

“I Am He”

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„Mina olen see”

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Christ's charity—evident in complete loyalty to divine will—persisted and continues to persist.

It is the Sabbath day, and we have gathered to speak of Christ and Him crucified. I know that my Redeemer lives.

Consider this scene from the last week of Jesus's mortal life. A multitude had gathered, including Roman soldiers armed with staves and strapped with swords. Led by officers from the chief priests who had torches in hand, this earnest company was not off to conquer a city. Tonight they were looking for only one man, a man not known to carry a weapon, receive military training, or engage in physical combat at any time in His entire life.

As the soldiers approached, Jesus, in an effort to protect His disciples, stepped forth and said, “Whom seek ye?” They replied, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said, “I am he. ... As soon ... as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.”

To me, that is one of the most stirring lines in all of scripture. Among other things, it tells me straightforwardly that just being in the presence of the Son of God—the great Jehovah of the Old Testament and Good Shepherd of the New, who bears no weapons of any kind—that just hearing the voice of this Refuge from the Storm, this Prince of Peace, is enough to send antagonists stumbling into retreat, piling them in a jumble, making the whole group wish they had been assigned kitchen duty that night.

Just a few days earlier, when He had entered the city triumphantly, “all the city was moved,” the scripture says, asking, “Who is this?” I can

Kristuse ligimesearmastus, mida näitab Tema täielik lojaalsus jumalikule tahtele, kestis ja jääb kestma.

On hingamispäev ja me oleme tulnud rääkima Kristusest ja Temast kui ristilöödust. Ma tean, et mu Lunastaja elab.

Mõelge sellele stseenile Jeesuse sureliku elu viimasest nädalast. Kokku tuli jõuk, kelle seas olid ka nuiadega relvastatud ja mõõku kandvad Rooma sõdurid. Ülempreestrite poolt saadetud ja tõrvikuid kandvate ametnike juhtimiseleiläinud see seltskond linna vallutama. Täna õhtul otsisid nad vaid ühte meest, kelle puhul teati, et ta ei kannu relva, pole läbinud sõjalist väljaõpet ega pole mingil ajal terve oma elu jooksul füüsilises võitluses osalenud.

Sõdurite lähenedes astus Jeesus oma jüngerid kaitsta püüdes ette ja ütles: „Keda te otsite?” Nad vastasid: „Jeesust Naatsaretlast!” Jeesus lausus: „Mina olen see! .. Kui ta .. neile ütles: „Mina olen see!” taganesid nad ja langesid maha.”

Ma pean seda üheks kõige põnevamaks reaks pühakirjades. Muuhulgas öeldakse siin mulle otse, et olles ainuüksi Jumala Poja, Vana Testamendi suure Jehoova ja Uue Testamendi Hea Karjasejuures, kes ei kannu mingeid relvi, etkuuldes ainuüksi Tema häält, kes on Ulualune Saju eest, Rahuvürst, on see piisav, et saata vastased komistades taanduma ja läbisegi üksteise otsa hunnikusse kukkuma ning panna kogu seda rühma soovima, et neid oleks määratud tol ööl kõögitoimkonda.

Kui Ta vaid mõni päev varem kuninglikult linna saabus, „tõusis kogu linn liikvele”, küsides pühakirjade sõnul: „Kes see on?” Ma võin vaid

only imagine that “Who is this?” is the question those muddled soldiers were now asking!

Theanswerto that question could not have been in His looks, for Isaiah had prophesied some seven centuries earlier that “he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.” It certainly wasn’t in His polished wardrobe or His great personal wealth, of which He had neither. It could not be from any professional training in the local synagogues because we have no evidence that He ever studied at any of them, though even in His youth He could confound superbly prepared scribes and lawyers, astonishing them with His doctrine “as one having authority.”

From that teaching in the temple to His triumphant entry into Jerusalem and this final, unjustifiable arrest, Jesus was routinely placed in difficult, often devious situations in which He was always triumphant—victories for which we have no explanation except divine DNA.

Yet down through history many have simplified, even trivialized our image of Him and His witness of who He was. They have reduced His righteousness to mere prudishness, His justice to mere anger, His mercy to mere permissiveness. We must not be guilty of such simplistic versions of Him that conveniently ignore teachings we find uncomfortable. This “dumbing down” has been true even regarding His ultimate defining virtue, His love.

