

Charity—a Sign of True Discipleship

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Alofa Mama—o se Faailoga o le Avea ma Soo Moni

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O Le Fitugafulu

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The real destination of discipleship is literally to become as Jesus Christ is.

President Russell M. Nelson recently invited us to “make our discipleship our highest priority.” That powerful invitation has stirred me to ponder deeply about my personal discipleship of Jesus Christ.

Discipleship Is Deliberate

A disciple is a follower or student of another. Disciples are “apprentices” who devote their lives to becoming like their teacher. Thus, being a disciple of Jesus Christ implies more than believing His teachings and doctrine. It even implies more than acknowledging His divinity and accepting Him as our Savior and Redeemer, as vitally important as that is.

President Dallin H. Oaks explained: “Following Christ is not a casual or occasional practice. It is a continuous commitment and way of life that should guide us at all times and in all places.” Discipleship is a deliberate journey that we take to become transformed through the Lord’s atoning sacrifice and His enabling power. The real destination of discipleship is literally to become as Jesus Christ is—even to the point where we receive “his image in [our] countenances.”

To be the Lord’s disciples, we must intentionally imitate His thoughts and actions every day—for example, His obedience, humility, and

O le taunuuga moni o le avea ai ma soo o le avea tino e faapei ona i ai Iesu Keriso.

Na valaaulia talu ai nei e Peresitene Russell M. Nelson i tatou “ia avea ma a tatou faamua-mua aupito silisili lo tatou avea ma soo.” O lona valaaulia mamana na musuia ai a’u e manatunatu loloto e uiga i lo’u lava avea patino ai ma soo o Iesu Keriso.

O Le Avea ma Soo E Manaomia Ai Le Faatinoga Faautauta

O se soo o sē e mulimuli po o se tagata e a’oga mai se isi. O soo o “tagata e aoga mai se isi” o ē tuuto o latou olaga ia avea e faapei o lo latou faiaoga. O le mea lea, o le avea ai ma soo o Iesu Keriso, e aofia ai le tele o isi mea nai lo le na ona talitonu i Ana aoaoga ma Lana mataupu autu. E aofia ai foi le tele o isi mea nai lo le faailoaina o Lona paia ma le taliaina o Ia o lo tatou Faaola ma le Togiola, e matua’i taua e pei o lona.

Sa faamatala mai e Peresitene Dallin H. Oaks: “O le mulimuli ia Keriso e le o se faiga faasamasamanoa pe na o nisi taimi e fai ai. O se tautinoga faifaipia ma o se ala o le olaga lea e tatau ona taialaina ai i tatou i taimi uma ma i nofoaga uma.” O le avea ai ma soo o se malaga e faia ma le faaeteete ma se faamoemoega, ia tatou liua ai e ala i le taulaga togiola a le Alii ma Lona mana e mafai ai. O le taunuuga moni o le avea ai ma soo o le avea tino e faapei ona i ai Iesu Keriso—e oo lava i le tulaga tatou te maua ai “ona foliga i o [tatou] mata.”

Ina ia avea ma soo o le Alii, e tatau ona tatou mulimulita’ia ma le loto i ai Ona mafauauga ma faatinoga i aso uma—mo se faataitaiga, o

patience. As we gradually incorporate these attributes into our own identities, we become “partakers of [His] divine nature.” This emulation of the Savior’s character is at the heart of worshipping Him. As President Nelson taught, “Our adoration of Jesus is best expressed by our emulation of Jesus.”

The Sign of True Discipleship

Of all the many divine attributes of Jesus Christ we are to emulate, one stands preeminent and embodies all others. That attribute is His pure love, or charity. Both the prophet Mormon and the Apostle Paul remind us that without charity, “[we] are nothing.” Or, as revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, without “charity, [we] candonothing.”

The Savior Himself identified love as a mark or sign by which His true disciples would be recognized when He declared:

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

Charity is a rich concept that can be difficult to define but is easily perceived by all who are touched by it. Preach My Gospel teaches that “charity, like faith, leads to action.” Indeed, charity may be described as “love in action.” This description provides great insight into the summary statement of the Savior’s life—He “went about doing good.”

As followers of Jesus Christ, we should seek to emulate the way our Master demonstrated His pure love for others. Although the Savior manifests charity in many ways, I would like to call attention to three particular patterns of His charity that are readily seen in His true disciples.

