

The Love of God

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Jumala armastus

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I joyfully witness that the Savior Jesus Christ is the love of God. His love for us is perfect, personal, and perpetual.

One summer while traveling in a remote area, our family spent an evening sleeping outdoors under a cloudless sky. Clearly visible above us was the magnificent Milky Way, filled with innumerable stars and the occasional shooting star. While we marveled at the majesty of God's creation, we felt a reverent connection to Him. Our young children, who had grown up in Hong Kong, had never experienced anything like this before. They innocently asked if we lived under the same sky back home. I tried to explain to them that it was the same sky, but air and light pollution where we lived prevented us from seeing these stars even though they were there.

The scriptures teach us that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." While disorienting distractions and terrestrial temptations cloud our spiritual vision, when we exercise faith in God and His Son, Jesus Christ, we receive clear assurance of Their reality and of Their concern for us.

In the Book of Mormon, the prophet Lehi saw "a tree, whose fruit was desirable to make one happy" and was the "most sweet, above all." When he tasted the fruit, his soul was filled with great joy, and he wanted his family to taste it also. We learn that this tree represents "the love of God," and like Lehi, we too can receive a joyful witness of God when we invite Him into our lives.

Jesus Christ embodies Heavenly Father's love for us. Through His atoning sacrifice, He took

Tunnistan rõõmsalt, et Jeesus Kristus on Jumala Poeg. Tema armastus meie vastu on täiuslik, isiklik ja igavene.

Ühel suvel kauges piirkonnas reisides veetis meie pere õhtu õues pilvitu taeval magades. Meie kohal oli selgelt näha suurepärase Linnutee, täis lugematuid tähti, ja märkasime ka mõnda langevat tähte. Kui imetlesime Jumala loodu ülevust, tundisime Temaga aupaklikku sidet. Meie väikesed lapsed, kes olid üles kasvanud Hongkongis, polnud kunagi varem midagi sellist kogenud. Nad küsisid süüdimatult, kas me elame kodus sama taeval all. Püüdsin neile selgitada, et see on sama taevas, kuid meie kodulinna õhu- ja valgussaaste ei võimaldanud meil neid tähti näha.

Pühakirjad õpetavad meile, et „usk on kindel usaldus selle vastu, mida oodatakse, ja veendumus selles, mida ei nähta”. Kuigi eksitavad segajad ja maapealsed kiusatused varjutavad meie vaimset nägemisvõimet, saame Jumalasse ja Tema Pojasse Jeesusesse Kristusesse usku rakendades selge kindlustunde nende tegelikkusest ja nende murest meie pärast.

Mormoni Raamatus nägi prohvet Lehhi „ühte puud, mille vili oli ihaldusväärne, kuna teeb inimese õnnelikuks”. Puu vilja maitstes täitus tema hing suure rõõmuga ja ta soovis, et ka tema pere seda maitseks. Me õpime, et see puu esindab „Jumala armastust”, ja nagu Lehhi, võime ka meie saada rõõmutoova tunnistuse Jumalast, kui Teda oma ellu kutsume.

Jeesus Kristus kehastab Taevase Isa armastust meie vastu. Oma lepitushvri kaudu võttis

upon Himself our sins and was bruised for our iniquities. He has personally borne our griefs, carried our sorrows, and taken upon Himself our pains and sicknesses. He sends the Holy Ghost to comfort us, and the fruits of the Spirit include joy, peace, and faith, which fill us with hope and love.

While the love of God is accessible to all, many search earnestly for it, while others desire to feel God's love but do not believe that they deserve it. Some others are desperately trying to hang on to it. The scriptures and the Lord's prophet teach us that we can consistently experience God's love when, through the grace of Jesus Christ, we repeatedly repent, frankly forgive, strive to keep His commandments, and selflessly serve others. We feel God's love when we do things that draw us closer to Him, such as conversing with Him daily through prayer and scripture study, and stop doing things that distance us from Him, such as being prideful, contentious, and rebellious.

President Russell M. Nelson has invited us to "remove, with the Savior's help, the old debris in our lives" and to "lay aside bitterness." He has encouraged us to "bolster our spiritual foundations" through "centering our lives on [the Savior] and on the ordinances and covenants of His temple." He promised that "as we keep our temple covenants, we gain greater access to the Lord's strengthening power. ... We experience the pure love of Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father in great abundance!"

