

Joy Through Covenant Discipleship

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Glæde gennem et pagtsbaseret liv som discipel

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As we bind ourselves to act as covenant disciples, our relationship with the Father and Son is enriched, our joy enhanced, and our eternal perspective expanded.

One day in 2023, Uyanga Altansukh was at work in the northern Mongolian city of Darkhan when the Mongolian mission president entered her workplace. In her words:

“I saw him and thought he had this bright light in his countenance. He was very kind and fun to those around him, and I felt warmth. Before he left, I asked him some questions. A few days later, he came into my work again and asked if I could attend his church. I thought it might be helpful. I was worried for my children’s future, as society seemed to be full of stress and darkness. I wanted my children to be like this man with a light in their countenance, spreading joy to others around them.

“One day the missionaries taught us the law of tithing. My children said with excitement, ‘We must pay our tithing, Mom.’ I could see my children’s faith at that moment. Before I joined the Church, I watched general conference and listened to President Russell M. Nelson speak. He announced new temples all over the world and said that a new temple would be built in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. I rejoiced and shed tears, even though I did not understand why. With this joy, I could tell that my faith and testimony were growing.”

Uyanga, like millions of others, is part of the great gathering of Israel in preparation for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. She has begun her journey along the covenant path and has be-

Når vi forpligter os til at handle som pagtsdisciple, bliver vores forhold til Faderen og Sønnen beriget, vores glæde bliver større, og vores evige perspektiv bliver udvidet.

En dag i 2023 var Uyanga Altansukh på arbejde i den nordmongolske by Darkhan, da den mongolske missionspræsident trådte ind på hendes arbejdsplads. Hun fortæller:

»Jeg så ham og tænkte, at hans ansigt udstrålede et klart lys. Han var meget venlig og omgængelig, og jeg følte en varme. Inden han gik, stillede jeg ham nogle spørgsmål. Et par dage senere kom han ind på min arbejdsplads igen og spurgte, om jeg havde lyst til at besøge hans kirke. Jeg tænkte, at det kunne være godt. Jeg var bekymret for mine børns fremtid, for samfundet virkede fyldt af stress og mørke. Jeg ønskede, at mine børn skulle være som denne mand med en udstråling af lys i deres ansigt og sprede glæde til andre omkring dem.

En dag underviste missionærerne os i tiende-loven. Mine børn sagde begejstret: »Vi skal betale vores tiende, mor.« Jeg kunne se mine børns tro i det øjeblik. Før jeg blev medlem af Kirken, så jeg generalkonferencen og lyttede til præsident Russell M. Nelson. Han annoncerede nye templer over hele verden og sagde, at der ville blive bygget et nyt tempel i Ulaanbaatar i Mongoliet. Jeg blev jublende glad og fældede tårer, selvom jeg ikke forstod hvorfor. Med denne glæde kunne jeg se, at min tro og mit vidnesbyrd voksede.«

Uyanga er, ligesom millioner af andre, en del af den store indsamling af Israel, der sker som forberedelse til Jesu Kristi genkomst. Hun har påbegyndt sin rejse ad pagtens vej og er blevet en

come a disciple of Christ. What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ? I appreciate the Japanese word for disciple—deshi—demeaning younger brother, and shi meaning child.

Jesus Christ declared, "I was in the beginning with the Father, and am the Firstborn." Because of who He is and what He has done, we worship Him, we revere Him, we give glory to Him, and we follow Him. Christ has redeemed us, and we are forever grateful for His infinite and atoning sacrifice.

We have a Heavenly Father, who loves us as His children. His love for us is perfect. Jesus Christ and His mission illustrate God's love for us. As John wrote, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

In our quest to understand what we do not know, we might sometimes rely on our familiar mortal experiences, or things we do know. For example, we can learn somewhat of God the Father through our own parenthood and mortal family relationships. However, we should be careful in applying these comparisons too far in our attempt to understand our Heavenly Father. The attributes of God the Father transcend any less-than-perfect attributes of a fallen man. God the Father is the perfect Father. He is perfectly loving, kind, patient, and understanding and is perfectly glorious. We can trust Him perfectly. The love of Christ reflects the love of God the Father and is a representation of that love.

Jesus Christ is both the example and the means. In Christ, we can understand better the perfect attributes of the Father and His plan. Through Christ, we are given the enabling power to overcome the tendencies of natural men and women so that we might become more like the Father.

