

“I Am He”

By President Jeffrey R. Holland
Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

“O A’u Lenei”

Saunia e Peresitene Jeffrey R. Holland
Sui Peresitene o le Korama a Aposetolo e Toasefululua

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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,”

O le alofa mama o Keriso—e iloga i le faamaoni a’ia’i i le finagalo paia—e tumau ma faaauau pea ona tumau.

O le aso Sapati lenei, ma ua tatou potopoto e talanoa e uiga ia Keriso ma le faasatauroina o Ia. Ua ou iloa o loo soifua lo’u Faaola.

Manatu i lenei vaaiga mai le vaiaso mulimuli o le soifuaga o Iesu i le olaga nei. Sa potopoto se motu o tagata, e aofia ai ma fitafita Roma sa faaaupegaina i tao ma suluga pelu. Sa ta’imua ai taitai mai faitaulaga sili, o ē sa i ai sulu i lima, o lenei vaega naunautai sale’io atu e faatoilalo se aai. O le po lea sa latou sailia ai le tagata e toatasi, o se tagata e le’i tauaveina lava se auupega, pe a’otauina faafitafita, pe na auai i se taua faaletino i se taimi o Lona soifuaga atoa.

A o latalata atu fitafita, i se taumafaiga e puipuia Ona soo, sa la’a atu ai Iesu ma faapea atu, “O ai tou te sailia” Sa latou tali atu, “O Iesu le Nasareta.” Sa fetalai atu Iesu, “O A’u lenei. ... [Ina ua] ... ia fai atu ia te i latou, o A’u lenei, [na] solomuli ... i latou, ua pauu foi i le elele.”

Ia te a’u la, o se tasi lea o laina e sili ona o’otia i tusitusiga paia uma. E ese mai isi mea uma, o loo ta’usa’o mai ai lava ia te a’u e faapea, na o le i ai lava i le mea o afio aile Alo o le Atua—le Ieova silisili o le Feagaiga Tuai ma le Leoleo Mamoe Lelei o le Feagaiga Fou, o le e le’i tago lava i se auupega o soo se ituaiga—e faapeana o le faalogoa lava i le siufofogao lenei Malutaga mai le Afa, lenei Alii o le Filemu, ua lava lea e faatautevateva ai le fili ma pauu ai, ma faafaula’i ai lava i latou i se faaputuga, ma latou moomoo ai sa sili pe a na tofofi i latou e tiute i le umukuka i lena po.

E na o ni nai aso na muamua atu, ina ua Ia ulufale atu faatupu i le aai, “ona vevesi ai lea o

the scripture says, asking, “Who is this?” I can only imagine that “Who is this?” is the question those muddled soldiers were now asking!

The answer to 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?

le aai uma,” fai mai le mau, ma fesili, “O ai ea lenei?” E mafai ona ou mafaufau faapea “O ai ea lenei?” o le fesili lea na fesili ai nei na fitafita fememea’i!

O letalii lena fesili sa le mafai ona i ai i Ona foliga, aua sa valoia e Isaia i le fitu seneturi na muamua atu e faapea “ua leai sona aulelei po o se manaia; ma a tatou vaai ia te ia e leai sona lalelei tatou te mananao ai ia te ia.” E mautinoa sa le’i i ai lava i Sana teugala’ei, po o se tamaoaiga patino tele, aua sa le’i i ai uma na mea ia te Ia. Sa le’i mafai ona i ai mai ni ana aoaoga faapolofesa i sunako sa i ai, aua e leai ni faamaoniga faapea sa Ia a’oga ai i se tasi o na mea, e ui o Lona talavou sa mafai ona Ia faafememea’iina ia tusiupu ma loia atamamai sa i ai, ma faafoina ai i latou i Lana mataupu “e faapei o se ua i ai le pule.”

Mai lena aoaoga i totonu o le malumalu e oo atu i Lona ulufale manumalo atu i Ierusalema ma lenei pueina faapagota mulimuli ma le le tonu, sa masani ona tuuina ai Iesu i tulaga faigata, e masani ona faaseseina lea sa Ia manumalo ai i taimi uma-manumalo e leai so tatou faamatalaga sei vagana ai le DNA faalelagi.