Charity Is Showing Compassion

First, the Savior showed charity by being compassionate. During His ministry among the Nephites, as recorded in the Book of Mormon, the Lord invited the people to return home and

Lona usiusitai, lotomauualalo, ma le onosai. A o tatou faaafolia ai nei uiga faaleatua i o tatou lava faasinomaga, e avea i tatou ma “ē ua tofusia i [Lana] amio Atua.” O leni mulimulita’ia o uiga o le Faaola o loo i le taulotoaiga o lo tatou tapuai ia te Ia. E pei ona sa aoao mai e Peresitene Nelson, “O lo tatou faamemelo ia Iesu e sili ona faaalua i lo tatou faataitai ia Iesu.”

O Le Faailoga o le Avea ma Soo Moni

Mai le mau uiga paia uma o Iesu Keriso e tatau ona tatou faataitai i ai, e tasi lava e aupito sili ona taua ma e afolia uma ai isi. O lena uiga faaleatua o Lona alofa moni lea, po o le alofa mama. Ua faamanatu mai e le perofeta o Mamona ma le Aposetolo o Paulo a aunoa ma le alofa, “[o tatou] o meanoa.” Pe, e pei ona faaalua i le Perofeta o Iosefa Samita, a leai se “alofa mama, e leai se mea [tatou] temafaia.”

Na faailoa mai e le Faaola lava Ia le alofa o se maka po o se faailoga e iloa ai Ona soo moni ina ua Ia tautino mai:

“O le poloaiga fou ou te tuu atu ai ia te outou, Ia outou fealofani; faapei ona ou alofa atu ia te outou, ia fealofani foi outou.

“O lemea lea e iloa ai e tagata uma lava o o’u soo outou, pe afai ua outou fealofani.”

O le alofa mama o se manatu faavae ‘oa e mafai ona faigata ona faamatala ae e faigofie ona vaaia e i latou uma e ootia ai. Ua aoao mai e le Tala’i La’u Talaleleie faapea, “o le alofa mama, e pei o le faatuatua, e tau atu i le faatinoga.” Ioe, o le alofa mama e mafai ona faamatalaina o le “alofa i lona faatinoga.” O lea faamatalaga e maua ai le malamalamaaga tele i le faamatalaga aotele o le soifuaga o le Faaola—“sa femaliui [o Ia] ma agalelei.”

I le avea ai ma soo o Iesu Keriso, e ao ona tatou saili e mulimulita’ia le ala o loo faatino ai e lo tatou Matai Lona alofa mama a’ia’i mo isi. E ui ina faaalua e le Faaola le alofa mama i le tele o taimi, ou te fia valaaulia ai le gauai i mamanu faapitoa e tolu o Lona alofa mama ua vaaia moni i Ona soo moni.

O Le Alofa Mama O Le Faaalia Lea o le Aagalofa

Muamua, na faaalua e le Faaola le alofa mama e ala i le aagalofa. I le taimi o Lana auunaga ia sa Nifae, e pei ona tusia i le Tusi a Mamona, na valaaulia e le Alii ia tagata e toefoi i o latou aiga ma

ponder on the things He had taught and to prepare for His return the following day. The record then states:

“They were in tears, and did look steadfastly upon him as if they would ask him to tarry a little longer with them.

“And he said unto them: Behold, my bowels are filled with compassion towards you.”

Compassion is the portion of charity that seeks to alleviate suffering. Filled with compassion, the Lord healed the sick and afflicted among the people. Afterward, He blessed their children while angels descended from heaven and surrounded them. He performed these tender, loving acts, and many more, because He was “moved with compassion.”

While serving as a young missionary in South America, I likewise benefited from the compassion of a dear friend. One evening while I was driving with my companion to the home of our mission president, a young man on a bicycle turned suddenly in front of the vehicle. It happened so quickly that I could not avoid the collision. Tragically, this young man was killed by the impact. I was devastated over the loss of his life. Terrified and in shock as the awful reality of what had just occurred crashed down upon me, I was taken to jail and locked up. I have never felt more frightened and alone. I was filled with despair and fear that I would be imprisoned for the rest of my life.

A fellow missionary, Elder Brian Kochevar, learned of the accident and was moved by compassion. He came to the jail and pled with the officers to be allowed to stay with me in the cell so that I would not be alone. Miraculously, they agreed. To this day, I feel profound gratitude for this disciple’s act of Christlike love, which calmed, comforted, and consoled me during the greatest moment of distress in my life. His charitable compassion was a telling sign of his discipleship. As President Nelson observed, “One of the easiest ways to identify a true follower of Jesus Christ is how compassionately that person treats other people.”

