

### **The unrepentant will suffer as Jesus did**

So sobering is all of the foregoing that what follows needs to be said, and I do not hesitate to say it. The revelations tell us that commensurate with their own sins, unrepentant sinners must suffer even as Jesus did for ours, as they one day personally experience the full justice of God (see D&C 19:16–18). Additionally, those who in various ways persistently foster and intensify this often drug-drenched drama of immorality—whether as promoters, enablers, facilitators, or profiteers—will also then face and then feel all the misery they have caused countless others!

### **Take a stand—alone if necessary**

Finally, brothers and sisters, in certain times and circumstances, discipleship requires us to be willing to stand alone! Our willingness to do so, here and now, is consistent with Christ's kneeling alone,

there and then, in Gethsemane. In the final atoning process, "none were with [Him]" (D&C 133:50; see also Matthew 26:38–45).

As we take our stand, the faithful will not be alone, however. Of necessity, the angel who stood by Christ in Gethsemane to strengthen Him left Him (see Luke 22:43). If we hold aloft the shield of faith in God and faith in His commandments, His angels will be "round about [us], to bear [us] up" and "have charge over [us]" (D&C 84:88; 109:22). Of this promise I testify. And now, therefore, in terms of the weather in our souls, brothers and sisters, I testify that we set the dial. We so determine the degree of our happiness in this and the next world. I likewise testify that our compliance with God's commandments, including the seventh, invites God to place His hand on ours as we set the dial. It is the hand of Him who desires to give us all that He hath (see D&C 84:38). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## **Elder Robert F. Orton**

### **The first and great commandment**

The attention of people around the world has been drawn, during the past four weeks, to the willful, intentional, and destructive acts of terrorism and hatred.

Hatred is the antithesis of love. Lucifer is its chief proponent and perpetrator and has been since his approach to the plan of salvation was rejected by the Father. It was he who influenced Judas to deliver Jesus to the chief priests for 30 pieces of silver (see Matthew 26:14–15). It is he, the enemy of all righteousness and the father of contention, who, "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

On the other hand, it was that same Jesus whom Judas delivered to the chief priests who said, "Love your enemies, . . . and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you" (3 Nephi 12:44;

see also Matthew 5:44). And it was He who pleaded for the soldiers who crucified Him, saying, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

I thought for many years that love was an attribute. But it is more. It is a commandment. In His dialogue with the lawyer, a Pharisee, Jesus said:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37–40; see also Galatians 5:14).

President Hinckley has said that "love is like the Polar Star. In a changing world,

it is a constant. It is . . . the very essence of the gospel." "Without love . . . there is little else to commend the gospel to us as a way of life" (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1997], 319, 317).

The Apostle John said that "God is love" (1 John 4:8). Thus, on Him, as the embodiment of love, hang all the law and the prophets.

The Apostle Paul taught that faith, which is the first principle of the gospel, works by love (see Galatians 5:6). What a valuable doctrine to understand! Love is the driving force behind faith. Just as a fire at home on a cold winter night makes it warm, so love of God and neighbor gives us faith, with which anything is possible.

#### **Love neighbors to show love for God**

Most of us profess to love God. The challenge, I have observed, is loving our neighbor. The term *neighbor* includes family, people with whom we work, those whom we see in geographical proximity to our home and at church, and even the enemy, though we do not condone what the latter does. If we do not love all of these, our brothers and sisters, can we truly say that we love God? The Apostle John declared that "he who loveth God love his brother also," and added, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar" (1 John 4:21, 20). Love of God and neighbor must therefore be inseparably connected.

Our eternal progression leans heavily on the degree to which we love. Webster defines *love* as the "unselfish, loyal and benevolent concern for the good of another; an affection based on admiration, benevolence or common interests" (*Longman Webster English College Dictionary*, overseas edition). And Mormon treats as synonymous the terms "pure love of Christ" and "charity" (see Moroni 7:47). We can best demonstrate our love to God by keeping His commandments. And we

can show our love to God and neighbor by charitable acts of service.

#### **Love changes the lives of two men**

Permit me two illustrations. In the Transylvanian Alps of Romania, a man, with his wife and two children, was baptized into the Church. He became the leader of his branch; however, due to economic and family pressures, he became inactive for a time. Upon his return to activity, he reported that as he had stepped out of the water at the time of his baptism, someone whispered in his ear, "I love you." No one had ever told him that before. His recollection of that expression of love, and the loving and charitable acts and expressions of members of his branch, brought him back.

Several years ago a young man became involved in the ways of the world. For a time, his parents had no influence on him. Two high priests who were neighbors and members of his ward but who had no specific calling to serve him, together with an uncle and others, put their arms around and befriended him. They nursed him back into activity and encouraged him to prepare for a mission. They told him that they loved him and demonstrated that love by their conduct toward him. This changed the young man's life. It takes an abundance of love and a cooperative effort to raise a child.

#### **We come to love those we serve**

"No one can assist in this work [unless] he shall be humble and full of love" (D&C 12:8). "By love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13). Just as service is a natural consequence of love, so is love a natural consequence of service. Husbands, serve your wives. Wives, serve your husbands. Husbands and wives, serve your children. And to all we say, serve God and neighbor. As we do so, we will come to love the object of our devotion and thus be

obedient to the first and great commandment of love.

#### **No disputations, contention, or hatred**

Following His Resurrection in Jerusalem, Jesus appeared to the Nephites in the Americas. After teaching about baptism, He warned against anger and contention, saying:

“And there shall be no disputations among you. . . . For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another” (3 Nephi 11:22, 29).

Brothers and sisters, if we are obedient to the commandment of love, there will be no disputations, contention, or hatred between or among us. We will not speak ill of one another but will treat each other with kindness and respect, realizing that each of us is a child of God. There will be no Nephites, Lamanites, or other “-ites” among us, and every man, woman, and child will deal justly one with another.

#### **Continue to give and love**

Early one morning in Bucharest, as I jogged through Cismigiu Park, I observed an old tree which was struggling to give new branches—to give new life. The symbol of life is to give. We give so much to family and friends and to community and Church that at times we, as the old tree, may think that life is too difficult—that constantly giving is a burden too heavy to bear. We may think that it would be eas-

ier to give up and to do only that which the natural man does. But we should not and will not quit. Why? Because we must continue to give, just like Christ and the old tree gave. As we give just a little bit, let us think of Him who gave His life that we might live.

Jesus, near the end of His mortal life, revisited the doctrine of love when He instructed His adherents that as He had loved them, so they also should love one another. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

I conclude that, given the purpose of our existence, if we do not love God and neighbor, whatever else we do will be of little eternal consequence.

I testify of the divinity of Christ and the reality of His mission to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. That we might love as He loved and continues to love, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### **President Faust**

The choir and congregation will now sing “Let Us All Press On.” At the conclusion of the singing, Elders Wayne S. Peterson and H. Ross Workman of the Seventy will address us. We shall then be pleased to hear from Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

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The choir and congregation sang “Let Us All Press On.”

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## **Elder Wayne S. Peterson**

#### **A friendly response to childish behavior**

Many years ago while on vacation with my family, I had an experience that

taught me a great lesson. On a Saturday my wife and I decided to take the children for a drive and to do some shopping. During the drive the children fell asleep, and