I have a friend who was blessed with a beautiful family and a promising career. This changed when an illness left him unable to work, which was followed by a divorce. The years since have been difficult, but his love for his children and the covenants he has made with God have sustained him. One day he learned that his former spouse had remarried and had requested a cancellation of their temple sealing. He was troubled and confused. He sought peace and understanding in the house of the Lord. The day after his visit, I received the following message from him:

"I had an amazing experience in the temple last night. I think it was obvious that I still held quite a bit of resentment. ... I knew that I must change, and I have been praying all week to do so. ... Last night in the temple I literally felt the Spirit remove the resentment from my heart.

Ta enda peale meie patud ja teda muljuti meie süütegude tõttu. Ta on isiklikult kannatanud meie südamevalusid ja kandnud meie muresid ning võtnud enda peale meie valud ja haigused. Ta saadab Püha Vaimu meid trööstima ja Vaimu viljade hulka kuuluvad rõõm, rahu ja usk, mis täidavad meid lootuse ja armastusega.

Kuna Jumala armastus on kõigile kättesaadav, otsivad paljud seda tõsimeelselt, samas kui teised soovivad tunda Jumala armastust, kuid ei usu, et nad seda väärivad. Teised jälle püüavad sellest meeleheitlikult kinni hoida. Pühakirjad ja Issanda prohvet õpetavad meile, et me võime kogeda Jumala armastust pidevalt, kui me Jeesuse Kristuse armu kaudu korduvalt meelt parandame, siiralt andestame, püüame pidada kinni Tema käskudest ja teisi ennastalgavalt teenime. Me tunneme Jumala armastust, kui teeme asju, mis meid Temale lähemale toovad, näiteks vestleme Temaga iga päev palve ja pühakirjade uurimise kaudu ning lõpetame nende asjade tegemise, mis meid Temast eemale hoiavad, näiteks uhkuse, tülitsemise ja mässumeelsuse.

President Russell M. Nelson on kutsunud meid eemaldama „Päästja abiga meie elust vana prügi” ja heitma kõrvale kibestumise. Ta on julgustanud meid tugevdama meie vaimseid aluseid, keskendades oma elu Päästjale ning Tema templi talitustele ja lepingutele. Ta lubas, et „templilepingutest kinni pidades saame suurema juurdepääsu Issanda jõudu andvale väele. .. Me kogeme külluses Jeesuse Kristuse ja meie Taevase Isa puhast armastust!”

Mul on sõber, keda on õnnistatud ilusa perekonna ja paljutöötava karjääriga. See kõik muutus, kui haigus muutis ta töövõimeetuks, millele järgnes abielulahutus. Pärast seda on tal olnud rasked aastad, kuid armastus oma laste vastu ja lepingud, mille ta on Jumalaga sõlminud, on teda toetanud. Ühel päeval sai ta teada, et tema endine abikaasa oli uuesti abiellunud ja taotles nende templipitseerimise tühistamist. Ta oli mures ja segaduses. Ta otsis rahu ja mõistmist Issanda kojas. Päev pärast seda templikülastust sain temalt järgmise sõnumi:

„Sain eile õhtul templis hämmastava kogemuse. Oli ilmselge, et tundsin ikka veel päris palju pahameelt. .. Teadsin, et pean muutuma, ja olen terve nädala selle nimel palvetanud. .. Eile õhtul templis tundsin sõna otseses mõttes, kuidas Vaim pahameele mu südamest eemaldas. ..

... It was such a relief to be freed from it. ... An ominous physical burden bearing down on me has been lifted.”

While he still has his challenges, my friend treasures that experience in the house of the Lord, where the liberating power of the love of God has helped him to feel closer to God, more optimistic about life, and less anxious about his future.

When we experience the love of God, we can bear up our burdens with ease and submit patiently and cheerfully to His will. We have confidence that God will remember His covenants with us, visit us in our afflictions, and deliver us from bondage. We will also desire to share the joy we feel with our family and loved ones. As with Lehi's family, each person has agency to choose whether to partake of the fruit or not, but our opportunity is to love, share, and invite in such a way that those we love can feel the love of God.

To help others feel God's love, we need to cultivate in ourselves Christlike attributes such as humility, charity, compassion, and patience and help turn others towards the Savior through following the two great commandments of loving God and loving our fellow men.

One of our sons struggled with fitting in and self-esteem during his teenage years. My wife and I prayed to know how to help him, and we were willing to do whatever the Lord would have us do. One day I felt prompted to ask my elders quorum president if he knew of anyone in need who I could visit together with my son. After some thought, he asked us to visit a woman with significant health challenges and, with permission from the branch president, to bring the sacrament to her each week. I was elated but also concerned about how my son would react to this weekly commitment.

