

Come into the Fold of God

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Of the Seventy

Within the fold of God, we experience the Good Shepherd's watchful, nurturing care and are blessed to feel His redeeming love.

As young parents, Brother and Sister Samad learned the gospel of Jesus Christ in their simple two-room home in Semarang, Indonesia.¹ Seated around a small table, with a dim light that seemed to provide more mosquitoes than illumination, two young missionaries taught them eternal truths. Through sincere prayer and the guidance of the Holy Ghost, they came to believe what they were taught and chose to be baptized and become members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. That decision, and their pattern of living since, has blessed Brother and Sister Samad and their family in every aspect of their lives.²

They are among the early pioneer Saints in Indonesia. Later they received the ordinances of the temple, and Brother Samad served as the branch president and then district president, driving throughout Central Java to fulfill his responsibilities. For the past decade, he has served as the first patriarch of the Surakarta Indonesia Stake.

As one of the missionaries in that humble, faith-filled home 49 years ago, I have witnessed in them what King Benjamin taught in the Book of Mormon: "I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual."³ The blessings that flow into the lives of those who follow the example and teachings of Jesus Christ, who choose to be counted among His disciples, are numerous, joyful, and eternal.⁴

The Fold of God

Alma's baptismal covenant invitation to those gathered at the Waters of Mormon begins with this phrase: "Now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God."⁵

A fold, or sheepfold, is a large enclosure, often constructed with stone walls, where the sheep are protected at night. It has only one opening. At the end of the day, the

shepherd calls the sheep. They know his voice, and through the gate they enter the safety of the fold.

The people of Alma would have known that shepherds stand at the narrow opening of the fold so that when the sheep enter, they are numbered⁶ and their wounds and ailments noted and cared for one by one. The safety and well-being of the sheep depend on their willingness to come into the fold and to stay in the fold.

Among us there may be some who feel they are at the edge of the flock, perhaps thinking they are less needed or valued or that they don't belong in the fold. And, as in the sheepfold, in the fold of God we sometimes step on one another's toes and need to repent or forgive.

But the Good Shepherd⁷—our true shepherd—is always good. Within the fold of God, we experience His watchful, nurturing care and are blessed to feel His redeeming love. He said, “I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.”⁸ Our Savior has graven upon His palms our sins, pains, afflictions,⁹ and all that is unfair in life.¹⁰ All are welcome to receive these blessings, as they “are desirous to come”¹¹ and choose to be in the fold. The gift of agency is not simply the right to choose; it is the opportunity to choose the right. And the walls of the fold are not a constraint but a source of spiritual safety.

Jesus taught that there is “one fold, and one shepherd.”¹² He said:

“He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ...

“And the sheep hear his voice ... ,

“... and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.”¹³

Jesus then stated, “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved,”¹⁴ teaching clearly that there is only one way into the fold of God and only one way to be saved. It is by and through Jesus Christ.¹⁵

Blessings Come to Those in the Fold of God

We learn how to come into the fold from the word of God, which is the doctrine taught by Jesus Christ and His prophets.¹⁶ When we follow the doctrine of Christ and come into the fold through faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism and confirmation, and continuing faithfulness,¹⁷ Alma promised four specific, personal blessings. *You* may (1) “be redeemed of God,” (2) “be numbered with those of the first resurrection,” (3) “have eternal life,” and (4) the Lord will “pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you.”¹⁸

After Alma taught about these blessings, the people clapped their hands for joy. Here's why:

First: To *redeem* means to pay off a debt or obligation or to free from what distresses or harms.¹⁹ No amount of personal improvement on our part can make us clean

from the sins we have committed or whole from the wounds we have suffered without the Atonement of Jesus Christ. He is our Redeemer.²⁰

Second: Because of Christ's Resurrection, all will be resurrected.²¹ After our spirits depart our mortal bodies, we will undoubtedly look forward to when we can again with a resurrected body embrace those we love. We will eagerly look forward to being among those of the First Resurrection.

Third: Eternal life means to live with God and as He lives. It is "the greatest of all the gifts of God"²² and will bring a fulness of joy.²³ It is the ultimate purpose and objective of our lives.

Fourth: The companionship of a member of the Godhead, the Holy Ghost, provides much-needed guidance and comfort during this mortal life.²⁴

Consider some causes of unhappiness: misery comes from sin,²⁵ sadness and loneliness from the death of a loved one, and fear from the uncertainty of what happens when we die. But when we enter the fold of God and keep our covenants with Him, we feel the peace of knowing and trusting that Christ will redeem us from our sins, that the separation of our body and spirit will end more quickly, and that we will live eternally with God in a most glorious manner.

