

Eternal Life—to Know Our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ

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God and Christ are literally a Father and a Son—separate, distinct, individual beings who are wholly unified in Their purpose.

Many years ago I took the opportunity to study the final testimonies of the prophets in each dispensation. Each bore a powerful witness of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

As I have read these testimonies—and many others like them over the years—it has always touched my heart to sense how deeply Heavenly Father loves His eldest Son and how Jesus shows His love by His obedience to His Father’s will. I testify that when we do what is necessary to know Them and know Their love for one another, we will obtain “the greatest of all the gifts of God”—even eternal life.¹ For “this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”²

How can this gift be ours? It comes through a matter of personal revelation, which has been spoken of and taught this morning.

Do you remember the first time you knew there was a God and could feel His love? As a boy, I used to gaze into the starry sky and ponder and feel His presence. I thrilled to explore the magnificent beauties of God’s creations—from tiny insects to towering trees. As I recognized the beauty of this earth, I knew that Heavenly Father loved me. I knew that I was a literal spiritual offspring, that we are all sons and daughters of God.

How did I know this? you might ask. The scriptures teach, “To some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and ... to others it is given to believe on their words, that they also might have eternal life if they continue faithful.”³ From my perspective, this does not mean that some people will forever be dependent upon the testimonies of others.

My own testimony grew as I learned about Heavenly Father and the Savior from the teachings and testimony of my parents, teachers, the scriptures—which I read diligently—and especially the Holy Ghost. As I exercised faith and obeyed the commandments, the Holy Ghost testified that what I was learning was true. This is how I came to know for myself.

In this process, seeking for personal revelation is a key. Nephi invites each of us to “feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.”⁴

Before my eighth birthday, I sought to know more about baptism. I read the scriptures and prayed. I learned that I

would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost when I was confirmed. I also began to understand that God and Christ are literally a Father and a Son—separate, distinct, individual beings who are wholly unified in Their purpose. “We love [Them], because [They] first loved us.”⁵ And over and over again I observed how They love one another and work together for our good. Listen to a few of the many scriptures that teach this truth:

Teaching about our premortal life, Heavenly Father referred to Jesus Christ as “my Beloved Son, which was my Beloved and Chosen from the beginning.”⁶ When the Father created the earth, He did so “by [His] Only Begotten” Son.⁷

Jesus’s mother, Mary, was told she would bring forth “the Son of the Highest.”⁸ And when Jesus was a young man, He told His mother that He “must be about [His] Father’s business.”⁹ Years later, when the Savior was baptized, Heavenly Father spoke from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”¹⁰

To teach His disciples to pray, Jesus spoke these words:

“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”¹¹

He taught Nicodemus, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.”¹² And He explained His miracles by saying, “The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever [the Father] doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.”¹³

As the hour of the Atonement drew near, Jesus prayed, saying: “Father, the hour is come. ... I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”¹⁴ Then, as the weight of our sins befell Him, He pled, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”¹⁵ In His last moments on the cross, Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” and then cried out, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.”¹⁶

He then visited the spirits of those who had died, in the spirit world, to give “them power to come forth, after his resurrection from the dead, to enter into his Father’s kingdom.”¹⁷ After the Savior’s Resurrection, He appeared to Mary Magdalene, saying, “I ascend unto my Father, and [to] your Father.”¹⁸

When He came to the people on the American continent, His Father introduced Him saying, “Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name.”¹⁹ When Jesus descended among the people at the temple, He introduced Himself, saying: “Behold, I am Jesus Christ. ... I have ... glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world.”²⁰ When He taught His doctrine, He explained:

“It is the doctrine which the Father hath given unto me; and I bear record of the Father, and the Father beareth record of me.”²¹

“Verily ... the Father and I are one.”²²

Can we see a pattern in these scriptures that testifies of the Father and the Son as distinct individuals and beings? How, then, are They *one*? Not because They are the same person but because They are unified in purpose, equally dedicated to “bring[ing] to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”²³

Jesus is a God, yet He continually distinguishes Himself as a separate, individual being by praying to His Father and

by saying that He is doing His Father's will. During His ministry among the Nephites, He pled, "Father, I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me out of the world, ... that I may be in them as thou, Father, art in me, that we may be one, that I may be glorified in them."²⁴

With this in mind, we are not surprised that the Restoration of the gospel began with the appearance of not one but two glorified beings. Of his First Vision, the Prophet Joseph Smith testified: "One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*"²⁵

The young Prophet, who went into the grove to find out which church he should join, went with faith unwavering and came out with the knowledge and a witness of the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom God had sent. Joseph, like the prophets before him, was then to be an instrument for restoring to the world the knowledge that leads to eternal life.

You too can seek our Heavenly Father and "this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have [testified]"²⁶ in the scriptures and in this general conference. As you seek a personal witness—your personal revelation—you will discover that Heavenly Father has provided a special way for you to know the truth for yourself: through the third member of the Godhead, a personage of spirit we know as the Holy Ghost.

"And when ye shall receive these things"—including what I have shared today—"I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

"And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know [with a surety] the truth of all things."²⁷

Brothers and sisters, I testify that our Heavenly Father wants us to seek this knowledge now. The words of the prophet Helaman cry from the dust: "Remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation ... , a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall."²⁸ Indeed, we will not fail.

That sure foundation is Jesus Christ. He is "the Rock of Heaven."²⁹ When we build our house upon Him, the rains of the latter days may descend, the floods may come, and the winds may blow, but we will not fall. We will not fail, for our home and our family will be founded upon Christ.³⁰

I testify that such a home is "a house of glory."³¹ There we gather together to pray to our Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ, His Beloved Son. There we glorify and give gratitude to Them. There we receive the Holy Ghost and "the promise which [He gives] unto [us] of eternal life, even the glory of the celestial kingdom."³²

I bear my special witness that our Savior is Jesus Christ, that He lives, that our Eternal Heavenly Father loves us and watches over us, that we have a prophet in this dispensation—even President Thomas S. Monson—to lead and to guide us. The Holy Spirit testifies that this is true to each who goes and seeks the knowledge. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

2. John 17:3.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 46:13–14.
4. 2 Nephi 32:3.
5. 1 John 4:19.
6. Moses 4:2.
7. Moses 2:1.
8. Luke 1:32.
9. Luke 2:49.
10. Matthew 3:17.
11. Matthew 6:9–10.
12. John 3:16.
13. John 5:19; see also verse 17.
14. John 17:1, 4.
15. Matthew 26:39.

16. Luke 23:34, 46.

17. Doctrine and Covenants 138:51.

18. John 20:17.

19. 3 Nephi 11:7.

20. 3 Nephi 11:10–11.

21. 3 Nephi 11:32.

22. 3 Nephi 11:27.

23. Moses 1:39.

24. 3 Nephi 19:29.

25. Joseph Smith—History 1:17.

26. Ether 12:41.

27. Moroni 10:4–5.

28. Helaman 5:12.

29. Moses 7:53.

30. See 3 Nephi 14:24–25.

31. Doctrine and Covenants 88:119; 109:8, 16.

32. Doctrine and Covenants 88:4.