

The Joy of Our Redemption

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Shangwe ya Ukombozi Wetu

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Jesus Christ's love and power can save each of us from our mistakes, weaknesses, and sins and help us to become something more.

About 10 years ago I felt impressed to paint a portrait of the Savior. Though I am an artist, this felt a bit overwhelming. How was I to paint a portrait of Jesus Christ that captured His Spirit? Where was I to begin? And where would I find the time?

Even with my questions, I decided to move forward and trust that the Lord would help me. But I had to keep moving and leave the possibility to Him. I prayed, pondered, researched, and sketched and was blessed to find help and resources. And what was a white canvas started to become something more.

The process wasn't easy. Sometimes it didn't look as I had hoped. Sometimes there were moments of inspired strokes and ideas. And many times, I just had to try again and again and again.

When I thought the oil painting was finally complete and dry, I began to apply a transparent varnish to protect it from dirt and dust. As I did, I noticed the hair in the painting start to change, smear, and dissolve. I quickly realized that I had applied the varnish too soon, that part of the painting was still wet!

I had literally wiped away a portion of my painting with the varnish. Oh, how my heart sank. I felt as though I had just destroyed what God had helped me to do. I cried and felt sick inside. In despair, I did what anyone would typical-

Upendo na nguvu za Yesu Kristo zinaweza kumukoa kila mmoja wetu kutoka kwa makosa yetu, udhaifu, na dhambi zetu na kutusaidia tuwe kitu kingine zaidi.

Karibu miaka 10 iliyopita nilihisi msukumo wa kupaka rangi picha ya Mwokozi. Ingawa mimi ni msanii, hii ilionekana kidogo ya kucho-sha. Ni kwa jinsi ganimiminingechora picha ya Yesu Kristo inayoonyesha Roho Wake? Ni wapi ninganzia? Ni wapi ningepata muda?

Hata kwa maswali yangu, niliamua kusonga mbele na kutumaini kwamba Bwana angenisaidia. Lakini ilinibidi kusonga mbele na kuachayan-ayoweze kana Kwake. Nilisali, nikatafakari, nikatafiti, na kuchora, na nilibarikiwa kupata msaada na nyenzo. Na kilichokuwa turubai nyupe kikaanza kuwa kitu kingine zaidi.

Mchakato huu haukuwa rahisi. Wakati mwingine haukuonekana kama nilivyotarajia. Wakati mwingine kulikuwa na nyakati za uvuvio wa kuweka mistari na mawazo mengine. Na mara nyingi, nililazimika tu kujaribu tena na tena.

Nilipodhani kuwa mchoro wa rangi ya mafuta ulikuwa umekamilika na kukauka, nilianza kutumia vanishi inayoangaza ili kuukinga dhidi ya uchafu na vumbi. Nilipofanya hivyo, niligundua nywele kwenye mchoro zilianza kubadilika, kutawanyika na kupotea. Kwa haraka niligundua kuwa nilipaka vanishi mapema sana, ile sehemu ya mchoro ilikuwa bado haijakauka!

Kumbe nilikuwa nimefuta sehemu ya mchoro wangu kwa vanishi. Ee, jinsi gani moyo wangu ulifadhaika. Nilihisi kama vile nimeharibu kile ambacho Mungu alinisaidia kufanya. Nililia na kujihisi mgonjwa ndani. Katika huzuni, nilifanya

ly do in a situation like this: I called my mother. She wisely and calmly said, “You won’t get back what you had, but do the very best you can with what you’ve got.”

And I Partook, by Kristin M. Yee

So I prayed and pled for help and painted through the night to repair things. And I remember looking at the painting in the morning—it looked better than it did before. How was that possible? What I thought was a mistake without mend was an opportunity for His merciful hand to be manifest. He was not done with the painting, and He was not done with me. What joy and relief filled my heart. I praised the Lord for His mercy, for this miracle that not only saved the painting but taught me more about His love and power to save each of us from our mistakes, weaknesses, and sins and to help us become something more.

Just as the depth of my gratitude for the Savior grew as He mercifully helped me to repair the “unrepairable” painting, so has my personal love and gratitude for my Savior intensified as I’ve sought to work with Him on my weaknesses and to be forgiven of my mistakes. I will forever be grateful to my Savior that I can change and be cleansed. He has my heart, and I hope to do whatever He would have me do and become.

