

The Answer Is Jesus

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Of the Seventy

No matter how difficult or confusing the challenges may be, you can always remember that the answer is simple: it is always Jesus.

What an honor to speak to you in this session of conference. Today I address you as friends. In the Gospel of John, the Savior taught that we are His friends if we do what He asks us to do.¹

It is our individual and collective love of the Savior, and our covenants with Him, that bind us together. As President Henry B. Eyring taught: “To you I wish to say how much the Lord loves you and trusts you. And, even more, I wish to tell you how much He depends on you.”²

When I was called as a General Authority by President Russell M. Nelson, I was flooded with emotions. It was overwhelming. My wife, Julie, and I anxiously awaited the Saturday afternoon session of general conference. It was humbling to be sustained. I carefully counted the steps to my designated seat so as not to fall in my first assignment.

At the conclusion of that session, something happened that had a profound effect on me. The quorum members formed a line and greeted the new General Authorities one by one. Each one shared their love and support. With a hearty *abrazo* they said, “Don’t worry—you belong.”

In our relationship with the Savior, He looks on the heart and is “no respecter of persons.”³ Consider how He chose His Apostles. He didn’t pay attention to status or wealth. He invites us to follow Him, and I believe He reassures us that we belong with Him.

This message especially applies to the youth of the Church. I see in you what President Nelson sees in you. He said that “there is something undeniably special about this generation of youth. Your Heavenly Father must have great confidence in you to send you to earth at this time. You were born for greatness!”⁴

I am grateful for what I learn from the youth. I am grateful for what my children teach me, for what our missionaries teach me, and for what my nieces and nephews teach me.

Not too long ago, I was working on our farm with my nephew Nash. He is six and has a pure heart. He is my favorite nephew named Nash, and I believe I am his favorite uncle speaking in conference today.

As he helped me come up with a solution for our project, I said, “Nash, that is a great idea. How did you get so smart?” He looked at me with an expression in his eyes that said, “Uncle Ryan, how do you not know the answer to this question?”

He simply shrugged his shoulders, smiled, and confidently said, “Jesus.”

Nash reminded me that day of this simple and yet profound teaching. The answer to the simplest questions and to the most complex problems is always the same. The answer is Jesus Christ. Every solution is found in Him.

In the Gospel of John, the Savior said to His disciples that He would prepare a place for them. Thomas was confused and said to the Savior:

“Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?”

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”⁵

The Savior taught His disciples that He is “the way, the truth, and the life.” He is the answer to the question of how to come unto Heavenly Father. Gaining a testimony of His divine role in our lives was something I learned as a young man.

While I was serving as a missionary in Argentina, President Howard W. Hunter invited us to do something that had a profound effect on my life. He said, “We must know Christ better than we know him; we must remember him more often than we remember him; we must serve him more valiantly than we serve him.”⁶

At that time, I had been concerned with how to be a better missionary. This was the answer: to know Christ, to remember Him, and to serve Him. Missionaries throughout the world are united in this purpose: to “invite others to come unto Christ by helping them receive the restored gospel through faith in [Him] and His Atonement” and through “repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.”⁷ To our friends who are listening to the missionaries, I add my invitation to come unto Christ. Together we will strive to know Him, remember Him, and serve Him.

Serving a mission was a sacred time of my life. In my last interview with him as a full-time missionary, President Blair Pincock spoke of the upcoming change in mission leaders, as he and his wife were also nearing the completion of their service. We were both sad to be leaving something we loved so much. He could see that I was troubled by the

thought of not being a full-time missionary. He was a man of great faith and lovingly taught me as he had for the previous two years. He pointed to the picture of Jesus Christ above his desk and said, “Elder Olsen, it is all going to be OK because it is His work.” I felt reassured knowing that the Savior will help us, not just while we are serving but always—if we will let Him.

Sister Pincock taught us from the depths of her heart in the simplest Spanish phrases. When she said, “Jesucristo vive,” I knew it was true and that He lived. When she said, “Elderes y hermanas, les amo,” I knew that she loved us and wanted us to follow the Savior always.

