

Sacrament Meeting Talk by Tom Irvine

2 Nephi 15

[26] And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins.

[29] And now behold, I say unto you that the right way is to believe in Christ, and deny him not; and Christ is the Holy One of Israel; wherefore ye must bow down before him, and worship him with all your might, mind, and strength, and your whole soul; and if ye do this ye shall in nowise be cast out.

Moroni 10

[32] Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.

The Book of Mormon is the instrument that God designed to "sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out [His] elect." (Moses 7:62)

The Prophet Joseph Smith said "that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book." The Book of Mormon teaches of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and is the instrument by which God will fulfill His ancient promise to gather scattered Israel in these latter days.

Combined quote from:

President Ezra Taft Benson, Flooding the Earth with the Book of Mormon, Ensign, November 1988.

Elder Russell M. Nelson, Be Thou an Example of the Believers, October 2010 General Conference

3 Nephi 30

[2] Turn, all ye Gentiles, from your wicked ways; and repent of your evil doings... and come unto me, and be baptized in my name, that ye may receive a remission of your sins, and be filled with the Holy Ghost, that ye may be numbered with my people who are of the house of Israel.

The House of Israel is God's True House!

Know ye that ye are of the house of Israel.

Mormon 7:2

The great purpose of missionary work is thus to proclaim the Book of Mormon to lead men and women to Jesus Christ that they may repent, receive baptism and be numbered with the house of Israel.

And preparing for missionary service is my assigned topic today.

I hope that as many of our young people as possible can prepare for and fulfill full-time missions.

And let us remember that every member is a missionary.

(President David O. McKay, Conference Report, Apr. 1959)

Having said this, the Spirit has guided me to reach out to our faithful brothers and sisters who are worthy to go on missions and have prepared to do so, but have been unable, due to circumstances beyond their control. And to those who have started on their mission and have had to come home early due to afflictions of mind, body, or spirit. And in broader sense, I wish to extend compassion to all those who have wounded souls.

The great, English poet-philosopher from the 20th century wrote that "Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans."

My dear friends, today there are more ways than ever for us to open our mouths and share with others the joyful news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There is a way for everyone—even the hesitant missionary—to participate in this great work. We can each find a way to use our own

particular talents and interests in support of the great work of filling the world with light and truth. As we do so, we will find the joy that comes to those who are faithful and courageous enough “to stand as witnesses of God at all times” (Mosiah 18:9). - President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, February 2013, First Presidency Message

My best friend is young man in Arizona named Max. I served as Max’s one-on-one primary teacher when he was 6 and 7 years old. Max has autism. At that time, he had a limited vocabulary and seemed to exist in a dimension of his own. He and I bonded and became best friends. My wife quipped that Max and I got along so well because we were so alike!

Max is now 13 years old, and he is serving as the secretary in his Deacon’s quorum. I spoke with him on the phone the other day. I was very pleased that his communication skills and vocabulary had improved so much. I told him that I felt that I was talking with an adult.

Max may or may not be able to serve a full-time proselyting mission when he comes of age. But he has a special mission on this Earth. He radiates the light of Christ through his bright countenance.

Now of the three men who serve in the First Presidency, how many were able to go on two-year full-time proselyting missions when they came of age? (pause) None.

Each came of age at a time when there were wars and rumors of wars. So each served in the military of his respective country.

President Thomas S. Monson came of age during World War II. He joined the U.S. Naval Reserve and received training in San Diego. The war soon ended, and President Monson never was in combat. He then returned to Utah, earned his college degree, married, and was called to serve as a young bishop, all in a few short years. He had 85 widows in his ward, to whom he rendered compassionate service. His “mission” was thus to develop this compassion. This experience was part of the training that he needed so that the Lord could call him to serve as the current President of the Church. *We also have widows in our ward. And we should follow President Monson’s example by serving them.*

First Counselor in the First Presidency Henry B. Eyring came of age during the Korean and Cold War era. He earned his college degree and joined the U.S. Air Force. He was stationed at Sandia, New Mexico, where he had a desk job during the day as an officer. During evenings and

weekends, he served as a part-time, district missionary. He and his companion averaged about 40 hours per month doing missionary work, and they had success. President Eyring's Air Force and part-time missionary experience prepared him to now serve in the First Presidency.

