

Focus on Jesus Christ and His Gospel

By Elder I. Raymond Egbo
Of the Seventy

Tulimatai ia Iesu Keriso ma Lana Talalelei

Saunia e Elder I. Raymond Egbo
O Le Fitugafulu

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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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Pe a tatou le amanaiaina faalavefau o le lalolagi ae tulimatai atu ia Keriso ma Lana talalelei, ua faamaonia lo tatou manumalo.

I le 1996, sa manumalo ai le 'au soka a alii Nigeria i le pine'auro i Taaloga a le Olimipeka na faia i Atlanta, i le Iunaite Setete. Ina ua uma le taaloga faaii, sa faatumulia e le motu o tagata fiafia ia magaala o aai ma taulaga uma i Nigeria; o lenei atunuu e 110 miliona tagata na vave ona suia i se faafiafiaga tele i le ta o le lua i le taeao! Sa pepesi le olioli, fiafia, ma le taufai sagisagi a o 'aai, pepese ma sisiva ia tagata. O le taimi lena, sa soofaatasi ai Nigeria, ma sa femitai le au Nigeria uma i le avea ai o se [tagata] Nigeria.

A o le'i faia le Olimipeka, sa feagai lenei 'au ma le tele o luitau. Ina ua amata le taamilosaga, sa faamutaina la latou lagolago tautupe. Sa auai lava le 'au e aunoa ma anomea talafeagai, o nofoaga e toleni ai, meaai, po o auunaga mo le tataina o lavalava.

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I se tasi taimi, sa na o ni nai minute le latou mamao mai le aveesea mai tauvaga, ae sa manumalo le au Nigeria i mea uma e ui sa foliga mai e le manuia. O lea tulaga taua na suia ai la latou manatu ia i latou lava. Faatasi ai ma se talitonuga fou, ma faatasi ai ma le galulue (malosi) o tagata taitoatasi ma faatasi o se 'au, ma le naunautai le ma'alofia, sa latou le amana'iaina ma le lotogatasi faalavefau ae tulimatai atu i le manumalo. O lea tulimataiga na latou maua ai ni pine auro, ma sa faaigoaina ai e le au Nigeria i latou o le "Au Na Moemiti I Ai." O loo faaauau pea ona ta'ua le Au Na Moemiti I Ai i le Olimipeka o le 1996 i taaloga a Nigeria.

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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 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

O le taimi lava na aoaoina ai e le ‘au soka a Nigeria ia ‘aia nei amanaia le tele o mea faalave-fau latou te fetaiai ae tulimatai i le latou sini, sa faamanuiaina i latou i talaatu o le mea sa latou manatu e mafai—ma maua ai le olioli tele. (E faapei foi o i matou uma i Nigeria!)

I se ala foi faapena, a tatou le amanaiaina faalavefau a le lalolagi ma tulimatai atu ia Keriso ma Lana talalelei, e mautinoa lava lo tatou faamanuiaina i talaatu o mea e mafai ona tatou mafaufauina atoatoa ma ia lagonaina le olioli silisili. E pei ona aoa mai Peresitene Russell M. Nelson: “Afai o le taulaiga o o tatou olaga e i luga o ... Iesu Keriso ma Lana talalelei, e mafai ona tatou lagona le olioli e tusa lava po o a mea o tutupu—pe le o tutupu foi—i o tatou olaga.”

Ou te tatalo o le a fesoasoani mai le Agaga Paia ia i tatou taitoatasi e gauai atu i le valaaulia a Peresitene Nelson e tulimatai o tatou olaga ia “Iesu Keriso ma Lana talalelei” ina ia mafai ai ona tatou maua le olioli ia Keriso, “tusa lava pe o a mea o tutupu—pe le o tutupu foi—i o tatou olaga.”

E faamatala e ni tala o i le Tusi a Mamona ni tagata o e na suia o latou olaga e ala i le tulimatai atu ia Iesu Keriso ma Lana talalelei.

