

“I Am He”

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“Ni Mimi”

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Kaimu Rais wa Akidi ya Mitume Kumi na Wawili

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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.

Hisani ya Kristo—hudhihirishwa katika uaminifu kamili kwa mapenzi ya uungu—ipo toka kitambo na inaendelea kuwepo na huendelea kuendelea.

Ni siku ya Sabato, na tumekusanyika kuzungumza juu ya Kristo na Yeye kusulubiwa. Najua Kristo Yu hai.

Fikiria tukio hili kutoka katika wiki ya mwisho ya maisha ya Yesu duniani. Umati ulikuwa umekusanyika, ikijumuisha askari wa Kirumi waliojihami kwa marungu na mapanga viunoni. Wakiongozwa na maofisa kutoka kwa makuhani wakuu ambao walikuwa na tochi mikononi, kombania hii yenye arihaikuwaimekuja kuteka mji. Usiku huu walikuwa wanamtafuta mtu mmoja tu, mtu ambaye hakujulikana kubeba silaha, bila mafunzo ya kijeshi, au kujihusisha na kupigana wakati wowote katika maisha Yake yote.

Askari walipokuwa wanakaribia, Yesu, katika juhudi ya kuwalinda wanafunzi Wake, alisonga mbele na kusema, “Ni nani mnayemtafuta? Wao wakamjibu, “Yesu Mnazareti.” Yesu akawaambia, “Ni mimi. ... Punde ... alipowaambia, Ni mimi, walirudi nyuma, wakaanguka chini.”

Kwangu mimi, huo ni mojawapo ya mistari yenye kisisimua sana katika maandiko yote. Miongoni mwa mambo mengine, unaniambia wazi kwambakuwa tu kwenye uwepowa Mwana wa Mungu—Yehova mkuu wa Agano la Kale na Mchungaji Mwema wa Agano Jipya ambaye habebi silaha ya aina yoyote—kwambakusikia tu sauti ya Kimbilio hili kutoka kwa Dhoruba, huyu Mfalme wa Amani inatosha kuwafanya wapinzani wajikwae wakitaka kukimbia, wakirundikana kwa fujo na kulifanya kundi lote kutamani wangepangiwa kazi za jikoni usiku huo.

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 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 re-

Siku chache tu kabla, wakati Yeye alipoingia jijini kwa shangwe, “mji wote ulitaharuki,” maandiko yanasema, wakiulizana, “Ni nani huyu?” Ni-naweza tu kuwaza kwamba “Ni nani huyu?” ni swali ambalo liliwakanganya askari hao waliokuwa sasa wanauliza!

Jibula swali hilo halingeweza kuwa katika mwonekano Wake, kwani Isaya alikuwa ametoa unabii karne saba mapema kwamba “Yeye hana umbo wala uzuri; Na tumwonapo hana uzuri hata tumtamani.” Haikuwa katika mavazi Yake ya ustarabu au katika ukwasi Wake mwingi wa kibinafsi, ambavyo vyote Yeye hakuwa navyo. Halingewezekana kuwa wa mafunzo yoyote ya kitaalamu katika masinagogi ya eneo hilo kwa sababu hatuna ushahidi wowote kwamba Yeye aliwahi kujifunza kutoka kwa yeyote kati yao, ingawa hata katika ujana Wake Yeye angeweza kuwakanganya sana wasomi na wanasheria, akiwashangaza na mafundisho Yake “kama mtu aliyekuwa na mamlaka.”

Kutoka kwenye fundisho Lake hilo ndani ya hekalu mpaka kuingia kwake Yerusalemu kwa ushindi na huku kukamatwa, kusiko haki, Yesu mara kwa mara aliwekwa kwenye hali ngumu, zisizoeleweka ambazo daima alikuwa mshindi—ushindi ambao hatuna melezo yake isipokuwa kwa kupitia vinasaba vya kiungu.