Second Counselor in the First Presidency Dieter F. Uchtdorf grew up in war-torn Germany. He went to college and joined the West German Air Force as a fighter pilot. He later joined Lufthansa airlines and became a vice president. These experiences prepared him to serve in the First Presidency. President Uchtdorf often gives talks using his boyhood and aviation experiences to teach gospel principles in a meaningful way.

Sometimes we feel lost due to adverse circumstances which may prevent us from serving full-time missions or affect us in other ways.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, April 2008 General Conference

Some are lost because they are different. They feel as though they don't belong. Perhaps because they are different, they find themselves slipping away from the flock. They may look, act, think, and speak differently than those around them and that sometimes causes them to assume they don't fit in. They conclude that they are not needed.

Tied to this misconception is the erroneous belief that all members of the Church should look, talk, and be alike. The Lord did not people the earth with a vibrant orchestra of personalities only to value the piccolos of the world. Every instrument is precious and adds to the complex beauty of the symphony. All of Heavenly Father's children are different in some degree, yet each has his own beautiful sound that adds depth and richness to the whole.

This variety of creation itself is a testament of how the Lord values all His children.

Elder Jeffery R. Holland gave a talk in the October 2013 Conference titled, Like a Broken Vessel.

And who among us is not a broken vessel? (my interjection)

The Apostle Peter wrote that disciples of Jesus Christ are to have "compassion one of another." In that spirit I wish to speak to those who suffer from some form of mental illness or emotional disorder, whether those afflictions be slight or severe, of brief duration or persistent over a

lifetime. We sense the complexity of such matters when we hear professionals speak of neuroses and psychoses, of genetic predispositions and chromosome defects, of bipolarity, paranoia, and schizophrenia. However bewildering this all may be, these afflictions are some of the realities of mortal life, and there should be no more shame in acknowledging them than in acknowledging a battle with high blood pressure or the sudden appearance of a malignant tumor.

In striving for some peace and understanding in these difficult matters, it is crucial to remember that we are living—and chose to live—in a fallen world where for divine purposes our pursuit of godliness will be tested and tried again and again. Of greatest assurance in God’s plan is that a Savior was promised, a Redeemer, who through our faith in Him would lift us triumphantly over those tests and trials, even though the cost to do so would be unfathomable for both the Father who sent Him and the Son who came. It is only an appreciation of this divine love that will make our own lesser suffering first bearable, then understandable, and finally redemptive.

In any case we have all taken courage from those who, in the words of the Prophet Joseph, “search[ed] ... and contemplate[d] the darkest abyss” and persevered through it—not the least of whom were Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, and Elder George Albert Smith, the latter being one of the most gentle and Christlike men of our dispensation, who battled recurring depression for some years before later becoming the universally beloved eighth prophet and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

To those of you who have autism, Asperger’s syndrome, obsessive compulsive disorder...

To those who suffer anxiety, insomnia, depression, agoraphobia, hypochondria, or eating disorders....

To the girl or boy who has been bullied at school...

To anyone who has felt marginalized or excluded....

To the widows grieving for their lost husbands....

To the brother on kidney dialysis....

To persons of color who have been discriminated against...

To the new convert who has been disowned by his family for joining our church...

To the brother with a speech impediment...

To the grieving parents who have a child who has let go of the iron rod...

To the brother or sister who has difficulty making it through airport security due to a pacemaker or surgical steel embedded in his or her body....

To anyone who grew up in a family torn apart by alcoholism, abuse or divorce....

To the family struggling with finances and employment.....

To the single sister who has wanted to marry but has never had a marriage proposal...

To the couple struggling to have their first live-born child...

To the sister who lost all of her family members in a series of tragedies even before she met her husband...

To the sister who had held her family together while her son went through a difficult divorce and child custody battle...

To the sister who was injured in a severe automobile accident and who now has a painful condition worse than fibromyalgia...

To the industrious family who fell on hard times and had to humble themselves to accept church welfare...

To the parents who lost a child due to cancer....

To those of you who go to sleep each night hooked up to a CPAP machine or some other medical device....

To students struggling to meet their educational goals...

To the parents who must continually monitor their diabetic son's blood sugar level....

In short, to everyone, I express my compassion....

As we proclaim the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon... as we testify of the divinity of our Savior Jesus Christ... as we seek to gather the lost tribes of Israel...

Let us also remember our mission to show Christ-like compassion. Let us mourn with those who mourn and comfort those who stand in need of comfort. Let us assure them that the Lord loves them and so do we. And this too is our life's mission.