

Personal Preparation to Meet the Savior

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Maandalizi Binafsi Kukutana na Mwokozi

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Follow the Savior's teachings. His instructions are neither mysterious nor complex. When we follow them, we do not need to fear or be anxious.

My dear brothers and sisters, last October, President Russell M. Nelson taught, “Now is the time for you and for me to prepare for the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ.” When President Nelson speaks about the Second Coming, it is always with joyful optimism. However, a girl in Primary recently told me that she becomes anxious whenever the Second Coming is mentioned. She said, “I’m scared because bad things are going to happen before Jesus comes again.”

It is not just children who may feel this way. The best advice for her, for you, and for me is to follow the Savior’s teachings. His instructions are neither mysterious nor complex. When we follow them, we do not need to fear or be anxious.

Toward the end of His mortal ministry, Jesus Christ was asked when He would come again. In answering, He taught three parables, recorded in Matthew 25, about how to prepare to meet Him—whether at His Second Coming or whenever we leave this world. These teachings are crucial because personal preparation to meet Him is central to life’s purpose.

The Savior first told the parable of the ten virgins. In this parable, ten virgins went to a wedding feast. Five wisely brought oil to fill their lamps, and five foolishly did not. When the bridegroom’s imminent arrival was announced, the foolish virgins left to buy oil. When they

Fuata mafundisho ya Mwokozi. Maelekezo Yake wala si ya ajabu au changamano. Tunapoyafuata, hatuhitaji kuogopa au kuwa na wasiwasi.

Wapendwa akina kaka na akina dada, Oktoba iliyopita, Rais Russell M. Nelson alifundisha, “Sasa ni wakati wako na mimi wa kujiandaa kwa ajili ya Ujio wa Pili wa Bwana na Mwokozi wetu, Yesu Kristo.” Wakati Rais Nelson anapozungumza kuhusu Ujio wa Pili, daima ni kwa matumani mema ya shangwe. Hata hivyo, msichana wa Darasa la Watoto hivi karibuni aliniambia kwamba yeye anakuwa na wasiwasi wakati wowote Ujio wa Pili unapotajwa. Alisema, “Ninakuwa na woga kwa sababu vitu vibaya vinatokea kabla Yesu hajaja tena.”

Sio tu watoto ambao wanahisi hivyo. Ushauri bora kwake, kwako na kwangu ni kufuata mafundisho ya Mwokozi. Maelekezo Yake wala si ya ajabu au magumu. Tunapoyafuata, hatuhitaji kuogopa au kuwa na wasiwasi.

Kuelekea mwisho wa huduma Yake ya duni, Yesu Kristo aliulizwa ni lini Yeye angerudi tena. Katika kujibu, Yeye alifundisha mafumbo matatu, yaliyorekodiwa katika Mathayo 25, kuhusu jinsi ya kujiaanda kukutana Naye—Iwe ni katika Ujio Wake wa Pili au wakati wowote tunapoondoka ulimwenguni humu. Mafundisho haya ni muhimu kwa sababu maandalizi binafsi ya kukutana na Yeye ndiyo kiini cha dhumuni la maisha.

Mwokozi kwanza alisema fumbo la wanawali kumi. Katika fumbo hili, wanawali kumi walienda kwenye karamu ya harusi. Watano kwa busara walileta mafuta ya kujaza taa zao, na watano wapumbavu hawakufanya hivyo. Wakati kuwasili kwa bwana harusi kulipotangazwa, wanawali

returned, it was too late; the door to the feast was shut.

Jesus identified three aspects of the parable to help us. He explained:

“And at that day, when I shall come in my glory, shall the parable be fulfilled which I spake concerning the ten virgins.

“For they that are wise and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived—verily I say unto you, they shall ... abide the day.”

In other words, they did not need to fear or be anxious, because they would survive and prosper. They would prevail.

If we are wise, we receive the truth by accepting the gospel of Jesus Christ through priesthood ordinances and covenants. Next, we strive to remain worthy of having the Holy Ghost always with us. This capability must be acquired individually and personally, drop by drop. Consistent, personal, private acts of devotion invite the Holy Ghost to guide us.

The third element that Jesus highlighted is avoiding deception. The Savior warned:

“Take heed that no man deceive you.

“For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.”

