

The Plan of Mercy

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Barmhjertighedens plan

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The Lord is merciful and our Heavenly Father's plan of salvation is truly a plan of mercy.

Herren er barmhjertig, og vor himmelske Faders frelsesplan er i sandhed en barmhjertighedens plan.

A Prophet's Invitation

Last April, soon after the joyful news that the Church had acquired the Kirtland Temple, President Russell M. Nelson invited us to study the dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple, recorded in section 109 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The dedicatory prayer, said President Nelson, “is a tutorial about how the temple spiritually empowers you and me to meet the challenges of life in these last days.”

I am sure your study of section 109 yielded insights that blessed you. This evening, I share a couple of things I learned as I followed our prophet's invitation. The peace-giving path down which my study led reminded me that the Lord is merciful and that our Heavenly Father's plan of salvation is truly a plan of mercy.

Newly Called Missionaries Serving in the Temple

As you may be aware, “newly called missionaries are encouraged to receive the temple endowment as soon as possible and to attend the temple as often as circumstances allow.” Once endowed, they also “may serve as temple ... workers before they begin missionary service.”

Time in the temple before entering the missionary training center (MTC) can be a wonderful blessing for new missionaries as they learn

En profets opfordring

Sidste år i april, kort tid efter de glædelige nyheder om, at Kirken nu havde erhvervet templet i Kirtland, opfordrede præsident Russell M. Nelson os til at studere indvielsesbønnen til dette tempel, som står optegnet i afsnit 109 i Lære og Pagter. Præsident Nelson sagde, at indvielsesbønnen »er en lektie i, hvordan templet åndeligt gør jer og mig i stand til at klare livets udfordringer i disse sidste dage«.

Jeg er sikker på, at jeres studium af afsnit 109 har givet jer indsigt, der har velsignet jer. I aften vil jeg gerne dele et par ting, jeg lærte, da jeg fulgte opfordringen fra vores profet. Den fredssindgydende sti, som mit studie førte mig ned ad, mindede mig om, at Herren er barmhjertig, og at vor himmelske Faders frelsesplan i sandhed er en nådig plan.

Nyligt kaldede missionærer tjener i templet

Som I nok ved, opfordres »nykaldede missionærer ... til at modtage tempelbegavelsen så hurtigt som muligt og komme i templet så ofte, som omstændighederne tillader det«. Når de har modtaget deres begavelse, kan de også »tjene som tempeltjenere, før de begynder deres missionstjeneste«.

Tid i templet, før de starter på missionærskole, kan være en vidunderlig velsignelse for nye missionærer, idet de lærer mere om tempelpag-

more about temple covenants before sharing the blessings of those covenants with the world.

But in studying section 109, I learned that in the temple, God empowers new missionaries—indeed, all of us—in an additional, sacred way. In the dedicatory prayer, given by revelation, the Prophet Joseph Smith prayed that “when thy servants shall go out from thy house ... to bear testimony of thy name,” the “hearts” of “all people” would “be softened”—both the “great ones of the earth” and “all the poor, the needy, and [the] afflicted.” He prayed that “their prejudices may give way before the truth, and thy people may obtain favor in the sight of all; that all the ends of the earth may know that we, thy servants, have heard thy voice, and that thou hast sent us.”

This is a beautiful promise for a newly called missionary—to have prejudices “give way before the truth,” to “obtain favor in the sight of all,” and to have the world know they are sent by the Lord. Each of us surely needs these same blessings. What a blessing it would be to have hearts softened as we interact with neighbors and co-workers. The dedicatory prayer does not explain exactly how our time in the temple will soften others’ hearts, but I am convinced it is bound up with how time in the house of the Lord softens our own hearts by centering us on Jesus Christ and His mercy.

The Lord Answers Joseph Smith’s Plea for Mercy

As I studied the Kirtland dedicatory prayer, I was also struck that Joseph again and again pleaded for mercy—for the members of the Church, for the enemies of the Church, for the leaders of the country, for the nations of the earth. And, very personally, he pleaded with the Lord to remember him and to have mercy upon his beloved Emma and their children.

How must Joseph have felt when, one week later, on Easter Day, April 3, 1836, in the Kirtland Temple, the Savior appeared to him and Oliver Cowdery and, as recorded in section 110 of the Doctrine and Covenants, said, “I have accepted this house, and my name shall be here; and I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house.” This promise of mercy must have had special meaning to Joseph. And as President Nelson taught last April, this promise also “applies to every dedicated temple today.”

terne, inden de skal fortælle verden om velsignelserne ved disse pagter.