Just like our Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ is perfectly merciful and just. These divine attributes of justice and mercy are not in opposition. They are complementary. Both justice and mercy illustrate God's perfect love for His children. We can trust God the Father and Jesus Christ because They are just and fair with all of us.

God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, are perfectly aligned in purpose and love. Because

Kristi discipel. Hvad betyder det at være en Kristi discipel? Jeg sætter pris på det japanske ord for discipel – deshi – de, som betyder lillebror, og shi, som betyder barn.

Jesus Kristus sagde: »Jeg var i begyndelsen hos Faderen og er den Førstefødte.« På grund af hvem han er, og hvad han har gjort, tilbeder vi ham, vi ærer ham, vi hædrer ham, og vi følger ham. Kristus har forløst os, og vi er evigt taknemmelige for hans uendelige og forsonende offer.

Vi har en himmelsk Fader, som elsker os som sine børn. Hans kærlighed til os er fuldkommen. Jesus Kristus og hans mission illustrerer Guds kærlighed til os. Som Johannes skrev: »For således elskede Gud verden, at han gav sin enbårne søn, for at enhver, som tror på ham, ikke skal fortæbes, men have evigt liv.«

I vores søgen efter at forstå, hvad vi ikke ved, kan vi nogle gange støtte os til vores velkendte jordiske erfaringer eller ting, vi faktisk ved. For eksempel kan vi lære noget om Gud Faderen gennem vores eget forældreskab og jordiske familieforhold. Vi må dog være forsigtige med at gå for langt med disse sammenligninger i vores forsøg på at forstå vores himmelske Fader. Gud Faderens egenskaber overgår ethvert faldent menneskes langt fra fuldkomne egenskaber. Gud Faderen er den fuldkomne Fader. Han er fuldkommen i sin kærlighed, venlighed, tålmodighed og forståelse og er fuldkomment herlig. Vi kan have fuldkommen tillid til ham. Kristi kærlighed afspejler Gud Faderens kærlighed og er en repræsentation af denne kærlighed.

Jesus Kristus er både eksemplet og midlet. I Kristus kan vi bedre forstå Faderens fuldkomne egenskaber og plan. Gennem Kristus får vi den kraft, der gør det muligt at overvinde de naturlige menneskes tilbøjeligheder, så vi kan blive mere som Faderen.

Ligesom vor himmelske Fader er Jesus Kristus fuldstændt i sin barmhjertighed og retfærdighed. De guddommelige egenskaber, retfærdighed og barmhjertighed, er ikke modsætninger. De supplerer hinanden. Både retfærdighed og barmhjertighed illustrerer Guds fuldkomne kærlighed til sine børn. Vi kan stole på Gud Faderen og Jesus Kristus, fordi de er retfærdige og fair over for os alle.

Gud Faderen og hans Søn, Jesus Kristus, er fuldkomment afstemt i hensigt og kærlighed.

God and Jesus Christ love us, we are given the opportunity and privilege as true disciples to make covenants with Them. By our doing so, our relationship with Christ is expanded: "And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters."

As disciples, when we make and keep sacred covenants, we are blessed with spiritual power. We are connected to Christ and God the Father in a special relationship and can experience Their love and joy in a measure reserved for those who have made and kept covenants. Our ability to sense a full measure of God's love, or to continue in His love, is contingent upon our righteous desires and actions.

In John chapter 15, verse 9, we read, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." And then we are given an invitation: "Continue ye in my love."

In the next verse, we are given the way to continue in His love: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."

We then see the purpose of keeping the commandments in verse 11: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

Through true covenant discipleship, we can begin to understand better the nature of God and the joy that He wants all of His children to experience. We can also begin to understand some principles that at first might seem confusing. For example, how can God have a fulness of joy when some of His children are suffering so much? The answer lies in God's perfect perspective and in His perfect plan. He sees us from the beginning to our glorious potential future. He has provided a way, through His Son, Jesus Christ, for all of us, His children, to overcome the pains, suffering, sins, guilt, and loneliness of our mortality. God has provided for us the way and the choice.