During His mortal mission, Jesus taught that there were two great commandments. They have been taught in this conference and will forever be taught: “Love the Lord thy God [and] love thy neighbour as thyself.” If we are to follow the Savior faithfully in these two crucial and inextricably linked rules, we ought to hold firmly to what He actually said. And what He actually said was, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” On that same evening, He said we were to “love one another; as I have loved you.”

In those scriptures, those qualifying phrases defining true, Christlike love—sometimes referred to as charity—are absolutely essential.

What do they define? How did Jesus love?

ette kujutada, et „kes see on?” oli küsimus, mida ka need ähmi täis sõdurid nüüd esitasid!

Vastussellele küsimusele ei saanud olla Tema välimuses, kuna Jesaja oli kuulutanud prohvetlikult oma seitse sajandit varem, et „ei olnud tal kuju ega ilu: me nägime teda, aga tal ei olnud välimust, et oleksime teda ihaldanud”. Kindlasti polnud see ka Ta laitmatus riietuses ega Tema suures isiklikus rikkuses, kuna Tal ei olnud kumbagi. Selle taga ei saanud olla ka erialane väljaõpe kohalikes palvekodades, kuna meil puuduvad igasugused tõendid, et Ta kunagi üheski neis õppis, isegi kui Ta suutis juba noorukina oivalise ettevalmistuse saanud kirja- ja käsutundjaid segadusse ajada ning hämmastada neid oma õpetusega „nõnda nagu see, kellel on meeleväld”.

Alates sellest õpetusest templis kuni võiduka Jeruusalemma sisenemiseni ja selle lõpliku, õigustamatu vahistamiseni, pandi Jeesus regulaarselt keerulistesse, sageli riikalistesse olukordadesse, millest Ta alati võidukalt välja tuli – meil pole nendele võitudele muud seletust peale jumaliku DNA.

Ometi on paljud läbi ajaloo lihtsustanud, isegi kahandanud meie ettekujutust Temast ja Tema tunnistusest selle kohta, kes Ta oli. Nad on madaldanud Tema õigemeelsust pelgaks pirtsakuseks, Ta õiglust pelgaks vihaks, Ta halastust pelgaks järeleandlikkuseks. Me peame hoiduma Teda nõnda lihtsustatult käsitamast, mis jätaaks mugavalt tähele panemata õpetused, mida me peame ebamugavaks. Selle „nüristamise” ohvriks on langenud isegi Tema ülim voorus, Tema armastus.

Jeesus õpetas oma sureliku missiooni ajal, et on olemas kaks suurt käsku. Neid on õpetatud sellel konverentsil ja õpetatakse igavesti: „Armasta Issandat, oma Jumalat, [ja] armasta oma ligimest nagu iseennast.” Kui me tahame Päästjat nende kahe üliolulise ja lahutamatult seotud seaduse puhul ustavalt järgida, peame sellest, mida Tategelikult ütles, tugevalt kinni pidama. Jategelikult ütles Ta, et „kui te mind armastate, siis pidage minu käsusõnu”. Tolsamal õhtul ütles Ta meile: „Te üksteist peate armastama, nõnda nagu mina teid olen armastanud.”

Nendes pühakirjakohtades on vahel ligimesearmastuseks nimetatud tõelist Kristuse-sarnast armastust määratlema sobivad fraasid täiesti asendamatud.

Mida need määratlevad? Kuidas Jeesus armastas?

First, He loved with “all [of His] heart, might, mind and strength,” giving Him the ability to heal the deepest pain and declare the hardest reality. In short, He is one who could administer grace and insist on truth at the same time. As Lehi said in his blessing to his son Jacob, “Redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth.” His love allows an encouraging embrace when it is needed and a bitter cup when it has to be swallowed. So we try to love—with all of our heart, might, mind, and strength—because that is the way He loves us.

The second characteristic of Jesus’s divine charity was His obedience to every word that proceeded from God’s mouth, always aligning His will and behavior with that of His Heavenly Father.

