

The Man Who Communed with Jehovah

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October 2024 general conference

Joseph Smith was "blessed to open the last dispensation," and we are blessed that he did.

My purpose this day and always is to testify of Jesus Christ, that He is the Son of God, the Creator and Savior of the world, our Deliverer and Redeemer. Because "the fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ," today I share with you my knowledge and testimony of the Savior as they have been strengthened and deepened by the life and teachings of one key apostle and prophet.

The Beginning of Wisdom

On the morning of a beautiful clear day early in the spring of 1820, 14-year-old Joseph Smith entered a grove of trees near his family's home to pray about his sins and to ask which church to join. His sincere prayer, offered with unwavering faith, received the attention of the most powerful forces in the universe, including the Father and the Son. And the devil. Each of these had an intense interest in that prayer and in that boy.

What we now call the First Vision marked the beginning of the Restoration of all things in this last dispensation. But for Joseph, the experience was also personal and preparatory. All he wanted was forgiveness and direction. The Lord gave him both. The instruction to "join none of [the churches]" was directive. The words "Thy sins are forgiven thee" were redemptive.

For all the beautiful truths we might learn from that First Vision, perhaps Joseph's main takeaway was simply, "I had found the testimo-

Joseph Smith blev »velsignet til at kunne åbne den sidste uddeling,« og vi er velsignede ved, at han gjorde det.

Mit formål, i dag og altid, er at vidne om Jesus Kristus, at han er Guds Søn, verdens Skaber og Frelser, vor Befrier og Forløser. Eftersom »det grundlæggende princip i vores religion er apostlenes og profeternes vidnesbyrd om Jesus Kristus«, deler jeg i dag min kundskab og mit vidnesbyrd om Frelseren, som er blevet styrket og øget af en central apostels og profets liv og lærdomme.

Visdommens begyndelse

En smuk, klar morgen, tidligt på foråret i 1820, gik den 14-årige Joseph Smith ud i en lund nær sin families hjem for at bede angående sine synder og at spørge om, hvilken kirke han skulle tilslutte sig. Hans oprigtige bøn, der blev frembragt i urokkelig tro, fik opmærksomhed fra de stærkeste kræfter i universet, herunder af Faderen og Sønnen. Og Djævelen. De havde alle en stor interesse i den bøn og i den dreng.

Det, vi i dag kalder det første syn, markerede begyndelsen på genoprettelsen af alt i denne sidste uddeling. Men for Joseph var oplevelsen også personlig og forberedende. Alt han ønskede, var tilgivelse og vejledning. Herren gav ham begge dele. Instruksen om ikke at »slutte [sig] til nogen af [kirkerne]« var retningsgivende. Ordene: »Dine synder er dig tilgivet« var forløsende.

Af alle de smukke sandheder, vi kan lære af det første syn, var Josephs vigtigste konklusion måske helt enkelt: »Jeg havde erfaret, at Jakobs

ny of James to be true—that a man who lacked wisdom might ask of God, and obtain.”

As one scholar noted: “The real resonance of the First Vision today is to know that it’s the nature of God to give to those who lack wisdom. ... The God that reveals Himself to Joseph Smith in the sacred grove is a God who answers teenagers in times of trouble.”

Joseph’s experience in the grove gave him confidence to ask for forgiveness and direction for the rest of his life. His experience has also given me confidence to ask for forgiveness and direction for the rest of my life.

Regular Repentance

On September 21, 1823, Joseph earnestly prayed for forgiveness, confident that because of his experience in the grove three years earlier, heaven would respond again. And it did. The Lord sent an angel, Moroni, to instruct Joseph and inform him of an ancient record he would later translate by the gift and power of God—the Book of Mormon.

Almost 13 years after that, Joseph and Oliver Cowdery knelt in solemn, silent prayer in the newly dedicated Kirtland Temple. We do not know what they prayed for, but their prayers likely included a plea for forgiveness, for, as they arose, the Savior appeared and declared, “Behold, your sins are forgiven you; you are clean before me.”

In the months and years after this experience, Joseph and Oliver would sin again. And again. But in that moment, for that moment, in response to their plea and in preparation for the glorious restoration of priesthood keys that was about to happen, Jesus made them sinless.

Joseph’s life of regular repentance gives me confidence to “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that [I] may obtain mercy.” I have learned that Jesus Christ truly is “of a forgiving disposition.” It is neither His mission nor His nature to condemn. He came to save.

