

Sons and Daughters of God

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Guds sønner og døtre

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We truly believe that we are all literally the children of God, and because of that, we have the potential to become like Him.

Today I would like to address one of the most joyful, glorious, and powerful gospel truths that God has revealed. At the same time, it is ironically one for which we have been criticized. An experience I had some years ago profoundly deepened my appreciation for this gospel truth.

As a representative of the Church, I was once invited to a religious conference where it was announced that from that moment on they would recognize as valid all baptisms performed by almost all other Christian churches, as long as the ordinance was done with water and in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Then it was explained that this policy did not apply to baptisms performed by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

After the conference I was able to delve deeper into the reasons for that exception with the leader in charge of the announcement. We had a wonderful and insightful conversation.

In short, he explained to me that that exception had primarily to do with our particular beliefs about the Godhead, which other Christian denominations often refer to as the Trinity. I expressed my appreciation for him taking the time to explain to me his beliefs and the policy of his church. At the end of our conversation, we hugged and then said goodbye.

As I later contemplated our discussion, what this leader said about Latter-day Saints not understanding what he called the “mystery of the Trinity” stayed in my mind. What was he referring to? Well, it had to do with our understand-

Vi tror i sandhed, at vi er Guds bogstavelige børn, og at vi derfor har potentialet til at blive som ham.

I dag vil jeg gerne tale om en af de mest glædelige, pragtfulde og stærke evangeliske sandheder, som Gud har åbenbaret. Det er ironisk nok på samme tid en af dem, vi er blevet kritiseret for. En oplevelse, jeg havde for nogle år siden, øgede min påskønnelse af denne evangeliske sandhed.

Som repræsentant for Kirken blev jeg engang inviteret til en religiøs konference, hvor det blev bekendtgjort, at fra det øjeblik af ville de anerkende alle dåb, der blev udført af næsten alle andre kristne kirker, som gyldige, så længe ordinancen blev udført med vand og i Faderens, Sønnens og Helligåndens navn. Derefter blev det forklaret, at denne retningslinje ikke gjaldt dåb udført af Jesu Kristi Kirke af Sidste Dages Hellige.

Efter konferencen fik jeg mulighed for at dykke dybere ned i årsagerne til denne undtagelse med lederen, der stod for bekendtgørelsen. Vi havde en vidunderlig og indsigtssfuld samtale.

Kort sagt forklarede han mig, at den undtagelse primært havde at gøre med vores særlige tro om Guddommen, som andre kristne trosretninger ofte omtaler som treenigheden. Jeg udtrykte min påskønnelse af, at han tog sig tid til at forklare mig om sin tro og sin kirkes retningslinjer. Ved slutningen af vores samtale krammede vi hinanden og sagde så farvel.

Jeg tænkte senere over vores samtale og det, denne leder sagde om, at sidste dages hellige ikke forstår, hvad han kaldte »treenighedens mysterium«. Hvad henviste han til? Det havde noget at gøre med vores forståelse af Guds væsen. Vi tror

ing of the nature of God. We believe that God the Father “is an exalted man” with a glorified “body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; [and] the Son also.” Thus, every time we talk about the nature of God, in some way, somehow, we are also talking about our own nature.

And this is true not only because we all were made “in [His] image, after [His] likeness,” but also because, as the Psalmist recorded, God said, “Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.” This is for us a precious doctrine now recovered with the advent of the Restoration. In summary, it is nothing more or less than what our missionaries teach as the first lesson, first paragraph, first line: “God is our Heavenly Father, and we are His children.”

Now, you might say, “But many people believe we are children of God.” Yes, that is true, but their understanding may be a little different from the implication of its deeper meaning that we affirm. For Latter-day Saints, this teaching is not metaphorical. Rather, we truly believe that we are all literally the children of God. He is “the Father of [our] spirits,” and because of that, we have the potential to become like Him, which seems to be inconceivable to some.

