

Focus on Jesus Christ and His Gospel

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Fokuser på Jesus Kristus og hans evangelium

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When we ignore the distractions of the world and focus on Christ and His gospel, we are guaranteed success.

In 1996 the Nigerian men's football team won gold at the Olympic Games held in Atlanta in the United States. As the final ended, jubilant crowds poured onto the streets of every city and town in Nigeria; this country of 200 million people was instantly transformed into a massive celebration at two o'clock in the morning! There was infectious joy, happiness, and excitement as people ate, sang, and danced. In that moment, Nigeria was united and every Nigerian was content being Nigerian.

Before the Olympics, this team faced numerous challenges. As the tournament began, their financial support ended. The team competed without proper kits, training venues, food, or laundry services.

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At one point, they were minutes away from being eliminated from competition, but the Nigerian team triumphed against all odds. This pivotal moment changed how they saw themselves. With newfound confidence, and with individual and team hard work and dogged determination, they unitedly ignored distractions and focused on winning. This focus earned them gold medals, and Nigerians christened them the "Dream Team." The Dream Team at the 1996 Olympics continues to be referenced in Nigerian sports.

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Once the football team learned to ignore the many distractions facing them and focused on their goal, they succeeded beyond what they

Når vi ignorerer verdens distraktioner og fokuserer på Kristus og hans evangelium, er vi garanteret succes.

I 1996 vandt det nigerianske herrelandshold guld i fodbold ved OL, der blev afholdt i Atlanta i USA. Da finalen sluttede, strømmede jublende skarer ud på gaderne i alle byer i Nigeria; dette land med 200 millioner indbyggere blev øjeblikkeligt omdannet til en massiv folkefest klokken to om natten! Der var en smittende glæde, lykke og begejstring, mens folk spiste, sang og dansede. I det øjeblik var Nigeria forenet, og enhver nigerianer var glad for at være nigerianer.

Før OL stod dette hold over for mange udfordringer. Da turneringen begyndte, ophørte deres økonomiske støtte. Holdet deltog uden ordentligt udstyr, træningsfaciliteter, mad og mulighed for at få vasket deres tøj.

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På et tidspunkt var de få minutter fra at blive udelukket fra turneringen, men det nigerianske hold sejrede mod alle odds. Dette afgørende øjeblik forandrede den måde, de så sig selv på. Med nyfunden selvtillid, og en individuel og kollektiv stærk indsats og en stædig beslutsomhed stod de sammen om at ignorere distraktionerne og fokusere på at vinde. Dette fokus skaffede dem guldmedaljen, og nigerianerne døbte dem »Drømmeholdet«. Der bliver stadig henvist til Drømmeholdet ved OL i 1996 i nigeriansk sport i dag.

David Cannon/Allsport/Getty Images

Så snart fodboldholdet lærte at ignorere de mange distraktioner, de stod overfor, og fokusere på deres mål, blev de mere succesfulde, end de

thought possible and experienced great joy. (As did the rest of us in Nigeria!)

In a similar way, when we ignore the distractions of the world and focus on Christ and His gospel, we are guaranteed success beyond what we can fully imagine and can feel great joy. President Russell M. Nelson taught: “When the focus of our lives is on ... Jesus Christ and His gospel, we can feel joy regardless of what is happening—or not happening—in our lives.”

I pray that the Holy Ghost will help each of us to heed President Nelson’s invitation to focus our lives on “Jesus Christ and His gospel” so we can experience joy in Christ “regardless of what is happening—or not happening—in our lives.”

Several accounts in the Book of Mormon describe individuals who turned their lives around by focusing on Jesus Christ and His gospel.

Consider Alma the Younger. He rebelled and fought against the Church. His father, Alma, prayed and fasted. An angel appeared and called Alma the Younger to repentance. In that moment, Alma began to suffer “the pains of a damned soul.” In his darkest hours, he remembered his father teaching that Christ would come to atone for the sins of the world. As his mind caught hold on this thought, he pled with God for mercy. Joy was the result, a joy he described as exquisite! Mercy and joy came to Alma because he and his father focused on the Savior.

For parents with children who have strayed, take heart! Instead of wondering why an angel does not come to help your child repent, know that the Lord has placed a mortal angel in his or her path: the bishop, another Church leader, or a ministering brother or sister. If you keep fasting and praying, if you do not set a timetable or a deadline for God, and if you trust that He is stretching forth His hand to help, then—sooner or later—you find God touching the heart of your child when your child chooses to listen. This is so because Christ is joy—Christ is hope; He is the promise “of good things to come.” So trust Jesus Christ with your child, for He is the strength of every parent and every child.

Once he experienced joy in Christ, Alma the Younger lived with that joy. But how did he maintain such joy even through difficulty and trial? He states:

“From that time even until now, I have

nogensinde havde forestillet sig, og oplevede stor glæde. (Og det gjorde resten af os i Nigeria også!)