Charity Is Ministering to Unspoken Needs

Another example of how the Savior demon-

mafaufau loloto i mea sa Ia aoaoina ma ia saunia mo Lona toe talia ane i le aso e sosoo ai. Ona ta’ua lea e le faamaumauga:

“Ua maligi o latou loimata, ma ua latou pulatoa mai ia te ia e peiseai ua latou mananao e ole mai ia te ia ia afio pea o ia faatasi ma i latou mo sina taimi umi teisi atu.

“Ma sa ia fetalai mai ia te i latou: Faauta, ua tumu lo’u loto i le agaaloa ia te outou.”

O le agaaloa o se vaega o le alofa mama e saili e tuuitiitia le mafatiaga. I le faatumuina ai i le mutimutualofa, sa faamalolo ai e le Alii tagata e mama’i ma mafatia. Mulimuli ane, sa Ia faamanuiaina a latou fanau a o afio ifo agelu mai le lagi ma siosiomia ai i latou. Sa Ia faatinoina nei galuega faamomoloto, alofa, ma le tele o isi, ona sa “mutimutivale Lona alofa.”

A o auauna ai o se faifeautalai talavou i Amerika i Saute, sa faapena foi ona faamanuiaina au mai le mutimutualofa o se uo pele. I se tasi afiafi a o alu atu le ma taavale ma la’u soa i le fale o le matou peresitene o le misiona, sa liliu faafuasei e se taulealea lana uila i luma o le taavale. Sa vave tele ona tupu ma sa le mafai ai ona ou alofia le faalavelave. O le mea e faanoanoa ai, sa malia lenei taulealea i le aafiaga. Sa nutimomoia a’u ona o le maimau o lona soifua. I le fefe ma le faate’ia, a o lofituina au i le mea moni matautia faatoa tupu, sa ave a’u ma loka i le falepuipui. E lei i ai se taimi na ou lagona ai le fefe tele ma le tuuatoatasi. Sa faatumuina a’u i le atuatuvaale ma le fefe faapea o le a faafalepuipuia au i aso uma o totoe o lo’u ola.

Sa faalogo se uso faifeautalai, o Elder Brian Kochever, e uiga i le faalavelave ma sa ootia o ia i le mutimutualofa. Sa sau o ia i le falepuipui ma aioi atu i taitai ina ia faataga o ia ma te nonofo i le sela, ina ia le tuuatoatasi ai na o a’u. O se vavega, sa latou malilie i ai. E oo mai lava i lenei aso, ou te lagonaina pea le lotofaafetai mo le faatinoga faaKeriso a lenei soo, lea na faatoafilemu ai, faamafanafana, ma faanā ai a’u i le taimi aupito sili ona mafatia o lo’u olaga. O lona mutimutualofa mama o se faailoga manino o lona aveai ma soo. E pei ona matauina e Peresitene Nelson, “O se tasi o ala aupito faigofie e faailoa ai sesoo monio Iesu Keriso o le ala e taulima ai ma le agaaloa e lenei tagata isi tagata.”

O Le Alofa Mama o le Auauna Atu Lea i Manaoga e Lēmafaamatalaina

O se isi faataitaiga o le ala e faaali mai ai e le

strates His love is through His observance of and ministry to the unspoken needs of others. To the man who had been lame for 38 years with no one to help him, the Lord made him whole and encouraged him to live righteously. To the woman caught in adultery, He offered hope and comfort rather than condemnation. For the man with paralysis who was lowered from the roof, the Lord offered forgiveness of sins, not just healing of body.

When I was called to serve as a bishop, our six young children made sacrament meetings challenging for my wife, Cristin, who had to manage them alone while I sat on the stand. As you may imagine, our children were often less than reverent. Noticing her situation, two members of our ward, John and Debbie Benich, began sitting with her each Sunday to help. Their kindness continued for years, and they became surrogate grandparents to our family. Like the Lord, these disciples had noticed the unspoken need and acted in love—a prominent sign of their discipleship.

Charity Is Helping Others Along the Covenant Path

Lastly, the Savior's perfect love is focused on enabling all of God's children to fulfill our divine potential that we may "partake of his salvation, and the power of his redemption." As we become more like our Master, our desire to help our brothers and sisters along the covenant path will naturally increase.

