

Christ, which was built “upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”<sup>24</sup> It is not a break-off from any other church.

We believe that the fulness of the gospel of Christ has been restored, but this is no reason for anyone to feel superior in any way toward others of God’s children. Rather, it requires a greater obligation to invoke the essence of the gospel of Christ in our lives—to love, serve, and bless others. Indeed, as the First Presidency stated in 1978, we believe that “the great religious leaders of the world such as Mohammed, Confucius, and the Reformers, as well as philosophers including Socrates, Plato, and others, received a portion of God’s light. Moral truths were given to them by God to enlighten whole nations and to bring a higher level of understanding to individuals.”<sup>25</sup> Thus, we have respect for the sincere religious beliefs of others and appreciate others extending the same courtesy and respect for the tenets we hold dear.

I have a personal witness of the truth of the covenants, teachings, and authority restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. This assurance has been with me all of my life. I am grateful that the Restoration of the fulness of the gospel has taken place in our time. It contains the pathway to eternal life. May the strength, peace, and concern of God the Father and the abiding love and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with us all, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## NOTES

1. “Statement of the First Presidency regarding God’s Love for All Mankind,” Feb. 15, 1978.
2. In Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 112; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 84.
3. 2 Thessalonians 2:3; italics added.
4. See Mark 1:9–10.
5. See Acts 8:14–17; 19:3–6.
6. See Matthew 3:17; Acts 7:55; Doctrine and Covenants 130:22.
7. Acts 24:15.
8. See Daniel 2:28; Amos 3:7; Doctrine and Covenants 121:26.
9. See Obadiah 1:21; Malachi 4:6; 1 Corinthians 15:29; Revelation 7:15.
10. Acts 3:20–21.
11. See Mark E. Petersen, *The Great Prologue* (1975), 34–35.
12. See William Cullen Bryant, ed., *Picturesque America; or, the Land We Live In*, 2 vols. (1872–74), 1:502; see also LeGrand Richards, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, rev. ed. (1966), 29.
13. Revelation 14:6.
14. See Ephesians 4:11.
15. James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. (1924), 204.
16. Doctrine and Covenants 110:12.
17. See Doctrine and Covenants 110:13–16.
18. Ephesians 1:10.
19. “Why These Temples?” in *Temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (1999), 14.
20. Revelation 7:13, 15.
21. Moses 1:39.
22. 1 Corinthians 15:29.
23. See Moses 5:58; 8:19; Abraham 2:10–11.
24. Ephesians 2:20.
25. First Presidency statement, Feb. 15, 1978.

## Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

### “Blessed are the poor in spirit”

The first words Jesus spoke in His majestic Sermon on the Mount were to the troubled, the discouraged and downhearted. “Blessed are the poor in spirit,”

He said, “for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>1</sup> Whether you are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or among the tens of thousands listening this morning who are not of our faith, I speak to those who are facing per-

sonal trials and family struggles, those who endure conflicts fought in the lonely foxholes of the heart, those trying to hold back floodwaters of despair that sometimes wash over us like a tsunami of the soul. I wish to speak particularly to you who feel your lives are broken, seemingly beyond repair.

### “Come unto me”

To all such I offer the surest and sweetest remedy that I know. It is found in the clarion call the Savior of the world Himself gave. He said it in the beginning of His ministry, and He said it in the end. He said it to believers, and He said it to those who were not so sure. He said it to everyone, whatever their personal problems might be:

“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.”<sup>2</sup>

In this promise, that introductory phrase, “come unto me,” is crucial. It is the key to the peace and rest we seek. Indeed, when the resurrected Savior gave His sermon at the temple to the Nephites in the New World, He began, “Blessed are the poor in spirit who *come unto me*, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>3</sup>

When Andrew and John first heard Christ speak, they were so moved they followed Him as He walked away from the crowd. Sensing He was being pursued, Jesus turned and asked the two men, “What seek ye?” They answered, “Where dwellest thou?” And Christ said, “Come and see.” The next day He found another disciple, Philip, and said to him, “Follow me.”<sup>4</sup> Just a short time later He formally called Peter and others of the new Apostles with the same spirit of invitation. Come, “follow me,”<sup>5</sup> He said.

It seems clear that the essence of our duty and the fundamental requirement of our mortal life is captured in these brief

phrases from any number of scenes in the Savior’s mortal ministry. He is saying to us, “Trust me, learn of me, do what I do. Then, when you walk where *I am going*,” He says, “we can talk about where *you* are going and the problems you face and the troubles you have. If you will follow me, I will lead you out of darkness,” He promises. “I will give you answers to your prayers. I will give you rest to your souls.”

