

Your Repentance Doesn't Burden Jesus Christ; It Brightens His Joy

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The invitation to repent is an expression of God's love. Saying yes to that invitation is an expression of ours.

Several years ago on a trip to Florida, I sat outside reading a book. Its title suggested that we can still make it to heaven, even though we're not perfect now. A woman walking by asked, "Do you think it's possible?"

I looked up, confused, and then realized she was talking about the book I was reading. I said something ridiculous like, "Well, I'm not that far into it, but I'll let you know how it ends."

Oh, how I wish I could travel back in time! I'd tell her, "Yes, it's possible! Because heaven isn't for people who've been perfect; it's for people who've been forgiven, who choose Christ again and again."

Today I want to speak to those of us who sometimes feel, "Repentance and forgiveness seem to be working for everyone but me." Those who privately wonder, "Since I keep making the same mistakes, maybe this is the way I am." Those who, like me, have days when the covenant path feels so steep, it's almost a covenant hike!

A wonderful missionary in Australia, Elder QaQa from Fiji, shared a similar feeling in his departing testimony: "I know that God loves me, but sometimes I wonder, 'Does God know that I love Him?' Because I'm not perfect, and I still make mistakes."

Mwaliko wa kutubu ni dhihirisho la upendo wa Mungu. Kusema ndiyo kwa mwaliko huo ni dhihirisho la upendo wetu.

Miaka kadhaa iliyopita nikiwa safarini Florida, niliketi nje nikisoma kitabu. Kichwa chake cha habari kilipendekeza kwamba bado tunaweza kufika mbinguni, japokuwa sisi si wakamilifu sasa. Mwanamke aliyepita kando aliuliza, "Unadhani inawezekana?"

Nilitazama juu, nikiwa nimekanganyikiwa, na kisha nikatambua alikuwa akizungumzia kitabu nilichokuwa nakisoma. Nilisema kitu cha kipuuzi kama, "Vema, sijafika mbali kwenye kusoma, lakini nitakujua kitakavyohitimisha."

Ee, jinsi gani natamani ningerudi tena kwenye wakati ule! Ningemwambia, "Ndiyo, inawezekana! kwa sababu mbinguni si kwa ajili ya watu walio wakamilifu; ni kwa ajili ya watu waliosamehewa, wanaomchagua Kristo tena na tena."

Leo ninataka kuzungumza na wale kati yetu ambao wakati mwingine mnahisi, "Toba na msamaha huonekana kufanya kazi kwa kila mtu isipokuwa mimi." Wale ambao kwa siri wana-jiuliza, "Kwa kuwa naendelea kufanya makosa yaleyale, pengine hivi ndivyo jinsi nilivyo." Wale ambao, kama mimi, wana siku ambapo njia ya agano huonekana kama mwinuko mkali, ni kama vile kupanda mlima wa agano!

Mmisionari wa kupendeza huko Australia, Mzee QaQakutoka Fiji, alishiriki hisia sawa na hiyo katika ushuhuda wake wa kuondoka: "nina-jua kwamba Mungu ananipenda, lakini nyakati zingine najiuliza, je, Mungu anajua kwamba mimi Ninampenda?" Kwa sababu mimi si mkamilifu na ninaendelea kufanya makosa."

In that one tender, haunting question, Elder QaQa summed up exactly what I've often worried about. Maybe you're wondering too, thinking, "I'm trying so hard, but does God know I'm really trying? When I keep falling short, does God know I still love Him?"

It saddens me to admit this, but I used to measure my relationship with the Savior by how perfectly I was living. I thought an obedient life meant I would never need to repent. And when I made mistakes, which was every single day, I distanced myself from God, thinking, "He must be so disappointed in me."

That's just not true.

I've learned that if you wait until you're clean enough or perfect enough to go to the Savior, you've missed the whole point!

What if we thought about commandments and obedience in a different way?

I testify that while God cares about our mistakes, He cares more about what happens after we make a mistake. Are we going to turn to Him again and again? Are we going to stay in this covenant relationship?

Maybe you hear the Lord's words "If [you] love me, keep my commandments" and feel deflated because you haven't kept all the commandments. Let me remind you that it is also a commandment to repent! In fact, it might be the most repeated commandment in the scriptures.

In Alma's soliloquy, "O that I were an angel, and could have the wish of [my] heart ... and cry repentance," he wasn't trying to shame us by pointing out our mistakes. He wanted to cry repentance so that you and I could avoid suffering in the world. One reason Alma hated sin is because it causes us pain.

Sometimes I have to remember, like a Post-it note on my forehead, that the commandments are the path away from pain. And repentance is too. Our prophet said, "The Savior loves us always but especially when we repent."