Ae i lalo o le talafaasolopito e toatele ua faafaigofieina, e oo lava ina manatu faatauva i lo tatou faatusa ia te Ia ma Lana molimau pe o ai o Ia. Ua latou faaitiitia Lana amiotonu i le na o le faautauta, o Lana faamasinoga tonu i le na o le ita, Lona alofa mutimutivale i le na o le tuufau. E tataua ona tatou faaeteete i soo se ituaiga faauiga-faigofie o Ia, ia e faigofie ai ona le amanaiaina aoaoga ia tatou te le fiala ai. O lenei “faauigaina” e moni lava e tusa ai ma Lona uiga mama silisili, Lona alofa.

I le taimi o Lana misiona i le olaga nei, sa aoao mai i e Iesu e faapea, e lua lava poloaiga sili. O lea sa aoao atu i lenei konafesi ma o le a faavavau lava ona aoao atu: “Alofa atu i le Alii lou Atua [ma] alofa atu i lou tuaoi faapei o oe lava ia te oe.” Afai e ao ona tatou mulimuli faamaoni i le Faaola i nei tulafono taua ma le le matuueseeseina, e ao la ona tatou taofimau i le mea sa Ia fetalaimoniai. Ma o le meamonina Ia fetalai ai o le, “Afai tou te alolofa mai ia te a’u, tausii a’u poloaiga.” I lena lava tauafiai e tasi, sa Ia fetalai ai e tataua ona tatou “fealofani, e pei ona Ou alofa atu ia te outou.”

I na mau, o fasifuitau agavaa e faamatala ai le alofa moni faaKeriso—o nisi taimi e faasino i le alofa mama—e matuai taua lava.

O a mea latou te faauigaina? Na faapefea ona

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,

alofa Iesu?

Muamua, sa Ia alofa ma “[Lona] loto atoa, manatu atoa, mafaufau atoa ma le malosi atoa,”—ma maua ai e Ia le gafatia e faamaloloto ai tiga matutui ma folafola atu mea moni sili ona faigata. I se aotelega, o Ia o lē e mafai ona faatautaia le alofatunoa ma taulagi pea le mea moni i le taimi lava lea. E pei ona ta’ua e Lia e lana faamanuiaga o lona atalii o Iakopo, “O le a oo mai ai le togio-la talu le Mesia Paia; aua ua tumu o ia i le alofa tunoa ma le upumoni.” O Lona alofa ua mafai ai ona maua se opo faamalosi pe a manaomia ma se ipu oona e tataua ona inuina. O lea tatou te tau-mafai ai e alolofa—ma o tatou loto atoa, manatu atoa, mafaufau ma le malosi atoa—aua o le ala lena e alofa mai ai o Ia ia i tatou.

O le uiga lona lua o le alofa mama paia o Iesu o Lona usiusitai le ia fioga umana tulei mai i le fofoga o le Atua, ma faaogatusa i taimi uma Lona finagalo ma amioga a Lona Tama Faalelagi.

Ina ua taunuu o Ia i le Lalolagi i Sisifo ina ua mavae Lona Toetu, sa fetalai atu Keriso ia sa Nifae: “Faauta, o Au o Iesu Keriso. ... Ua ou inu i lena ipu oona lea na tuuina mai e le Tamā ia te au, ... ma ua ou faamamaluina le finagalo o le Tama ... mai lava i le amataga.”

Mai le anoanoai o auala na mafai ona Ia faailoa mai ai o Ia lava, sa faia e Iesu ala i le tautino mai o Lona usiusitai i le finagalo o le Tama—e ui e lē i le taimi o Lona matua’i manaomia o le fesoasoani, sa lagona ai e lena Alo Pele e Toatasi o le Atua le matua’i tuulafoaiina e Lona Tama. O le alofa mama o Keriso—e iloga i le faamaoni a’ia’i i le finagalo paia—e tumau ma e faaaaua pea ona tumau, e le na o aso faigofie ma toamalie ae faapea foi i aso e sili ona pogisa ma faigata.

O Iesu o “se tagata faanoanoa” ua fai mai ai le mau. Ua masani foi ma le faanoanoa, lē lavā, lē fiafia, ma le matua’i tuulafoaiina. I nei taimi ma taimi uma lava, e le uma le alofa o Iesu ma e faapena foi Lona Tama. I le i ai o sea alofa ua matua—le ituaiga alofa e fai ma faa’ao’ao, faamalosi, ma foai atu—o le a le uma foi lo tatou alofa.