It has now been over 200 years since the First Vision opened the doors to the Restoration. At the time, young Joseph Smith sought guidance from heaven to know what church to join. Through the revelation he received that day, and in later revelations given to him, the Prophet Joseph obtained knowledge about the nature of God and our relationship to Him as His children.

Because of that, we learn more clearly that our Heavenly Father has taught this precious doctrine from the very beginning. Allow me to cite at least two accounts from the scriptures to illustrate this.

You might remember God’s instructions to Moses as recorded in the Pearl of Great Price.

We read that “God spake unto Moses, saying: Behold, I am the Lord God Almighty, and Endless is my name.” In other words, Moses, I want you to know who I am. Then He added, “And, behold, thou art my son.” Later he said, “And I have a work for thee, Moses, my son; and thou art in the similitude of mine Only Begotten.” And then finally, He ended with, “And now, behold, this one thing I show unto thee, Moses, my son.”

It appears that God was determined to teach

på, at Gud Faderen »er et ophøjet menneske« med et herliggjort »legeme af kød og knogler ligeså håndgribeligt som menneskets; [og] Sønnen ligeså«. Hver gang vi taler om Guds natur, taler vi derfor på en vis måde, på en eller anden måde, også om vores egen natur.

Og det er sandt, ikke alene fordi vi alle blev skabt »i [hans] billede, så [vi] ligner [ham]«, men også fordi, som salmisten skrev, at Gud har sagt: »I er guder, I er alle [børn] af den Højeste.« Dette er for os en dyrebare lære, som nu er genvundet med genoprettelsens komme. Kort sagt er det hverken mere eller mindre end det, vores missionærer underviser om som den første lektion, første afsnit, første linje: »Gud er vor himmelske Fader, og vi er hans børn.«

Nu tænker I måske: »Mange mennesker tror på, at vi er Guds børn«. Ja, det er sandt, men deres forståelse kan være lidt anderledes end betydningen af den dybere mening, som vi stadfæster. For sidste dages hellige er denne lære ikke metaforisk. Vi tror derimod virkelig, at vi alle bogstaveligt talt er Guds børn. Han er Fader til vores ånd, og derfor har vi potentialet til at blive som ham, hvilket virker ufatteligt for nogle.

Det er nu over 200 år siden, at det første syn åbnede dørene til genoprettelsen. På det tidspunkt søgte den unge Joseph Smith vejledning fra himlen for at vide, hvilken kirke han skulle tilslutte sig. Gennem den åbenbaring, som profeten Joseph modtog den dag, og gennem åbenbaringer han modtog senere, fik han kundskab om Guds natur, og vores forhold til ham som hans børn.

På grund af det lærer vi tydeligere, at vor himmelske Fader har undervist i denne dyrebare lære helt fra begyndelsen. Tillad mig at citere mindst to beretninger fra skriften for at illustrere dette.

I husker måske Guds instruktioner til Moses, som de står i Den Kostelige Perle.

Vi læser, at »Gud talte til Moses og sagde: Se, jeg er Herren, Gud den Almægtige, og Uendelig er mit navn«. Med andre ord, Moses, jeg vil gerne have, at du ved, hvem jeg er. Så tilføjede han: »Og se, du er min søn.« Senere sagde han: »Og jeg har en gerning til dig, Moses, min søn; og du er i min Enbørns billede.« Og så til sidst afsluttede han med at sige: »Og se nu, dette ene viser jeg dig, - Moses, min søn.«

Det lader til, at Gud var opsat på i det mind-

Moses at least one lesson: "You are my child," which He repeated at least three times. He could not even mention the name of Moses without immediately adding that he was His son.

However, after Moses was left alone, he felt weak because he was no longer in the presence of God. That is when Satan came to tempt him. Can you see a pattern here? The first thing he said was, "Moses, son of man, worship me."

In this context, Satan's request to worship him may have been only a distraction. A significant temptation for Moses in that moment of weakness was to become confused and believe that he was only a "son of man," rather than a child of God.