Na bado katika historia nzima wengi wamerahisisha, hata kushusha thamani ya mfano wetu kumhusu Yeye na ushahidi Wake wa Yeye ni nani. Wameshusha thamani wema Wake kuwa kitu cha kujidai, haki Yake kuwa hasira, rehema Yake kuwa uhuru. Sisi tunapaswa tujihadharu na mitazamo miepesi kuhusu Yeye ambayo inapuuza mafundisho tuyaonayo magumu kwetu. “Upuuzi” huu umekuwa wa kweli hata kuhusu wema Wake wa juu, upendo Wake.

Wakati wa huduma Yake duniani, alifundisha kwamba kuna ya amri mbili kuu. Zimefundishwa katika mkutano huu na daima zitafundishwa: “Mpende Bwana Mungu wako [na] mpende jirani yako kama nafsi yako.” Ikiwa sisi tutamfuata Mwokozi kwa uaminifu katika hizi sheria mbili muhimu zilizoungana bila kuchanganulika, tunapaswa kushikilia kwa nguvu kile ambacho Yeyekwa kwelialisema. Na kile ambacho Yeye-kwa kwelialisema kilikuwa, “Kama mnanipenda, zishikeni amri zangu.” Jioni ile ile, Yeye alisema “pendaneni; kama nilivyowapenda ninyi.”

Katika maandiko hayo, virai hivyo vya kusta-hilisha vinafafanua ukweli, upendo kama wa

ferred to as charity—are absolutely essential.

What do they define? How did Jesus love?

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,

Kristo—wakati mwingine huitwa hisani—ni vya muhimu sana.

Vinafafanua nini? Je, Yesu alipenda vipi?

Kwanza, Yeye alipenda kwa “moyo [Wake] wote, uwezo, akili na nguvu,” ikimpatia Yeye uwezo wa kuponya maumivu ya kina na kutangaza uhalisia wa ukweli mgumu. Kwa kifupi, Yeye ni mtu ambaye anatoa neema na anasisitiza ukweli kwa wakati huo huo. Kama Lehi alivyo-sema katika baraka yake kwa mwanawe Yakobo, “Ukombozi unakuja kupitia Masiya Mtakatifu; kwani amejaa neema na kweli.” Upendo Wake huruhusu kumbatio wakati linapohitajika na kikombe kichungu kama inahitajika kimezwe. Kwa hiyo tunajaribu kupenda—kwa moyo wetu wote, uwezo, akili na nguvu—kwa sababu hii ndiyo njia ambayo Yeye anatupenda sisi.

Sifa ya pili ya hisani ya Yesu ilikuwa ni utiifu Wake kwakila nenolitokalo kinywani mwa Mungu, daima akiwianisha mapenzi na tabia Yake kwa yale ya Baba Yake wa Mbinguni.

Wakati alipowasili bara la Amerika kufuatia Ufufuko Wake, Kristo aliwaambia Wanefi: “Tazama, Mimi Ndimi Yesu Kristo. ... Na nimekunywa kutoka kwa kikombe kichungu ambacho Baba amenipatia, ... ambamo ndani yake nimevumilia mapenzi ya Baba ... kutoka mwanzo.”

Juu ya njia tofauti tofauti ambazo Yeye angeweza kujitambulisha Mwenyewe, Yesu alifanya hivyo kwa kutangaza utiifu Wake kwa mapenzi ya Baba—pasipo kujali kabisa kwamba ilikuwa punde tu kabla ya muda wa hitaji Lake kuu, Mwana huyu Mzaliwa wa Pekee wa Mungu alihisi kutelekezwa na Baba Yake. Hisani ya Kristo—inayojidhihirisha katika uaminifu kamili kwa mapenzi matakatifu—upo na unaendelea kuwepo, sio tu katika siku rahisi na za faraja lakini hasa hata katika siku za kiza na zilizo ngumu sana.

Yesu alikuwa “mtu wa huzuni,” maandiko yanasema. Alipitia huzuni, uchovu, kuvunjika moyo na upweke wa hali ya juu. Katika nyakati hizi na nyakati zote, upendo wa Yesu haushindwi, na wala wa Baba Yake. Kwa upendo ulio-komaa, wa kweli—aina ya ule unaotoa mfano, unaowezesha, na unaohamishika—upendo wetu pia hautashindwa.