My beloved friends, I know of no other way for us to succeed or to be safe amid life’s many pitfalls and problems. I know of no other way for us to carry our burdens or find what Jacob in the Book of Mormon called “that happiness which is prepared for the saints.”<sup>6</sup>

### Exercising faith

So how does one “come unto Christ” in response to this constant invitation? The scriptures give scores of examples and avenues. You are well acquainted with the most basic ones. The easiest and the earliest comes simply with the desire of our heart, the most basic form of faith that we know. “If ye can no more than *desire* to believe,” Alma says, exercising just “a *particle* of faith,” giving even a *small place* for the promises of God to find a home—that is enough to begin.<sup>7</sup> Just believing, just having a “molecule” of faith—simply hoping for things which are not yet seen in our lives, but which are nevertheless truly there to be bestowed<sup>8</sup>—that simple step, when focused on the Lord Jesus Christ, has ever been and always will be the first principle of His eternal gospel, the first step out of despair.

### Changing what we can by repentance

Second, we must change anything we can change that may be part of the problem. In short, we must repent, perhaps the most hopeful and encouraging word in the Christian vocabulary. We thank our Father in Heaven we are *allowed* to change,

we thank Jesus we *can* change, and ultimately we do so only with Their divine assistance. Certainly not everything we struggle with is a result of our actions. Often it is the result of the actions of others or just the mortal events of life. But anything *we* can change we *should* change, and we must forgive the rest. In this way our access to the Savior's Atonement becomes as unimpeded as we, with our imperfections, can make it. He will take it from there.

### **Taking upon us the name of Christ**

Third, in as many ways as possible we try to take upon us His identity, and we begin by taking upon us His name. That name is formally bestowed by covenant in the saving ordinances of the gospel. These start with baptism and conclude with temple covenants, with many others, such as partaking of the sacrament, laced throughout our lives as additional blessings and reminders. Teaching the people of his day the message we give this morning, Nephi said:

“Follow the Son, with full purpose of heart, . . . with real intent, . . . take upon you the name of Christ. . . . Do the things which I have told you I have seen that your Lord and your Redeemer [will] do.”<sup>9</sup>

Following these most basic teachings, a splendor of connections to Christ opens up to us in multitudinous ways: prayer and fasting and meditation upon His purposes, savoring the scriptures, giving service to others, “succor[ing] the weak, lift[ing] up the hands which hang down, . . . strengthen[ing] the feeble knees.”<sup>10</sup> Above all else, loving with “the pure love of Christ,” that gift that “never faileth,” that gift that “bear-eth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, [and] endureth all things.”<sup>11</sup> Soon, with that kind of love, we realize our days hold scores of thoroughfares leading to the Master and that every time we reach out, however feebly, for Him, we discover He has been anxiously trying to reach us.

So we step, we strive, we seek, and we never yield.<sup>12</sup>

My desire today is for *all* of us—not just those who are “poor in spirit” but *all* of us—to have more straightforward personal experience with the Savior's example. Sometimes we seek heaven too obliquely, focusing on programs or history or the experience of others. Those are important but not as important as personal experience, true discipleship, and the strength that comes from experiencing firsthand the majesty of His touch.

### **Trust in the Lord's promises**

Are you battling a demon of addiction—tobacco or drugs or gambling, or the pernicious contemporary plague of pornography? Is your marriage in trouble or your child in danger? Are you confused with gender identity or searching for self-esteem? Do you, or someone you love, face disease or depression or death? Whatever other steps you may need to take to resolve these concerns, come *first* to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Trust in heaven's promises. In that regard Alma's testimony is my testimony: “I do know,” he says, “that whosoever shall put their trust in God shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions.”<sup>13</sup>

This reliance upon the merciful nature of God is at the very center of the gospel Christ taught. I testify that the Savior's Atonement lifts from us not only the burden of our sins but also the burden of our disappointments and sorrows, our heartaches and our despair.<sup>14</sup> From the beginning, trust in such help was to give us both a reason and a way to improve, an incentive to lay down our burdens and take up our salvation. There can and will be plenty of difficulties in life. Nevertheless, the soul that comes unto Christ, who knows His voice and strives to do as He did, finds a strength, as the hymn says, “beyond [his] own.”<sup>15</sup> The Savior reminds us that He has “graven [us] upon the

palms of [His] hands.”<sup>16</sup> Considering the incomprehensible cost of the Crucifixion and Atonement, I promise you He is not going to turn His back on us now. When He says to the poor in spirit, “Come unto me,” He means He knows the way out and He knows the way up. He knows it because He has walked it. He knows the way because He *is* the way.

### “Be not afraid”

Brothers and sisters, whatever your distress, *please* don’t give up and *please* don’t yield to fear. I have always been touched that as his son was departing for his mission to England, Brother Bryant S. Hinckley gave young Gordon a farewell embrace and then slipped him a handwritten note with just five words taken from the fifth chapter of Mark: “Be not afraid, only believe.”<sup>17</sup> I think also of that night when Christ rushed to the aid of His frightened disciples, walking as He did on the water to get to them, calling out, “It is I; be not afraid.” Peter exclaimed, “Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.”

