

The Atoning Love of Jesus Christ

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Upendo wa Yesu Kristo wa Kulipia Dhambi

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Wa Akidi ya Mitume Kumi na Wawili

October 2025 general conference

Healing and forgiveness are each found in their fulness in the atoning love of Jesus Christ.

I express my love for President Russell M. Nelson and my gratefulness for the remarkable influence he has had on each of us. And for all of us, I thank God for preserving and magnifying the noble life of President Dallin H. Oaks.

With each passing year, I feel greater love for our Savior, Jesus Christ, and for His merciful Atonement. His supreme sacrifice, securing victory over death and sin, is the most consequential contribution of all human history. Understanding His divine gift is for me an open-ended heavenly tutorial that will continue beyond the grave.

The powerful compassion of the Savior in forgiving sin and in healing the wounds caused by the sins of others is a most miraculous manifestation of the love of God.

My desire is to offer hope for those seeking forgiveness for very serious sins and to offer comfort to those seeking healing from the anguishing wounds caused by the serious sins of others.

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Faith in Jesus Christ

If you have committed serious sins and are in the process of repenting or have the desire to ful-

Uponyaji na msamaha vinapatikana katika utimilifu wake katika upendo wa Yesu Kristo wenye kulipia dhambi.

Ninaeleza upendo wangu kwa Rais Russell M. Nelson na shukrani zangu kwa ushawishi usio kifani aliokuwa nao kwa kila mmoja wetu. Na kwetu sisi sote, ninamshukuru Mungu kwa kuyatunza na kuyakuza maisha mema ya Rais Dallin H. Oaks.

Kwa kila mwaka unaopita, ninajisikia upendo mkubwa kwa ajili ya Mwokozi wetu, Yesu Kristo, na kwa Upatanisho Wake wenye rehema. Dhabihu Yake kuu, yenye kuhakikisha ushindi dhidi ya mauti na dhambi, ndiyo matokeo yenye mchango mkubwa katika historia yote ya mwanaadamu. Kuelewa zawadi Yake ya kiungu kwangu mimi ni kilele cha wazi cha mafunzo ya kimbingu ambayo yataendelea hata baada ya kaburi.

Huruma ya Mwokozi yenye nguvu katika kusamehe dhambi na katika uponyaji wa majeraha yaliyo sababishwa na dhambi za wengine ni dhihirisho kuu zaidi la kimuujiza la upendo wa Mungu.

Hamu yangu ni kutoa tumaini kwa wale wanao tafuta msamaha wa dhambi zilizo kubwa na kutoa faraja kwa wale wanao tafuta uponyaji kutokana na majeraha machungu zaidi yaliyo sababishwa na dhambi kubwa za watu wengine.

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Imani katika Yesu Kristo

Kama umetenda dhambi kubwa na uko katika mchakato wa kutubu au unayo hamu ya ku-

ly repent and feel the unspeakable joy of forgiveness, please know this miracle is awaiting you. The Savior continuously calls, “Come unto me.”

Strengthening your faith in our Savior, Jesus Christ, will invigorate the yearning of your soul to know Him, believe in Him, and yield your heart to Him. Enos asked about his own forgiveness, “Lord, how is it done?” The Lord responded, “Because of thy faith in Christ, whom thou hast never before heard nor seen.”

And Moroni added, “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.”

Turning from sin, turning toward God, and strengthening your faith in Jesus Christ are a beautiful beginning. Humbly submitting your will to God includes acknowledging serious sins to your bishop or branch president, but your full forgiveness comes from the Savior. Forgiveness is a divine gift offered through the grace of Jesus Christ.

Honesty

A desire to truly return to God is accompanied by the determination to be completely honest with your Heavenly Father, with yourself, with those who were harmed, and with your priesthood leader. Your Heavenly Father rejoices in your resolve to come unto Him with a broken heart and contrite spirit. Having a contrite spirit is humbly putting yourself in the hands of God; having a broken heart brings what the Apostle Paul described as “godly sorrow,” a deep longing of the soul to return to Him whatever the cost.