Repenting allows us to feel God’s love and to know and love Him in ways we would never otherwise know. Of the woman who anointed the Savior’s feet, He said, “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.” She loved Jesus much, for He had forgiven her much.

There is such relief and hope in knowing that we can try again—that, as Elder David A. Bednar taught, we can receive an ongoing remission of our sins through the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost as we truly and sincerely repent.

The redeeming power of Jesus Christ is one of the greatest promised blessings of our covenants. Ponder this as you participate in sacred ordinances. Without it, we could not return home to the presence of our Father in Heaven and

kile ambacho kila mmoja hakika angeweza kufanya katika hali kama ile: nilimpigia simu mama yangu. Kwa hekima na upole alisema, “Huwezi kupata tena kile ulichokuwa nacho, lakini fanya vizuri zaidi uwezavyo kwa kile ulicho nacho.”

Na Nilipokea, na Kristin M. Yee

Hivyo nilisali na kusihi kwa ajili ya msaada na kuchora usiku kucha ili kurekebisha mambo. Na nakumbuka nilipoangalia mchoro asubuhi—ulionekana mzuri kuliko ilivyokuwa mwanzo. Je, iliwezekana vipi? Nilichodhani lilikuwa ni kosa lisilo na marekebisho ilikuwa ni fursa ya mkono Wake wa huruma kudhihirishwa. Yeye hakuwa amemalizana na mchoro huu, na Yeye hakuwa amemalizana na nami. Shangwe kiasi gani ilijaza nafsi yangu. Nilimtukuza Mungu kwa huruma Yake, kwa muujiza huu ambao si tu uliokoa mchoro bali ulinifundisha upendo Wake na nguvu ya kutuokoa kutoka makosa yetu, udhaifu, na dhambi zetu na kutusaidia tuwe kitu kingine zaidi.

Kadiri kina cha shukrani yangu kwa Mwokozi kilivyoongezeka kwa kadiri alivyonisaidia kwa huruma kurekebisha mchoro “usiorekebika,” ndivyo upendo wangu binafsi na shukrani kwa Mwokozi vilivyoongezeka nilipotafuta kufanya Naye kazi katika udhaifu wangu na kusamehewa makosa yangu. Nitakuwa milele mwenye shukrani kwa Mwokozi wangu kwamba naweza kubadilikana kutakaswa. Yeye ana moyo wangu, na ninatumaini kufanya chochote ambacho Yeye angetaka mimi nifanye na kuwa.

Kutubu huwezesha kuhisi upendo wa Mungu na kumjua na kumpenda katika njia ambazo kamwe tusingeweza kuzijua. Kwa mwanamke aliyeipaka mafuta miguu ya Mwokozi, Yeye alisema, “dhambi Zake, ambazo ni nyingi zimesamehewa; kwani alipenda sana: bali kwa yule aliyesamehewa kidogo, huyo hupenda kidogo.” Alimpenda Yesu sana, kwani Yesu alikuwa amemsamehe mengi.

Kuna faraja na tumaini katika kujua kwambatumunawezakujaribu tena—kwamba, kama Mzee David A. Bednar alivyofundisha, tunaweza kupokea ondoleo endelevu la dhambi zetu kupitia nguvu ya utakaso ya Roho Mtakatifu kadiri tunavyotubu kwa dhati.

Nguvu ya ukombozi ya Yesu Kristo ni mojawapo ya baraka kubwa zilizoahidiwa za maagano yetu. Tafakari kuhusu hili kadiri unavyoshiriki ibada takatifu za wokovu. Bila hiyo, tusingeweza kurudi nyumbani kwenye uwepo wa

those we love.

I know that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is mighty to save. As the Son of God, who atoned for the sins of the world and laid down His own life and took it up again, He holds the power of redemption and resurrection. He has made possible immortality for all and eternal life for those who choose Him. I know that through His atoning sacrifice, we can repent and truly be cleansed and redeemed. It is a miracle He loves you and me in this way.

He has said, “Will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?” He can heal the “waste places” of your soul—the places made dry, harsh, and desolate by sin and sorrow—and “make [your] wilderness like Eden.”

Just as we cannot comprehend the agony and depth of Christ’s suffering in Gethsemane and on the cross, so we “cannot measure the bounds nor fathom the depths of [His] divine forgiveness,” mercy, and love.

