

Focus on Jesus Christ and His Gospel

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Rōtahi i ni'a ia Iesu te Mesia 'e tāna 'evanelia

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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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Once the football team learned to ignore the many distractions facing them and focused

'Ia vaiiho ana'e tātou i te mau fa'anevanevara'a o te ao nei 'e 'ia rōtahi ana'e i ni'a ia Iesu Mesia 'e Tāna 'evanelia, e pāpū ia tātou ē, e roa'a te manu'ia rahi.

I te matahiti 1996, 'ua roa'a te feti'a 'auro i te pupu tu'e pōpō a te tāne nō Nitēria i te Tū'aro Nui nō Atlanta, i te Fenua Marite. I te hopera'a te ha'utira'a, 'ua haere mai te mau naho'a ta'ata 'o'aoa nā roto i te mau aro'a o te mau 'oire ato'a i Nitēria ; 'ua fa'ariro-'oi'oi-hia teie fenua e 200 mirioni ta'ata 'ei 'ōro'a rahi i te hora piti i te po'ipo'i ! 'Ua 'i te 'o'aoa, te poupou 'e te 'ana'anataera'a 'a tāmā'a, 'a hīmene 'e 'a 'ori noa ai te ta'ata. I terā-ra'a ra taime, 'ua tāhō'e Nitēria 'e 'o'aoa rahi tō Nitēria 'ia riro 'ei ta'ata Nitēria.

Nā mua a'e i te Tū'aro Nui, 'ua fa'aruru teie pupu e rave rahi fifi. I te ha'amatarā'a o te ta-ta'ura'a, 'ua fa'a'orehia tā rātou moni tauturu. 'Ua fa'aitoito noa te pupu ē 'aita e 'ahu, e vāhi tano nō te ha'api'ipi'ira'a, e mā'a 'e te hōroira'a 'ahu.

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I te hō'e taime, fa'atata roa hope te mau minuti o te ha'utira'a i reira rātou e pau ai, 'aita rā teie pupu nō Nitēria i fa'aea ē upōoti'a a'enei. I terā taime faufa'a roa, 'ua tau i tō rātou hi'ora'a ia rātou iho. Ma teie ti'aturira'a 'āpi 'e te itoitō ta'ata hō'e 'e a te pupu, te tāhō'e 'e te fa'aotira'a pāpū, 'ua vaiiho rātou i te hiti e rave rahi fa'anevanevara'a 'e e rōtahi i ni'a i te fā, 'oia ho'i 'ia roa'a te rē. Nā teie rōtahira'a i fa'aupo'oti'a i te feti'a 'auro, 'e 'ua pi'ihia rātou e te nūna'a Nitēria « Te pupu Moemoeā ». I teie ā mahana, tē hi'ohia nei teie pupu Moemoeā nō te Tū'aro Nui nō te matahiti 1996, 'ei rēni arata'i i roto i te tū'arora'a Nitēria.

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I te taime iho'a teie pupu tu'e pōpō i tāu'a 'ore ai i te mau fa'anevanevara'a i fa'aruruhia e rātou,

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 promise “of good things to come.” So trust Jesus Christ with your child, for He is the strength of

’ua manuia hau atu rātou i tei mana’ohia ’e ’ua tae mai te ’oa’oa rahi. (Mai ia mātou ato’a e te nūnā nō Nitēria !)

Hōē ā ato’a, ’ia vaiiho anaē tātou i te mau fa’anevanevara’a o te ao nei ’e ’ia rōtahi anaē i ni’a ia Iesu Mesia ’e Tāna ’evanelia, e pāpū ia tātou ē, e manuia rahi atu i tei mana’ohia ’e e roa’a te ’oa’oa fāito ’ore. ’Ua ha’api’i mai te peresideni Russell M. Nelson ē, « Mai te mea tei ni’a te fa’atumura’a o tō tātou orara’a [...] ia Iesu Mesia ’e i tāna ’evanelia, ’ei reira te ’oa’oa e tae mai ai noa atu te mea e tupu ra—’aore rā ’aita e tupu ra—i roto i tō tātou orara’a ».