So when the Lord says, "Repent ye, repent ye," what if you imagined Him saying, "I love you. I love you." Picture Him pleading with you to leave behind the behavior causing you pain, inviting you to step out of darkness and turn to

Katika swali lile moja la dhati, la kuchochea hisia, Mzee QaQa alifupisha kile ambacho mara kwa mara ninakihofia. Pengine unajiuliza pia, ukiwaza, "ninajaribu sana, lakini je, Mungu anajua kwamba ninajaribu kwa dhati? Ninapoen-delea kukosea, je, Mungu anajua bado ninampenda?"

Inanihuzunisha kukubali hili, lakini nilikuwa nikipima uhusiano wangu na Mwokozi kwa jinsi nilivyokuwa nikiishi kikamilifu. Nilidhani maisha ya utiifu yalimaanisha kamwe nisingehitaji kutubu. Na nilipofanya makosa, ambapo ilikuwa ni kila siku, nilijiweka mbali na Mungu, nikidhani, "Lazima atakuwa amekatishwa tamaa na mimi."

Hiyo siyo kweli kabisa.

Nimejifunza kwamba ikiwa utangoja hadi uwe safi vya kutosha au mkamilifu vya kutosha ili kwenda kwa Mwokozi, utakuwa umeelewa vibaya!

Vipi ikiwa tungefikiria kuhusu amri na utiifu katika njia tofauti?

Ninashuhudia kwamba wakati Mungu anajali kuhusu makosa yetu, Yeye anajali zaidi kile kinachotokeabaadaya kufanya makosa. Je, tutakwenda kumgeukia tena na tena? Je, tutakwenda kubaki kwenye njia hii ya agano?

Pengine unasikia maneno ya Bwana "Ikiwa [wewe] wanipenda, zishike amri zangu" na unahisi kupoteza ujasiri kwa sababu hujazishika amri zote. Acha nikukumbushe kuwa kutubu pia ni amri! Kwa hakika, inaweza kuwa amri iliyoji-rudia sana katika maandiko.

Katika maneno ya Alma, "Ee vile natamani ningekuwa malaika na ningekuwa na matarajio ya moyo [wangu] ... na kuhubiri toba," hakuwa akijaribu kutuaibisha kwa kuonesha makosa yetu. Alitaka kuhubiri toba ili wewe na mimi tuweze kuepuka kuteseka ulimwenguni. Sababu moja ya Alma kuchukua dhambi ni kwa sababu inatusababishia maumivu.

Nyakati zingine ninapaswa kukumbuka, kama vile ujumbe ulio kwenye paji langu la uso, kwamba amri ni njia za kututoa kwenye maumivu. Na toba hali kadhalika. Nabii wetu amesema, "Mwokozi anatupenda siku zote lakini hasa wakati tunapotubu."

Hivyo Bwana anaposema, "Tubuni, Tubuni," vipi ikiwa utamfikiria akisema, "ninakupenda. Ninakupenda." Pata taswira ya Yeye aki-kusihi kuachana na mazoea yanayokusababishia maumivu, akikualika utoke gizani na uigiekie

His light.

In my daughter Carly's ward, a new priest knelt to bless the sacrament, and instead of saying, "That they may do it in remembrance of the blood of thy Son," he inadvertently said, "That they may do it in remembrance of the love of thy Son." Tears filled Carly's eyes as the truth of those words sank in.

Our Savior was willing to suffer the pain of His Atonement because He loves you. In fact, you are "the joy that was set before him" while He suffered.

The invitation to repent is an expression of God's love.

Saying yes to that invitation is an expression of ours.

Picture your favorite image of Christ. Now imagine Him smiling brightly with joy each time you use His gift, because He is the "perfect brightness of hope."

Yes, your repentance doesn't burden Jesus Christ; it brightens His joy!

Let's teach that!

Because repentance is our best news!

We don't stay on the covenant path by never making a mistake. We stay on the path by repenting every day.

And when we're repenting, God forgives without shaming us, comparing us to anyone else, or scolding us because this is the same thing we were repenting of last week.

He's excited every time He sees us on our knees. He delights to forgive us because to Him we are delightful!

Don't you just feel that's true?

Then why is it so hard for us to believe?!

Satan, the great accuser and deceiver, uses shame to keep us from God. Shame is a darkness so heavy it feels that if you took it out of your body, it would have an actual weight or heft to it.

Shame is the voice that beats you up, saying, "What were you thinking?" "Do you ever get anything right?"

Shame doesn't tell us we made a mistake; it tells us we are our mistakes. You may even hear, "Hide." The adversary does everything in his power to keep the heaviness inside, telling us the cost is too high, that it will be easier if this stays in darkness, removing all hope.

nuru Yake.

