

The Plan of Mercy

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O Le Fuafuaga o le Alofamutimutivale

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O Le Fitugafulu

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

E alofamutimutivale le Alii ma o le fuafuaga o le faaolataga a lo tatou Tama Faalelagi e moni lava o se fuafuaga o le alofamutimutivale.

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.”

O Se Valaaulia a se Perofeta

Ia Aperila talu ai, e le'i pine ona mavae le talafou fiafia faapea ua maua e le Ekalesia le Malumalu o Katelani, ae valaaulia i tatou e Peresitene Russell M. Nelson e suesue le tatalo o le faapaiaga o le Malumalu o Katelani, o loo tusia i le vaega 109 o le Mataupu Faavae ma Feagaiga. O le tatalo o le faapaiaga, na saunoa ai Peresitene Nelson, “o se aoaoga e uiga i le auala e faamalosia ai faaleagaga e le malumalu oe ma a'u e taulima luitau o le olaga i nei aso e gata ai.”

Ou te mautinoa o lau suesuega o le vae-ga e 109 ua aumaia ai ni malamalamaaga ua faamanuiaina ai oe. O lenei afiafi, ou te faasoa atu ai ni mea se lua sa ou aoaoina a o o'u mulimuli i le valaaulia a le perofeta. O la'u suesuega o lea vaega na ta'ita'i atu ai au i le ala o le filemu, na faamanatu mai ai e alofamutimutivale le Alii ma o le fuafuaga o le faaolataga a lo tatou Tama Faalelagi o se fuafuaga moni lava o le alofamutimutivale.

O Faifeautalai Faatoa Valaauina e Galulue i le Malumalu

Atonu ua outou silafia, “ua fautuaina faifeautalai faatoa valaauina ina ia maua faaeega paia o le malumalu i le vave e mafai ai ma ia auai soo atu i le malumalu pe a faatagaina ai e tulaga.” A maua loa faaeega paia, ua “mafai foi ona avea ... o ni tagata faigaluega i le malumalu a o le'i amataina le galuega faafaifeautalai.”

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

O le taimi i le malumalu a’o le’i ulufale i le nofoaga e aoao ai faifeautalai (NAF) e mafai ona avea o se faamanuiaga matagofie mo faifeautalai fou a o latou aoao atili e uiga i feagaiga o le malumalu a o le’i faasoaina atu faamanuiaga o na feagaiga i le lalolagi.

Ae i le suesueina o le vaega e 109, sa ou aoao ai e faapea, i totonu o le malumalu, e faamamaina ai e le Atua ia faifeautalai fou—ioe, i tatou uma lava—i se ala faaopoopo, paia. I le tatalo o le faapaiaga, na tuuina mai e ala i faaaliga, sa tatalo atu ai Iosefa e faapea, “pe a o atu au auauna mai lou maota ... e molimau atu lou suafa,” ia “faamaluluina loto o “tagata uma”—o “tagata silisili o le lalolagi” ma “tagata matitiva uma, ma e ua le tagolima, ma [e] puapuagatia.” Sa tatalo o ia ina “ia aveesea o latou manatu faapito e le upumoni, ma ina ia mafai e lou nuu ona maua le fiasia mai le vaaiga a tagata uma; ina ia iloa ai e tuluiga uma o le lalolagi, o i matou, o au auauna, na matou faalogo i lou siufofoga, ma ua e auina atu i matou.”

O se folafolaga matagofie lenei mo se faifeautalai faatoa valaauina—ia aveesea le manatu faapito “e le upumoni,” ia “maua le vaaiga fiasia mai le vaaiga a tagata uma,” ma ia iloa e le lalolagi na auina atu i latou e le Alii. E mautinoa le manaomia e i tatou taitoatasi o nei foi faamanuiaga. Oka o se faamanuiaga i le faamaluluina o loto a o tatou fegalegaleai ma tuaoi ma ē tatou te galulue. E le o faamatala tonu maia e le tatalo o le faapaiaga le ala o le faamaluluina ai loto o isi i lo tatou taimi i le malumalu, ae ua faatalitonuina a’u ua fusia faatasi ma le ala e faamaluluina ai o tatou lava loto i le maota o le Alii, e ala i le faatotonugalemuina o i tatou lava ia Iesu Keriso ma Lona alofamutimutivale.

Ua Tali e le Alii le Olega a Iosefa Samita mo le Alofamutimutivale

A o ou suesueina le tatalo o le faapaiaga o Katelani, sa faateia foi au i le augani pea lava pea o Iosefa mo le alofamutimutivale—mo tagata o le Ekalesia, mo fili o le Ekalesia, mo taitai o le atunuu, mo malo uma o le lalolagi. Ma, i le mea sili ona patino, sa aioi atu o ia i le Alii ia manatua o iama ia alofamutimutivale i lana pele o Ema ma le la fanau.

Pe o le a se lagona o Iosefa ina ua mavae se vaiaso mulimuli ane, i le aso o le Eseta, 3 o Aperila, 1836 i le Malumalu o Katelani, na faaali

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.”

