

The Love of God

By Elder Benjamin M. Z. Tai
Of the Seventy

O Le Alofa o le Atua

Saunia e Elder Benjamin M. Z. Tai
O Le Fitugafulu

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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.

Ou te molimau atu ma le olioli tele o le Faaola o Iesu Keriso o le alofa lea o le Atua. O Lona alofa mo i tatou e atoatoa, e patino, ma e le uma.

I se tasi taumafanafana a o matou malaga i se vaega tuufua, sa faaalu e lo matou aiga se po e momoe ai i fafo i lalo o se lagi maninoa. Sa manino lo matou vaaia i o matou luga a'e o le Aniva, sa faatumulia i fetu e lē mafaitaulia ma fetulele i nisi o taimi. A o matou maofa i le maoae o foafoaga a le Atua, sa matou lagonaina se sootaga migao ma Ia. O le ma fanau laiti, sa ola a'e i Hong Kong, e le'i oo i se mea faapea muamua. Sa latou fesili ma le lotomama, pe na matou nonofo i lalo o le lagi lava lea i lo matou aiga [i Hong Kong]. Sa ou tau-mafai e faamatala i ai, o le lagi lava lea e tasi, ae o le faaleagaina o le ea ma le malamalama i le mea sa matou nonofo ai, na le mafai ai ona matou vaaia nei fetu e ui lava ina sa i ai iina.

Ua aoao mai i tatou e tusitusiga paia e faapea “o le faatuatua, o le faalagolago lea i mea ua faamoemoe i ai, o le mautinoa lea o mea e le o vaaia.” E ui ina puaoa la tatou vaaiga faaleagaga i faalavefau fenumia'i ma faatosinaga a le lalolagi, a tatou faaaga le faatuatua i le Atua ma Lona Alo o Iesu Keriso, tatou te maua le faamautinoaga manino o lo La'ua moni ma lo La'ua popolega mo i tatou.

I le Tusi a Mamona, na vaai le perofeta o Liae i “se laau, o ona fua sa manaomia lava e faafiafia ai le tagata” ma “sa sili ona suamalie, nai lo mea uma.” Ina ua ia tofoina le fua, sa faatumuina lona agaga i le olioli, ma sa ia manao i lona aiga e tofo foi i ai. Ua tatou aoao o lenei laau e faatusa i le “alofa o le Atua,” ma e faapei o Liae, e mafai foi ona tatou maua se molimau fiafia i le Atua pe a tatou valaaulia o Ia i o tatou olaga.

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

O Iesu Keriso o le faailoaga lea o le alofa o le Tama Faalelagi mo i tatou. E ala i Lana taulaga togioa, na Ia tauave ai i Ona Lava luga a tatou agasala ma sa totolia o Ia mo a tatou amioletonu. Na ia tauaveina patino o tatou mafatiaga, tauave o tatou faanoanoaga, ma tauave i Ona Lava luga o tatou tiga ma ma'i. Ua Ia auina mai le Agaga Paia e faamafanafana i tatou, ma o fua o le Agaga e aofia ai le olioli, filemu, ma le faatuatua lea e faatumuina ai i tatou i le faamoemoe ma le alofa.

E ui e mafai ona maua e tagata uma le alofa o le Atua, e toatele i latou e sailia ma le naunau-tai, a o isi e mananao ia lagonaina le alofa o le Atua ae e le talitonu ua tatau ai mo i latou. O nisi o loo matuai taumafai e pipiimau pea i ai. Ua aoao mai i tatou e tusitusiga paia ma le perofeta a le Alii e faapea, e mafai ona tatou iloa pea lava pea le alofa o le Atua pe a, tatou salamo pea lava pea, faamagalo atu e le aunoa, tauivi e tausi Ana poloaiga, ma auauna atu ma le le manatu faapito i isi, e ala i le alofa tunoa o Iesu Keriso. Tatou te lagonaina le alofa o le Atua pe a tatou faia mea tatou te latalata atili ai ia te Ia, e pei o le talanoa ma Ia i aso taitasi e ala i le tatalo ma le suesue i tusitusiga paia, ma tuu le faia o mea e faatau-mamao ai i tatou mai ia te Ia, e pei o le faasausili, fefinaua'i, ma le fouvale.

Ua valaaulia i tatou e Peresitene Russell M. Nelson ia "aveesea, faatasi ai ma le fesoasoani a le Faaola, otaota tuai mai o tatou olaga" ma "lafoai le oona matuitui." Ua ia fautuaina i tatou e "faamalolosia ma le mataalia atili o tatou faavae faaleagaga" e ala i le "faatutotonuina o o tatou olaga i [le Faaola] ma i sauniga ma feagaiga o Lona malumalu." Na Ia folafola mai "a tatou tausia a tatou feagaiga o le malumalu, tatou te maua se avanoa tele atu e faaaoaga ai le mana faamalosiua o le Alii. ... Tatou te lagona ai le alofa lē pona o Iesu Keriso ma lo tatou Tama Faalelagi i se fuataga tele!"