Examples of those who have experienced joy through discipleship might help us to better understand this concept. Perhaps you have heard the phrase that we are only as happy as our most unhappy child. I have seen that this does not need to be the case. My 94-year-old mother has

Fordi Gud og Jesus Kristus elsker os, får vi som sande disciple muligheden for og privilegiet af at indgå pagter med dem. Ved at gøre det styrkes vores forhold til Kristus: »Og se, på grund af den pagt, I har sluttet, skal I kaldes Kristi børn, hans sønner og hans døtre; for se, i dag har han født jer åndeligt; for I siger, at jeres hjerte er forandret ved tro på hans navn; derfor er I født af ham og er blevet hans sønner og døtre.«

Når vi som disciple indgår og holder hellige pagter, bliver vi velsignet med åndelig kraft. Vi knyttes til Kristus og Gud Faderen i et særligt forhold og kan opleve deres kærlighed og glæde i et omfang, der er forbeholdt dem, der har indgået og holdt pagter. Vores evne til at fornemme et fuldt mål af Guds kærlighed, eller til at fortsætte i hans kærlighed, er afhængig af vores retfærdige ønsker og handlinger.

I Johannesevangeliet kapitel 15 vers 9 læser vi: »Som Faderen har elsket mig, har også jeg elsket jer.« Også får vi en opfordring: »Bliv i min kærlighed.«

I det næste vers får vi anvist, hvordan vi kan blive i hans kærlighed: »Hvis I holder mine bud, vil I blive i min kærlighed, ligesom jeg har holdt min faders bud og bliver i hans kærlighed.«

Dernæst ser vi formålet med at holde budde-
ne i vers 11: »Sådan har jeg talt til jer, for at min glæde kan være i jer og jeres glæde blive fuldkommen.«

Gennem et trofast pagtsbaseret liv som discipel kan vi bedre begynde at forstå Guds væsen og den glæde, som han ønsker, at alle hans børn skal opleve. Vi kan også begynde at forstå nogle principper, som i første omgang kan virke forvirrende. Hvordan kan Gud for eksempel være fuld af glæde, når nogle af hans børn lider så meget? Svaret ligger i Guds fuldkomne perspektiv og i hans fuldkomne plan. Han ser os lige fra begyndelsen og til vores strålende potentielle fremtid. Han har gennem sin Søn, Jesus Kristus, sørget for en måde, hvorpå vi, hans børn, alle kan overvinde jordelivets smerter, lidelser, synder, skyld og ensomhed. Gud har givet os vejen og valget.

Eksempler på dem, der har oplevet glæde gennem et liv som discipel, kan hjælpe os til bedre at forstå dette. Måske har I hørt vendingen: Vi er kun lige så lykkelige som vores mest ulykkelige barn. Jeg har set, at det ikke behøver at være tilfældet. Min 94-årige mor har over 200 levende

over 200 living descendants. At any given point, at least one of the 200 is going to be unhappy. If this statement were true, my mother would be in a perpetual state of unhappiness, which she isn't. Those who know her know how joyful she is.

I now would like to share another experience. In January of 2019, my wife, Debbie, and I were invited into the office of President Nelson. He had positioned a chair close to us, and we sat almost knee to knee. After extending to us our current calling, President Nelson turned to Debbie and focused on her. He was kind, loving, gentle, and full of joy, like the perfect father or grandfather. He held Debbie's hand and patted it, reassuring her that it would be OK and that our family would be blessed. It seemed to us at that moment that we were the most important people to him and that he had all the time in the world for us. We left his office that Friday afternoon feeling reassured, loved, and joyful.

On Monday we saw the news. During that same day that President Nelson had spent with us, one of his daughters had passed away from cancer. We were stunned. Our hearts were full as we mourned for him and his family. Our hearts were also full of gratitude for his Christlike attention to us while mourning for his daughter who was suffering.

As we pondered this experience, we asked ourselves, "How could he be so kind, loving, and even joyful at such a difficult time?" The answer is because he knows. He knows that Christ has been victorious. He knows he will be with his daughter again and will spend an eternity with her. Joy and eternal perspective come through being bound to the Savior by making and keeping covenants and through Christlike discipleship.

President Nelson has taught: "Just as the Savior offers peace that 'passeth all understanding' [Philippians 4:7], He also offers an intensity, depth, and breadth of joy that defy human logic or mortal comprehension. For example, it doesn't seem possible to feel joy when your child suffers with an incurable illness or when you lose your job or when your spouse betrays you. Yet that is precisely the joy the Savior offers."