You may feel at times that it’s not possible to be redeemed, that perhaps you are an exception to God’s love and the Savior’s atoning power because of what you are struggling with or because of what you’ve done. But I testify that you are not beneath the Master’s reach. The Savior “descended below all things” and is in a divine position to lift you and claim you from the darkest abyss and bring you into “his marvellous light.” Through His sufferings, He has made a way for each of us to overcome our personal weaknesses and sins. “He has all power to save every man that believeth on his name and bringeth forth fruit meet for repentance.”

Just as it required work and pleading for heaven’s help to repair the painting, it takes work, sincerity of heart, and humility to bring “forth fruit meet for repentance.” These fruits include exercising our faith and trust in Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice, offering to God a broken heart and a contrite spirit, confessing and forsaking sin, restoring that which has been damaged to the best of our ability, and striving to live righteously.

To truly repent and change, we must first be “convinced of our sins.” A person does not see the need to take medicine unless they understand that they are ill. There may be times we may not be willing to look inside ourselves and see that

Baba yetu wa Mbinguni na wale tuwapendao.

Ninajua kwamba Bwana na Mwokozi, Yesu Kristo, ni mwenye nguvu za kuokoa. Kama Mwana wa Mungu, alijitoka dhabihu kwa ajili ya dhambi za ulimwengu na kuyatoa maisha Yakena kuyachukua tena, Yeye anabeba nguvu za ukombozi na ufufuko. Yeye amewezesha kutokufa kwa wote na uzima wa milele kwa wale wanaomchagua. Ninajua kwamba kupitia dhabihu Yake ya upatanisho, tunaweza kutubu na kutakaswa kabisa na kukombolewa. Ni muujiza kwamba Yeye anakupenda wewe na mimi katika njia hii.

Yeye amesema, “Je, hamtarudi kwangu sasa, na kutubu dhambi zenu, na kugeuka, ili niwaponye?” Yeye anaweza kuponya “sehemu chakavu” za nafsi yako—sehemu zilizokaushwa, kali na zenye ukiwa wa dhambi na huzuni—na “kufanya jangwa [lako] kuwa kama Edeni.”

Kama ambavyo hatuwezi kutambua maumivu na kina cha mateso ya Kristo katika Gethsemane na msalabani, vivyo hivyo “hatuwezi kupima mipaka wala kujua kina cha msamaha [Wake] wa kiungu,” huruma na upendo.

Unaweza kuhisi wakati mwingine kuwa sio rahisi kukombolewa, kwamba pengine wewe umetengwa na upendo wa Mungu na nguvu ya ukombozi ya Mwokozi kwa sababu ya unayoyapitia au kwa sababu ya yale uliyoyafanya. Lakini ninashuhudia kwamba hauko mbali na mfiko wa Bwana. Mwokozi “alijishusha chini ya mambo yote” na yupo kwenye nafasi ya kiungu kukuinua na kukutoa gizani na kukuleta kwenye “mwanga wake mkuu.” Kupitia kuteseka Kwake, Yeye ametengeneza njia kwa kila mmoja wetu kushinda udhaifu na dhambi. “Ana nguvuzoteza kumwokoakila mwanadamu anayeamini katika jina lake na kuzaa matunda ya toba.”

Kama vile ilivyohitaji kazi na kusihi kwa ajili ya msaada wa mbinguni ili kurekebisha mchoro ule, pia inahitaji kazi, uaminifu wa moyo, na unyenyekevu kuvuna “matunda ya toba.” Matunda haya yanajumuisha kutumia imani yetu katika Yesu Kristo na dhabihu Yake ya upatanisho, kutoa kwa Mungu moyo uliovunjika na roho iliyopondeka, kukiri na kuziacha dhambi, kurejesha kile ambacho kiliharibiwa kwa kadiri ya uwezo wetu wote, na kujitahidi kuishi kwa uadilifu.

Ili kutubu kweli na kubadilika, ni lazima kwanza tuwe “tumesadikishwa dhambi zetu.” Mtu haoni ulazima wa kutumia dawa mpaka wajue kwamba wanaumwa. Kunaweza kuwepo nyakati ambazo hatupendi kujitazama kwa ndani

which really needs healing and repair.

In C. S. Lewis's writings, Aslan poses these words to a man who has entangled himself in his own devices: "Oh [humankind], how cleverly you defend yourselves [from] all that might do you good!"

Where might you and I be defending ourselves from those things that might do us good?