O lea la, afai o nisi taimi o le tele o lou tau-mafai atili, o le tele foi lena o le faigata e foliga mai e oo i ai; afai, e faapei ona e taumafai e galue i ou tapulaa ma ou vaivaiga, e te maua se tasi po o se mea ua naunau e luitauina lou faatuatua; afai, e te galue tuuto, ae o lena lava e i ai taimi e

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.

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

lofituina ai oe i le fefe, manatua sa faapena foi mo nisi o tagata sili ona faatuatua ma maoae i vaitau uma. Ia manatua foi o loo i ai se malosiaga i le atulaulau o loo taumafai malosi e tetee atu imea lelei umae te taumafai e fai.

O lea la, i le taimi o le tamaoaiga faapea foi le mativa, i le taimi o le faaviivii patino faapea foi faitioga lautele, i le taimi o elemene paia o le Toefuataiga faapea foi nai vaivaiga faaletagata soifua ia o le a avea pea o se vaega lēmaalofia o le olaga, tatou te tumau i le ala male Ekalesia moni a Keriso. Aisea? Ona, e faapei o lo tatou Togiola, ua uma ona tatou lesitala i le semesa atoa—ua le faaiiua i sina suega puupuu muamua faalauiloa ae ia oo atu i le suega faaii. O le mea e olioli ai i lenei mea, ua uma ona aumai e le Puleaōga ia i tatou uma tusi e maua ai talia o le'i amataina le kosi. E le gata i lea, ua i ai se anoanoai o o tatou faiaoga e faamanatu mai ia i tatou na tali i mea masani e mapu i ai i luga o le ala. Ae, ioe, e leai ma se mea o nei mea e aoga lelei pe afai tatou te tia'i aoga.

“O ai tou te sailia?” Ma o tatou loto atoa tatou te tali atu ai, “O Iesu le Nasareta.” Pe a fetalai mai o Ia, “O A'u lenei,” tatou te tootutuli o tatou tulivae ma ta'uta'u atu i o tatou laulaufaiva o Ia o le Keriso soifua, ua na o Ia lava na togiolaina mo a tatou agasala, sa Ia tauaveina i tatou e ui i taimi tatou te manatu ai ua Ia tuulafoaiina i tatou. Pe a tatou tutu atu i Ona luma ma vaai atu i ma'ila i Ona lima ma vae ma itu, o le a amata ona tatou malamalama i le uiga ia te Iaia tauave a tatou agasala ma ia masani i le faanoanoa, ia usiusitai atoatoa i le finagalo o Lona Tama—o nei mea uma e mai le alofa mama a'ia'i mo i tatou. Ina ia faailoa atu i isi le faatuatua, salamo, papatisoga, le meaalofa o le Agaga Paia, ma le mauaina o o tatou faamanuiaga paia i le maota o le Alii—o “mataupu faavae [autu] nei ma sauniga” lea e iu ina faaalua ai lo tatou alolofa i le Atua ma tuaoi, ma faauigaina ai ma le olioli le Ekalesia moni a Keriso.

Uso e ma tuafafine, ou te molimau atu O Le Ekalesia a Iesu Keriso o le Au Paia o Aso e Gata Ai o le auala lea ua saunia e le Atua mo lo tatou faaeaga. O le talalelei ua aoao mai [e le Ekalesia] e moni, ma o le perisitua o loo faatulafonoina [le Ekalesia] e tuusa'o mai. Ou te molimau atu o Russell M. Nelson o se perofeta a lo tatou Atua, e faapei o ē na muaimalae ia te Ia, ma ē foi o le a suitulaga ia te Ia. Ma o le a i ai se aso o lena taitaiga faaperofeta o le a ta'ita'ia ai se tupulaga e vaai

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.

i lo tatou Avefeau o le Faaolataga o afio ifo e pei o le “uila’emo ... e alu a’e i sasae,” ma o le a tatou alalaga, “O Iesu le Nasareta.” Faatasi ai ma lima o loo faaloaloa mai pea lava pea ma le alofa moni, o le a Ia tali mai, “O A’u lenei” Ou te folafola atu ai nei mea faatasi ai ma le mana ma le pule faaa-posetolo o Lona suafa paia, o Iesu Keriso, amene.