My wife and I were recently blessed to serve as mission leaders to labor with the outstanding missionaries in Uruguay. I would say that these were the best missionaries in the world, and I trust that every mission leader feels that way. These disciples taught us every day about following the Savior.

During regular interviews one of our great sister missionaries walked into the office. She was a successful missionary, an excellent trainer, and a dedicated leader. She was looked up to by her companions and loved by the people. She was obedient, humble, and confident. Our previous visits focused on her area and the people she was teaching. This visit was different. As I asked her how she was doing, I could tell she was troubled. She said, “President Olsen, I don’t know if I can do this. I don’t know if I will ever be good enough. I don’t know if I can be the missionary that the Lord needs me to be.”

She was a remarkable missionary. Excellent in every way. A mission president’s dream. I had never worried about her abilities as a missionary.

As I listened to her, I struggled to know what to say. I silently prayed: “Heavenly Father, this is an outstanding missionary. She is Yours. She is doing everything right. I don’t want to mess this up. Please help me know what to say.”

The words came to me. I said, “*Hermana*, I am so sorry you are feeling this way. Let me ask you a question. If you had a friend you were teaching who felt this way, what would you say?”

She looked at me and smiled. With that unmistakable missionary spirit and conviction, she said, “President, that is easy. I would tell her that the Savior knows her perfectly. I would tell her that He lives. He loves you. You are good enough, and you’ve got this!”

With a little chuckle she said, “I guess if that applies to our friends, then it also applies to me.”

When we have questions or doubts, we may feel that the solutions are too complex or that finding answers is too confusing. May we remember that the adversary, even the father of all lies, is the architect of confusion.⁸

The Savior is the Master of simplicity.

President Nelson has said:

“The adversary is clever. For millennia he has been making good look evil and evil look good. His messages tend to be loud, bold, and boastful.

“However, messages from our Heavenly Father are strikingly different. He communicates simply, quietly, and with such stunning plainness that we cannot misunderstand Him.”⁹

How grateful we are that God so loved us that He sent His Son. He is the answer.

President Nelson recently said:

“The gospel of Jesus Christ has never been needed more than it is today. ...

“... This underscores the urgent need for us to follow the Lord’s instruction to His disciples to ‘go ... into *all* the world, and preach the gospel to *every* creature.’”¹⁰

To those who will choose to serve, I can attest to the blessings that will come as you heed a prophet’s call. Serving is not about you; it is about the Savior. You will be called to a place, but more importantly you will be called to a people. You will have the great responsibility and blessing of helping new friends understand that the answer is Jesus.

This is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and this is where we belong. Everything that President Nelson lovingly encourages us to do will lead us closer to the Savior.

To our magnificent youth—including my nephew Nash—throughout your life, no matter how difficult or confusing the challenges may be, you can always remember that the answer is simple: it is always Jesus.

As I have heard those who we sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators say on many occasions, I also say that we love you, we thank you, and we need you. This is where you belong.

I love the Savior. I bear witness of His name, even Jesus Christ. I testify that He is “the author and finisher of our faith,”¹¹ and He is the Master of simplicity. The answer is Jesus. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. See John 15:14.
2. Henry B. Eyring, “Hearts Bound Together,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2005, 77.
3. See 1 Samuel 16:7; Acts 10:34–35; Doctrine and Covenants 1:34–35.
4. Russell M. Nelson, in “Worldwide Youth Devotional: Messages from President Russell M. Nelson and Sister Wendy W. Nelson,” June 3, 2018, ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
5. John 14:5–6.
6. Howard W. Hunter, “What Manner of Men Ought Ye to Be?,” *Ensign*, May 1994, 64.
7. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2019), 1.
8. See 1 Corinthians 14:33; James 3:16; Doctrine and Covenants 123:7; 132:8.
9. Russell M. Nelson, “Hear Him,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 89.
10. Russell M. Nelson, “Preaching the Gospel of Peace,” *Liahona*, May 2022, 6.
11. Hebrews 12:2.