E i ai sa'u uo sa faamanuiaina i se aiga mata-gofie ma se galuega faamanuiaina. Na suia lenei mea ina ua ma'i o ia ua le mafai ona faigaluega, ma sosoo ai ma le tatalaina o le faaipoi-poga. Na faigata tausaga talu mai lena mea, ae na lagola-goina o ia i lona alofa i lana fanau ma feagaiga sa ia osia ma le Atua. I se tasi aso, sa ia faalogo ai ua toe faaipoi-poga lona toalua muamua ma ua talosaga e faaleaogaina la latou faamauga i le malumalu. Sa faaletonu o ia ma ua fememea'i. Sa sailia le filemu ma le malamalama i le maota o le Alii. O le aso ina ua mavae lona alu i le malumalu, sa ou

“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. ... 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.

maua ai le fe’au lenei mai ia te ia:

“Sa ou maua se aafiaga matagofie i le malum-alu anapo. Ou te manatu sa iloagofie sa ou taofimau pea le tele o le ita. ... Sa ou iloa ua tatau ona ou sui, ma sa ou tatalo i le vaiaso atoa ina ia faia. ... O anapo i le malumalu sa ou lagonaina moni le Agaga o aveesea le ita mai lo’u loto. ... Sa o se faamāmāavega le faasaolotoina mai ai. ... Sa aveesea se avega taufaamata’u mai ia te au.”

E ui ina o loo i ai ona luitau, ae e pele i la’u uo lena aafiaga i le maota o le Alii, lea na fesoasoani ai le mana faasa’oloto o le alofa o le Atua ia lagona le latalata atili i le Atua, ua tele atu lona faamoemoe e uiga i le olaga, ma ua itiiti lona atuatuvaile i lona lumanai.

Pe a tatou iloa le alofa o le Atua, e mafai ona tatou tauaveina ma le faigofie a tatou avega, ma ua’i atu ma le onosai ma le fiafia i Lona finagalo. Ua tatou mautinoa o le a manatua e le Atua Ana feagaiga ma i tatou, asiasi mai ia i tatou i o tatou puapuaga, ma lavea’i i tatou mai le nofopologa. O le a tatou mananao foi e faasoa atu le olioli tatou te lagonaina ma o tatou aiga ma ē pele ia i tatou. E pei o le aiga o Liae, e tofu le tagata ma lana faitalia e filifili ai pe ‘ai i le fua pe leai, ae o lo tatou avanoa e alofa atu ai, faasoa, ma valaaulia i se ala e mafai ai e i latou tatou te alolofa i ai ona lagona le alofa o le Atua.

Ina ia fesoasoani i isi ia lagonaina le alofa o le Atua, e moomia ona tatou atia’e i totonu o i tatou lava uiga paia faaKeriso e pei o le lotomauualalo, alofa mama, mutimutualofa, ma le onosai ma fesoasoani e faaliliu atu isi agai i le Faaola e ala i poloaiga sili e lua o le alofa i le Atua ma le alofa i o tatou uso a tagata.

Sa tauivi se tasi o o ma atalii ma le taumafai ia avea ma sē tasi o se vaega, ma le faatauaina o ia lava i tausaga o lona talavou. Sa ma tatalo ma lo’u toalua ia iloa pe faapefea ona fesoasoani ia te ia, ma sa ma naunau e fai soo se mea e finagalo le Alii ma te faia. I se tasi aso sa uunaia au e fesili i lo’u peresitene o le korama a toeaina pe na te iloina se tasi o manaomia se fesoasoani e mafai ona ma asiasi faatasi i ai ma lo’u atalii. I le mavae ai o ni nai mafaufauga, sa ia talosagaina i ma’ua e asiasi i se tamaitai o loo feagai ma ni luitau maoae faalesoifua maloloina, ma i le i ai o le faatagana mai le peresitene o le paranesi, e ave le faamanatuga ia te ia i vaiaso taitasi. Sa matuai faageetia au ae sa popole foi pe o le a faape’i se tali a lo’u atalii i lenei tautinoga faalevaiaso.

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 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?

I le ma asiasiga muamua, sa mafatia o ma'ua loto mo lenei tamaitai pele, ona sa feagai pea o ia ma tiga e le aunoa. Sa matuai faafetai o ia mo le faamanatuga, ma sa ma fiafia e asiasi ia te ia ma lona toalua. I le mavae ai o ni nai asiasiga, o se tasi Aso Sa sa ou malaga ai ma sa le mafai ona ma o ma lo'u atalii, ae sa ou faamanatu ia te ia lo ma tofiga. Ina ua ou foi mai i le fale, sa tau le mafai ona ou faatali pe na faapefea lana asiasiga. Sa tali mai lo'u atalii, e le'i manatu o ia o faia e tamaiti o lana vasega ni mea mananaia faapea. Ma sa ia faaopoopo i le faapea mai, na alu ma ave lona uso e fesoasoani ma sa sologa lelei le faamanatuga, ae na faanoanoa lenei tuatafine pele i le aluga o le vaiaso ona sa ia valaaulia ni uo i lona fale e matamata tifaga ai, ae e le'i lelei lana masini vitio. Fai mai lo'u atalii, na ia sailia i luga o le initoneti, ma maua ai le faafitauli, ma sa ia faaleleia loa lava i lea taimi. Sa ia lagona lona aoga, fiafia, ma le faatuatua e fai se mea na faasusulu ai le aso o le tuafafine lea. Sa ia lagonaina le alofa o le Atua mo ia.