"And it came to pass that Moses looked upon Satan and said: Who art thou? For behold, I am a son of God, in the similitude of his Only Begotten." Fortunately, Moses was not confused and did not allow himself to become distracted. He had learned the lesson of who he really was.

The next account is found in Matthew 4. Scholars have entitled this "the three temptations of Jesus," as if the Lord was tempted only three times, which of course is not the case.

Hundreds of gallons of ink have been used to explain the meaning and content of these temptations. As we know, the chapter begins by explaining that Jesus had gone into the desert, "and when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred."

Satan's first temptation apparently had only to do with satisfying the Lord's physical needs. "Command that these stones be made bread," he challenged the Savior.

A second enticement may have had to do with tempting God: "Cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee."

Finally, Satan's third temptation referred to the aspirations and glory of the world. After Jesus had been shown "all the kingdoms of the world, ... [Satan] saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

In truth, Satan's ultimate temptation may have had less to do with those three specific provocations and more to do with tempting Jesus Christ to question His divine nature. At least twice, the enticement was preceded by the challenging accusation from Satan: "If thou be the Son of God"—if you really believe it, then do this or that.

ste at lære Moses en lektie: »Du er mit barn«, hvilket han gentog mindst tre gange. Han kunne ikke engang nævne Moses' navn uden straks at tilføje, at han var hans søn.

Men da Moses var blevet ladet alene, følte han sig svag, fordi han ikke længere var i Guds nærhed. Det var her, Satan kom for at friste ham. Kan I se et mønster her? Det første, Satan sagde var: »Moses, menneskesøn, tilbed mig.«

I denne sammenhæng kan Satans anmodning om at tilbede ham måske bare have været en distraktion. Det var en betydningsfuld fristelse for Moses i det svage øjeblik at blive forvirret og tro, at han blot var »menneskesøn« og ikke Guds barn.

»Og det skete, at Moses så på Satan og sagde: Hvem er du? For se, jeg er søn af Gud, i hans Enbørnes billede.« Heldigvis var Moses ikke forvirret og lod sig ikke distrahere. Han havde lært lektien om, hvem han virkelig var.

Den næste beretning findes i Matthæus 4. Lærde har kaldt dette »Jesu tre fristelser«, som om vor Herre kun blev fristet tre gange, hvilket selvfølgelig ikke er tilfældet.

Hundredvis af liter blæk er blevet brugt til at forklare betydningen og indholdet af disse fristelser. Som vi ved, begynder kapitlet med at forklare, at Jesus var gået ud i ørkenen: »Og da han havde fastet i fyrre dage og fyrre nætter, led han til sidst sult.«

Satans første fristelse drejede sig tilsyneladende kun om at tilfredsstille Herrens fysiske behov. »Sig, at stenene her skal blive til brød,« udfordrede han Frelseren.

En anden fristelse kan have at gøre med at friste Gud: »Styrt dig ned. For der står skrevet: Han vil give sine engle befaling [angående dig]«.

Til sidst handlede Satans tredje fristelse om verdslige forhåbninger og herlighed. Efter at Jesus var blevet vist »alle verdens riger ... [sagde Satan] til ham: ›Alt dette vil jeg give dig, hvis du vil kaste dig ned og tilbede mig.‹«

Faktisk havde Satans ultimative fristelse måske ikke så meget at gøre med disse tre specifikke provokationer, men mere at gøre med at friste Jesus Kristus til at sætte spørgsmålstejn ved sin guddommelige natur. Mindst to gange blev der forud for fristelsen fremsat en anklagende beskyldning fra Satan: »Hvis du er Guds Søn«—hvis du virkelig tror på det, så gør sådan eller sådan.

Please notice what had happened immediately before Jesus went into the desert to fast and pray: we find the account of Christ's baptism. And when He had come out of the water, there came "a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Do we see the connection? Can we recognize a pattern here?

It is no wonder that every time we are taught about our divine nature and destiny, the adversary of all righteousness tempts us to call them into question.

How different our decisions would be if we really knew who we really are.