Men mit studium af afsnit 109 lærte mig, at Gud i templet giver kraft til nye missionærer – ja, i virkeligheden til os allesammen – på en mere hellig måde. I indvielsesbønnen, der blev givet ved åbenbaring, bad profeten Joseph Smith således: »Når dine tjenere drager ud fra dit hus ... for at aflægge vidnesbyrd om dit navn,« må »alle mennesker[s] hjerte« da - både »jordens ædle og store« og »alle ... fattige, trængende og plagede ... blive blødgjort.« Han bad om, at »fordomme må vige for sandheden, og [Herrens] folk må vinde yndest i alles øjne; så alle jordens ender må vide, at vi, dine tjenere, har hørt din røst, og at du har sendt os.«

Det er et smukt løfte til en nykaldet missionær – at fordomme »må vige for sandheden«, at »vinde yndest i alles øjne« og at verden må vide, at de er sendt af Herren. Enhver af os har bestemt brug for disse velsignelser. Hvilken velsignelse ville det ikke være at få blødgjort hjerter, når vi omgås naboer og kolleger? Indvielsesbønnen forklarer ikke præcist, hvordan vores tid i templet vil blødgøre andres hjerter, men jeg er overbevist om, at det hænger sammen med, hvordan tid i Herrens hus blødgør vores eget hjerte ved at centrere os om Jesus Kristus og hans nåde.

Herren besvarer Joseph Smiths indtrængende bøn om barmhjertighed

Da jeg studerede indvielsesbønnen til templet i Kirtland, slog det mig også, at Joseph gang på gang bad om barmhjertighed – for Kirkens medlemmer, for Kirkens fjender, for landets ledere, for verdens nationer. Og helt personligt bad han Herren om at huske ham og at være barmhjertig mod hans elskede Emma og deres børn.

Hvad mon Joseph følte en uge senere, på skedag den 3. april 1836 i templet i Kirtland, da Frelseren viste sig for ham og Oliver Cowdery? Hvor Herren, som det står skrevet i afsnit 110 i Lære og Pagter, sagde: »Jeg har antaget dette hus, og mit navn skal være her; og jeg skal i barmhjertighed give mig til kende for mit folk i dette hus.« Dette løfte om barmhjertighed må have haft en helt speciel betydning for Joseph. Som præsident Nelson lærte os sidste april, »gælder [dette løfte stadig] hvert eneste indviende tempel i dag«.

Finding Mercy in the House of the Lord

There are so many ways in which we each can find mercy in the house of the Lord. This has been true since the Lord first commanded Israel to build a tabernacle and to place at its center the “mercy seat.” In the temple, we find mercy in the covenants we make. Those covenants, in addition to the baptismal covenant, bind us to the Father and the Son and give us increased access to what President Nelson has taught is “a special kind of love and mercy ... called *hesed*” in Hebrew.

We find mercy in the opportunity to be sealed to our families for eternity. In the temple, we also come to understand with greater clarity that the Creation, the Fall, the Savior’s atoning sacrifice, and our ability to enter again into our Heavenly Father’s presence—indeed, every part of the plan of salvation—are manifestations of mercy. It might be said that the plan of salvation is a plan of happiness precisely because it is a “plan of mercy.”

Seeking Forgiveness Opens the Door to the Holy Ghost

I am grateful for the beautiful promise in section 110 that the Lord will manifest Himself in mercy in His temples. I am also grateful for what it reveals about how the Lord will manifest Himself in mercy whenever we, like Joseph, plead for mercy.

Joseph Smith’s plea for mercy in section 109 was not the first time his pleas for mercy prompted revelation. In the Sacred Grove, young Joseph prayed not just to know which Church was true, but he also said that he “cried unto the Lord for mercy, for there was none else to whom I could go [to] obtain mercy.” Somehow his recognition that he needed mercy that only the Lord could provide helped open the windows of heaven. Three years later the angel Moroni appeared, following what Joseph said was his “prayer and supplication to Almighty God for forgiveness of all my sins and follies.”

This pattern of revelation following a plea for mercy is a familiar one in the scriptures. Enos heard the voice of the Lord only after praying for forgiveness. King Lamoni’s father’s conversion

Find barmhjertighed i Herrens hus

Der er mange måder, hvorpå vi hver især kan finde barmhjertighed i Herrens hus. Dette har været sandt, lige siden Herren for første gang befalede Israel at bygge et tabernakel og at placere »sonedækket« i midten af det. I templet finder vi barmhjertighed i de pagter, vi indgår. Som tillæg til dåbspagten binder disse pagter os til Faderen og Sønnen og giver os øget adgang til det, præsident Nelson har lært os er »en særlig form for kærlighed og barmhjertighed ... ved navnhesed« på hebræisk.