Restoring What Is Broken

Your yearning leads you to want to repair what you have broken. Yet, realizing some things are not in your power to repair, you fervently pray that the Lord, through His grace, will help heal those who have been hurt in consequence of your actions.

The effects of serious sin on others are often painfully difficult to overcome. Are you following

tubu kikamilifu na kuhisi shangwe isiyo elezeka ya msamaha, tafadhali jua kwamba muujiza huu unakusubiria wewe. Mwokozi kwa mwendelezo anaita, “Njooi kwangu.”

Kuimarisha imani yako katika Mwokozi wetu, Yesu Kristo, kutahuisha kutamani kwa nafsi yako kumjua Yeye, kuamini katika Yeye, na kuuweka moyo wako Kwake. Enoshi aliomba msamaha kwa ajili ya nafsi yake mwenyewe, “Bwana, je, inafanywa vipi? Bwana akamjibu, “Kwa sababu ya imani yako katika Kristo, ambaye wewe hujamwona kamwe wala kumsikia.”

Na Moroni aliongeza, “Ikiwa mtajinyima ubaya wote na kumpenda Mungu na mioyo yenu, akili, na nguvu zenu zote, basi neema Yake inawatosha.”

Kugeuka kutoka dhambini, kugeuka kumwelekea Mungu, na kuimarisha imani yako katika Yesu Kristo ni mwanzo mzuri. Kwa unyenyekevu kukabidhi mapenzi yako kwa Mungu ikijumuisha kukiri dhambi zako kubwa kwa askofu wako au rais wa tawi, lakini msamaha wako kamili huja kutoka kwa Mwokozi. Msamaha ni zawadi ya kiungu inayotolewa kupitia neema ya Yesu Kristo.

Uaminifu

Hamu ya kweli ya kurudi kwa Mungu inaambatana na dhamira ya dhati ya kuwa mwaminifu kiukamilifu kwa Baba yako wa Mbinguni, kwako wewe mwenyewe, na wale ulio waumiza, na kwa kiongozi wako wa ukuhani. Baba yako wa Mbinguni hufurahia katika azimio lako la kuja Kwake kwa moyo uliovunjika na roho iliyopondeka. Kuwa na roho iliyopondeka ni kwa unyenyekevu kujiweka wewe mwenyewe katika mikono ya Mungu; kuwa na moyo uliovunjika huleta kile Mtume Paulo alikielezea kama “huzuni ya kiungu,” ni hamu ya kina ya nafsi ya kurudi Kwake kwa gharama yo yote.

Kurejesha Kilichovunjika

Hamu yako hukuelekeza kwenye kutaka kurekebisha kile ulichovunja. Lakini, kwa kutambua kuwa baadhi ya mambo hayapo katika uweza wako wa kuyarekebisha, unasali kwa dhati kwamba Bwana, kupitia neema Yake, atasaidia kuwaponya wale walioumizwa kama matokeo ya matendo yako.

Athari za dhambi kubwa kwa watu wengine mara nyingi ni ngumu sana kuzishinda. Je,

the example of the sons of Mosiah, who were “zealously striving to repair all the injuries which they had done”? Speak with those you respect about what you might not be seeing.

As I was preparing this talk, I received an unexpected email from someone in the process of repenting and desiring to return to the Church. His former wife was still suffering from the loss “of [their] eternal marriage, [difficulties with the children], the loss of financial security, ... not [being] quite able to keep up with expenses, [and] the deeply suffocating feelings of being betrayed.”

He shared with me how his priesthood leader “felt impressed to [ask him] to prayerfully consider what [more he could do for his former wife and children].” With permission, I share a part of his email:

“I [first] thought the [money] I gave up in the divorce decree was more than generous, but my branch president encouraged me to fast and pray about it. ...

“Initially, I struggled with the idea of further restitution. Since my sins weren’t financial, I wondered what a ‘generous restitution’ truly meant ... [but] I soon realized it wasn’t just about money.

“My priesthood leaders met with [my former wife] and my children and realized they were still struggling and hadn’t healed. ...

“My new goal was to move forward with faith. ... I simply expressed my desire to help with no strings attached. ... I decided to [send my former wife a specific amount] per paycheck, which was a significant portion of my net pay. Just before making the first payment, the Lord [impressed upon my mind that I needed] to pay [twice that amount].