The Savior knew pretenders would try to deceive the very elect and that many disciples would be duped. We should neither believe those who falsely claim divine sanction nor venture into metaphorical deserts or secret chambers to be taught by counterfeits.

The Book of Mormon teaches us how we can differentiate deceivers from disciples. Disciples always promote believing in God, serving Him, and doing good. We will not be deceived when we seek and take counsel from trusted individuals who are themselves faithful disciples of the Savior.

We can also avoid deception by worshipping regularly in the temple. This helps us maintain an eternal perspective and protects us from influences that might distract or divert us from the covenant path.

The essential lesson of this parable of the ten virgins is that we are wise when we accept the gospel, seek to have the Holy Ghost with us,

wapumbavu waliondoka kwenda kununua mafuta. Waliporejea, walikuwa wamechelewa; mlango wa kuingia kwenye karamu ulikuwa umefungwa.

Yesu Kristo alitambulisha vipengele vitatu vya fumbo hili kutusaidia sisi. Yeye alieleza:

“Na siku ile, wakati nitakapokuja katika utukufu wangu, ndipo mfano utakapotimia ambao nilisema kuhusu wanawali kumi.

“Kwani wale walio na hekima na kupokea ukweli, na wamemchukua Roho Mtakatifu kuwa kiongozi wao, na hawajadanganyika—amini ninawaambia ... watastahimili siku ile.”

Kwa maneno mengine, hawahitaji kuogopa au kuwa na wasiwasi kwa sababu watanusurika na kustawi. Watashinda.

Ikiwa sisi tuna hekima, tutapokea ukweli kwa kukubali injili ya Yesu Kristo kupitia ibada za ukuhani na maagano. Kisha, tunajitahidi kubaki wenye kustahili kuwa na Roho Mtakatifu daima pamoja nasi. Uwezo huu sharti upatikane kwa kila mtu binafsi, tone kwa tone. Vitendo thabiti, binafsi, vya kiibada humwalika Roho Mtakatifu kutuongoza.

Kipengele cha tatu ambacho Yesu aliangazia ni kuepuka udanganyifu. Mwokozi alionya:

“Angalieni kwamba hakuna mtu atakaye wadanganya.

“Kwa sababu wengi watakuja katika jina langu, wakisema, Mimi ni Kristo—nao watawadanganya wengi.”

Mwokozi alijua wenye kujifanya wangejaribu kuwadanyanya hasa wateule na kwamba wafuasi wengi wangedanganywa. Hatupaswi kuwaamini wale ambao kwa uongo wanadai kibali cha uungu au kutembelea majangwa ya kiistiari au vyumba vya siri ili kufundishwa na vitu bandia.

Kitabu cha Mormoni kinatufundisha jinsi tunavyoweza kutofautisha wadanganyifu na wanafunzi. Wanafunzi daima hukuza kuamini katika Mungu, kumtumikia Yeye na kufanya mema. Hatutadanganywa wakati tunapotafuta na kupata ushauri kutoka kwa watu wanaoamimika ambao wao wenyewe ni wanafunzi waaminifu wa Mwokozi.

Tunaweza pia kuepuka udanganyifu kwa kuabudu kila mara katika hekalu. Hii hutusaidia kudumisha mtazamo wa milele na kutulinda kutokana na ushawishi ambao ungeweza kutuvuruga au kutuchepusha kutoka kwenye njia ya agano.

Somo muhimu la fumbo hili la wanawali kumi ni kwamba tunakuwa na hekima tunapokubali injili, kutafuta kuwa na Roho

and avoid deception. The five wise virgins could not help those without oil; no one can accept the gospel, take the Holy Ghost as a guide, and avoid deception on our behalf. We have to do this for ourselves.

The Savior then told the parable of the talents. In this parable, a man gave differing amounts of money, referred to as talents, to three servants. To one servant he gave five talents, to another he gave two, and to a third he gave one. Over time, the first two servants doubled what they had received. But the third servant simply buried his single talent. To both servants who had doubled their talents, the man said, "Well done, ... good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

The man then chided the servant who had buried his talent for being "wicked and slothful." This servant's talent was taken away, and he was banished. Yet, had this servant doubled his talent, he would have received the same commendation and reward as the other servants.

One message of this parable is that God expects us to magnify the abilities we have been given, but He does not want us to compare our abilities to those of others. Consider this insight provided by the 18th-century Hasidic scholar Zusya of Anipol. Zusya was a renowned teacher who began to fear as he approached death. His disciples asked, "Master, why do you tremble? You've lived a good life; surely God will grant you a great reward."