På en tilsvarende vis er vi, når vi ignorerer verdens distraktioner og fokuserer på Kristus og hans evangelium, garanteret succes ud over, hvad vi helt kan forestille os, og vi kan føle stor glæde. Præsident Russell M. Nelson har sagt: »Når vi har fokus på ... Jesus Kristus og hans evangelium, kan vi føle glæde, uanset hvad der sker – eller ikke sker – i vores liv.«

Jeg beder til, at Helligånden må hjælpe hver af os med at følge præsident Nelsons opfordring om at have fokus på »Jesus Kristus og hans evangelium«, så vi kan vi føle glæde i Kristus, »uanset hvad der sker – eller ikke sker – i vores liv«.

Adskillige beretninger i Mormons Bog beskriver personer, der vender op og ned på deres liv ved at fokusere på Jesus Kristus og hans evangelium.

Tænk på Alma den Yngre. Han gjorde oprør og bekæmpede kirken. Hans far, Alma, bad og fastede. En engel viste sig og kaldte Alma den Yngre til omvendelse. I det øjeblik begyndte Alma at lide »en fordømt sjæls smerter«. I sine mørkeste timer huskede han sin fars belæring om, at Kristus ville komme for at sone for verdens synder. Da hans sind greb fat om denne tanke, anrøbte han Gud om nåde. Resultatet var glæde, en glæde, han beskrev som overordentlig stor! Denne nåde og glæde kom til Alma, fordi han og hans far fokuserede på Frelseren.

Forældre til børn, der er kommet på afveje, fat mod! I stedet for at undre jer over, hvorfor en engel ikke viser sig for at hjælpe jeres barn med at omvende sig, så vid, at Herren har sat en jordisk engel på deres vej: Biskoppen, en anden kirkeleder eller en omsorgsbror eller -søster. Hvis I bliver ved med at faste og bede, hvis I ikke forsøger at opstille en tidsplan eller en deadline for Gud, og hvis I har tillid til, at han rækker sin hånd frem for at hjælpe, så vil I – nu eller senere – opleve Gud røre jeres barns hjerte, når jeres barn vælger at lytte. Sådan er det, fordi Kristus er glæde – Kristus er håb; han er løftet om de gode ting, der skal ske. Så betro jeres barn til Jesus Kristus, for han er enhver forælders og ethvert barns styrke.

Så snart Alma den Yngre oplevede glæde i Kristus, levede han med den glæde. Men hvordan holdt han fast i en sådan glæde selv gennem vanskeligheder og prøver? Han sagde:

»Fra den tid helt indtil nu har jeg arbejdet

labored without ceasing, [to] bring souls unto repentance; that I might bring them to taste of the exceeding joy of which I did taste. ...

“... And ... the Lord doth give me exceedingly great joy in the fruit of my labors. ...

“And I have been supported under trials and troubles of every kind.”

Joy in Christ began for Alma when he exercised faith in Him and cried for mercy. Then Alma exercised his faith in Christ by laboring to help others taste of the same joy. These continuous labors produced great joy in Alma even in trials and troubles of every kind. You see, “the Lord loves effort,” and effort focused on Him brings blessings. Even severe trials can be “swallowed up in the joy of Christ.”

Another group in the Book of Mormon who made Jesus Christ and His gospel the focus of their lives and found joy are those who founded the city Helam—a place where they could raise their children and enjoy the free exercise of their religion. This righteous people living good lives were enslaved by a marauding group and stripped of the fundamental human right to exercise religion. Sometimes bad things happen to good people:

“The Lord seeth fit to chasten his people; yea, he trieth their patience and their faith.

“Nevertheless—whosoever putteth his trust in him the same shall be lifted up at the last day. Yea, and thus it was with this people.”

How did this people endure through their trials and suffering? By focusing on Christ and His gospel. Their troubles did not define them; rather, each of them turned to God, likely defining themselves as a child of God, a child of the covenant, and a disciple of Jesus Christ. As they remembered who they were and called upon God, they received peace, strength, and ultimately joy in Christ:

“Alma and his people did ... pour out their hearts to [God]; and he did know the thoughts of their hearts.

“And it came to pass that the voice of the Lord came to them in their afflictions, saying: Lift up your heads and be of good comfort, for I know of the covenant which ye have made unto me; and I will covenant with my people and deliver them out of bondage.”

In response, the Lord did “ease the burdens ... upon [their] shoulders. ... Yea, the Lord

uden ophør for at kunne bringe sjæle til omvendelse, så jeg kunne få dem til at smage den overordentlig store glæde, som jeg smagte ...

Og ... Herren giver mig overordentlig stor glæde ved frugten af mit arbejde ...

Og jeg er blevet støttet under prøvelser og besværligheder af enhver art.»