“I’ve learned that restitution isn’t just about money. It’s about humbly dedicating my life to the Lord. ... The money is to help replace what I took from my family due to my poor choices. It’s about making and keeping promises without expecting anything in return and helping her not worry about bills so she can seek the Spirit.”

Your efforts to restore what you have broken

unafuata mfano wa wana wa Mosia, ambao “wakijibidiisha wakijitahidi kuponya majera-ha yote waliyofanya”? Zungumza na wale unao waheshimu kuhusu kile ambacho yawezekana hukioni.

Nilipokuwa nikiandaa mahubiri haya, nilipokea barua pepe nisyotarajia kutoka kwa mtu fulani aliye katika mchakato wa kutubu na anatamani kurudi Kanisani. Mke wake wa zamani bado alikuwa anateseka kutokana na “kupotea kwa ndoa [yao] ya milele, [magumu pamoja na watoto], kupotea kwa usalama wa kifedha, ... kuto [kuweza] kumudu gharama za maisha, [na] hisia zenye kukaba roho za kusaliwa.”

Alishiriki na mimi jinsi kiongozi wake wa ukuhani “alivyojisikia kuvutiwa [kumwomba] kwa sala kufikiria nini [zaidi angeweza kufanya kwa ajili ya mke wake wa zamani na watoto].” Kwa ruhusa yake ninashiriki sehemu ya barua pepe yake:

“[Kwanza] nilifikiri [pesa] niliyoiacha katika tamko langu la talaka ilikuwa zaidi ya ukarimu, lakini rais wangu wa tawi alinihimiza kufunga na kusali kuhusu hilo.

“Mwanzoni, nilipambana na wazo la kurejesha zaidi. Kwa vile dhambi zangu hazikuwa za kifedha, nilijiuliza ‘kurejesha kwa ukarimu’ hasa maana yake ni nini ... [lakini] punde niligundua haikuwa tu kuhusu pesa.

“Viongozi wangu wa ukuhani walikutana na [mke wangu wa zamani] na watoto wangu walikuwa bado wanapambana na hawajapona.”

“Lengo langu jipya lilikuwa ni kusonga mbele kwa imani. ... Nilielezea tu hamu yangu ya kusaidia lakini bila masharti kwenye jambo hilo. ... Niliamua [kumtumia mke wangu wa zamani kiasi maalumu] kutoka kila mshahara ninaolipwa, ambacho kilikuwa sehemu kubwa ya mshahara wangu. Kabla tu ya kufanya malipo yangu ya kwanza, Bwana [alishawishi akili yangu kwamba nilihitajika] kutoa [mara mbili ya kiasi kile].

“Nimejifunza kwamba urejeshaji siyo tu kuhusu pesa. Ni kuhusu kwa unyenyekevu kuyatoa kwa dhati maisha yetu kwa Bwana. ... Pesa ni kwa ajili ya kusaidia kufidia kile nilichokichukua kutoka kwa familia yangu kwa sababu ya chaguzi zangu mbaya. Ni kuhusu kufanya na kutimiza ahadi pasipo kutarajia cho chote kama malipo na kumsaidia yeye asihofu kuhusu malipo ya bili ili aweze kumtafuta roho.”

Jitihada zako za kurejesha kile ulicho kivunja

may have nothing to do with money, but as you humbly counsel with the Lord, you may find there is more you can do.

Divine Approval by Degrees

As you seek the Lord's forgiveness, be patient as you wait upon His full approval. Consider this scripture:

"They ... humble[d] themselves ... in the depths of humility; and ... did cry mightily to God; yea, even all the day long. ... [But] the Lord was slow to hear their cry because of their iniquities."

"Nevertheless the Lord did hear their cries, and began ... to ease their burdens; ... and ... they began to prosper by degrees."

Be patient as the Lord gives you His blessing and approval by degrees.

In the Lord's time, you will feel His voice telling you, "Let these things trouble you no more." One day, as you continue to turn to the Savior, your Heavenly Father will take "away the guilt from [your heart], through the merits of his Son."