Inquiring of the Lord

As part of the promised “restitution of all things,” the Lord, through Joseph Smith, brought forth the Book of Mormon and other revelations that contain the fulness of His gospel. Vital truths were given clarity and completeness as Joseph

vidnesbyrd var sandt, at en, som står tilbage i visdom, kan bede til Gud og få.»

Som en forsker bemærkede: »Den virkelige genklang af det første syn i dag er at vide, at det er Guds natur at give til dem, der mangler visdom ... Den Gud, der åbenbarede sig for Joseph Smith i den hellige lund, er også den Gud, der svarer teenagere i vanskelige tider.«

Josephs oplevelse i lunden gav ham selvtillid til at bede om tilgivelse og vejledning resten af sit liv. Hans oplevelse har også givet mig selvtillid til at bede om tilgivelse og vejledning hele mit liv.

Regelmæssig omvendelse

Den 21. september 1823 bad Joseph oprigtigt om tilgivelse med fuld tillid til, at himlen igen ville svare, på grund af den oplevelse, han havde haft i lunden tre år tidligere. Og det gjorde den. Herren sendte en engel, Moroni, for at vejlede Joseph og fortælle ham om en gammel optegnelse, som han senere skulle oversætte ved Guds gave og kraft – Mormons Bog.

Næsten 13 år senere knælede Joseph og Oliver Cowdery i højtidelig, stille bøn i det nylyt indviende tempel i Kirtland. Vi ved ikke, hvad de bad om, men deres bønner indeholdt sikkert en bøn om tilgivelse, for da de rejste sig, viste Frelseren sig og erklærede: »Se, jeres synder er jer tilgivet; I er rene i mine øjne.«

I månederne og årene efter denne oplevelse, begik Joseph og Oliver synder igen. Og igen. Men i det øjeblik, for det øjeblik, gjorde Jesus dem syndfri som svar på deres bøn, og som forberedelse til den herlige gengivelse af nøgler, der skulle til at ske.

Josephs liv med regelmæssig omvendelse giver mig tillid til at jeg »med frimodighed [kan] træde frem for nådens trone, for at ... få barmhertighed«. Jeg har lært, at Jesus Kristus i sandhed er »af en tilgivende natur«. Det er hverken hans mission eller hans natur at fordømme. Han kom for at frelse.

Spørg Herren

Som en del af den lovede genoprettelse af alt, frembragte Herren, gennem Joseph Smith, Mormons Bog og andre åbenbaringer, der indeholder hans evangeliums fylde. Afgørende sandheder blev tydeliggjort og fuldendt, da Joseph

repeatedly inquired of the Lord for direction. Consider the following:

The Father and the Son have bodies “as tangible as man’s.”

Jesus took upon Himself not only our sins but also our sicknesses, afflictions, and infirmities.

His Atonement was so excruciating it caused Him to bleed from every pore.

We are saved by His grace “after all we can do.”

There are conditions to Christ’s mercy.

As we come unto Christ, He will not only forgive our sins, but He will also change our very nature so “that we have no more disposition to do evil.”

Christ always commands His people to build temples, where He manifests Himself unto them and endows them with power from on high.

I testify that all these things are true and necessary. They represent only a fraction of the fulness that was restored by Jesus Christ through Joseph Smith in response to Joseph’s recurring requests for direction.

Rolling on This Kingdom

In 1842, Joseph wrote of amazing things that would come to pass in this last dispensation. He declared that during our day, “the heavenly Priesthood will unite with the earthly, to bring about those great purposes; and whilst we are thus united in the one common cause, to roll forth the kingdom of God, the heavenly Priesthood are not idle spectators.”

To his friend Benjamin Johnson, Joseph said, “Benjamin, [if I die] I [would] not be far away from you, and if on the other side of the veil, I [would] still be working with you, and with a power greatly increased, to roll on this kingdom.”

On June 27, 1844, Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were murdered. Joseph’s body was laid to rest, but his testimony continues to reverberate around the world and in my soul:

“I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it.”

“I never told you I was perfect; but there is no error in the revelations which I have taught.”

“The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets,

fortsatte med at adspørge Herren om yderligere vejledning. Overvej følgende:

Faderen og Sønnen har legemer »lige så håndgribelig[e] som menneskets«.

Jesus påtog sig ikke blot vores synder, men også vores sygdomme, trængsler og skrøbeligheder.

Hans forsoning var så ulidelig, at den fik ham til at bløde fra hver pore.

Vi bliver frelst ved hans nåde, »efter alt hvad vi kan gøre«.

Der er betingelser for Kristi barmhjertighed.

Når vi kommer til Kristus, vil han ikke blot tilgive vores synder, men han vil også ændre selve vores natur, »så vi ikke mere har tilbøjelighed til at gøre ondt«.