Tē pure nei au, ’ia tauturu te Vārua Mo’a ia tātou pā’ato’a ’ia rave mai ’e ’ia hāro’aro’a i te anirā’a a te peresideni Nelson ’ia rōtahi tō tātou orara’a i ni’a ia « Iesu Mesia ’e tāna ’evanelia » ’ia roa’a te ’oa’oa i ni’a i te Mesia, « noa atu te ’ohipa e tupu nei ’aore rā e ’ore e tupu rā i roto i tō tātou orara’a ».

E rave rahi ’āamu i roto i te Buka a Moromona nō te mau ta’ata tei fāriu fa’ahou mai nā roto i te rōtahira’a i ni’a ia Iesu Mesia ’e tāna ’evanelia.

’A feruri na ia Alama tamaiti. ’Ua ’ōrure hau ’oia ’e ’ua ’aro i te ’Ēkālesia. ’Ua pure ’e ’ua ha’apae tōna metua tane, o Alama, i te maa. ’Ua fā mai te hōē melahi ’e ’ua parau ia Alama ’ia tātarahapa. I taua taime ra, ’ua ha’amata Alama i te māuiui « i te māuiui nō te hōē vārua i fa’ahapahia ». I roto i tōna mau hora pōiri roa aē, ’ua ha’amana’o ’oia i tōna metua tāne i te ha’api’ira’a ē, e haere mai te Mesia nō te tara ē i te hara a tō te ao nei. A mau noa tōna ferurira’a i ni’a i teie mana’o, ’ua tāparu ’oia i te Atua ’ia aroha mai iāna. ’Ua roa’a iāna tē ’oa’oa, ’o tāna ia i parau ē, ’aita roa e mea e taea !’Ua tae mai te aroha ’e te ’oa’oa i roto ia Alama nō te mea, ’ua fa’atumu raua tōna metua tane i ni’a i te Fa’aora.

I te mau metua e tamari’i tei haere ē atu, ’a fa’aitoito ! Maoti i te aniani nō te aha ’aita te hōē melahi e haere mai ai e tauturu i tā ’outou tamari’i ’ia tatarahapa, e ha’amana’o ’ua fa’aineine te Fatu i te hōē melahi pae tino i ni’a i tōna ’ē’a : te ’episekōpo, te tahi atu ta’ata fa’atere, ’aore rā, e taeāē ’e ’aore rā, e tuahine aupuru. Mai te mea e tāmāu noa ’outou i te ha’apae i te ma’a ’e i te pure, ’ia ’ore ’outou e ha’amāu i te hōē tārena ’e aore rā, e tai’o mahana nō te Atua, e mai te mea e ti’aturi ’outou ē, tē fa’atoro mai nei ’oia i tōna rima nō te tauturu, i muri iho, e ’ite ’outou i te Atua i te ha’aputapūrā’a i te ’āau o tā ’outou tamari’i ’ia mā’iti ’oia ’ia fa’aro’o mai. E tupu mai te reira nō

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

te mea, te Mesia ʻo te ʻoaʻoa ʻia ʻe te tiʻiraʻa ; ʻO ʻoia te fafauaʻa o « te mau mea maitaʻi atoʻa e tae mai rā ». Nō reira, ʻa tiʻaturi ia Iesu Mesia nō tā ʻoutou tamariʻi, ʻo ʻoia te pūai o te mau metua tātaʻitahi, e o te mau tamariʻi tātaʻitahi.

I te taimē ʻoia i faʻariʻi ai i teie ʻoaʻoa Mesia, ʻua ora Alama tamaiti e teie ʻoaʻoa. Mea nāhea paʻi ʻoia i vai ai i roto i terā ʻoaʻoa noa atu te fifi ʻe te tāmatarāʻa ? Teie tāna i parau :

« Mai te reira mai taimē ʻe tae roa mai i teie nei, ʻua rave au i te ʻohipa ma te faʻaea ʻore, ʻia tiʻa iāʻu ʻia faʻafāriu mai i te mau taʻata ʻia tātarahapa ; ʻia tiʻa iāʻu ʻia arataʻi mai ia rātou ʻia faʻariʻi i te ʻoaʻoa rahi ʻo tāʻu i faʻariʻi [...]