Injured and Suffering

For you who have been so unfairly injured by the serious sins of another, I long to share the Savior's love and compassion, His comfort and peace.

The sadness you have felt, the heartbreak, the loss, the suffocating feeling of betrayal, the upending of your life as you imagined it to be—I give you my absolute assurance, the Savior knows you and loves you. Reach out to Him. He is your comfort and strength; He will send His angels to bear you up. When will your pain be gone, your grief subdued, the unwanted memories forgotten? I do not know. But this I do know: He has the power to bring beauty from the ashes of your suffering.

Our beloved brothers and sisters of Grand Blanc, Michigan, with their undaunted faith in Jesus Christ, with their courage and unselfishness, have received and will, in the weeks and months ahead, abundantly receive of the Savior's incomparable love and grace.

As you continue to place your trust in Him, your clouds of darkness and anguished sobbing in the night will be transformed into cascading

yawezekana zisihusiane na pesa, lakini kadiri kwa unyenyekevu unaposhauriana na Bwana, unaweza kuona kuna la zaidi unaloweza kufanya.

Idhini ya Kiungu Kidogo Kidogo

Unapotafuta msamaha wa Bwana, kuwa na subira, unapongojea idhini Yake kamili. Zingatia andiko hili:

"Wao ... walijinyenyekeza wenyewe katika vina vya unyenyekevu; na ... walimlilia Mungu sana; ndiyo, hata siku yote. ... [Lakini] Bwana alikuwa mzito kusikia kilio chao kwa sababu ya maovu yao."

"Hata hivyo Bwana alisikia vilio vyao, na kuanza ... kupunguza mizigo yao; ... na ... wakaanza kufanikiwa kidogo kidogo."

Kuwa mvumilivu Bwana anapokupa baraka Zake na idhini Yake kidogo kidogo.

Katika wakati wa Bwana, utahisi sauti ya Bwana ikikuambia, "Vitu hivi visikusumbue tena." Siku moja, kadiri unavyoendelea kumgeukia Mwokozi, Baba Yako wa Mbinguni "ataondolea mbali hatia kutoka [moyoni mwako], kupitia neema ya Mwanawe."

Kujeruhiwa na Kuteseka

Kwa wewe ambaye umejeruhiwa pasipo haki na dhambi kubwa za wengine, ninatamani kushiriki upendo na huruma ya Mwokozi, faraja Yake na amani.

Huzuni ambayo umeihisi, kuvunjika moyo, upotevu, hisia za kuchosha za usaliti, zenye kungusha maisha yako kama ambavyo umefikiria kuwa hivyo—ninakupeni hakikisho langu la dhati, kuwa huyu Mwokozi anakujua na anakupenda. Mfikie Yeye. Yeye ni faraja na nguvu yako; Yeye atakutumia malaika Wake ili wakubebe. Lini uchungu wako utatoweka, huzuni yako kunyamazishwa, kumbukumbu zisizotakiwa kusahaulika? Mimi sijui. Lakini hili nalijua: Yeye anao uweza wa kuleta uzuri kutoka katika majivu ya mateso yako.

Wapendwa Kaka zetu na dada zetu wa Grand Blanc, Michigan, kwa imani yao katika Yesu Kristo isiyotishika, na kwa ujasiri wao na kutokuwa kwao na ubinafsi, wamepokea na watapokea, katika wiki na miezi ijayo, wingi wa upendo na neema ya Mwokozi isiyo linganishwa.

Unapoendelea kuweka kuamini kwako katika Yeye, mawingu ya kiza na kwikwi za kuonyesha huzuni usiku zitabadilishwa kuwa maporomoko

ing tears of joy and peace in the morning's light. "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy. ... And your joy no [one] taketh from you." That moment will come. I testify that it will come.

The atoning love of Jesus Christ can be found in the most difficult situations, but we all constantly need the atoning grace of our Savior. President Dallin H. Oaks has taught: "Because of His atoning experience in mortality, our Savior is able to comfort, heal, and strengthen all men and women everywhere, but I believe He does so only for those who seek Him and ask for His help. The Apostle James taught, 'Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up' (James 4:10). We qualify for that blessing when we believe in Him and pray for His help."