For Alma begyndte glæden i Kristus, da han udøvede tro på ham og anråbte om nåde. Så udøvede Alma sin tro på Kristus ved at arbejde for at hjælpe andre med at smage den samme glæde. Almas vedvarende arbejde bragte ham stor glæde, selvom han led prøvelser og vanskeligheder af enhver art. Ser I, »Herren elsker en indsats«, og en indsats fokuseret på ham medfører velsignelser. Selv alvorlige prøvelser kan blive »opslugt i glæden over Kristus«.

En anden gruppe i Mormons Bog, der gjorde Jesus Kristus og hans evangelium til fokus i deres liv og fandt glæde, er dem, der grundlagde byen Helam – et sted, hvor de kunne opfostre deres børn og nyde frihed til at udøve deres religion. Dette retfærdige folk, der levede gode liv, blev gjort til slaver af en plyndrende gruppe og frataget den grundlæggende menneskeret til at udøve religion. Nogle gange sker der dårlige ting for gode mennesker.

»Herren [finder] det tjenligt at revse sit folk; ja, han prøver deres tålmodighed og deres tro.

Men hver den, der sætter sin lid til ham, han skal blive løftet op på den yderste dag. Ja, og således var det med dette folk.«

Hvordan holdt dette folk deres prøvelser og lidelser ud? Ved at fokusere på Kristus og hans evangelium. Deres prøvelser definerede dem ikke, men derimod vendte enhver af dem sig til Gud, nok fordi de definerede sig selv som et Guds barn, et barn af pagten og som Jesu Kristi discipel. Når de huskede på, hvem de var, og anråbte Gud, modtog de fred, styrke og til sidst glæde i Kristus:

»Alma og hans folk ... udøste hjertet til [Gud]; og han kendte deres hjertes tanker.

Og det skete, at Herrens røst kom til dem i deres trængsler og sagde: Løft hovedet og vær ved godt mod, for jeg kender den pagt, som I har sluttet med mig; og jeg vil slutte pagt med mit folk og udfri dem af trældom.«

Som svar lettede Herren »de byrder... der [blev] lagt på [deres] skuldre ... Ja, Herren styr-

did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord.” Note that these Saints let their troubles, suffering, and trials be swallowed up in the joy of Christ! Then in due time, He showed Alma the way for escape, and Alma—a prophet of God—led them to safety.

As we focus on Christ and follow His prophet, we too will be led to Christ and the joy of His gospel. President Nelson has taught: “Joy is powerful, and focusing on joy brings God’s power into our lives. As in all things, Jesus Christ is our ultimate exemplar, ‘who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross’ [Hebrews 12:2].”

My mother recently passed away; it was a shock. I love my mother and did not plan on losing her so young. But through her passing, my family and I have experienced both sorrow and joy. I know because of Him, she is not dead—she lives! And I know because of Christ and the priesthood keys restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith, I will be with her again. The sorrow of losing my mom has been swallowed up in the joy of Christ! I am learning that to “think celestial” and “let God prevail” includes focusing on the joy available in Christ.

He lovingly invites, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

kede dem, så de kunne bære deres byrder med lethed, og de underordnede sig gladelig og med tålmodighed hele Herrens vilje. «Bemærk, at disse hellige lod deres vanskeligheder, lidelser og prøvelser blive opslugt i glæden over Kristus! Så viste han med tiden Alma vejen til udfrielse, og Alma – en Guds profet – ledte dem i sikkerhed.

Når vi fokuserer på Kristus og følger hans profet, vil vi også blive ledt til Kristus og til glæden i hans evangelium. Præsident Nelson har sagt: »Glæde er kraftfuld, og at fokusere på glæde bringer Guds kraft ind i vores liv. Som det gælder i alt, er Jesus Kristus vores ultimative forbillede, »som for den glædes skyld, der ventede ham, udholdt korset« [Hebr 12:2].«

Min mor gik for nylig bort, hvilket var et chok. Jeg elsker min mor og havde ikke regnet med at skulle miste hende så tidligt. Men gennem hendes bortgang har min familie og jeg oplevet både sorg og glæde. Jeg ved, at på grund af Kristus er hun ikke død – hun lever! Og jeg ved, at jeg, på grund af Jesus Kristus og de præstedømmenøgler, der blev gengivet gennem profeten Joseph Smith, se hende igen. Sorgen over at have mistet min mor er blevet opslugt i glæden over Kristus! Jeg lærer, at det at »tænk[e] celestially« og at »lad[e] Gud råde« indebærer at fokusere på den glæde, der er tilgængelig i Kristus.

Jesus indbyder os kærligt: »Kom til mig, alle I, som slider jer trætte og bærer tunge byrder, og jeg vil give jer hvile.« I Jesu Kristi navn. Amen.