For instance, we can uplift and befriend those who feel offended or forgotten, help those who are new to our congregation feel welcome, or invite friends to worship with us at sacrament meeting—perhaps this coming Easter. There are countless ways to encourage and assist others in their progression if we deliberately and prayerfully seek heaven's help to have eyes to see and a heart to feel how Jesus Christ sees and feels for them.

Helping others along their covenant path may take the form of an unconventional act of service. As an example, during my current assignment in the Philippines, I learned of the Agamata family. They were baptized in 2023, and

Faaola Lona alofa e ala lea i Lona matauina ma le auauna atu i manaoga lēmafaamatalaina o isi. O le tagata na pipili mo le 38 tausaga ae leai se tasi e fesoasoani ia te ia, sa faaatoaina o ia e le Alii ma fautuaina o ia e ola amiotonu. I le fafine na maua o mulilua, na Ia ofo atu i ai le faamoemoe ma le faamafanafanaga nai lo le ta'usalaina. Mo le tagata ma'i supa, lea sa tuutuu ifo mai le taualuga, sa ofo atu i ai e le Alii le faamagaloga o agasala, ae le na o le faamalologa o le tino.

Ina ua tofia au e avea o se epikopo, sa fai e le ma fanau laiti e toaono ia sauniga faamanatuga o se mea faigata mo lo'u toalua, o Cristin, o lē sa taulimaina toatasi i latou a o ou saofai i luga o le tulaga. Atonu tou te vaai faalemafaufau, sa tele ina lē migao le ma fanau. O le matauina o lea tulaga, sa amata nonofo ai ni tagata se toalua o la matou uarota, o John ma Debbie Benich, faatasi [ma lo'u toalua] i Aso Sa taitasi e fesoasoani ai. Sa faaauau lo la'ua agalelei mo le tele o tausaga, ma sa avea i la'ua ua pei o ni matua matutua sui i lo matou aiga. Faapei o le Alii, na matau e nei soo le manaoga lēmafaamatalaina ma galulue loa i le alofa—o se faailoga iloga o lo la'ua avea ai ma soo.

O Le Alofa Mama o le Fesoasoani Lea i Isi i Luga o le Ala o Feagaiga

O le mea mulimuli, o le alofa atoatoa o le Faaola e taulai i le faagavaaina o fanau uma a le Atua e faataunuu ai lo tatou gafatia paia ia mafai ai ona tatou "taumamafa i lana olataga, ma le mana o lana togiola." A o tatou avea atili e faapei o lo tatou Matai, o le a faateleina faalenatura lo tatou manao e fesoasoani i o tatou uso ma tuafafine i luga o le ala o feagaiga.

Mo se faataitaiga, e mafai ona tatou siitia ma faauo ia i latou o e lagona le tiga po o le faagaloina, e fesoasoani ia i latou e fou i la tatou faapopotoga ia lagona le talileleia, pe valaaulia uo tatou te tapuai faatasi i sauniga faamanatuga—atonu i le Eseta o loma nei. E le mafaitaulia auala e faamalosi ai ma lagolago isi i lo latou agaigai i luma pe afai tatou te saili ma le loto i ai ma le agaga tatalo le fesoasoani mai le lagi ia maua mata e vaai aima se loto e lagonaina ai le ala e silasila ai ma lagona o Iesu Keriso mo i latou.

O le fesoasoani i isi i luga o le ala o feagaiga e ono manaomia ai le ituaiga o gaoioiga tulaga ese o le auaunaga. O se faataitaiga, i lo'u tofiga i le taimi nei i Filipaina, sa ou faalogo ai e uiga i le aiga o Agamata. Sa papatiso i latou i le 2023,

then they eagerly set a date to be sealed as a family in the nearby Urdaneta Philippines Temple. However, just before the family's appointment, several typhoons struck the region. Brother Agamata, a rice farmer, was unable to plant his crops during the harsh storms. When the tempests finally passed, he needed to quickly plant the rice while the ground was soaked with water—ideal conditions for planting. Sadly, the temple trip would have to be postponed.

Two disciples, Elder and Sister Cauilan, along with three young service missionaries, heard of the Agamata family's struggle and offered help despite having no farming experience. Working under the blistering sun, they helped plant the seedlings, allowing the Agamatas to complete their task and attend their temple sealing as scheduled. Elder Cauilan observed that “[the Agamatas’] countenances glowed as we saw them dressed in white in the house of the Lord. The joy we felt ministering to the one is a joy beyond compare!”