Kristus befaler altid sit folk at bygge templer, hvor han giver sig til kende for dem og begaver dem med kraft fra det høje.

Jeg vidner om, at alle disse ting er sande og nødvendige. De repræsenterer kun en brøkdel af den fylde, der blev gengivet af Jesus Kristus gennem Joseph Smith, som svar på Josephs gentagne anmodninger om vejledning.

Videreførelse af dette rige

I 1842 skrev Joseph om fantastiske ting, der ville ske i denne sidste uddeling. Han erklærede, at i vore dage vil »det himmelske præstedømme forenes med det jordiske for at tilvejebringe disse store formål; og mens vi således er forenet i en fælles sag, nemlig at videreføre Guds rige, er det himmelske præstedømme ikke uvirksomme tilskuere.«

Til sin ven Benjamin Johnson sagde Joseph: »Benjamin, [hvis jeg dør], vil jeg ikke være langt væk fra dig, og hvis jeg er på den anden side af sløret, vil jeg stadig arbejde sammen med dig og med en stærkt forøget kraft til at videreføre dette rige.«

Den 27. juni 1844 blev Joseph Smith og hans bror Hyrum myrdet. Josephs legeme blev lagt til hvile, men hans vidnesbyrd giver stadig genlyd verden over og i min sjæl:

»Jeg havde set et syn; jeg vidste det, og jeg vidste, at Gud vidste det, og jeg kunne ikke fornægte det.«

»Jeg har aldrig sagt til jer, at jeg er fuldkommen – men der findes ingen fejl i de åbenbaringer, som jeg har forkyndt jer.«

»De fundamentale principper og grundsætninger i vores religion er apostlenes og profeter-

concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.”

What was said of John the Baptist might also be said of Joseph Smith: “There was a man sent from God, whose name was [Joseph]. ... He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light,” “that all men through him might believe.”

I believe. I believe and am sure that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. I testify that the living God is our loving Father. I know this because the voice of the Lord has spoken it to me, and so has the voice of His servants, the apostles and prophets, including and beginning with Joseph Smith.

I testify that Joseph Smith was and is a prophet of God, a witness and servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was “blessed to open the last dispensation,” and we are blessed that he did.

The Lord commanded Oliver and all of us, “Stand by my servant Joseph, faithfully.” I testify that the Lord stands by His servant Joseph and the Restoration wrought through him.

Joseph Smith is now part of that heavenly priesthood of which he spoke. As he promised his friend, he is not far away from us, and on the other side of the veil, he is still working with us, and with a power greatly increased, to roll on this kingdom. With joy and thanksgiving, I raise my voice in “praise to the man who communed with Jehovah.” And above all, praise to Jehovah, who communed with that man! In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

nes vidnesbyrd om Jesus Kristus, at han døde, blev begravet og igen opstod den tredje dag og fór til himlen; og alt andet, som falder ind under vores religion, er kun tillæg dertil.«

Det, der blev sagt om Johannes Døber, kan også siges om Joseph Smith: »Der kom et menneske, udsendt af Gud, hans navn var [Joseph] ... Selv var han ikke lyset, men han skulle vidne om lyset«, »for at alle skulle komme til tro ved ham.«

Jeg tror. Jeg tror og ved, at Jesus er Kristus, den levende Guds Søn. Jeg bærer vidnesbyrd om, at Gud er vor kærlige Fader. Jeg ved dette, fordi Herrens røst har sagt det til mig, og det har hans tjeneres, apostles og profeters, røst også, heriblandt og begyndende med Joseph Smith.

Jeg vidner om, at Joseph Smith var og er en Guds profet, et vidne og en tjener for Herren Jesus Kristus. Han blev velsignet til at kunne åbne for den sidste uddeling, og vi er velsignede ved, at han gjorde det.

Herren befalede Oliver og os alle: »Stå min tjener Joseph trofast bi.« Jeg vidner om, at Herren Jesus Kristus står sin tjener Joseph bi, og genoprettelsen fandt sted gennem ham.

Joseph Smith er nu en del af det himmelske præstedømme, som han talte om. Som han lovede sin ven, så er han ikke langt fra os, og han arbejder stadig sammen med os fra den anden side af sløret og med en stærkt forøget kraft for at videreføre dette rige. Med glæde og taknemmelighed løfter jeg min røst og »priser profeten, som skued’ Jehova«. Og mest af alt, i lovprisning af Jehova [Jahve], som talte med den mand! I Jesu Kristi navn. Amen.