Zusya said: "If God says to me, 'Zusya, why were you not another Moses?' I will say, 'Because you didn't give me the greatness of soul that you gave Moses.' And if I stand before God and He says, 'Zusya, why were you not another Solomon?' I will say, 'Because you didn't give me the wisdom of Solomon.' But, alas, what will I say if I stand before my Maker and He says, 'Zusya, why were you not Zusya? Why were you not the man I gave you the capacity to be?' Ah, that is why I tremble."

Indeed, God will be disappointed if we do not rely upon the merits, mercy, and grace of

Mtakatifu kuwa pamoja nasi na kuepuka udanganyifu. Wale wanawali watano wenye hekima hawangeweza kuwasaidia wale ambao hawakuwa na mafuta; hakuna mtu anayeweza kukubali injili, kuwa na Roho Mtakatifu kama kiongozi na kuepuka udanganyifu kwa niaba yetu. Tunapaswa kufanya hivi kwa ajili yetu wenyewe.

Mwokozi kisha alisema fumbo la talanta. Katika fumbo hili, mtu alitoa viwango tofauti vya fedha, vilitajwa kama talanta, kwa watumishi watatu. Kwa mtumishi mmoja alitoa talanta tano, kwa mwingine alitoa talanta mbili, na kwa wa tatu alitoa talanta moja. Baada ya muda, watumishi wawili wa kwanza walizalisha maradufu ya kile walichopokea. Lakini mtumishi wa tatu alizika chini ile talanta yake moja. Kwa watumishi wote wawili ambao walizalisha maradufu talanta zao, yule mtu alisema: "Vema, mtumwa mwema na mwaminifu; ulikuwa mwaminifu kwa machache, nitakuweka juu ya mengi; ingia katika furaha ya bwana wako."

Yule mtu kisha alimkaripia mtumishi ambaye alikuwa amezika talanta yake kwa kuwa "mtumwa mbaya na mlegevu." Talanta ya mtumishi huyu ilitwaliwa, na akafukuzwa. Bado, kama mtumishi huyu angelirudufu talanta yake, angepokea sifa na tuzo kama wale watumishi wengine.

Ujumbe mmoja wa fumbo ni kwamba Mungu anatutarajia sisi kutanua uwezo tuliopewa, lakini Yeye hataki sisi tulinganishe uwezo wetu na ule wa wengine. Fikiria umaizi uliotolewa na msomi wa Hasidic karne ya 18, Zusya wa Anipoli. Zusya alikuwa mwalimu maarufu ambaye, alianza kuogopa alipokaribia kifo. Wanafunzi wake waliuliza, "Bwana, mbona unatetemeka? Umeishi maisha mazuri; hakika Mungu atakupata tuzo kubwa."

Zusya alisema: "Kama Mungu akisema kwangu, 'Zusya, kwa nini wewe haukuwa Musa mwingine? Nitasema, 'Kwa sababu wewe haukunipa ukuu wa nafasi ambayo ulimpa Musa.' Na kama nikisimama mbele za Mungu na Yeye anasema, 'Zusya, kwa nini wewe haukuwa Sulemani mwingine? Nitasema, 'Kwa sababu wewe haukunipa hekima ya Sulemani.' Lakini, ole, kama nikisimama mbele za Muumba wangu na Yeye aseme, 'Zusya, kwa nini wewe haukuwa Zusya? Kwa nini wewe haukuwa mtu ambaye nilikupa uwezo wa kuwa? Aa, hii ndiyo sababu ninatetemeka."

Kwa kweli, Mungu atasikitika kama hatutategemea fadhili, rehema na neema ya Mwokozi ili

the Savior to magnify the God-given abilities we have received. With His loving assistance, He expects us to become the best version of ourselves. That we may start with differing abilities is irrelevant to Him. And it should be to us.

Finally, the Savior told the parable of the sheep and goats. When He returns in His glory, “before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.”

Those on His right became heirs in His kingdom, and those on His left received no inheritance. The distinguishing characteristic was whether they fed Him when He was hungry, gave Him drink when He was thirsty, housed Him when He was a stranger, clothed Him when He was naked, and visited Him when He was sick or imprisoned.