The Agamatas now enjoy the rich blessings of being sealed as an eternal family because a few fellow disciples who were filled with charity—a sign of their discipleship—determined to help their brothers and sisters forward along their covenant path.

Brothers and sisters, discipleship of Jesus Christ is the only way to obtain enduring happiness. It is a path filled with deliberate and purposeful acts of love toward others. While the path of discipleship may be difficult and challenging, and while at times we may struggle and fall short, we can take comfort that God is mindful of us and yearns to help us every time we try. Isaiah reminds us that “God will hold [our] hand, saying ... , Fear not; I will help thee.”

With this assurance from our Father in Heaven in mind, I earnestly pray that we may follow President Nelson's invitation to prioritize our discipleship. May we “pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart” to “be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; ... that when he shall appear we shall be like him” because we will carry a sign of true discipleship, which is

ona latou faatulagaina ma le naunautai lea o se aso e faamauina ai o se aiga i le Malumalu lata ane o Urdaneta i Filipaina. Peitai, toeitiiti o'o i le aso na faatulagaina a le aiga, sa taia le itulagi i le tele o afa ma asiosio. Sa le mafai e Uso Agamata, o se faifaatoaga alaisa, ona toto ana laau i le taimi o afa matautia. Ina ua i'u ina mavae atu ia afa, sa manaomia ona ia vave totoina le alaisa a o susūpala le eleele i le vai—o tulaga lelei tele e totō ai. O le mea e faanoanoa ai, o le a tataua ona tolopo le malaga i le malumalu.

E toalua soo, o Elder ma Sister Cauilan, faatasi ai ma isi faifeautalai talavou mo auaunaga, sa faalogo i le mafatiaga o le aiga o Agamata, ma sa ofo atu e fesoasoani e ui ina leai so latou poto masani faafaatoaga. O le galulue ai i le mutigitigi o le la, sa latou fesoasoani ai e totō fatu, ma mafai ai e le au Agamata ona faamae'a la latou galuega ma auai i le faamauga i le malumalu e pei ona sa faatulagaina ai. Sa matauina e Elder Cauilan faapea sa susulu foliga o le “[au Agamata] a o matou vaaia i latou o laei papa'e i le maota o le Alii. O le olioli na matou lagonaina i le auauna atu i le toatasi, o se olioli e le mafaatusalia!”

Ua olioli nei le au Agamata i faamanuiaga mau'oa o le faamauina o se aiga e faavavau ona sa i ai ni nai soo sa faatumulia i le alofa mama—o se faailoga o lo latou avea ai ma soo—na naunau e fesoasoani i o latou uso ma tuafafine e agai i luga i lo latou ala o feagaiga.

Uso e ma tuafafine, o le avea ma soo o Iesu Keriso ua na o le pau lea o le ala e maua ai le fafia tumau. O se ala e faatumulia i gaoioiga ma le loto i ai ma faamoemoega o le alofa i isi. E ui atonu e faigata le ala o le avea ma soo ma i ai luitau, e ui foi e i ai taimi tatou te ono tauivi ai ma toilalo, ae e mafai ona tatou maua le mafanafana aua e silafia e le Atua i tatou ma e naunau e fesoasoani mai i taimi uma tatou te taumafai ai. Ua faamanatu mai e Isaia ia i tatou e faapea... “o le Atua o le a taofi [lo tatou] lima taumatau ma faapea mai, Aua tou te fefefe; Ou te fesoasoani ia te outou.”

Faatasi ai ma lenei faamautinoaga mai lo tatou Tama o i le Lagi, ou te tatalo faatauana ai ia tatou mulimuli i le valaaulia a Peresitene Nelson e faamuamua lo tatou avea ma soo. Ia tatou “tatalo atu i le Tama ma le malosi atoa o le loto, ina “ia faatumulia i lenei alofa, lea ua ia faaee mai i luga o i latou uma o e o soo moni o lona Alo, o Iesu Keriso; ... a oo ai ina afio mai o ia o le a tatou faapei o ia.” aua ua tatou tauaveina se faailoga o le

“charity ... the pure love of Christ.”

I testify that Jesus Christ is our living, glorious Savior, Redeemer, Exemplar, and Friend. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

avea ma soo moni, o le “alofa mama lea ... o le alofa lē ponā lea o Keriso.”

Ou te molimau atu o Iesu Keriso o lo tatou Faaola soifua, mamalu, o le Togiola, le Faaa’oa’o, ma le Uo. I le suafa o Iesu Keriso, amene.