Kwa hiyo, kama nyakati zingine kwa kadiri unavyojaribu, ndivyo inavyoonekana kuwa vigumu sana; kama vile unavyojaribu kufanyia kazi

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.

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

vizuizi na mapungufu yako, unagundua kuna mtu au kitu kinachoazimia kujaribu imani yako; kama unafanya kazi kwa bidii sana, bado unahisi nyakati za uoga zikikukamata, kumbuka kwamba imekuwa hivyo kwa baadhi ya watu waaminifu wa ajabu katika kila kipindi. Pia kumbuka kwamba kuna nguvu katika ulimwengu inayoazimia kupingakila kitu kizuri unachojaribu kufanya.

Kwa hiyo, iwe katika wingi na pia katika umasikini, iwe katika pongezi za binafsi na pia ukosoaji wa umma, iwe katika vipengele vitakatifu vya Urejesho na pia katika mapungufu ya binadamu ambayo yatakuwa sehemu yake, tunabakia kwenye njiaya Kanisa la Kristo la kweli. Kwa nini? Kwa sababu kama vile Mkombozi wetu, tulijiandikisha kwa ajili ya kozi yote—sio kwa jaribio fupi bali hadi mtihamu wa mwisho. Shangwe katika hili ni kwamba Mwalimu Mkuu ametupatia sisi sote majibu ya wazikabla ya kozi kuanza. Zaidi ya hayo, tuna walimu wengi ambao hutukumbusha majibu hayo katika kila kipindi wakati tuwapo njiani. Lakini bila shaka, hakuna kati ya haya yatazaa matunda kama tunakwepa darasa.

“Mnamtafuta nani?” Kwa mioyo yetu yote tunajibu, “Yesu wa Nazareti.” Wakati Yeye anaposema, “Ni mimi,” tunapiga goti na kukiri kwa ulimi wetu kwamba Yeye ni Kristo aliye hai, kwamba Yeye peke yake alilipia dhambi zetu, kwamba Yeye alikuwa anatubeba hata wakati tulipodhani ametutelekeza. Tutakaposimama mbele Yake na kuona vidonda katika mikono Yake na miguu, tutaanza kuelewa kile ilichomaanisha Kwake kubeba dhambi zetu na kuzoea huzuni, kuwa mtiifu kabisa kwa mapenzi ya Baba Yake—yote hayo sababu ya upendo safi kwetu. Ili kuwatambulisha wengine kwenye imani, toba, ubatizo, kipawa cha Roho Mtakatifu na kupokea baraka zetu katika nyumba ya Bwana—hizi ni “kanuni na ibada” za msingi ambazo zinafunua upendo wetu kwa Mungu na jirani na kwa shangwe kuonyesha mfano wa Kanisa la kweli la Kristo.

Akina kaka na dada, ninashuhudia kwamba Kanisa la Yesu Kristo la Watakatifu wa Siku za Mwisho ni chombo ambacho Mungu ametoa kwa ajili kuinuliwa kwetu. Injili inayofundishwa na Kanisa hili ni ya kweli, na ukuhani unaolihalisha siyo zao. Ninashuhudia kwamba Russell M. Nelson ni nabii wa Mungu wetu, kama vile watangulizi Wake walivyofanya na kama vile warithi Wake watakavofanya. Na siku moja huo mwongozo wa kinabii utaongoza kizazi kumwo-

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.

na Mjumbe wetu wa Ukombozi akishuka kama vile “radi ... itokavyo mashariki,” na tutatamka, “Yesu wa Nazareti.” Kwa mikono milele iliyonyooshwa na upendo usio na unafiki, Yeye atajibu, “Ni mimi.” Ninaahidi hivyo kwa nguvu za kitume na mamlaka ya jina Lake takatifu, hata Yesu Kristo, amina.