« ʻE [...] ʻua hōroʻa mai te Fatu i te ʻoaʻoa rahi iāʻu nei i te hotu nō tāʻu mau ʻohipa [...]

« ʻE i tauturuhia na hoʻi au i roto i tōʻu mau ʻati ʻe tōʻu mau peʻapeʻa e rave rahi ».

ʻUa haʻamata te ʻoaʻoa Mesia nō Alama i tōna faʻaohiparāʻa i tōna faʻaroʻo i te Mesia ʻe nō tōna tāparuraʻa i tōna aroha. I muri iho, ʻua faʻaohipa ʻo Alama i tōna faʻaroʻo i te Mesia nō te tauturu ia vetahi ʻe ʻia faʻariʻi atoʻa i teie ʻoaʻoa. Nā teie mau tautururaʻa tāmau i faʻatae mai i te ʻoaʻoa rahi ia Alama, noa atu te ʻati ʻe te peʻapeʻa e rave rahi. Tē ʻite nei ʻoutou, « ʻUa here te Fatu i te tūtavarāʻa, ʻe e hōroʻa mai te tūtavarāʻa i te rē. Te mau ʻati rahi atoʻa, e « horomiʻihia tō rātou mau ʻati i roto i te ʻoaʻoa o te Mesia ».

Te tahi atoʻa pupu taʻata i roto i te Buka a Moromona tei rōtahi i niʻa ia Iesu Mesia ʻe tāna ʻevanelia i te roaraʻa o te oraraʻa ʻe ʻua faʻariʻi hoʻi i te ʻoaʻoa, ʻo rātou ʻo rātou ʻia tei patu i te ʻoire nō Helama—e vāhi i reira rātou i faʻāamu ai tā rātou mau tamariʻi ʻe ʻua tiʻa ia rātou ʻia faʻaohipa i te tiʻamāraʻa o tō rātou faʻaroʻo. ʻUa faʻatitihia teie mau taʻata parau-tiʻa e ora ra i te oraraʻa maitaʻi e te hōē pupu taʻata ʻino ʻe ʻua faʻāerehia rātou i te tiʻaraʻ tumu o te hōē taʻata nō te faʻatupu i haʻapaʻoraʻa faʻaroʻo. I te tahi taimē e tupu mai te mau ʻohipa ʻiʻino i niʻa i te mau taʻata maitaʻitaʻi.

« ʻĀreʻa rā ʻua tiʻa i te Fatu ʻia ʻavau mai i tōna ra mau taʻata ; ʻoia ʻia, tē tāmata mai rā ʻoia i tō rātou faʻaoromaʻi ʻe tō rātou faʻaroʻo hoʻi.

« ʻĀreʻa rā—ʻo ʻoia ʻo tē tiʻaturi iāna ra, e faʻateiteihia ʻia i te mahana hopeʻa ra. ʻOia ʻia, ʻua nā-reira-hia teie nei feiā.

Nāhea teie mau taʻata i faʻaoromaʻi ai i tā rātou mau ʻati ʻe te māuiui ? Nā roto i te rōtahi-raʻa i niʻa te Mesia ʻe tāna ʻevanelia. E ʻere nā tā rātou mau ʻati i faʻataʻa ia rātou ; ʻua fāriu rā rātou tātaʻitahi i te Atua ʻe ʻua faʻariro rātou ia rātou iho

covenant, and a disciple of Jesus Christ. As they remembered who they were and called upon 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 with patience 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

‘ei tamari’i nā te Atua, ‘ei tamari’i nō te fafaua’a
‘e e pipi nā Iesu Mesia. A ha’amana’o ai rātou ‘o vai
mau rātou ‘e ma te pi’i i te Atua, ‘ua fa’ari’i rātou i
te hau, te pūai ‘e i te pae hope’a, te ‘o’o i roto i te
Mesia :

« Alama ‘e tōna mau tāata [...] ‘ua nīni’i
māite atu rātou i tō rātou ‘āau iāna ; ‘e ‘ua ‘ite mai
ho’i ‘oia i te mau mana’o o tō rātou mau ‘āau.

