I'd like to ask you a few questions if I may."¹

I asked her sincerely,² "Patti, your deceased husband—do you know you can see him again?"

She said, "Oh, is that possible?"

"Do you know your deceased son, Matt, who died as a baby—you will see him also in the future?"

Her eyes became moist, and her voice was shaking. The Spirit of the Lord touched her. I sensed she had missed them so much.

Then I prayerfully asked her, "Patti, do you know you have a loving and kind Heavenly Father, who loves you so dearly?"

She said, "Do I?"

"Patti, do you know your Heavenly Father has a special plan for you and that your family can be forever?"

"Can we?" she replied.

"Have you ever heard the plan before?"

She said, "No."

Very sincerely I asked her, "Would you like to know about it?"

"Yes, I would," she responded.

The Spirit of the Lord touched her deeply. And the Lord promises us, "For mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts."³

He also said: "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep. . . . My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."⁴

The love of God is in our hearts

Nephi desired to see father Lehi's dream—the tree of life⁵—and he did. Then Nephi also saw the beautiful baby Jesus.⁶ And the angel asked, "Knowest thou the meaning of the tree which thy father saw?"⁷

Nephi replied, "Yea, it 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."⁸

Before we came to this earth, our Heavenly Father gently and peacefully placed in our bosoms "the love of God." In Heavenly Father's eyes, you are a very special child. My friend Patti has the spark of divinity in her soul. When Patti

heard the word of Heavenly Father, she was touched deeply and she responded to His voice.

We were total strangers, but the Lord placed one of His precious daughters quietly next to me. I was praying earnestly that the Spirit of the Lord would touch her and speak to her.

How to share the message of the Lord

How can you and I share the beautiful message of the Lord Jesus Christ?

First, cultivate an awareness; bring others to a knowledge. President Gordon B. Hinckley teaches us:

"Let there be cultivated an awareness in every member's heart of his [or her] own potential for bringing others to a knowledge of the truth. . . . Let him pray with great earnestness about it. Let each member pray."⁹

President Hinckley then quotes the testimony of Alma:

"O Lord, wilt thou grant unto us that we may have success in bringing them again unto thee. . . .

"Behold, O Lord, their souls are precious; . . . give unto us, O Lord, power and wisdom that we may bring these, our brethren, . . . unto thee."¹⁰

In the LDS Bible Dictionary it states, "The object of prayer is not to change the will of God, but to secure for ourselves and for others blessings that God is already willing to grant, but that are made conditional on our asking for them."¹¹

Second, a good example is our best tool. President Hinckley taught us, "The most effective tract we will carry will be the goodness of our own lives."¹² As we live the gospel, we will be like a lighthouse on a hilltop,¹³ "the light" and "the salt of the earth."¹⁴

We can partake of "the love of God," "the tree of life," and drink from "the fountain of living waters"¹⁵ daily by communing with our Holy Father, immersing ourselves in the scriptures, and medi-

tation. Then the Lord will bless us to be more sensitive to speak to those souls which He has prepared for us.

Third, act at a time when you feel the Spirit. Elder M. Russell Ballard taught us: "The key to success in bringing souls unto Christ is to act at a time when you feel the Spirit and you sense that your friend does also. . . . Through our faith, our trust in the Lord, and our good works, we can bring many souls unto the Lord."¹⁶

As we seek and pray in faith,¹⁷ the Lord will guide us, and His elect will soon embrace¹⁸ "the glad tidings of great joy,"¹⁹ to partake of the eternal and "infinite atonement"²⁰ of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Patti's baptism and sealing

The missionaries taught Patti. Three weeks later, while she was staying in Utah, Patti called me. "Brother Kikuchi, this is Patti. I am going to be baptized. Would you come to my baptismal services?"

My wife and I went to her baptism. Many members were kindly fellowshiping her. Oh, I shall never forget her joyful countenance as she came out of the water!

I shall never forget her sweet tears at the sacred altar in the Salt Lake Temple a year later. I remember her peaceful and celestial glow when she was sealed to her deceased husband and son and living daughter who had become a member of the Church. She now knows her family is forever in the Lord. My friend Patti Louise Donaldson found the Lord Jesus Christ. Now she lives in Utah.

"I will draw near unto you"

My dear friends who are within the sound of my voice, you are a son or daughter of Heavenly Father. You were once in His holy presence. I know that your Heavenly Father has a special plan

for you and your family to return to live with Him. Let's go home. Let us prepare to go home to our Heavenly Father's place. We want to share with you your Heavenly Father's love. You will find the love of God, which is "the most joyous"²¹ to your soul.

My dear brothers and sisters, I testify to you that Heavenly Father sent His Only Begotten Son and that Jesus Christ died for you and me. He said:

"How sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not.

"For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; . . .

"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."²²

He loves you. He knows you. He lives. In 1820 Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus, came to the boy Joseph and established His kingdom so that we may be able to go home. By now, can you hear "the voice of the good shepherd"?²³ Your Savior is calling you. Come, come and partake of His love. He invites you, "Ye shall call upon me while I am near." Then He promises, "Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you."²⁴ I know that He lives. I know that President Hinckley is our prophet. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. See Doctrine and Covenants 28:16.
2. See Doctrine and Covenants 30:5, 11.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 29:7.
4. John 10:14, 27.
5. See 1 Nephi 11:8–9.
6. See 1 Nephi 11:15–20.

7. 1 Nephi 11:21.
8. 1 Nephi 11:22.
9. "Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep," *Ensign*, May 1999, 106.
10. Alma 31:34–35.
11. Bible Dictionary, "Prayer," 753.
12. *Ensign*, May 1999, 107.
13. See Luke 11:33, 36.
14. Matthew 5:13–14.
15. 1 Nephi 11:22, 25.
16. In Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 41; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 33.
17. See Doctrine and Covenants 18:18.
18. See Doctrine and Covenants 31:7.
19. Mosiah 3:3.
20. See Alma 34:10, 12.
21. 1 Nephi 11:23.
22. Doctrine and Covenants 19:15–19.

23. Alma 5:38.
24. Doctrine and Covenants 88:62–63.

President Monson

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve has just spoken to us, followed by Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation will now sing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." Following the singing, Elders Loren C. Dunn and John B. Dickson of the Seventy will address us.

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

Elder Loren C. Dunn

The importance of being a good father

I was in a busy airport last week and there, amidst great numbers of people rushing to catch their planes, was a father kneeling down by his son, patiently feeding him an ice cream cone which the son was too small to hold himself. The little boy needed help because his snowsuit, which kept him warm, also made it impossible for his arms to bend. I thought to myself, "What a great dad!"

There should be no other word that is more important to us than *father* or *mother*, and it is the word *father* that I would like to talk about. It's not just a matter of how to be a good father. There is plenty written and much good advice given, even at this conference. It is the commitment to be a good father that I want to talk about also.

"Because my father sent me"

The history of the gospel of Jesus Christ from Adam and Eve down to the present day is closely associated with

father and mother and family. The introductory pages of the Book of Mormon have the great prophet Nephi, while recounting the trials and blessings of his day, first paying homage to his father: "I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father; and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days, nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days; yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days."¹

Enos, likewise, first recognized his father for the preparation he received: "Behold, it came to pass that I, Enos, knowing my father that he was a just man—for he taught me in his language, and also in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—and blessed be the name of my God for it."²

When the Prophet Joseph Smith first received the vision of the angel Moroni, he was instructed to tell his father, who, in turn, confirmed that it was true and