Everyone was perplexed, both those on the right hand and those on the left hand. They asked when they had, or when they had not, given Him food, drink, and clothing or helped Him when He was vulnerable. In response, the Savior said, “Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

The message of the parable is clear: when we serve others, we serve God; when we don't, we disappoint. He expects us to use our gifts, talents, and abilities to bless the lives of Heavenly Father's children. The divine impulse to serve others is illustrated in a poem written in the 19th century by the Finnish poet Johan Ludvig Runeberg. My siblings and I repeatedly heard the poem “Farmer Paavo” throughout our childhoods. In the poem, Paavo was a poor farmer who lived with his wife and children in the lake region of central Finland. Several years in a row, most of his crops were destroyed, whether through the runoff from the spring snowmelt, summer hailstorms, or an early autumn frost. Each time the meager harvest came in, the farmer's wife lamented, “Paavo, Paavo, you unfortunate old man, God has forsaken us.” Paavo, in turn, stoically said, “Mix bark with the rye flour to make bread so the children won't go hungry. I'll work harder to drain the marshy fields. God is testing us, but He will provide.”

kutanua uwezo uliotolewa na Mungu tuliopokea. Kwa usaidizi Wake wenye upendo, Yeye anatumaraajia kuwa toleo bora la sisi wenyewe. Kwamba tunaweza kuanza kwa uwezo unaotofautiana si kitu Kwake. Na inabidi iwe hivyo kwetu.

Mwishowe, Mwokozi alisema fumbo la kondoo na mbuzi. Wakati Yeye atakaporudi katika utukufu Wake, “na mataifa yote watakusanyika mbele zake; naye atawabagua kama vile mchungaji abaguavyo kondoo na mbuzi; atawaweka kondoo mkono wake wa kuume, na mbuzi mkono wake wa kushoto.”

Wale walio upande Wake wa kulia waka-wa warithi katika ufalme Wake, na wale walio upande Wake wa kushoto hawatapokea urithi. Sifa bainifu ilikuwa ni kama wao walimlisha Yeye wakati Yeye alipokuwa na njaa, walimpa Yeye kinywaji wakati Yeye alipokuwa na kiu, walimpa Yeye makazi wakati Yeye alipokuwa mgeni, walimvisha Yeye wakati Yeye alipokuwa uchi na walimtembelea Yeye wakati Yeye alipokuwa mgonjwa au kifungoni.

Kila mtu alikanganywa, wote wale walio mkono wa kulia na wale walio mkono wa kushoto. Waliuliza ni lini walimpa au hawakumpa Yeye chakula, kinywaji, mavazi, au kumsaidia Yeye wakati alipokuwa na uhitaji. Kwa kujibu Mwokozi alisema “Amin, nawaambia kadiri mlivyomtendea mmojawapo wa hao ndugu zangu walio wadogo, mlinitendea mimi.”

Ujumbe wa fumbo ni wazi: tunapowatumikia wengine, tunatumikia Mungu; tusipofanya hivyo, tunavunja moyo. Yeye anatumaraajia sisi kutumia vipawa vyetu, talanta na uwezo kubariki maisha ya watoto wa Baba yetu wa Mbinguni. Msukumo wa kiungu wa kuwatumikia wengine ulionyeshwa katika shairi lilioandikwa katika karne ya 19 na mshairi Mfini Johan Ludvig Runeberg. Mimi pamoja na ndugu zangu tulisikia shairi hili likirudiwa rudiwa “Mkulima Paavo” kote katika utoto wetu. Katika shairi, Paavo alikuwa mkulima masikini ambaye aliishi pamoja na mke wake na watoto katika ukanda wa ziwa katikati ya Finland. Kwa miaka kadhaa mfulululizo, mengi ya mazao yake yaliharibiwa, iwe ni kutokana na uyeyukaji wa theluji ya majira ya kuchipua, dhoruba za majira ya joto, au baridi ya mapema ya majira ya kupukutika majani. Kila wakati mavuno haba yalipopatikana, mke wa mkulima aliomboleza, “Paavo, Paavo, wewe mtu mzee mwenye bahati mbaya, Mungu ametutelekeza.” Paavo, akijibu, kwa ukakamavu alisema,

Each time the crops were destroyed, Paavo directed his wife to double the amount of bark that she mixed into the flour to ward off starvation. He also worked harder, digging trenches to drain the ground and decrease his fields' susceptibility to a spring runoff and an early autumn frost.