Afai e ufitia le olaga i puao tusa lava pe o a au taumafaiga silisili, afai e te manatu e le o faafofogaina au tatalo, pe afai foi e le o mafai ona e lagonaina le alofa o le Atua, faamolemole e taua au taumafaiga uma, e pei ona mautonu fetu i o tatou luga a'e, e silafia, e faafofogaina, ma alolofa le Tama Faalelagi ma Iesu Keriso ia te oe.

I se tasi taimi, ina o i ai Ona soo i se vaa "o felafoa'iina [e] galu," sa savali atu ai le Faaola agai ia i latou i luga o le sami ma faamautinoa atu i ai, ma faapea atu, "Ia outou loto tetele; o A'u lava; aua tou te matatau." Ina ua mana'o Peteru e savali atu i le Faaola i luga o le sami, sa talo atu Iesu ia te ia, ma faapea atu, "Sau." Ae ina ua aveesea le taula'i atu o Peteru na amata ai ona magoto, ma sa aapa atu loa le aao o le Faaola e pu'e o ia ma ta'ita'i atu o ia i le saogalemu a o fetalai atu, "O oe na le faatuatua itiiti, se a le mea ua e masalosalo vale ai?"

A oo ina faasagatau mai matagi i o tatou olaga, pe tatou te naunau ea e matafafia ma lototetele? E mafai faapefea ona tatou manatua e le tuulafoaiina i tatou e le Faaola, ma o loo lata mai o Ia atonu i ni ala tatou te le o iloina? Pe tatou te loto ea e o atu ia te Ia i le faatuatua, aemaise ai lava pe a foliga e faigata le ala o i o tatou luma? A o a foi ni auala Na Te sii a'e ai i tatou i le saogalemu pe a tatou tautevateva? E mafai faapefea ona tatou vaavaai faamaoni atu ia te Ia i mafauauga uma e aunoa ma le masalosalo po o le fefe?

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 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.

Afai e te manao e lagonaina atili le alofa o le Atua i lou olaga, sei ou valaaulia oe e te mafaufau i mea nei:

Muamua, taofi sooina ia e manatua o oe o se atalii/afafine o le Atua ma mafaufau i mea e te faafetai ai.

Lua, tatalo i aso taitasi, ma ole atu i le Tama Faalelagi e fesoasoani ia e iloa pe o ai o siomiaina oe e moomia ona lagonaina Lona alofa.

Tolu, ole atu ma le lotofaamaonipo o le a se mea e mafai ona e faia e fesoasoani ai i lena tagata ia lagonaina le alofa o le Atua.

Ma le lona fa, gaoioi loa lavai le musumusuga e te maua.

Afai tatou te tatalo pea lava pea ma ole atu e fai ma sui o isi, o le a faaali mai e le Atua ia i tatou ia tagata e mafai ona tatou fesoasoani i ai. Ma afai foi tatou te gaoioi loa lava, e mafai ona avea i tatou ma auala Na Te tali ai a latou tatalo. O le faia o lena mea, e oo mai le taimi, o le a tatou maua ai tali i a tatou tatalo ma o le a tatou lagonaina le alofa o le Atua i o tatou lava olaga.

I ni nai masani talu ai, a o ma malaga i Viatename, sa ma i ai ma lo'u toalua i se vaalele na amata lele ese i se afā malosi. Sa matautia le fesoua'iga, ma mafai ona iloa atu mai lo ma faamalama ia ao pogisa, o timuga mamafa, ma uila. I le mavae ai o se alu a'e lēmailoa i luga, sa i'u ina ēa i luga a'e o ao o matagi ma agai atu ai i lea vaaiga matagofie. Sa o ma toe manatuaina ai ma lagonaina lo tatou Tama Faalelagi ma Iesu Keriso ma lo La'ua alolofa tele mo i tatou.

Uo pele, i le avea ai o se tasi ua iloina le alofa o le Atua, ou te molimau fiafia atu ai o le Faaola o Iesu Keriso o le alofa lea o le Atua. O Lona alofa mo i tatou e atoatoa, e patino, ma e le uma. A tatou mulimuli faamaoni ia te Ia, ia faatumuina i tatou i Lona alofa, ma ia avea i tatou o se molī o le ava e taialaina isi i Lona alofa. I le suafa o Iesu Keriso, amene.