Mafaufau ia Alema le Itiiti. Sa ia fouvale ma tau faasagatau o ia i le Ekalesia. Sa tatalo ma anapogi lona tamā, o Alema. Sa faaali atu se agelu ma valaauina Alema le Itiiti ia salamo. O le taimi lena, na amata ai ona mafatia Alema “i tiga o se agaga lava ua faasalaina.” I ona taimi sili ona faigata, sa ia manatua ai le aoa atu o lona tamā e faapea, o le a afio mai Keriso e togiola mo agasala a le lalolagi. A o ia manatuaina nei mafaufauga, sa ia augani atu i le Atua mo le alofamutimutivale. Na avea le olioli ma taunuuuga, o se olioli na ia faamatalaina e sili atu ona tele! Na oo mai le alofamutimutivale ma le olioli ia Alema ona sa tulimatai atu o ia ma lona tamā i le Faaola.

Mo matua e i ai fanau ua sē ese, ia lototelele! Nai lo le taumanatunatu pe aisea e le sau ai se agelu e fesoasoani i lau tama ia salamo, ia silafia ua tuuina e le Alii se agelu i le olaga nei i lona ala: o le epikopo, se isi taitai o le Ekalesia, po o se uso po o le tuafafine o auunaga. Afai e te anapogi pea ma tatalo, afai e te le faatulagaina se taimi faatulagaina po o se taimi mo le Atua e tali mai ai, ma afai e te talitonu o loo faaloaloa atu e Ia Lona aao e fesoasoani mai, ona—le pine lea—ona e maua le Atua ua pa’i atu i le loto o lau tama pe a filifili lau tama e faalogo. E afua lenei mea ona o

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 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

Keriso o le olioli—o Keriso foi o le faamoemoe; o Ia o le folafolaga “o mea lelei e oo mai.” O le mea lea talitonu ia Iesu Keriso mo lau tama, aua o Ia o le malosiaga o matua uma o tamaiti uma.

O le taimi lava na ia iloa ai le olioli ia Keriso, sa ola Alema le Itiiti ma lena olioli. Ae na faapefea ona ia tausia lena ituaiga o olioli e oo lava i taimi o faigata ma tofotofoga? Ua ia ta’ua:

“Mai i lena taimi e oo mai i le taimi nei, o loo o’u galue e aunoa ma se malolo, ina [ia] mafai ona ou aumai o agaga i le salamo; ina ia mafai ona ou aumai i latou e tofo i le olioli tele lea sa ou tofo i ai. ...

“... Ma ... ua tuuina mai e le Alii ia te a’u le olioli e silisili ona tele i le fua o a’u galuega. ...

“Ma sa lagolagoina au a’u o ou i ai [i] tofotofoga ma faalavelave o ituaiga eseese uma.”

O le olioli ia Keriso sa amata mo Alema ina ua ia faaoga le faatuatua ia te Ia ma tagi atu mo le alofamutimutivale. Ona faatino lea e Alema lona faatuatua ia Keriso, e ala i le fesoasoani atu i isi ia tofo i le olioli lava lea e tasi. O nei galuega faifaipea na aumaia ai ia Alema le olioli tele, e oo lava i tofotofoga ma faalavelave o soo se ituaiga. Ua outou vaai la, “e fiafia le Alii i taumafaiga,” ma o taumafaiga e tulimatai atu ia te Ia e aumaia ai faamanuiaga.” E tusa lava foi i tofotofoga ogaoga e mafai ona “faatumuina i le olioli ia Keriso.”

O se isi vaega i le Tusi a Mamona o e na avea Iesu Keriso ma Lana talalelei ma tulimata’iga o o latou olaga ma maua ai le olioli, o i latou sa faavaeina le aai o Helama—o se nofoaga e mafai ona tausia ai a latou fanau ma olioli ai i le faaogaina saoloto o la latou tapuaiga faalelotu. O lenei nuu amiotonu na ola i ni olaga lelei sa faapologaina i latou e se vaega faomea ma sa latou aveesea le aiā tataua faavae a tagata soifua i le faaogaina o la latou tapuaiga faalelotu. E i ai taimi e tutupu ai mea leaga i tagata lelei.