After years of hardship, Paavo finally harvested a rich crop. His wife exulted, "Paavo, Paavo, these are happy times! It is time to throw away the bark, and bake bread made only with rye." But Paavo solemnly took his wife's hand and said, "Mix half the flour with bark, for our neighbor's fields have frosted over." Paavo sacrificed his and his family's bounty to help his devastated and destitute neighbor.

The lesson of the Savior's parable of the sheep and goats is that we are to use the gifts we have been given—time, talents, and blessings—to serve Heavenly Father's children, especially the most vulnerable and needy.

My invitation to the anxious Primary child I mentioned earlier, and to each of you, is to follow Jesus Christ and to trust the Holy Ghost as you would a cherished friend. Rely on those who love you and who love the Savior. Seek God's guidance to develop your unique abilities, and help others, even when it isn't easy. You will be ready to meet the Savior, and you can join President Nelson in being joyfully optimistic. In doing so, you help the world prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and you will be blessed with sufficient hope to enter the rest and joy of the Lord, now and in the future.

As we sing in one of our new hymns:

Rejoice! And prepare for that day! ...

No one knows the day and hour when He will come again,
But He'll return as scriptures say; it will be a

"Changanya maganda na unga wa shayiri utengeneze mkate ili watoto wasiwe na njaa. Nitafanya bidii kukausha maji maji kwenye shamba. Mungu anatumjaribu, lakini Yeye atatumatia."

Kila wakati mimea ilipoharibiwa, Paavo alimwelekeza mke wake kuongeza mara mbili ya kiasi cha maganda ambayo alichanganya na unga ili kuzuia wasife na njaa. Pia alifanya kazi kwa bidii sana, akichimba mitaro ili kutoa maji kutoka kwenye ardhi ili kupunguza uwezekano wa shamba lake kuharibiwa na maji ya majira ya kuchipua na barafu ya majira ya kupukutika majani.

Baada ya miaka ya ugumu, Paavo hatimaye alipata mavuno mengi. Mke wake alishangilia, "Paavo, Paavo hizi ni nyakati za furaha! Ni wakati wa kutupa maganda, na kuoka mkate wa shayiri pekee." Lakini kwa umakini Paavo aliutwaa mkononi wa mke wake na kusema, "Changanya nusu ya unga na maganda, kwani mashamba ya jirani yetu yamefunikwa na barafu." Paavo alitoa dhahabu mavuno yake na ya familia yake ili kumsaidia jirani masikini aliyekuwa anaangamia.

Somo la fumbo la Mwokozi la kondoo na mbuzi ni kwamba tunapaswa kutumia vipawa vyetu tulivyopewa—muda, talanta na baraka—kuwatumikia watoto wa Baba wa Mbinguni, hasa wale walio hatarini na wenye uhitaji.

Mwaliko wangu kwa yule mtoto wa Darasa la Watoto mwenye wasiwasi niliyemtaja hapo awali, na kwa kila mmoja wenu, ni kumfuata Yesu Kristo na kumtumainia Roho Mtakatifu kama vile ambavyo ungefanya kwa rafiki wa thamani. Wategemee wale ambao wanakupenda na wale wanaompenda Mwokozi. Utafute mwongozo wa Mungu ili kukuza uwezo wako wa kipekee, na wasaidie wengine, hata pale ambapo si rahisi kufanya hivyo. Utakuwa tayari kukutana na Mwokozi, na unaweza kuungana na Rais Nelson katika kuwa mwenye kutumainia mema kwa shangwe. Kwa kufanya hivyo, unasaidia kuutayarisha ulimwengu kwa ajili Ujio wa Pili wa Yesu Kristo, na utabarikiwa kwa tumaini la kutosha kuingia katika pumziko na shangwe ya Bwana, sasa na katika siku zijazo.

Kama tunavyoimba katika moja ya nyimbo zetu mpya:

Furahia! Na jitayarishe kwa ajili ya siku ile!

...

Hakuna ajuaye siku na saa wakati Yeye atakapokuja tena,

Lakini Yeye atarudi kama maandiko yase-

joyful day

When our beloved Savior comes again.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

mavyo; itakuwa siku ya shangwe

Wakati Mwokozi wetu mpendwa atakapoku-
ja tena.

Katika jina la Yesu Kristo, amina.