When He arrived on the Western Hemisphere following His Resurrection, Christ said to the Nephites: “Behold, I am Jesus Christ. ... I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, ... in the which I have suffered the will of the Father ... from the beginning.”

Of the myriad ways He could have introduced Himself, Jesus did so by declaring His obedience to the will of the Father—never mind that not long before in His hour of greatest need, this Only Begotten Son of God had felt totally abandoned by His Father. Christ’s charity—evident in complete loyalty to divine will—persisted and continues to persist, not just through the easy and comfortable days but especially through the darkest and most difficult ones.

Jesus was “a man of sorrows,” the scriptures say. He experienced sadness, fatigue, disappointment, and excruciating loneliness. In these and in all times, Jesus’s love faileth not, and neither does His Father’s. With such mature love—the kind that exemplifies, empowers, and imparts—ours will not fail either.

So, if sometimes the harder you try, the more difficult it seems to get; if, just as you try to work on your limitations and your shortcomings, you find someone or something determined to challenge your faith; if, as you labor devotedly, you still feel moments of fear wash over you, remember that it has been so for some of the most faithful and marvelous people in every era of time. Also remember that there is a force in the universe determined to oppose every good thing you try to do.

Esiteks armastas Ta „kõigest oma südamest, väest, meelest ja jõust”, mistõttu Ta oli võimeline ravima sügavaimat valu ja kuulutama kõige karmimat reaalsust. Lühidalt on Ta see, kes võib anda armu ja nõuda samal ajal tõe. Nagu Lehhi ütles oma poega Jaakobit õnnistades, tuleb „lunastus .. Pühas Messias ja tema kaudu, sest tema on täis armu ja tõe”. Tema armastus on vajaduse korral julgustav sülelus ja kibe karikas, kui see tuleb alla neelata. Nõnda püüame armastada kõigest oma südamest, väest, meelest ja jõust, sest nii armastab Tema meid.

Teine Jeesuse jumaliku ligimesearmastuse tunnus oli Ta kuulekusigale sõnale, mis lähtus Jumala suust, joondades alati oma tahte oma Taevase Isa tahtele ja käitudes, nagu Tema soovis.

Kui Kristus pärast ülestõusmist läänepoolkerale saabus, ütles Ta nefilastele: „Vaadake, mina olen Jeesus Kristus. .. Ma olen joonud sellest kibedast karikast, mille Isa mulle andis, .. millega ma olen alistunud .. Isa tahtmisele algusest peale.”

Kõigi nende lugematul arvul enesetutvustuse võimaluste seast kuulutas Jeesus end tutvustades oma kuulekust Isa tahtele— olgugi et mitte kuigi palju varem oli see Jumala Ainusündinud Poeg tundnud end tunnil, mil Ta enim tuge vajas, oma Isa poolt hüljatuna. Kristuse ligimesearmastus, mida näitab Tema täielik lojaalsus jumalikule tahtele, kestis ja jääb kestma mitte ainult kergetel ja mugavatel päevadel, vaid eeskätt kõige mustematel ja kõige raskematel päevadel.

Pühakirjades öeldakse, et Jeesus oli „valude mees”. Ta koges kurbust, väsimust, pettumust ja piinavat üksildust. Jeesuse ja Tema Isa armastus ei katke praegusel ega ühelgi ajal. Sellise küpse armastuse puhul, mis on eeskujuks ning annab jõudu ja annab endast, ei katke ka meie armastus.

Seega, kui vahel tundub, et mida enam proovida, seda raskemaks läheb; või kui püüdes töötada oma piirangute ja puuduste kallal, hakkab keegi või miski teie usku ühtäkki sihilikult proovile panema; ning kui ka pühendunult töötades tunnete ikka veel, kuidas hirmuhoog teile peale tuleb, siis, pidage meeles, et mõned kõige ustavamad ja imelisemad inimesed on kogenud seda igal ajastul. Lisaks pidage meeles, et üks vägi universumis on otsustanud panna vastukõigele, mis on hea, mida te teha püüate.

So, through abundance as well as poverty, through private acclaim as well as public criticism, through the divine elements of the Restoration as well as the human foibles that will inevitably be part of it, we stay the course with the true Church of Christ. Why? Because as with our Redeemer, we signed on for the whole term—not ending with the first short introductory quiz but through to the final exam. The joy in this is that the Headmaster gave us all open-book answers before the course began. Furthermore, we have a host of tutors who remind us of these answers at regular stops along the way. But of course, none of this works if we keep cutting class.