Let us not defend ourselves from the good that God desires to bless us with. From the love and mercy that He desires us to feel. From the light and knowledge He desires to bestow upon us. From the healing that He knows we so readily need. From the deeper covenant relationship He intends for all His sons and daughters.

I pray we may lay aside any "weapons of war" that we've consciously or even unconsciously taken up to defend ourselves from the blessings of God's love. Weapons of pride, selfishness, fear, hate, offense, complacency, unrighteous judgment, jealousies—anything that would keep us from loving God with all our hearts and keeping all our covenants with Him.

As we live our covenants, the Lord can give us the help and power we need to both recognize and overcome our weaknesses, including the spiritual parasite of pride. Our prophet has said: "Repentance is the pathway to purity, and purity brings power."

"And oh, how we will need His power in the days ahead."

Like my painting, the Lord is not done with us when we make a mistake, nor does He flee when we falter. Our need for healing and help is not a burden to Him, but the very reason He came. The Savior Himself said:

"Behold, I have come unto the world to bring redemption unto the world, to save the world from sin."

"Mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come, him will I receive; and blessed are those who come unto me."

So come—come ye that are weary, worn, and sad; come and leave your labors and find rest in Him who loves you most. Take His yoke upon you, for He is gentle and lowly in heart.

na kuona kile ambacho kinahitaji uponyaji na marekebisho.

Katika maandishi ya C. S. Lewis, Aslan alitoa hoja kwa maneno haya kwa mtu ambaye amejingiza mitegoni kwa njia zake: "Oh [binadamu], jinsi gani kwa werevu unajilinda mwenyewe dhidi ya yale ambayo yanguweza kukufanyia vyema!"

Ni wapi wewe na mimi tunaweza kuwa tunaajilinda dhidi ya mambo yote ambayo yanguweza kutufanya tuwe wema?

Acha tusijilinde dhidi ya mambo mazuri ambayo Mungu anatamani kutubariki nayo. Kutoka kwenye upendo na huruma ambao Yeye anatamani sisi tuihisi. Kutoka kwenye nuru na maarifa ambavyo Yeye anatamani kutupatia. Kutoka kwenye uponyaji ambao Yeye anajua tunahitaji bila shaka. Kutoka kwenye mahusiano ya kina ya maagano Yeye anayoyakusudia kwa ajili ya wana na mabinti Zake wote.

Ninasali kwamba tuweke kando "silaha zozote za vita" ambazo kwa kujua au kutokujua tumechukua kujilinda dhidi ya baraka za upendo wa Mungu. Silaha za kiburi, ubinafsi, woga, chuki, makwazo, unafiki, hukumu zisizo haki, wivu—kitu chochote ambacho kinaweza kutuzuia kumpenda Mungu kwa moyo wetu wotena kushika maagano yetu yote pamoja Naye.

Kadiri tunavyoishi maagano yetu, Bwana anaweza kutupa nguvu na msaada tunaohitaji ili kutambuana kushinda udhaifu wetu, ikijumuisha kupe wa kiroho wa kiburi. Nabii wetu amesema:

"Toba ndiyo njia ya kuelekea usafi, na usafi huleta nguvu."

"Na lo, ni kiasi gani tutahitaji nguvu Yake katika siku zijazo."

Kama mchoro wangu, Bwana hajamalizana nasi pale tunapokosea, wala Yeye haondoki pale tunaposita. Uhitaji wetu wa kuponywa na kusaidiwa sio mzigo Kwake, bali ndiyo sababu ya Yeye kuja. Mwokozi Mwenyewe alisema:

"Tazama, nimekuja duniani kuleta ukombozi katika ulimwengu, ili kuiokoa dunia kutoka dhambini."

"Mkono wangu wa rehema umenyooshwa kwenu, na yeyote atakayekuja, nitampokea; na heri ni wao ambao huja kwangu."

Kwa hiyo njooni—njooni ninyi nyote msumbukao, wagonjwa na wenye huzuni; njooni na muachane na kazi zenu na mpate pumziko ndani yake Yeye awapendaye sana. Jitieni nira yangu, mjifunze kwangu; kwa kuwa mimi ni mpole na

Our Heavenly Father and Savior see you. They know your heart. They care about what you care about, including those you love.

The Savior can redeem that which was lost, including broken and fractured relationships. He has made a way for all that is fallen to be redeemed—to breathe life into that which feels dead and hopeless.