Elder Robert E. Wells

I received permission from my dear friend and emeritus General Authority Seventy, Elder Robert E. Wells, now 97 years old, to share his experience of more than 60 years ago:

While living in Paraguay in 1960 and employed as an international banker, Robert Wells, then 32 years old, and his wife, Meryl, were each a pilot in two different planes, flying home from Uruguay to Paraguay. Encountering thick clouds, Robert and Meryl lost visual and radio contact with each other. Robert quickly landed, where he learned his wife's plane had crashed. Neither his wife nor the two friends flying with her had survived. His children, at home in Asunción, were ages seven, five, and two.

Elder Wells spoke of his grief:

"Words will forever be inadequate in expressing the pain that swelled within me, consuming my emotions and numbing my senses. Profound tears of sorrow simply wouldn't stop flowing. To make matters worse, as my mind was attempting to deal with the devastating realization of my wife's passing, I found myself experiencing

ya ghafla ya machozi ya shangwe na amani katika mwangaza wa asubuhi. "Huzuni yako itageuzwa kuwa shangwe. ... Na shangwe yako hakuna mtu atakayeitwaa kutoka kwako." Wakati huo utakuja. Nashuhudia kwamba utakuja.

Upendo wa Yesu Kristo wenye kulipia dhambi unaweza kupatikana katika hali ngumu sana, lakini sisi sote kwa kiasi kisichobadilika tunahitaji neema ya Mwokozi wetu ya kulipia dhambi. Rais Dallin H. Oaks amefundisha: "Kwa sababu ya uzoefu Wake wa kulipia dhambi katika maisha ya duniani, Mwokozi wetu anaweza kufariji, kuponya, na kuimarisha wanaume wote na wanawake wote kila mahali, lakini mimi naamini Yeye hufanya hivyo kwa wale tu ambao wanamtafuta Yeye na kuomba msaada Wake. Mtume Yakobo alifundisha: 'Jidhilini mbele za Bwana, naye atawakuza' (Yakobo 4:10). Tunastahili baraka hiyo tunapoamini katika Yeye na kuomba msaada Wake."

Mzee Robert E. Wells

Nilipokea ruhusa kutoka kwa rafiki yangu kipenzi Mzee Robert E. Wells, Kiongozi Mkuu Mwenye Mamlaka aliyepumzishwa na kubaki na heshima hiyo, sasa ana miaka 97, ameniruhusu kushiriki uzoefu wake huu wa zaidi ya miaka 60 iliyopita.

Wakati akiishi huko Paraguai mwaka 1960 na akiwa ameajiriwa kama mfanya kazi wa kimataifa wa benki, Robert Wells, wakati huo akiwa na umri wa miaka 32, na mke wake, Meryl, wote wawili walikuwa marubani katika ndege mbili tofauti, wakiruka kutoka nyumbani Uruguay kwenda Paraguay. Wakiyakabili mawingu mazito, Robert na Meryl walipoteana kimawasiliano ya kuona na ya radio wao kwa wao. Robert kwa haraka akatua, ambapo aligundua kwamba ndege ya mke wake ilikuwa imedondoka. Si mke wake wala wale marafiki wawili walioruka pamoja na mke wake hakuna aliyenusurika. Watoto wake nyumbani huko Asunción, walikuwa wa umri wa miaka saba, mitano, na miwili.

Mzee Wells alizungumzia juu ya huzuni yake:

"Maneno milele hayatatosha kuelezea huzuni iliyo vimba ndani yangu, ikimaliza hisia zangu na kutia ganzi fahamu zangu. Machozi ya huzuni ya ndani kabisa hayakukoma kutiririka. Kufanya mambo kuwa mabaya zaidi, akili yangu ilipokuwa ikijaribu kushughulikia uhalisia wa kifo cha mke wangu, nilijikuta nikipitia hisia za hatia kub-

tremendous guilt for feeling I was responsible for the crash.”

Robert blamed himself for not having had the plane inspected more thoroughly and for not giving his wife better instrument flying instructions. He felt he was guilty of neglect.