Vi finder barmhjertighed i muligheden for at blive beseglet til vores familie for evigt. I templet forstår vi også med større klarhed, at skabelsen, faldet, Frelserens forsonende offer og vores evne til at komme tilbage til vor himmelske Faders nærhed igen—ja, alle dele af frelsesplanen—er tilkendegivelser af barmhjertighed. Faktisk kan man sige, at frelsesplanen er en plan for lykke, netop fordi det er »barmhjertighedens plan«.

Når vi søger tilgivelse, åbner det døren for Helligånden

Jeg er taknemmelig for det smukke løfte i afsnit 110 om, at Herren vil give sig til kende i barmhjertighed i sine templer. Jeg er ligeledes taknemmelig for det, afsnittet åbenbarer om den måde, hvorpå Herren vil give sig til kende i barmhjertighed, uanset hvornår vi, ligesom Joseph, indtrængende beder om barmhjertighed.

Joseph Smiths bøn om barmhjertighed i afsnit 109 var ikke første gang, hans bønner om barmhjertighed medførte åbenbaring. I den hellige lund bad den unge Joseph ikke kun om at vide, hvilken kirke der var sand, men han sagde også, at han »bad til Herren om barmhjertighed, for der var ikke nogen anden, til hvem [han] kunne gå for at få barmhjertighed«. På en eller anden måde hjalp hans anerkendelse af, at han havde behov for barmhjertighed, og at det kun var Herren, der kunne give ham den, med at åbne for himlens sluser. Englen Moroni viste sig tre år senere, efter hvad Joseph sagde var en »bøn og anråbelse af Gud den Almægtige om tilgivelse for alle mine synder og tåbeligheder«.

Dette mønster af åbenbaring, der følger en anråbelse om barmhjertighed, er velkendt i skrifterne. Enosh hørte først Herrens røst efter at have bedt om tilgivelse. Kong Lamoni’s fars

begins with his prayer, “I will give away all my sins to know thee.” We may not be blessed with these same dramatic experiences, but for those who sometimes struggle to feel answers to prayer, seeking the Lord’s mercy is one of the most powerful ways to feel the witness of the Holy Ghost.

Pondering God’s Mercy Opens the Door to a Testimony of the Book of Mormon

A similar principle is beautifully taught in Moroni 10:3–5. We often shorthand these verses to teach that through sincere prayer, we can learn whether the Book of Mormon is true. But this shorthand can neglect the important role of mercy. Listen to how Moroni begins his exhortation: “I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, ... that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts.”

Moroni urges us not only to read these things—the records he was about to seal up—but also to ponder in our hearts what the Book of Mormon reveals about “how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men.” It is pondering upon the Lord’s mercy that prepares us to “ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true.”

As we ponder on the Book of Mormon, we might ask: Is it really true, as Alma taught, that God’s plan of mercy assures that every person who ever lived on this earth will be resurrected and that they will “be restored to their ... perfect frame”? Is Amulek right—can the Savior’s mercy satisfy all the bitterly real demands of justice that we would otherwise be obligated to pay and instead “[encircle us] in the arms of safety”?

Is it true, as Alma testified, that Christ suffered not only for our sins but for our “pains and afflictions” so that He could “know ... how to succor his people according to their infirmities”? Is the Lord really so merciful, as King Benjamin taught, that as a free gift, He atoned “for the sins of those ... who have died not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have

omvendelse begynder med hans bøn: »Jeg vil aflægge alle mine synder for at kende dig.« Vi bliver måske ikke velsignet med de samme dramatiske oplevelser, men for dem, der indimellem kæmper med at føle, at deres bønner bliver besvaret, så er det at søge Herrens barmhjertighed en af de mest kraftfulde måder, vi kan føle Helligånden vidne på.

Når vi grunder over Guds barmhjertighed, åbner det døren til et vidnesbyrd om Mormons Bog

Vi lærer om et lignende princip på smukkeste vis i Moroni 10:3–5. Vi reducerer ofte disse vers til at lære os, at gennem oprigtig bøn kan vi erfare, hvorvidt Mormons Bog er sand. Men denne reducere kan negligere den vigtige rolle, barmhjertigheden spiller. Hør, hvordan Moroni begynder sin formaning: »Se, jeg vil formane jer til, at I, når I læser dette ... at I husker på, hvor barmhjertig Herren har været mod menneskenes børn fra Adams skabelse helt op til den tid, da I modtager dette og grunder over det i hjertet.«

Moroni beder os ikke kun indtrængende om at læse dette – den optegnelse, han skulle til at forsegle – men også i vores hjerte at grunde over, hvad Mormons Bog åbenbarer, om »hvor barmhjertig Herren har været mod menneskenes børn«. Når vi grunder over Herrens barmhjertighed, bliver vi forberedt på at spørge »Gud, den evige Fader, i Kristi navn, om ikke dette er sandt«.