Trust in Christ and Act in Faith

Brothers and sisters, the scriptures are filled with examples of the Savior's majestic power and His compassionate mercy and grace. During His earthly ministry, His blessings of healing came to those who trusted Him and acted in faith. For example, the infirm man at the pool of Bethesda walked when, with faith, he followed the Savior's command to "rise, take up thy bed, and walk."²⁶ Those who were sick or afflicted in any manner in the land of Bountiful were healed when "with one accord" they "did go forth."²⁷

Similarly, to receive the marvelous blessings promised to those who come into the fold of God requires us to do just that—we need to choose to come. Alma the Younger taught, "And now I say unto you that the good shepherd doth call after you; and if you will hearken unto his voice he will bring you into his fold."²⁸

Several years ago a dear friend passed away from cancer. When his wife, Sharon, first wrote about his diagnosis, she said: "We Choose Faith. Faith in our Savior, Jesus Christ. Faith in our Heavenly Father's plan, and faith that He knows our needs and fulfills His promises."²⁹

I have met many Latter-day Saints like Sharon who feel the inward peace of being securely within the fold of God, especially when temptation, opposition, or adversity comes.³⁰ They have chosen to have faith in Jesus Christ and to follow His prophet. Our dear prophet, President Russell M. Nelson, has taught, "Everything good in life—every potential blessing of eternal significance—begins with faith."³¹

Come Fully into the Fold of God

My great-great-great-grandfather James Sawyer Holman came to Utah in 1847, but he wasn't among those to arrive in July with Brigham Young. He came later that year and, according to family records, was responsible to bring the sheep. He didn't reach the Salt Lake Valley until October, but he and the sheep made it.³²

Figuratively speaking, some of us are still on the plains. Not everyone arrives in the first group. My dear friends, please continue the journey—and help others—to come fully into the fold of God. The blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ are immeasurable because they are eternal.

I am profoundly grateful to be a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I bear witness of the love of our Heavenly Father and our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, and of the peace that comes only from Them—the inner peace and the blessings found in the fold of God. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. Like many Indonesians of his generation, Brother Samad has just one name. His wife, Sri Katoningsih, and their children use Samad as their surname.
2. Brother and Sister Samad report that at least 44 of their extended family are now members of the Church. Many others also enjoy the blessings of the gospel because of their example and service.
3. Mosiah 2:41.
4. See Doctrine and Covenants 59:23.
5. Mosiah 18:8.
6. See Moroni 6:4.
7. See John 10:14; see also Gerrit W. Gong, “Good Shepherd, Lamb of God,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2019, 97–101.
8. Isaiah 49:16.
9. See Alma 7:11–13.
10. See Dale G. Renlund, “Infuriating Unfairness,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2021, 41–44.
11. Mosiah 18:8.
12. John 10:16.
13. John 10:2–4.
14. John 10:9.
15. See 2 Nephi 31:21; Helaman 5:9.

16. See Henry B. Eyring, "The Power of Teaching Doctrine," *Ensign*, May 1999, 73; *Liahona*, July 1999, 85. When we seek to come unto Christ, we must come according to the words of Christ, "for there is one God and one Shepherd over all the earth" (see 1 Nephi 13:40–41).
17. The doctrine of Christ, simply stated, is that all people everywhere must exercise faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repent, be baptized, receive the Holy Ghost, and endure to the end, or, as the Savior taught in 3 Nephi 11:38, "ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God."
18. Mosiah 18:9, 10.
19. See *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, "redeem"; see also D. Todd Christofferson, "Redemption," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 109.
20. See Alma 11:40.
21. See 2 Nephi 2:8; 9:12.
22. Doctrine and Covenants 14:7.
23. See 2 Nephi 9:18.
24. See 1 Nephi 4:6; Moroni 8:26.
25. See Mosiah 3:24–25; Alma 41:10.
26. John 5:8.
27. 3 Nephi 17:9.
28. Alma 5:60. In Moses 7:53, the Messiah also said, "Whoso cometh in at the gate and climbeth up by me shall never fall."
29. Sharon Jones, "Diagnosis," wechoosefaith.blogspot.com, Mar. 18, 2012.
30. *Preach My Gospel* defines "endure to the end" as follows: "To remain true to the commandments of God and be true to the endowment and sealing ordinances of the temple despite temptation, opposition, and adversity throughout life" ([2019], 73). This suggests that we will experience temptation, opposition, and adversity throughout life.
31. Russell M. Nelson, "Christ Is Risen; Faith in Him Will Move Mountains," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2021, 102.
32. See brief biographies of James Sawyer Holman and Naomi Roxina LeBaron Holman by their granddaughter Grace H. Sainsbury in the possession of the speaker (Charles C. Rich diary, Sept. 28, 1847, Church History Library, Salt Lake City; Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, June 21, 1847, 49, Church History Library). Holman was a captain in the 1847 Charles C. Rich company.