Katika kata ya binti yangu Carly, kuhani mpya alipiga magoti kubariki sakramenti na badala ya kusema, "Ili waweze kufanya hivi kwa ukumbusho wa damu ya Mwanao," bila kuku-sudia akasema "Ili waweze kufanya hivi kwa ukumbusho wa upendo wa Mwanao." Machozi yalijaza macho ya Carly pale ukweli wa maneno yale ulipozama ndani.

Mwokozi wetu alikuwa radhi kuteseka maumivu ya Dhabihu Yake ya Kulipia Dhambi kwa sababu anakupenda. Hakika, wewe ni "fura-ha iliyowekwa mbele yake" wakati alipoteseka.

Mwaliko wa kutubu ni dhihirisho la upendo wa Mungu.

Kusema ndiyo kwa mwaliko huo ni dhihirisho la upendo wetu.

Vuta taswira ya picha yako pendwa ya Kristo. Sasa mfikirie akitabasamu kwa shangwe kila mara unapotumia zawadi Yake, kwa sababu Yeye ni "mng'aro mkamilifu wa tumaini."

Ndiyo, toba yakohaimchoshi Yesu Kristo; ina-ongezashangwe Yake!

Hebu tulifundishe hilo!

Kwa sababu toba ndiyo habari yetu nzuri zaidi!

Hatubaki kwenye njia ya agano kwa kutofanya makosa kamwe. Tunabaki kwenye njia kwa kutubu kila siku.

Na wakati tunapotubu, Mungu anasamehe bila kutuaibisha, kutulinganisha na yeyote au kutugombeza kwa sababu hili ni jambo lililelile tulilokuwa tunalifanyia toba wiki iliyopita.

Anapendezwa kila mara anapotuona tukiwa magotini. Anafurahia kutusamehe kwa sababu Kwake Yeye sisi tuna furaha!

Je, huii kwamba hilo ni kweli?

Kwa nini basi ni vigumu kwetu kuamini?!

Shetani, mshitaki mkuu mdanganyi, hutumia aibu kututenga mbali na Mungu. Aibu ni hisia ya kizakinene kiasi kwamba ukiiiondoa mwilini mwako, itakuwa na uzito halisi au ujazo.

Aibu ni sauti inayokudidimiza ikisema, "Ulikuwa unafikria nini?" "Umewahi kweli kufanya jambo kwa usahihi?"

Aibu haituambii kwambatumefanyakosa; inatuambia kwambasisini makosa yetu. Unaweza hata kusikia, "Jifiche." Mjaribu anafanya kila kitu katika uwezo wake kuweka uzito ndani, akitu-ambia gharama ni kubwa sana, kwamba itakuwa rahisi kama hili litabaki gizani, akiiondoa tumaini lote.

Satan is the thief of hope.

And you need to hear this, so I'll say these words out loud: You are not the voice in your head or the mistakes you have made. You may need to say that out loud too. Tell Satan, "Not today." Put him behind you.

Feel that pull, the godly sorrow that turns you toward your Savior, and watch His grace enter into your life and the lives of those you love. I promise that the minute we bring a broken heart courageously toward Him, He is immediately there.

If you saw someone drowning, wouldn't you reach your hand out and rescue them? Can you imagine your Savior rejecting your outstretched hand? I imagine Him diving into the water, descending below all things to lift us up so we can take a fresh breath! No one can sink lower than the light of Christ shines.

The Savior is forever brighter than the darkness of shame. He would never attack your worth. So watch closely.

Imagine that this hand represents worth.

This hand represents obedience. Maybe you woke up this morning, said a meaningful prayer, and searched the scriptures to hear God's voice. You've made good decisions and are treating the people around you with Christlikeness. You're listening to general conference! Your obedience is here!

Or maybe things haven't gone so well. You've struggled lately to do those small, simple things to connect to heaven. You've made some decisions you aren't proud of.

Where is your worth? Has this hand moved at all?

Your worth isn't tied to obedience. Your worth is constant; it never changes. It was given to you by God, and there's nothing you or anyone else can do to change it. Obedience brings blessings; that is true. But worth isn't one of them. Your worth is always "great in the sight of God," no matter where your decisions have taken you.

While I make mistakes, I want to stay in covenant relationship with Christ, and I'll tell you why.

I grew up taking diving lessons and learned that when judges score a dive, they watch the execution. Was the entry perfectly vertical, with

Shetani ni mwizi wa tumaini.

Na unapaswa kusikia hili, hivyo nitasema maneno haya kwa sauti: Wewe si sauti kichwani mwako au makosa uliyoyafanya. Unaweza kuhitaji kusema hilo kwa sauti pia. