

Embrace the Lord's Gift of Repentance

By Elder Jorge M. Alvarado
Of the Seventy

Opomau le Meaalofa a le Alii o le Salamo

Saunia e Elder Jorge M. Alvarado
O Le Fitugafulu

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Let us not wait for things to get hard before turning to God. Let us not wait until the end of our mortal lives to truly repent.

I testify of a loving Heavenly Father. In the April 2019 general conference, moments after I was sustained in my new responsibility as a General Authority Seventy, the choir sang a rendition of “I Stand All Amazed” that pierced my heart and soul.

I marvel that he would descend from his throne divine

To rescue a soul so rebellious and proud as mine,

That he should extend his great love unto such as I,

Sufficient to own, to redeem, and to justify.

As I heard those words, I was all amazed. I felt that despite my inadequacies and flaws, the Lord blessed me to know that “in his strength I can do all things.”

The common feeling of inadequacy, weakness, or even unworthiness is something with which many of us sometimes struggle. I still struggle with this; I felt it the day I was called. I have felt it many times, and I still feel it right now speaking to you. However, I have learned that I am not alone with these feelings. In fact, there are many accounts in the scriptures of those who seem to have felt similar feelings. For example, we remember Nephi as a faithful and valiant servant of the Lord. At times, even he struggled with feelings of unworthiness, weakness, and inadequacy.

He said: “Notwithstanding the great good-

Aua tatou te faatalitali seia oo ina faigata mea ona faatoa liliu atu lea i le Atua. Aua tatou te faatalitali seia oo i le iuga o o tatou olaga e salamo faamaoni ai.

Ou te molimau atu i se Tama Faalelagi alofa. I le konafesi ia Aperila 2019, i nai taimi ina ua uma ona lagolagoina a’u i lo’u tiutetauave fou o se Fitugafulu o le Pulega Aoao, sa lagi ai e le au-faipese se fatuga o le “Ua Ou Tu ma Ofo” na tuia ai lo’u loto ma lo’u agaga.

Ou te ofo i lona afio mai i luga,

E laveai a’u sē ua faalogogatā,

Ma ua Ia alofa i sē ua pei o a’u nei,

Ua lava Ia na te faaola ma faapaia.”

Ina ua ou faalogo atu i na upu, sa ou matuai maofa lava. Sa ou lagonaina e ui i ni o’u le agavaa ma vaivaiga, ae sa faamanuiaina au e le Alii ia ou iloa “o Lona malosi e mafai ai ona ou faia o mea uma.”

O le lagona masani o le le gafatia, vaivaiga, po o le le agavaa foi o se mea e toatele i tatou e tauivi ai i nisi o taimi. O loo ou tauivi pea ma lenei mea; sa ou lagonaina i le aso na valaauina ai au. Ua faatele ona ou lagonaina, ma o loo lagonaina pea i le taimi nei a o tautala atu ia te outou. Peitai, ua ou aoaoina e faapea e le o tuua na o au ma nei lagona. O le mea moni, e tele tala i tusitusiga paia o i latou e foliga mai na oo foi i na lava lagona. Mo se faataitaiga, tatou te manatua Nifae o se auauna faamaoni ma le lototoa a le Alii. Na i ai taimi, e oo foi ia te ia na tauivi ma lagona o le le agavaa, vaivaiga, ma le le gafatia.

Na ia saunoa: “E ui i le agalelei tele o le Alii,

ness of the Lord, in showing me his great and marvelous works, my heart exclaimeth: O wretched man that I am! Yea, my heart sorroweth because of my flesh; my soul grieveth because of mine iniquities.”

The Prophet Joseph Smith spoke of often feeling “condemned,” in his youth, “for [his] weakness and imperfections.” But Joseph’s feelings of inadequacy and worry were part of what led him to ponder, study, learn, and pray. As you may remember, he went to pray in the grove near his home to find truth, peace, and forgiveness. He heard the Lord say: “Joseph, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee. Go thy way, walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments. Behold, I am the Lord of Glory. I was crucified for the world that all those who believe on my name may have eternal life.”

Joseph’s sincere desire to repent and seek the salvation of his soul helped him come to Jesus Christ and receive forgiveness of his sins. This continuous effort opened the door to the continuing Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This remarkable experience of the Prophet Joseph Smith illustrates how feelings of weakness and inadequacy can help us recognize our fallen nature. If we are humble, this will help us come to recognize our dependence upon Jesus Christ and stir within our hearts a sincere desire to turn to the Savior and repent of our sins.

My friends, repentance is joy! Sweet repentance is part of a daily process through which, “line upon line, precept upon precept,” the Lord teaches us to live a life centered in His teachings. Like Joseph and Nephi, we can “cry unto [God] for mercy; for he is mighty to save.” He can fulfill any righteous desire or longing and can heal any wound in our lives.

In the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ, you and I can find countless accounts of individuals who learned how to come unto Christ through sincere repentance.

I’d like to share with you an example of the

i le faaali mai ia te a u o ana galuega tetele ma le ofoofogia, ua alaga a e pea lo u loto: E, le tagata leaga e ua i ai a u! Ioe, ua faanoanoa lo u loto ona o lo u tino; ua faanoanoa lo u agaga ona o a u amioletonu.”

E tele taimi na saunoa ai le Perofeta o Iosefa Samita ma le lagona o le “tausalaina,” i lona talavou, “aua o [ona] vaivaiga lea ma ona le atoatoa.” Peitai o lagona o Iosefa o le le gafatia ma le popole o se vaega o le mea na taitai ai o ia e manatunatu loloto, suesue, aoao, ma tatalo. Atonu tou te manatua, sa alu o ia e tatalo i le vao e lata ane i lona aiga e sue le mea moni, filemu, ma le faamagaloga. Sa ia faalogoina le Alii o fetalai mai, “Iosefa, lo’u atalii e, ua faamagaloina au agasala. Alu i ou ala, savali i a’u tulafono ma tausi i a u poloaiga. Faauta, o a’u o le Alii o le mamalu. Sa faasatauroina au mo le lalolagi ina ia mafai ona maua e i latou uma o e talitonu mai i lou igoa le ola e faavavau.”

O le manao faamaoni o Iosefa e salamo ma saili le faaolataga o lona agaga sa fesoasoani ia te ia e sau ai ia Iesu Keriso ma maua ai le faamagaloga o ana agasala. O leni taumafaiga faifaipena na talaia ai faitotoa i le faaauauina o le Toefuataiga o le talalelei a Iesu Keriso i aso amuli.

O le aafiaga ofoofogia o le Perofeta o Iosefa Samita ua faapupula mai ai le ala e mafai ai e lagona o vaivaiga ma le le gafatia ona fesoasoani ia i tatou e iloa ai lo tatou natura pa’u. Afai tatou te lotomauualalo, o le a fesoasoani lena mea ia i tatou e iloa ai lo tatou faalagolago ia Iesu Keriso, ma gaepuina i totonu o o tatou loto se manao faamaoni e liliu atu i le Faaola ma salamo ai ia tatou agasala.

A’u uo e, o le salamo o le olioli lea! O le suamalie o le salamo o se vaega o le faagasologa i aso taitasi lea e aoao mai ai i tatou e le Alii, “o lea fuaiupu ma lea fuaiupu, mataupu ma lea mataupu,” e ola ai i se olaga e faatotonugalemu i Ana aoaoga. E faapei o Iosefa ma Nifae, e mafai ona tatou “tagi atu [i le Atua] mo le alofa mutimutivale, ona ua malosi o ia e faaola.” E mafai ona Ia faataunuaina soo se manaoga amiotonu po o se moomooga ma e mafai ona faamaloloina soo se manu’aga i o tatou olaga.

I Le Tusi a Mamona: O Se Tasi Molimau ia Iesu Keriso e mafai e oe ma a’u ona maua ni tala e le mafaitaulia o tagata taitoatasi o e sa aoaoina le ala e o mai ia Iesu Keriso e ala i le salamo faamaoni.

Ou te fia faasoa atu ia te outou se faaitaiga

tender mercies of the Lord through an experience that occurred in my beloved home island of Puerto Rico.

It was in my hometown of Ponce that a sister in the Church, Célia Cruz Ayala, decided that she was going to give a Book of Mormon to a friend. She wrapped it and went to deliver this gift, more precious to her than diamonds or rubies, she said. On her way, a thief approached her, grabbed her purse, and ran away with the special gift inside.

When she told this story at church, her friend said, “Who knows? Maybe this was your opportunity to share the gospel!”

Well, a few days later, do you know what happened? Célia received a letter. I hold that letter, which Célia shared with me, in my hand today. It says:

“Mrs. Cruz:

“Forgive me, forgive me. You will never know how sorry I am for attacking you. But because of it, my life has changed and will continue to change.

“That book [the Book of Mormon] has helped me in my life. The dream of that man of God has shaken me. ... I am returning your five [dollars,] for I can’t spend them. I want you to know that you seemed to have a radiance about you. That light seemed to stop me [from harming you, so] I ran away instead.

“I want you to know that you will see me again, but when you do, you won’t recognize me, for I will be your brother. ... Here, where I live, I have to find the Lord and go to the church you belong to.

“The message you wrote in that book brought tears to my eyes. Since Wednesday night I have not been able to stop reading it. I have prayed and asked God to forgive me [and] I ask you to forgive me. ... I thought your wrapped gift was something I could sell. [Instead,] it has made me want to [change] my life. ... Forgive me, forgive me, I beg you.

“Your absent friend.”

Brothers and sisters, the light of the Savior can reach us all, no matter our circumstances. “It is not possible for you to sink lower than the infinite light of Christ’s Atonement shines,” said President Jeffrey R. Holland.

o le alofamutimutivale o le Alii e ala i se aafiaga na tulai mai i lo’u motu pele o Puerto Rico.

I lo’u taulaga o Ponce, sa tonu i se tuafafine o le Ekalesia, o Silia Cruz Ayala, o le a ia tuuina atu le Tusi a Mamona i se uo. Sa ia afifina ma alu e tiliva lenei meaalofo, e sili ona taua ia te ia nai lo taimane po o penina, o lana tala lea. A o aga atu o ia i le ala, sa alu ane se gaoi ia te ia, se’i lana tama’i ato ma sola loa ma le meaalofo o loo i ai i totonu.

Ina ua ia faamatalaina lenei tala i le lotu, sa fai atu lana uo, “O ai e iloa? Atonu o lou avanoa lenei e faasoa atu ai le talalelei!”

Ia, i nai aso mulimuli ane, tou te silafia le mea na tupu? Sa maua e Silia se tusi. Ua ou uuina i lo’u lima i le asō, lena tusi lea na faasoa mai e Silia ia te a’u. Fai mai,

“Mrs. Cruz:

Faamagalo a’u, faamagalo a’u. O le a e le iloaina lava lo’u faanoanoa i lo’u osofa’ia o oe. Ae ona o lena mea, ua suia ai lo’u olaga ma o le a faaauau pea ona suia.

O lena tusi [o le Tusi a Mamona] ua faasoani ia te a’u i lo’u olaga. O le miti a lena tagata o le Atua na luluina ai a’u. ... Ua ou toe-fafoiina atu lau lima talā, ona e le mafai ona ou faaaluina. Ou te manao ia e iloa sa foliga mai na e susulu faataalilolio. O lena malamalama na foliga sa taofia ai a’u [mai le faamanu’alia o oe, o lea] na ou solaese ai loa.

“Ou te manao ia e iloa o le a e toe vaai ia te a’u, ae afai e te vaai mai, o le a e le iloaina a’u, aua o le a avea a’u ma ou tuagane. ... O iinei, i le mea ou te nofo ai, ua tataua ona ou sailia le Alii ma alu i le lotu e te lotu ai.

“O le savali na e tusia i lena tusi, na maligi ai o’u loimata. Talu mai le po o le Aso Lulu, ua le mafai lava ona ou taofia le faitauina. Sa ou tatalo ma ole atu i le Atua e faamagalo a’u, [ma] ou te tatalo atu ia e faamagalo a’u. ... Sa ou manatu o lau meaalofo na afifi, o se mea e mafai ona ou faatauina atu. [Ae,] na faia ai a’u ia ou manao e [suia] lo’u olaga. ... Ua ou augani atu ia e faamagalo a’u, faamagalo a’u.

“O lau uo o loo toesea.”

Uso e ma tuafafine, o le malamalama o le Faaola e mafai ona oo mai ia i tatou uma, tusa lava po o le a le tulaga o tatou i ai. “E le mafai ona e magoto ia maualalo ifo nai lo le malamalama le gata o le Togiola a Keriso,” na saunoa ai Peresitene Holland.

As for the unintended recipient of Célia's gift, the Book of Mormon, this brother went on to witness more of the Lord's mercy. Although it took time for this brother to forgive himself, he found joy in repentance. What a miracle! One faithful sister, one Book of Mormon, sincere repentance, and the Savior's power led to the enjoyment of the fulness of blessings of the gospel and sacred covenants in the house of the Lord. Other family members followed and accepted sacred responsibilities in the Lord's vineyard, including full-time missionary service.

As we come unto Jesus Christ, our path of sincere repentance will eventually lead us to the Savior's holy temple.

What a righteous motive to strive to be clean—to be worthy of the fulness of the blessings made possible by our Heavenly Father and His Son through sacred temple covenants! Serving regularly in the house of the Lord and striving to keep the sacred covenants we make there will increase both our desire and our ability to experience the change of heart, might, mind, and soul necessary for us to become more like our Savior. President Russell M. Nelson has testified: “Nothing will open the heavens more [than worshipping in the temple]. Nothing!”

My dear friends, do you feel inadequate? Do you feel unworthy? Are you second-guessing yourself? Perhaps you might worry and ask: Do I measure up? Is it too late for me? Why do I keep failing when I am trying my absolute best?

Brothers and sisters, surely we will make mistakes in our lives along the way. But please remember that, as Elder Gerrit W. Gong has taught: “Our Savior's Atonement is infinite and eternal. Each of us strays and falls short. We may, for a time, lose our way. God lovingly assures us [that] no matter where we are or what we have done, there is no point of no return. He waits ready to embrace us.”

As my dear wife, Cari Lu, has also taught me, we all need to repent, rewind, and reset the time to “zero o'clock” every single day.

Obstacles will come. Let us not wait for things to get hard before turning to God. Let us

Ae mo le tagata e lei faamoemoeina e maua le meaalofo a Silia, sa alu lenei uso ma molimau atili atu i le alofamutimutivale o le Alii. E ui ina sa umi se taimi mo lenei uso e faamagalo ai ia lava, ae sa ia maua le olioli i le salamo. Oka se vavega! Tasi le tuafafine faamaoni, tasi le Tusi a Mamona, salamo ma le faamaoni, ma le mana o le Faaola na ta'ita'i atu ai i le faamalieleina i le atoaga o faamanuiaga o le talalelei ma feagaiga paia i le maota o le Alii. O isi tagata o le aiga na sosoo atu ai ma sa taliaina tiutetauave paia i le tovine o le Alii, e aofia ai le galuega faifeautalai faamisiona.

A o tatou o mai ia Iesu Keriso o lo tatou ala o le salamo ma le faamaoni, o le a i'u ina taitai atu ai i tatou i le malumalu paia o le Faaola.

Oka se faamoemoeaga amiotonu o le tauivi ia mamā—ia agavaa mo le atoaga o faamanuiaga ua mafai ona o lo tatou Tama Faalelagi ma Lona Alo e ala i feagaiga paia i le malumalu! O le auauna atu e le aunoa i le maota o le Alii ma tauivi e tausi feagaiga paia tatou te osia iina, o le a faateleina ai lo tatou manao ma lo tatou gafatia e maua ai suiga o le loto, manatu, mafaufau, ma le agaga e tatau ai mo i tatou ona avea atili e faapei o lo tatou Faaola. Na molimau mai Peresitene Russell M. Nelson “E leai se mea o le a matalaatiiai le lagi [nai lo le tapuai i le malumalu]. E leai se mea!”

A'u uo pele, pe e te lagonaina le le gafatia? Pe e te lagonaina le le agavaa? Pe o e taumatemateina oe lava? Atonu o loo e popole ma tuufesili: Pe fetai a'u? Pe ua tuai tele ea mo a'u? Aisea ou te saga toilalo ai pea ae o lea ou te taumafaia le mea aupito sili ou te mafaia?

Uso e ma tuafafine, e moni lava o le a tatou faia ni measese i o tatou olaga. Ae faamolemole manatua, e pei ona sa aoao mai Elder Gerrit W. Gong: “O le Togiola a le Faaola e le gata ma e faavavau. E tofua i tatou uma ma masalosologa ma mea e toilalo ai. E i ai taimi tatou te ono sē ese ai ma le ala. Ua faamautinoa mai ma le agaalofo e le Atua ia i tatou [e faapea], po o fea lava o tatou i ai, po o a foi mea sa tatou faia, e leai se mea e ta'u o le lē toe foi. E faatalitali mai o Ia ma sauni e opomau i tatou.”

Ona sa aoao mai a'u e si o'u toalua pele, o Cari Lu, tatou te manaomia uma ona salamo, toefafoi i tua, ma toe seti le taimi i le “selo i le uati” i aso taitasi uma.