Når vi grunder over Mormons Bog, spørger vi måske: Er det virkelig sandt, som Alma sagde, at Guds barmhjertighedsplan forsikrer os om, at hver person, der nogensinde har levet på jorden, vil opstå, og at de skal »blive bragt tilbage til [deres] rette og fuldkomne skikkelse«? Har Amulek ret? Kan Frelserens nåde virkelig tilfredsstille alle dybt reelle krav, retfærdigheden stiller, som vi ellers ville blive afkrævet, og at han i stedet »omslutter [os] i sikkerhedens arme«?

Er det sandt, som Alma vidnede om, at Kristus ikke kun led for vores synder, men også for vores »smerter og sygdomme«, så han »kan vide, hvorledes han kan bistå sit folk, hvad angår deres skrøbeligheder«? Er Herren virkelig så barmhjertig, som Kong Benjamin belærte om, at han som en gratis gave sonede »for de synder, der er begået af dem ... som døde uden at kende

ignorantly sinned”?

Is it true, as Lehi said, that “Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy”? And is it really true, as Abinadi testified, quoting Isaiah, that Jesus Christ was “wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed”?

In sum, is the Father’s plan as taught in the Book of Mormon really this merciful? I testify that it is and that the peace-giving and hopeful teachings of mercy in the Book of Mormon are true.

Still, I imagine that some may be struggling, despite your faithful reading and prayers, to realize Moroni’s promise that Heavenly Father “will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.” I know this struggle because I felt it, many years ago, when my own first couple of reads of the Book of Mormon did not yield an immediate and clear answer to my prayers.

If you are struggling, may I invite you to follow Moroni’s counsel to ponder on the many ways the Book of Mormon teaches “how merciful the Lord hath been [to] the children of men”? Based on my experience, I hope that when you do, the peace of the Holy Ghost can enter your heart and you can know, believe, and feel that the Book of Mormon and the plan of mercy it teaches are true.

I express my gratitude for the Father’s great plan of mercy and for the Savior’s willingness to carry it out. I know that He will manifest Himself in mercy in His holy temple and in every part of our life if we will seek Him. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Guds vilje angående sig, eller som har syndet i uvidenhed«?

Er det sandt, som Lehi sagde, at »Adam faldt, for at menneskene kunne blive til, og menneskene er til for at kunne nyde glæde«? Er det virkelig sandt, som Abinadi vidnede om, mens han citerede Esajas, at Jesus Kristus blev »gennemboret for vore overtrædelser, at han blev knust for vor syndighed; de straffe, der gav os fred, dem led han; og ved hans sår bliver vi helbredt«?

Alt i alt er Faderens plan, som Mormons Bog underviser i, virkelig så barmhjertig? Jeg vidner om, at det er sandt, og at lærdommene i Mormons Bog om barmhjertighed, som giver fred og håb, er sande.

Jeg forestiller mig alligevel, at der er nogle af jer, der på trods af jeres trofaste studium og bønner kæmper med at realisere Moronis løfte om, at vor himmelske Fader vil »tilkendegive sandheden af det for jer ved Helligåndens kraft«. Jeg kender denne kamp, fordi jeg selv kæmpede den for mange år siden, da mine første gennemlæsninger af Mormons Bog ikke straks gav mig et klart svar på mine bønner.

Hvis I kæmper med dette, så lad mig opfordre jer til at følge Moronis vejledning om at grunde over de mange måder, hvorpå Mormons Bog lærer os, »hvor barmhjertig Herren har været mod menneskenes børn«. Med afsæt i min egen erfaring håber jeg, at Helligåndens fred, når I gør dette, vil finde vej ind i jeres hjerte, og at I kan vide, tro og føle, at Mormons Bog og barmhjertighedens plan, som den underviser i, er sande.

Jeg udtrykker min taknemmelighed for Faderens store barmhjertighedsplan og for Frelserens villighed til at føre den ud i livet. Jeg ved, at han i barmhjertighed vil give sig til kende i sine hellige templer og i hver eneste del af vores liv, hvis vi vil søge ham. I Jesu Kristi navn. Amen.