Christ’s answer to him was as it *always* is *every* time: “Come,” He said. Instantly, as was his nature, Peter sprang over the vessel’s side and into the troubled waters. While his eyes were fixed upon the Lord, the wind could toss his hair and the spray could drench his robes, but all was well—he was coming to Christ. It was only when his faith wavered and fear took control, only when he removed his glance from the Master to look at the furious waves and the ominous black gulf beneath, only then did he begin to sink into the sea. In newer terror he cried out, “Lord, save me.”

Undoubtedly with some sadness, the Master over every problem and fear, He who is the solution to every discouragement and disappointment, stretched out His hand and grasped the drowning disciple with the gentle rebuke, “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”<sup>18</sup>

### The broken can be mended

If you are lonely, please know you can find comfort. If you are discouraged, please know you can find hope. If you are poor in spirit, please know you can be strengthened. If you feel you are broken, please know you can be mended.

In Nazareth, the narrow road,  
That tires the feet and steals the  
breath,  
Passes the place where once abode  
The Carpenter of Nazareth.

And up and down the dusty way  
The village folk would often wend;  
And on the bench, beside Him, lay  
Their broken things for Him to mend.

The maiden with the doll she broke,  
The woman with the broken chair,  
The man with broken plough, or yoke,  
Said, “Can you mend it, Carpenter?”

And each received the thing he sought,  
In yoke, or plough, or chair, or doll;  
The broken thing which each had  
brought

Returned again a perfect whole.

So, up the hill the long years through,  
With heavy step and wistful eye,  
The burdened souls their way pursue,  
Uttering each the plaintive cry:

“O Carpenter of Nazareth,  
This heart, that’s broken past repair,  
This life, that’s shattered nigh to death,  
Oh, can You mend them, Carpenter?”

And by His kind and ready hand,  
His own sweet life is woven through  
Our broken lives, until they stand  
A New Creation—“all things new.”

“The shattered [substance] of [the]  
heart,  
Desire, ambition, hope, and faith,  
Mould Thou into the perfect part,  
O, Carpenter of Nazareth!”<sup>19</sup>

May we all, especially the poor in spirit, come unto Him and be made whole,

I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, amen.

#### NOTES

1. Matthew 5:3.
2. Matthew 11:28–29.
3. 3 Nephi 12:3; italics added.
4. John 1:35–39, 43.
5. Matthew 4:19.
6. 2 Nephi 9:43.
7. See Alma 32:27; italics added.
8. See Alma 32:21.
9. 2 Nephi 31:13, 17.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 81:5.
11. See Moroni 7:45–47.
12. See Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “Ulysses,” in *The Complete Poetical Works of Tennyson* (1898), 89.
13. Alma 36:3.
14. See Alma 7:11–12.
15. “Lord, I Would Follow Thee,” *Hymns*, no. 220.
16. 1 Nephi 21:16.
17. Mark 5:36.
18. Matthew 14:27–31; italics added.
19. George Blair, “The Carpenter of Nazareth,” in Obert C. Tanner, *Christ’s Ideals for Living* (Sunday School manual, 1955), 22.

## Elder Earl C. Tingey

### The great plan of happiness

The prophet Jacob asked, “Why not speak of the atonement of Christ, and attain to a perfect knowledge of him?”<sup>1</sup>

I take that question as the subject of my talk—why not speak of the Atonement of Jesus Christ?

Alma refers to the Atonement as “the great plan of happiness.”<sup>2</sup> I shall use that phrase to describe the beautiful doctrine we know as the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

President Hugh B. Brown, in speaking of the immortality of the soul, and man’s relationship to Deity, said: “Sooner or later life’s vicissitudes bring each of us to grips with this important subject. . . . Each of us, regardless of color, creed, or nationality, has a rendezvous with the experience that we call death.”<sup>3</sup>

Most of us, in sorrow and loss, have reverently stood at the grave of a loved one and asked the question, “Is there any happiness in death?”

A Book of Mormon prophet answers this question for us with joyful expressions of thanksgiving for the Atonement of Jesus Christ, which ransoms us from death: “O the wisdom of God, his mercy and

grace! . . . O the greatness and the justice of our God!”<sup>4</sup>

Let me share five truths of the great plan of happiness that have brought this kind of joy to me.

### Reality of the Father and the Son

*First:* A knowledge of the plan confirms that there is a God and He has a Son, Jesus Christ. The Father and the Son are perfect. They live in heaven, and They possess glorified bodies of spirit, flesh, and bones.

These truths were revealed to us in this dispensation when the boy Joseph Smith knelt in humble prayer and later declared: “I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*”<sup>5</sup>

### Purpose of mortal life

*Second:* Knowing the identity of the Father and the Son helps us know that all of us are placed on earth to acquire a