If you are struggling with a situation you think you should have overcome by now, don't give up. Be patient with yourself, keep your covenants, repent often, seek the help of your leaders if needed, and go to the house of the Lord as regularly as you can. Listen for and heed the promptings He sends you. He will not abandon His covenant relationship with you.

There have been difficult and complex relationships in my life that I have struggled with and sincerely sought to improve. At times I felt like I was failing more often than not. I wondered, "Did I not fix things the last time? Did I not truly overcome my weakness?" I've learned over time that I am not necessarily defective; rather, there is often more to work on and more healing that is needed.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson taught: "Surely the Lord smiles upon one who desires to come to judgment worthily, who resolutely labors day by day to replace weakness with strength. Real repentance, real change may require repeated attempts, but there is something refining and holy in such striving. Divine forgiveness and healing flow quite naturally to such a soul."

Each day is a new day filled with hope and possibilities because of Jesus Christ. Each day you and I can come to know, as Mother Eve proclaimed, "the joy of our redemption," the joy of being made whole, the joy of feeling God's unfailing love for you.

I know that our Father in Heaven and Savior love you. Jesus Christ is the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind. He lives. Through His atoning sacrifice, the bands of sin and death were forever broken so that we might be free to choose healing, redemption, and eternal life with those we love. And I testify of these things in His name, Jesus Christ, amen.

mnyenyekevu wa moyo.

Baba yetu wa Mbinguni na Mwokozi wana-kuona. Wanaujua moyo wako. Wanajali kile unachokijali, ikiwa ni pamoja na wale unaowapenda.

Mwokozi anaweza kukomboa kile kilichopotea, ikiwa ni pamoja na mahusiano yaliyovunjika. Yeye ameshatengeneza njia kwa wale wote walioanguka ili kuokolewa—kurejesha uzima katika kile kinachohisi kufa na kukosa thamani.

Kama unahangaika na hali unayohisi unatakiwa uwe umeishinda kwa sasa, usikate tamaa. Kuwa mvumilivu, tii maagano yako, tubu kila mara, tafuta usaidizi wa viongozi wako inapohitajika, na nenda kwenye nyumba ya Bwana kila mara kadiri uwezavyo. Sikiliza na fuata hisia ambazo Yeye anakutumia. Yeye hatatupilia mbali maagano Yake na uhusiano Wake na wewe.

Pamekuwepo na mahusiano magumu na changamani katika maisha yangu ambayo nimehangahika nayo na hakika nimetafuta kuyaboresha. Wakati mwingine nilihisi kama nazidi kuanguka mara nyingi kuliko kawaida. Nilijiuliza, "Je, sikurekebisha mambo wakati uliopita? Hivi hakika sikushinda udhaifu wangu?" Nimejifunza kwa muda sasa kuwa sio kwamba sifai kabisa; bali, kuna mengi ya kufanya na uponyaji zaidi unaohitajika.

Mzee D. Todd Christofferson alifundisha: "Hakika Bwana anatabasamu juu ya mtu anayetamani kuja kwenye kiti cha hukumu akiwa anastahili, ambaye ameamua siku hadi siku kubadilisha udhaifu kuwa nguvu. Toba ya kweli, badiliko la kweli vinaweza kuhitaji kujaribu kila mara, lakini kuna kitu kinachotakasa na kitakatifu katika jitihada hizi. Msamaha wa kiungu na uponyaji hutiririka kiasili kwenye nafsi kama hiyo."

Kila siku ni siku mpya iliyojaa tumaini na uwezekano kwa sababu ya Yesu Kristo. Kila siku mimi na wewe tunaweza kujua, kama Mama Eva alivyotangaza, "shangwe ya ukombozi wetu," shangwe ya kufanywa wazima, shangwe ya kuhisi upendo wa Mungu wa kudumu kwako.

Ninajua kwamba Baba yetu wa Mbinguni na Mwokozi wanakupenda. Yesu Kristo ni Mwokozi na Mkombozi wa wanadamu wote. Yu hai. Kupitia dhabihu Yake ya Upatanisho, kamba za dhambi na kifo zilivunjwamileleili tuweze kuwahurukuchagua uponyaji, ukombozi, na uzima wa milele tukiwa na wale tunaowapenda. Ninashuhudia juu ya mambo hayakatika jina takatifu la Yesu Kristo, amina.