As we make and keep covenants, we will naturally turn outward and have a desire to help others feel the measure of joy and love we feel in our covenantal relationships. We can be part

efterkommere. På et hvilket som helst tidspunkt vil mindst én af de 200 være ulykkelig. Hvis dette udsagn var sandt, ville min mor konstant være ulykkelig, hvilket hun ikke er. De, der kender hende, ved, hvor glad hun er.

Nu vil jeg gerne dele en anden oplevelse. I januar 2019 blev min kone, Debbie, og jeg inviteret ind på præsident Nelsons kontor. Han havde placeret en stol tæt på os, og vi sad næsten knæ mod knæ. Efter at have givet os vores nuværende kaldelse vendte præsident Nelson sig mod Debbie og fokuserede på hende. Han var venlig, kærlig, blid og fuld af glæde, som den perfekte far eller bedstefar. Han holdt Debbies hånd og klappede den, mens han forsikrede hende om, at det nok skulle gå, og at vores familie ville blive velsignet. I det øjeblik virkede det, som om vi var de vigtigste mennesker for ham, og at han havde alverdens tid til os. Da vi forlod hans kontor den fredag eftermiddag, følte vi os beroligede, elskede og glade.

Om mandagen så vi nyhederne. I løbet af den dag, som præsident Nelson havde tilbragt sammen med os, var en af hans døtre død af kræft. Vi var lamslåede. Vores hjerter blev fyldt med sorg, da vi sørgede med ham og hans familie. Vores hjerter var også fyldt med taknemmelighed over hans kristuslignende opmærksomhed på os, mens han sørgede over sin datter, som led.

Da vi tænkte over denne oplevelse, spurgte vi os selv: »Hvordan kunne han være så venlig, kærlig og endda glad i en så svær tid?« Svaret er, at han véd det. Han véd, at Kristus har sejret. Han véd, at han skal være sammen med sin datter igen og tilbringe en evighed sammen med hende. Glæde og evigt perspektiv kommer ved at være knyttet til Frelseren, ved at indgå og holde pagter og ved kristuslignende discipelskab.

Præsident Nelson har sagt: »Ligesom Frelseren tilbyder en fred, som ›overgår al forstand‹ [Fil 4:7], tilbyder han også en intensitet, dybde og bredde i den glæde, som trodser menneskelig logik og dødeliges fatteevne. Det synes for eksempel ikke muligt at føle glæde, når ens barn lider af en uhelbredelig sygdom, eller når man mister sit job, eller når ens ægtefælle svigter. Alligevel er det lige præcis den glæde, Frelseren tilbyder.«

Når vi indgår og holder pagter, vil vi naturligt rette os udad og få et ønske om at hjælpe andre med at føle det samme mål af glæde og kærlighed, som vi føler i vores pagtsforhold. Vi

of the greatest cause on the earth today—the gathering of Israel. We can help to bring God’s children to Christ. As the prophet Jacob taught, “And blessed art thou; for because ye have been diligent in laboring with me in my vineyard, and have kept my commandments, and have brought unto me again the natural fruit, ... ye shall have joy with me because of the fruit of my vineyard.”

As we bind ourselves to act as covenant disciples, in whatever our level of capacity, our relationship with the Father and the Son is enriched, our joy enhanced, and our eternal perspective expanded. We then are endowed with power and can feel joy in a measure reserved for God’s true covenant disciples. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

kan være en del af den største sag på jorden i dag – Israels indsamling. Vi kan hjælpe med at bringe Guds børn til Kristus. Profeten Jakob underviste således: »Og velsignede er I; for eftersom I har været flittige til at arbejde sammen med mig i min vingård og har holdt mine befalinger og har bragt mig den naturlige frugt igen ... skal I glæde jer sammen med mig på grund af min vingårds frugt.«

Når vi forpligter os til at handle som pagtsdisciple, i den grad vi nu kan, bliver vores forhold til Faderen og Sønnen beriget, vores glæde bliver større, og vores evige perspektiv bliver udvidet. Vi begaves med kraft og kan føle glæde i et omfang, der er forbeholdt Guds sande pagtsdisciple. I Jesu Kristi hellige navn. Amen.