“Whom seek ye?” With all our hearts we answer, “Jesus of Nazareth.” When He says, “I am he,” we bow our knee and confess with our tongue that He is the living Christ, that He alone atoned for our sins, that He was carrying us even when we thought He had abandoned us. When we stand before Him and see the wounds in His hands and feet, we will begin to comprehend what it meant for Him to bear our sins and be acquainted with grief, to be completely obedient to the will of His Father—all out of pure love for us. To introduce others to faith, repentance, baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and receiving our blessings in the house of the Lord—these are the fundamental “principles and ordinances” that ultimately reveal our love of God and neighbor and joyfully characterize the true Church of Christ.

Brothers and sisters, I testify that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the vehicle God has provided for our exaltation. The gospel it teaches is true, and the priesthood legitimizing it is not derivative. I testify that Russell M. Nelson is a prophet of our God, as His predecessors were and as His successors will be. And one day that prophetic guidance will lead a generation to see our Messenger of Salvation descend like “lightning ... out of the east,” and we will exclaim, “Jesus of Nazareth.” With arms forever outstretched and love unfeigned, He will reply, “I am he.” I so promise with the apostolic power and authority of His holy name, even Jesus Christ, amen.

Seega, nii külluses kui vaesuses, nii vaikselt kiita saades kui avaliku kriitika all, nii taastamise jumalike elementide kui inimlike nõrkuste kaudu, mis vältimatult sellega kaasas käivad, püsime me Kristuse tõelise Kirikugasamal kursil. Miks? Sest meie Lunastaja sarnaselt panime end kirja kogu perioodiks – see ei lõpe esimese tutvustava lühiküsitlusega, vaid kestab kuni lõpueksamini välja. Seejuures on rõõmustav, et koolijuht andis meile kõigile enne kursuse algustõpiku vastused. Lisaks on meil hulgaliselt juhendajaid, kes meile neid vastuseid regulaarsetes vahepeatuses teel meelde tuletavad. Loomulikult pole sellest kasu, kui tunnist puududa.

„Keda te otsite?” Me vastame kogu südamest: „Jeesust Naatsaretlast!” Kui Ta lausub: „Mina olen see”, nõtkub me põlv ja tunnistab keel, et Ta on elav Kristus, et Tema üksi lepitab meie patud, et Ta kandis meid ka siis, kui me arvasime, et Ta on meid hüljanud. Kui me seisame Tema ees ning näeme Ta kätes ja jalgades haavu, hakkame mõistma, mida see tähendas, et Ta kandis meie patud ja oli haigustega tuttav ning oli täiesti kuu- lekas Isa tahte! – kõike seda puhtast armastusest meie vastu. Teistele tutvustuseks, et usk, mee- leparandus, ristimine, Püha Vaimu and ja Issanda kojas pühade õnnistuste saamine – need on peamised „põhimõtted ja talitused”, mis teevad lõpuks ilmsiks meie armastuse Jumala ja ligime- se vastu ning iseloomustavad rõõmsalt Kristuse tõelist Kirikut.

Vennad ja õed! Ma tunnistan, et Viimse Aja Pühade Jeesuse Kristuse Kirik on vahend, mille Jumal on andnud meie ülenduseks. Evangeelium, mida siin õpetatakse, on tõde, ning preesterlus, mis sellest seadusliku teeb, pole mingi tuletis. Ma tunnistan, et Russell M. Nelson on meie Jumala prohvet, nagu olid ka tema eelkäijad ja on tema tulevased ametijärglased. Ja ühel päeval näeb põlvkond selle prohvetliku juhatuse juhtimisel meie Pääste Sõnumitoojat laskumas „otsekui välk .. ida poolt”, ning me hüüame: „Jeesus Naatsaret- lane!” Ta vastab igavesti välja sirutatud käte ja teesklematu armastusega: „Mina olen see.” Ma tõotan seda apostelliku väe ja volitusega Tema pühal, nimelt Jeesuse Kristuse nimel, aamen.