On our first visit, our hearts ached for this dear woman, as she was in constant pain. She was very grateful for the sacrament, and we enjoyed visiting with her and her husband. After a few visits, one Sunday I was away and could not accompany my son, but I reminded him of our assignment. When I got home, I couldn't wait to hear how the visit went. My son replied that he didn't think his classmates got to do cool things like this. And he elaborated by saying that he brought his brother with him to help and that the sacrament went smoothly, but this dear sister

Sellest vabanemine oli suur kergendus. .. Minule langenud pahaendeline füüsiline koorem on ära võetud.”

Kuigi ta kogeb ikka veel väljakutseid, hindab mu sõber seda kogemust Issanda kojas, kus Jumala armastuse vabastav jõud on aidanud tal tunda end Jumalale lähemal, olla elu suhtes optimistlikum ja olla vähem mures oma tuleviku pärast.

Kui kogeme Jumala armastust, suudame oma koormaid kergesti kanda ning alluda kannatlikult ja rõõmsalt Tema tahte. Oleme kindlad, et Jumal peab meeles oma lepinguid meiega, külastab meid meie kannatustes ja vabastab meid orjusest. Samuti soovime jagada rõõmu, mida tunneme oma pere ja lähedastega. Nagu Lehi perekonna puhul, on igal inimesel valikuvabadus, kas ta soovib vilja maitsta või mitte, kuid meile on antud võimalus armastada, jagada ja kutsuda sellisel viisil, et need, keda me armastame, tunneksid Jumala armastust.

Et aidata teistel tunda Jumala armastust, peame kasvatama endas selliseid kristlikke omadusi, nagu alandlikkus, ligimesearmastus, kaastunne ja kannatlikkus, ning aitama pöörata teisi Päästja poole, järgides kahte suurt käsku – armastada Jumalat ja armastada ligimesi.

Üks meie poegadest oli teismeeas hädas sobitumise ja enesehinnanguga. Palvetasime koos abikaasaga, et teada, kuidas teda aidata, ja olime valmis tegema kõike, mida Issand soovib. Ühel päeval tundsin õhutust küsida oma vanemate kvoorumi juhatajalt, kas ta teab kedagi, kes vajab abi, keda võiksin koos oma pojaga külastada. Pärast mõningast mõtisklemist palus ta meil külastada naist, kellel on tõsised terviseprobleemid, ja koguduse juhataja loal talle igal nädalal sakramenti viia. Olin elevil, aga ka mures, kuidas mu poeg sellele iganädalasele kohustusele reageerib.

Esimese külaskäigu ajal valutasime südant selle kalli naise pärast, kuna ta oli pidevates valudes. Ta oli sakramendi eest väga tänulik ja meile meeldis teda ja ta abikaasat külastada. Pärast paari külastust olin ühel pühapäeval ära ega saanud oma pojaga kaasas olla, kuid tuletasin talle meelde meie ülesannet. Koju jõudes ei jõudnud ma oodata, et kuulda, kuidas külaskäik läks. Mu poeg vastas, et tema arvates ei ole tema klassikaaslastel võimalusi selliseid lähedaid asju teha. Ja täpsustas, et oli oma venna kaasa võtnud ning sakrament läks sujuvalt, kuid see kallis õde

had been sad during the week because she had invited friends to her home to watch movies, but her video player would not work. My son said he searched online, found the problem, and fixed it for her on the spot. He felt useful, happy, and trusted to do something that brightened her day. He felt God's love for him.

If despite your best efforts life is overcast, if you feel that your prayers are not heard, or if you can't feel God's love, please know that your every effort matters and, as certain as the stars above us, that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ know, hear, and love you.

On one occasion, when His disciples were in a boat being "tossed [by the] waves," the Savior walked towards them on the water and assured them, saying, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." When Peter wanted to walk to the Savior on the water, Jesus beckoned to him, saying, "Come." And when Peter lost his focus and began to sink, the Savior immediately reached out His hand to catch him and led him to safety while saying, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

When the winds are against us in our lives, are we willing to be cheerful and courageous? How can we remember that the Savior does not forsake us and that He is near us, perhaps in ways we don't yet recognize? Are we willing to go to Him in faith, especially when the path before us seems impossible? And in what ways does He lift us to safety when we flounder? How can we faithfully look unto Him in every thought, without doubt or fear?

If you would like to feel the love of God more abundantly in your life, may I invite you to consider the following:

First, pause frequently to remember that you are a child of God and think of the things you are grateful for.

Second, pray daily, asking Heavenly Father to help you know who around you needs to feel His love.

Third, ask sincerely what you can do to help that individual to feel the love of God.

And fourth, act promptly on the inspiration you receive.

