

Small and Simple Things

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Of the Seventy



Let us reach out to others with faith and with love.

My beloved brothers and sisters, just a few weeks ago I was at the missionary training center in Mexico City to share a message with the missionaries. My wife and I purposely arrived several hours early. As we explored the beautiful gardens and well-kept streets of the MTC, we couldn't help but notice the happiness that radiated from the faces of hundreds of young elders and sisters, each focused on acquiring new language skills and learning to better appreciate his or her purpose as a missionary.

As I paused to fully take in this remarkable sight, I reflected upon the words of Alma when he commanded his son Helaman to keep a history of his people as part of the records which had been entrusted with him and to keep all these things sacred so that they would one day go forth unto every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

Alma then told him:

“Now ye may suppose that this is foolishness in me; but behold I say unto you, that by small and simple things are great things brought to pass; and small means in many instances doth confound the wise.

“And the Lord God doth work by means to bring about his great and eternal purposes; and by very small means the Lord doth confound the wise and bringeth about the salvation of many souls” (Alma 37:6–7).

The innocence and youth of our missionaries exemplify the Lord's way—that those who are humble may “invite others to come unto Christ by helping them receive the restored gospel through faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end” (*Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* [2004], 1).

As members of the Church, we are able, through our own small and simple things, to “[convince] many of the error of their ways” and help bring “them to the knowledge of their God unto the salvation of their souls” (Alma 37:8).

On one occasion I accompanied a stake president and bishop to visit a less-active member. We taught him, in a very simple way, about the blessings of the Sabbath. We expressed to him our sincere love. He responded, “All I needed was to have someone come and give me an *abrazo*,” or hug. I immediately stood up and embraced him. The next day was Sunday. This same brother came to sacrament meeting with his entire family.

During a visiting teaching visit, Martha, a member of our ward, told my wife and her companion never to come

back again. She had decided to stop coming to church. One of the visiting teachers asked Martha if they could sing a hymn together this one last time, and she agreed. As they sang, something special happened. Little by little, the Spirit began to fill the room. Each of them felt it. Martha's heart began to soften. With her eyes filled with tears, she expressed to her visiting teachers the feelings of her heart. At that moment, she realized that she knew that the gospel was true. She now thanked her visiting teachers and expressed a desire for them to return. From that day forward, she received them with joy.

Martha began to attend church with her young daughter. For years they attended regularly, with Martha never losing hope that her husband might eventually choose to join them. At last the day came when the Lord touched his heart, and he began to attend with them, as did their other daughter soon thereafter. This family began to feel the true joy that comes from having gospel blessings in their home. Martha has since served faithfully as our ward Relief Society president, and her husband has served well in several callings within the stake. All this began with the singing of a hymn, a small and simple thing that touched Martha's heart.

Naaman was a captain of the host of the king of Syria, an honorable man, a mighty man in valor, but he was also a leper (see 2 Kings 5:1). After being unsuccessful in receiving a cure from the king of Israel for his leprosy, Naaman went to the house of Elisha, the prophet. Elisha sent a messenger out to him, saying:

“Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

“But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. ...

“And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?

“Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean” (2 Kings 5:10–11, 13–14).

Our prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, has invited us all to go forth and rescue our brothers and sisters. He said: “The world is in need of your help. There are feet to steady, hands to grasp, minds to encourage, hearts to inspire, and souls to save. The blessings of eternity await you” (“To the Rescue,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 48; or *Liahona*, July 2001, 57).

I testify that many of those who need our help are there waiting for us. They are ready for their valiant brothers and sisters to reach out to them and rescue them through small and simple means. I have personally spent many hours visiting less-active members of the Church whose hearts have already been softened by the Lord, who are now ready to receive our testimonies and our sincere expressions of love. When we reach out and invite them, they will return to the Church without hesitation.

Let us reach out to others with faith and with love. Let us remember the promise of the Lord:

“And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

“And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!” (D&C 18:15–16).

I bear witness of the love of the Lord toward all His children. I know He lives and that He is our Redeemer. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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