“Ua silafia e le Atua ua tataua ona aoai i lona nuu, ioe, na te tofotofoina lo latou onosai ma lo latou faatuatua.

“A e ui i lea—ai se faalagolago ia te ia, e faaeaina o ia i le aso gataaga. Ioe, ma sa faapea lava ona faia i lenei nuu.”

Na faapefea e lenei nuu ona onosaia o latou faigata ma puapuaga? E ala i le tulimata’i atu ia Keriso ma Lana talalelei. O mea na faalavelaveina ai i latou; e le’i avea ma o latou faasinomaga; ae na latou iloa i latou lava o se atalii/afafine o le Atua, o se atalii/afafine o le feagaiga, ma o se soo o Iesu Keriso. A o latou manatuaina i latou lava,

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 did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and withpatience 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.

ma valaau atu i le Atua, sa latou mauaina le filemu, malosi, ma i’u ai ina maua le olioli ia Keriso:

“Sa sasaa atu e Alema ma lona nuu ... o latou loto i [le Atua]; ma sa silafia e ia mafaufauga o o latou loto.

Ma sa oo ina oo mai le siufofoga o le Alii ia te i latou i o latou puapuaga, ua fetalai mai: Inā ea ia o outou ulu ma ia faamafanafanaina outou; ona ua Ou iloa le feagaiga na outou faia mai ia te a’u; ma o le a Ou osifeagaiga ma o’u tagata ma laveai i latou mai le pologa.”

I le tali mai, na “faamāmā [e le Alii] avega ... i luga o [o latou] tauau. ... ioe, sa faamalosia i latou e le Alii ina ia mafai ona latou tauave ma le faigofie a latou avega, ma sa latou gaua’i i atu ma le fiafia ma leonosai i le finagalo atoa o le Alii.” Matau, na tuu atu e nei Au Paia o latou puapuaga, mafatiaga, ma faigata e tofatumoa-naina i le olioli ia Keriso! Ona oo ai lea i le taimi, ua tatau ai, sa Ia faaali atu ia Alema le ala mo le solaaga, ma—sa taitai i latou i le saogalemu—e Alema, o se perofeta a le Atua.

A o tatou tulimata’i atu ia Keriso ma mulimuli i Lana perofeta, o le a taitaiina foi i tatou ia Keriso ma le olioli o Lana talalelei. Sa aoao mai e Peresitene Nelson: “O le olioli e mamana, ma o le taulai atu i le olioli e aumai ai le mana o le Atua i o tatou olaga. E pei o mea uma, o Iesu Keriso o lo tatou faataitaiga sili, ‘o lē na onosai i le satauro, ona o le olioli sa tuu i ona luma’ [Eperu 12:2].”

Na maliu talu ai nei lo’u tina; sa o se mea na faateia ai. Ou te alofa i lo’u tina ma ou te lei fuafua e maliu talavou o ia. Ae o lona maliu, na matou maua ai ma lo’u aiga le faanoanoa ma le olioli. Ua ou iloa, ona o Ia, e le’i maliu o ia—o loo ola o ia!. Ma ua ou iloina ona o Keriso ma ki o le perisitua ua toefuatai mai e ala i le Perofeta o Iosefa Samita, o le a ma toe faatasi ai ma ia. O faanoanoaga i le maliu ai o lo’u tina, ua tofatumoa-naina i le olioli ia Keriso! Ua ou iloina o le “mafaufau faaselesitila” ma le “faamuamua o le Atua” e aofia ai le tulimata’i atu i le olioli o loo maua ia Keriso.

O loo Ia valaaulia mai ma le alofa, “Ia outou o mai ia te au, o outou uma o e tigaina ma mafatia i avega, o a’u foi e malolo ai outou.” I le suafa o Iesu Keriso, amene.