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,

atu ai le Faaola ia te ia ma Oliva Kaotui ma, e pei ona tusia i le vaega e 110 o le Mataupu Faavae ma Feagaiga, ma fetalai atu, “Ua Ou talia lenei fale, ma o le a i ai iinei lo’u igoa; ma o le a Ou faaali atu a’u lava i lo’u nuu i lenei fale i le alofamutimutivale.” O lea folafolaga o le alofamutimutivale atonu sa i ai se uiga faapitoa ia Iosefa. Pei foi ona sa aoao mai ai Peresitene Nelson ia Aperila talu ai, o lea folafolaga “e faatatau foi i malumaluumaua faapaiaina i aso nei.”

Mauaina o le Alofamutimutivale i le Maota o le Alii

E tele naua auala e mafai ai e i tatou taitoatasi ona maua le alofamutimutivale i le maota o le Alii. Na moni lava lenei mea talu ona uluai poloaia e le Alii ia Isaraelu e fau se falefetafa’i ma tuu i lona totonugalemu le “nofoa o le alofamutimutivale.” I totonu o le malumalu, tatou te maua ai le alofamutimutivale i feagaiga tatou te osia. O na feagaiga, e faaopoopo atu i feagaiga o le papatisoga, e fusia ai i tatou i le Tama ma le Alo ma faateleina ai lo tatou mauaina o le mea na aoao mai e Peresitene Nelson o “se ituaiga faapitoa o alofa ma le alofamutimutivale ... ua ta’ua o le *hesed*” i le FaaEperu.

Tatou te maua le alofamutimutivale i le avanoa e faamauiaina ai i o tatou aiga mo le faavavau. Tatou te malamalama ai foi ma le manino sili atu o le Fofoaga, o le Pa’u, o le taulaga togiola a le Faaola, ma le mafaia ona tatou toe ulufale atu i le afioaga o lo tatou Tama Faalelagi—ioe, o vaega uma o le fuafuaga o le faaolataga—o se faailoaga o le alofamutimutivale. Ioe, atonu ai na faapea o le ata o le faaolataga o se fuafuaga tonu o le fiafia, ona o se “fuafuaga o le alofamutimutivale.”

O Le Sailia o le Faamagaloga e Tata-laina ai le Faitotoa i le Agaga Paia

Ou te faafetai lava mo le folafolaga matagofie i le vaega e 110 e faapea, o le a faaali mai e le Alii lava ia i le alofamutimutivale i totonu o Ona malumalu. Ou te faafetai lava foi mo mea ua faaalia mai e uiga i le ala o le a faaali mai ai e le Alii lava ia i le alofamutimutivale i soo se taimi, tatou te aioi atu ai mo le alofamutimutivale, faapei foi o Iosefa.

O le aioiga a Iosefa Samita mo le alofamutimutivale i le vaega e 109 sa le o le uluai taimi lea na uunaia ai faaliga mo le alofamutimutivale ona o ana talosaga. I le Vao Paia, sa le gata ina

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 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.”

tatalo Iosefa talavou ia iloa pe o le fea Ekalesia e moni, ae sa ia fai mai foi “na ia tagi atu i le Alii mo le alofamutimutivale, aua sa leai se tasi e mafai ona ou alu i ai e maua mai ai le alofa mutimutivale.” Ae peiseai, o lona iloaina sa ia manaomia le alofamutimutivale lea e na o le Alii e mafai ona maua mai ai, sa fesoasoani e talaia ai pupuni o le lagi. Tolu tausaga mulimuli ane, sa faaali atu ai le agelu o Moronae, i le mavae o le mea na fai mai ai Iosefa o lana “tatalo ma le olega i le Atua Malosi Aoa mo se faamagaloga o a u agasala uma ma sese.”

O lea mamanu o faaaliga i le mavae ai o se olega mo le alofamutimutivale o se mea masani i tusitusiga paia. Sa faalogo Enosa i le leo o le Alii i le faatoa mavae ai ona tatalo mo se faamagaloga. O le liua o le tamā o le Tupu o Lamona, na amata i lana tatalo: “O le a ou lafoaia a’u agasala uma ina ia ou iloa oe.” Atonu e le faamanuiaina i tatou i nei aafiaga maoae, ae mo isi o i latou e tauivi i nisi taimi ia lagonaina tali i tatalo, o le sailia o le alofamutimutivale o le Alii o se tasi lea o ala sili ona mamana e lagonaina ai le molimau a le Agaga Paia.