We live in a challenging world, a world of increasing commotion, where honorable people strive to at least emphasize our human dignity, while we belong to a church and embrace a gospel that lift our vision and invite us into the divine.

Jesus's commandment to be "perfect, even as [our] Father which is in heaven is perfect" is a clear reflection of His high expectations and our eternal possibilities. Now, none of this will happen overnight. In the words of President Jeffrey R. Holland, it will happen "eventually." But the promise is that if we "come unto Christ," we will "be perfected in him." That requires a lot of work—not just any work, but a divine work. His work!

Now, the good news is that it is precisely our Father in Heaven who has said, "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."

President Russell M. Nelson's invitation to "think celestial" implies a wonderful reminder of our divine nature, origin, and potential destination. We can obtain the celestial only through Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice.

Perhaps that is why Satan enticed Jesus with the very same temptation from the beginning to the end of His earthly ministry. Matthew recorded that while Jesus hung on the cross, those "that passed by reviled him, ... saying, ... If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." Glory be to God that He did not hearken but instead provided the way for us to receive all celestial blessings.

Let us always remember, there was a great price paid for our happiness.

I testify as with the Apostle Paul that "the

Læg mærke til, hvad der skete umiddelbart inden, Jesus gik ud i ørkenen for at faste og bede: Vi finder beretningen om Kristi dåb. Og da han kom op af vandet, lød der »en røst fra himlene:« Det er min elskede søn, i ham har jeg fundet velbehag!«

Kan vi se sammenhængen? Kan vi se et mønster her?

Det er ikke underligt, at hver gang vi bliver belært om vores guddommelige natur og skæbne, frister modstanderen af al retfærdighed os til at drage tvivl om dem.

Hvor ville vores beslutninger dog være anderledes, hvis vi virkelig vidste, hvem vi virkelig er.

Vi lever i en udfordrende verden, en verden med øget postyr, hvor hæderlige mennesker stræber efter i det mindste at lægge vægt på vores menneskelige værdighed, mens vi tilhører en kirke og omfavner et evangelium, der løfter vores syn og byder os ind i det guddommelige.

Jesu befaling om at være »fuldkomne, som [vor] himmelske fader er fuldkommen«, er en klar afspejling af hans høje forventninger og vores evige muligheder. Intet af dette vil ske fra den ene dag til den anden. Med præsident Jeffrey R. Hollands ord vil det ske »i sidste ende«. Men løftet er, at hvis vi kommer »til Kristus«, vil vi blive »fuldkommengjort i ham«. Det kræver meget arbejde – ikke bare hvilket som helst arbejde, men guddommeligt arbejde. Hans arbejde!

Den gode nyhed er, at det netop er vor Fader i himlen, der har sagt: »For se, dette er min gerning og herlighed: At tilvejebringe udødelighed og evigt liv for mennesket.«

Præsident Russell M. Nelsons opfordring til at »tænke celestiale« indebærer en vidunderlig påmindelse om vores guddommelige natur, herkomst og potentielle destination. Vi kan alene opnå det celestiale gennem Jesu Kristi sonoffer.

Måske er det derfor, at Satan lokkede Jesus med den selv samme fristelse lige fra begyndelsen til slutningen af hans jordiske tjenestegering. Matthæus skrev, at mens Jesus hang på korset, »spottede [de, der gik forbi,] ham ... og sagde: ... Hvis du er Guds søn, [så] stig ned fra korset«. Æret være Gud, at han ikke lyttede, men i stedet sørgede for en måde, hvorpå vi kan modtage alle celestiale velsignelser.

Lad os altid huske, at der blev betalt en stor pris for vores lykke.

Jeg vidner, ligesom apostlen Paulus om, at

Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

»Ånden selv vidner sammen med vores ånd om, at vi er Guds børn. Men når vi er børn, er vi også arvinger, Guds arvinger og Kristi medarvinger, så sandt som vi lider med ham for også at herliggøres med ham«.I Jesu Kristi navn. Amen.