Robert said:

“My mind went into a dark daze. ... I simply existed—[for the sake of the children,] nothing more.”

“I ... lost my desire to continue on.”

In time, Robert was blessed with a deeply spiritual experience. He recounted:

“One evening, about one year later, while on my knees in prayer, a miracle occurred. While praying and pleading to my Heavenly Father, I felt as though the Savior came to my side and I heard an audible voice speaking these words to my soul and to my ears: ‘Robert, my atoning sacrifice paid for your sins and your mistakes. Your wife forgives you. Your friends forgive you. I will lift your burden. ...’

“From that moment, the burden of guilt [and despair] was amazingly lifted from me. I had been rescued! I immediately understood the encompassing power of the Savior’s Atonement and ... that it applied directly to me. ... I ... experienced light and joy like I had never before known. ... I had been given an unearned gift—the Lord’s gift of grace. ... I didn’t deserve it—I had done nothing to merit it, but He gave it to me nonetheless.”

Brothers and sisters, may we each be “sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, ... [becoming] holy, without spot.”

I testify of the love, the mercy, and the grace of our Savior and Redeemer. He lives. We are His; we are children of the covenant. As we believe in Him, follow Him, and trust Him, He will lift us from our sorrows and our sins. Then, beyond this mortal life, in our Father’s house, we will live with Him forever and ever. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

wa ya kujihisi niliwajibika kwa kudondoka kwa ndege hiyo.”

Robert alijilaumu mwenyewe kwa kutohakikisha ukaguzi wa kina wa ndege hiyo na kwa kutompa mke wake maelekezo mazuri zaidi ya vifaa vya kurusha ndege. Alihisi alikuwa na hatia ya uzembe.

Robert alisema:

“Akili yangu iliingia katika giza lenye kudunduwa. ... Nilikuwepo tu—[kwa ajili ya watoto,] na siyo zaidi.”

“Mimi ... nilipoteza hamu yangu ya kuendelea.”

Baada ya muda, Robert alibarikiwa kwa kupitia tukio hili la kina la kiroho. Alisimulia:

“Jioni moja, karibia mwaka mmoja baadaye, wakati nimepiga magoti kusali, muujiza ulitokea. Wakati nikisali na kumsihi Baba wa Mbinguni, nilihisi kama vile Mwokozi alikuja pembeni yangu na nikasikia sauti ya kuweza kusikika ikisema maneno haya nafsini mwangu na masikioni mwangu: ‘Robert, dhabihu yangu ya kulipia dhambi ililipia dhambi zako na makosa yako. Mke wako anakusamehe. Marafiki zako wanakusamehe. Nitainua mzigo wako. ...’

“Kutokea muda huo, mzigo wa hatia [na kukata tamaa] kwa mshangao viliinuliwa kutoa kwangu. Nilikuwa nimeokolewa! Mara moja nilielewa nguvu yenye kuzingira ya Upatanisho wa Mwokozi na ... kwamba ilitumika moja kwa moja kwangu. ...’ Mimi ... nilipitia nuru na shangwe ambayo kamwe sikuwahi kuijua hapo kabla. ... Nilikuwa nimepatiwa zawadi ambayo sikuifanyia kazi—zawadi ya neema ya Bwana. ... Sikuistahili—sikuwa nimefanya lo lote la kusta-hili hiyo, lakini hata hivyo Yeye alinipatia.”

Akina kaka na akina dada, na kila mmoja wetu “atakaswe katika Kristo kwa neema ya Mungu, kupitia kumwagwa kwa damu ya Kristo, ... [ili mpate kuwa] watakatifu pasipo mawaa.”

Ninashuhudia juu ya upendo, rehema, na neema ya Mwokozi na Mkombozi wetu. Yeye yu hai. Sisi ni Wake; sisi ni watoto wa agano. Kadiri tunavyoamini katika Yeye, kumfuata Yeye, na kumtumainia Yeye, Yeye atatuinua kutoka kwenye huzuni yetu na dhambi zetu. Kisha, kupita maisha haya ya duniani, katika nyumba ya Baba Yake, tutaishi pamoja na Yeye milele na milele. Katika jina la Yesu Kristo, amina.