O Le Manatunatu Loloto i le Alofamutimutivale o le Atua e Tatala Ai le Faitotoa i se Molimau o le Tusi a Mamona

O se mataupu faavae faapena o loo matagofie le aoa mai i le Moronae 10:3–5. E tele ina tatou faafaigofieina nei fuaiupu e aoa atu ai faapea, e mafai ona tatou iloa pe moni le Tusi a Mamona, e ala i se tatalo ma le lotofaamaoni. Ae o lenei faafaigofieina e mafai ona lē amana’iaina ai le matafaioi taua o le alofamutimutivale. Faalogo i le ala o loo amata ai e Moronae lana apoapoiga: “Ou te apoapoai atu ia te outou pe a outou faitau nei mea, ... ia outou manatua le alofa mutimutivale tele o le Alii i le fanauga a tagata, mai i le foafoaga o Atamu e oo mai lava i lalo seia oo mai i le taimi o le a outou maua ai nei mea, ma manatunatu i ai i o outou loto.”

Ua uuna’ia i tatou e Moronae ia le gata ina faitauina nei mea—faamaumauga o le a ia faamaua faailogaina—ae iamanatunatu ai i o tatou loto i mea ua faaaliga mai e le Tusi a Mamona e uiga i le “alofamutimutivale tele o le Alii i le fanauga a tagata.” O le manatunatu i le alofamutimutivale o le Alii e saunia ai i tatou e “ole atu i le Atua, le Tamā Faavavau, i le suafa o Iesu Keriso, pe ua le moni nei mea.”

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 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

A o tatou manatunatu loloto i le Tusi a Mamona, atonu tatou te fesili: Pe moni ea, e pei ona aoao mai o Alema, o le fuafuaga o le alofamutimutivale o le Atua e faamautinoa ai o tagata uma o e na ola i lenei lalolagi o le a toetutuma o le a "toefuata'ia ... i o latou tino e tatau ai ma atoatoa"? Pe mo'i Amoleka—e mafai e le alofamutimutivale o le Faaola ona faamalie poloaiga tiga moniumao le faamasinoga tonu lea, na semanu e faamalosia i tatou e totagi ae nai lo o lena "[ua siomia i tatou] i aao o le saogalemu"?

Pe moni ea, e pei ona molimauina e Alema, na tigaina Keriso e le gata mo a tatou agasala ae mo o tatou "tiga ma puapuaga" ina ia mafai ona Ia "silafia ... le ala e fesoasoani ai i ona tagata, e tusa ai ma o latou vaivaiga"? Pe matuai alofamutimutivale ea le Alii, e pei ona aoao mai le Tupu o Peniamina, e faapea, o se meaalofo mauafua, sa Ia togiola ai "mo agasala a i latou ... o e na maliliu e aunoa ma le iloa o le finagalo o le Atua e uiga ia te i latou, po o e na agasala ma le le iloa"?

Pe moni ea e pei ona fai mai Liae, na "pau Atamu ina ia i ai tagata; ma ua i ai tagata ina ia latou maua le olioli"? Ma pe moni ea e pei ona molimauina e Apinati, ma sii mai upu a Isaia, o Iesu Keriso sa "faamanualia o ia mo a tatou solitulafono; sa tuimomomo o ia mo a tatou amioletonu; sa i ona luga le aoaiga mo lo tatou filemu; ma o ona faalavalava ua faamaloloina ai i tatou"?

I le aotelega, pe alofamutimutivale moni ea le fuafuaga a le Tama e pei ona aoao mai i le Tusi a Mamona? Ou te molimau atu e moni lava, ma e moni foi aoaoga o le alofamutimutivale i le Tusi a Mamona, lea e aumaia ai le filemu ma le faamoemoe.

Ae tusa lava foi, ou te manatu e i ai nisi atonu o tauivi, e ui i a outou faitauga faamaoni ma tatalo, ia iloa le folafolaga a Moronae e faapea, "o le a faaalua e le [Tama Faalelagi] le moni o ia mea ia te outou, e ala i le mana o le Agaga Paia." Ua ou iloa lenei tauiviga aua na ou lagonaina, i le tele o tausaga ua mavae, ina ua le aumaia ia te au se tali manino i lea lava taimi i a'u tatalo ina ua uma a'u uluai faitauga faalua o le Tusi a Mamona.

Afai o loo e tauivi, sei ou valaaulia oe e mulimuli i le fautuaga a Moronae ia mafaufau loloto i le tele o auala o loo aoao mai ai le Tusi a Mamona i le "alofa mutimutivale tele o le Alii i le fanauga a tagata"? E faavae i ou aafiaga, ou te faamoemoe a outou faia, e mafai e le filemu o le Agaga Paia ona ulufale atu i lou loto ma mafai ai ona e iloa, talitonu, ma lagonae moni le Tusi a

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.

Mamona ma le fuafuaga o le alofamutimutivale o loo aoao mai ai.

E momoli lo'u lotofaafetai mo le fuafuaga sili o le alofamutimutivale a le Tamā, ma mo le naunautai o le Faaola e faataunuuina. Ou te iloa o le a faaali mai o Ia e Ia lava i le alofamutimutivale i totonu o Lona malumalu paia, ma i vaega uma o o tatou olaga pe afai tatou te sailia o Ia. I le suafa o Iesu Keriso, amene.