« ‘Ua tae maira ho’i te parau a te Fatu ia rātou
i tō rātou vai-’ati-ra’a ra, nā ‘ō maira : E fa’ateitei
na ‘outou i te upō’o, ‘ia māhanahana maita’i, ‘ua
‘ite ho’i au i te parau fa’aaui tā ‘outou i fa’aaui mai
iāu ra ; e fa’aaui atu ho’i au i te faufa’a i tōu ra mau
tāata, e fa’aora atu ho’i ia rātou i te tītira’a.

‘Ei pāhonora’a, ‘ua « ha’amāmā [te Fatu] i te
mau hōpoi’a teiaha i tu’uhia i ni’a iho i tō [rātou]
mau taponu [...] ‘Oia ia, nā te Atua rātou i
fa’aitoito, i ti’a ai ia rātou i te fa’aoroma’i i te mau
‘ati ma te paruparu ‘ore, ‘e ‘ua auraro ihora rātou
ma «te ‘āau tae ‘e te fa’aoroma’i i te hina’aro ato’a
o te Fatu». A ha’amana’o ē, ‘ua vaiho teie mau Feiā
mo’a i tō rātou mau pe’ape’a, te mau māuiui ‘e te
mau ‘ati ‘ia horomi’ihia i roto i te ‘o’o i te Mesia
! I muri iho, ‘ia tae te taimē, ‘ua fa’a’ite ‘Oia ia Ala-
ma nāhea ‘ia horo ē atu, ‘e Alama—hōē perophe-
ta nō te Atua—‘ua arata’ihia ‘oia i te pāpururā’a.

‘A rōtahi ai tātou i ni’a i te Mesia ‘e ‘ia pe’e
anāe i tāna mau peropheta, te Peresideni Russell
M. Nelson, e arata’i ato’a hia tātou i te Mesia ‘e
te ‘o’o o te ‘evanelia. Mai tā peresideni Nelson
i ha’api’i : « E mana rahi tō te ‘o’o, ‘e e fa’atae te
fa’atumurā’a i ni’a i te ‘o’o i te mana o te Atua i
roto i tō tātou orara’a. I roto i te mau mea ato’a, ‘o
Iesu Mesia te hi’ora’a maita’i hope, ‘o tei fa’aoro-
ma’i i te satauro... i te [‘o’o] i tu’uhia mai i mua
i tāna aro’ [Hebera 12:2] ».

Nō fa’aru’e noa a’enei tōu metua vahine ; ‘ua
māere roa vau. ‘Ua here au i tōu māmā ‘e ‘aita vau
i mana’o ē e reva ‘o’oi’ōna nō tōna ‘āpi. Terā rā,
nā roto i tōna pohera’a, ‘ua fa’ari’i tōu ‘utuāfare
‘e ‘o vau nei, i te ‘oto e te ‘o’o. ‘Ua ‘ite rā vau ē,
maoti te Mesia, ‘aita tōu māmā i pohe ; tē ora nei
‘oia ! I teienei rā ‘ua ‘ite au ē, maoti te Mesia ‘e te
tāviri o te autahu’ara’a i fa’aho’ihia mai nā roto i
te peropheta Iosepha Semita, e ‘ite fa’ahou vau
iāna i te hōē mahana. ‘Ua horomi’ihia tōu māuiui
nō te pohera’a o tōu māmā i roto i te ‘o’o i te
Mesia ra ! Tē ‘ite ra vau ē, ‘ia « feruri tiretiera » ‘e
‘ia « vaiho i te Atua ‘ia upōoti’a » e tītau ato’a ia te
rōtahira’a i ni’a i te ‘o’o e vai rā i roto i te Mesia.

Ma te here, tē ani manihini nei ‘oia ‘ia «
Haere mai [...] iāu nei, ‘e te feiā ato’a i ha’a rahi ‘e

you rest.”In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

tei teiaha i te hōpoi’a, e nā’u ’outou e fā’aora ».I te
i’oa o Iesu Mesia, ’āmene.