O le a oo mai mea faalavefau. Aua tatou te faatalitali seia oo ina faigata mea ona faatoa liliu

not wait until the end of our mortal lives to truly repent. Instead, let us now, no matter which part of the covenant path we are on, focus on the redemptive power of Jesus Christ and on Heavenly Father's desire for us to return to Him.

The Lord's house, His holy scriptures, His holy prophets and apostles inspire us to strive towards personal holiness through the doctrine of Christ.

And Nephi said: "And now, behold, my beloved brethren, this is the way; and there is none other way nor name given under heaven whereby man [and woman] can be saved in the kingdom of God. And now, behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Our process of "at-one-ment" with God may feel challenging. But you and I can pause, be still, look to the Savior, and seek to find and act on what He would have us change. If we do so with full intent, we will witness His healing. And think of how our posterity will be blessed as we embrace the Lord's gift of repentance!

The Master Potter, taught my dad, will mold and refine us, which can be difficult. Nonetheless, the Master Healer will also cleanse us. I have experienced and continue to experience that healing power. I testify that it comes through faith in Jesus Christ and daily repentance.

Oh, it is wonderful that he should care for me

Enough to die for me!

I testify of God's love and of the infinite power of His Son's Atonement. We can feel it profoundly as we sincerely and wholeheartedly repent.

My friends, I am a witness of the glorious Restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith and the current divine guidance of the Savior through His prophet and mouthpiece, President Russell M. Nelson. I know Jesus Christ lives and that He is the Master Healer of our souls. I know and I testify that these things are true, in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

atu lea i le Atua. Aua tatou te faatalitali seia oo i le iuga o o tatou olaga e salamo faamaoni ai. Nai lo lona, ia tatou taulai atu nei loa, tusa lava po o le fea vaega o le ala o feagaiga o tatou i ai, taulai i le mana togiola o Iesu Keriso ma i le finagalo o le Tama Faalelagi mo i tatou e tofoi atu ia te Ia.

O le maota o le Alii, o Ana tusitusiga paia, o Ana perofeta paia ma aposetolo e musuia i tatou e tauivi agai i le paia o le tagata lava ia e ala i le aoaoga faavae a Keriso.

Ma na fai mai Nifae: "Ma o lenei, faauta, o u uso pele e, o le ala lenei; ma ua leai se isi lava ala po o se isi suafa ua tuuina mai i lalo ifo o le lagi e mafai ona faaolaina ai o le alii [ma le tamaitai] i le malo o le Atua. Ma o lenei, faauta, o le aoaoga faavae lenei a Keriso, ma o le aoaoga faavae moni lenei e tasi a le Tamā, ma le Alo, ma le Agaga Paia, o ni Atua ua tasi, ua leai se gataaga."

O la tatou faagasologa o le "to-gi-ola" ma le Atua atonu e faigata. Peitai, o oe ma a'u e mafai ona tutu, ia le gaoiā, tilotilo i le Faaola, ma saili ia maua ma galue i le mea e finagalo o Ia tatou te suia. Afai tatou te faia ma le loto atoa, o le a tatou molimauina lona faamalologa. Ma mafau fau i le ala o le a faamanuiaina ai a tatou fanau a o tatou opomauina le meaalofa a le Alii o le salamo!

O le a moloina ma faaatoatoa i tatou e le Tufuga Faiomea, na aoao mai ai lo'u tama, lea e mafai ona faigata. Ae, o le a faamamaina foi i tatou e le Fomai o Fomai. Ua ou oo i ai, ma o loo faaauau pea ona ou iloa lona mana faamalolo. Ou te molimau atu e oo mai e ala i le faatuatua ia Iesu Keriso ma i le salamo i aso taitasi.

E maeu le alofa ma lona maliu

Tiga mo au nei!

Ou te molimau atu i le alofa o le Atua ma le mana e le gata o le Togiola a Lona Alo. E mafai ona tatou lagonaina lona maoae, pe a tatou sala-mo faamaoni ma le loto atoa.

A'u uo e, o a'u o se molimau o le Toefuataiga mamalu o le talalelei e ala i le Perofo o Iosefa Samita ma le taitaiga faalelagi i le taimi nei a le Faaola e ala mai i Lana perofeta ma Lana fofoga lafolafola, o Peresitene Russell M. Nelson Ou te iloa o loo soifua Iesu Keriso ma o Ia o le Fomai o Fomai o o tatou agaga. Ua ou iloa ma molimau atu ua moni nei mea i le suafa o Iesu Keriso, amene.