If we consistently pray and ask on the behalf of others, God will show us the people we can help. And if we act promptly, we can become the

oli kurb, sest oli kutsunud sõbrad oma koju filmi vaatama, kuid tema videomängija ei töötanud. Mu poeg ütles, et otsis internetist, leidis probleemi ja parandas naise videomängija kohapeal ära. Ta tundis end kasuliku, õnneliku ja usaldatuna, et ta sai teha midagi, mis naise päeva helgemaks muutis. Ta tundis Jumala armastust selle naise vastu.

Kui pingutustest hoolimata on teie elu pilvine, kui teile tundub, et teie palveid ei võeta kuulda või kui te ei tunne Jumala armastust, siis teadke, et kõik teie pingutused on olulised ja sama kindlad kui tähed meie kohal, et Taevane Isa ja Jeesus Kristus teavad, kuulevad ja armastavad teid.

Kord, kui Tema jüngrid olid paadis, mis „oli hädas lainetega”, kõndis Päästja vee peal nende poole ja kinnitas neile, öeldes: „Olge julged, mina olen see, ärge kartke!” Kui Peetrus tahtis vee peal Päästja juurde kõndida, kutsus Jeesus teda, öeldes: „Tule!” Ja kui Peetrus kaotas tähelepanu ja hakkas vajuma, sirutas Päästja kohe välja oma käe, haaras temast kinni ja ütles: „Sa nõdrausuline, miks sa kahtlesid?”

Kui elutuuled meile vastu puhuvad, siis kas oleme valmis olema vahvad ja tugevad? Kuidas me saame meeles pidada, et Päästja ei hülga meid ja et Ta on meie lähedal ehk küll viisil, mida me veel ei tunne? Kas me oleme valmis minema Tema juurde usus, eriti siis, kui meie ees olev tee tundub võimatu? Ja mil moel toob Ta meid välja hädast, kui me oma muredesse upume? Kuidas saame igas oma mõttes ustavalt Tema poole vaadata, ilma kahtluse ja hirmuta?

Kui soovite tunda oma elus rikkalikumalt Jumala armastust, siis lubage mul kutsuda teid tegema järgmist.

Esiteks tehke sageli pause meenutamaks, et olete Jumala laps, ja mõelge asjadele, mille eest olete tänulik.

Teiseks palvetage iga päev, paludes Taivasel Isal aidata teil teada, kellel teie ümber on vaja tunda Tema armastust.

Kolmandaks küsige siiralt, mida saate teha, et aidata sellel inimesel tunda Jumala armastust.

Ja neljandaks tegutsege kiirestisaadud inspiratsiooni ajel.

Kui me järjekindlalt palvetame ja teiste eest palume, näitab Jumal meile inimesi, keda saame aidata. Ja kui me tegutseme kiiresti, võime saada

means through which He answers their prayers. By doing so, in time, we will receive answers to our prayers and we will feel God's love in our own lives.

A few months ago while traveling in Vietnam, my wife and I were on a flight that took off in a heavy storm. The turbulence was severe, and dark clouds, heavy rain, and lightning could be seen from our window. After a long and volatile ascent, our airplane finally rose above the storm clouds and emerged to this glorious vista. We were reminded once again of our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and felt Their great love for us.

Dear friends, as one who has experienced God's love, I joyfully witness that the Savior Jesus Christ is the love of God. His love for us is perfect, personal, and perpetual. As we faithfully follow Him, may we be filled with His love and may we be a lighthouse that guides others to His love. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

vahendiks, mille kaudu Ta vastab nende palvetele. Seda tehes saame aja jooksul oma palvetele vastuseid ja tunneme oma elus Jumala armastust.

Mõned kuud tagasi Vietnamis reisisides olime abikaasaga lennul, mis tõusis õhku tugevas tormis. Turbulents oli tõsine ja meie aknast oli näha tumedaid pilvi, tihedat vihma ja välku. Pärast pikka ja heitlikku heitlust tõusis meie lennuk lõpuks tormipilvedest kõrgemale ja meile avanes see hiilgav vaade. Meile tuletati taas meelde meie Taevast Isa ja Jeesust Kristust ning tundsime nende suurt armastust meie vastu.

Kallid sõbrad, Jumala armastust kogunud inimesena tunnistan ma rõõmsalt, et Päästja Jeesus Kristus on Jumala armastus. Tema armastus meie vastu on täiuslik, isiklik ja igavene. Teda ustavalt järgides täitugem Tema armastusega ja olgem majakas, mis juhib teisi Tema armastuse juurde. Jeesuse Kristuse nimel, aamen.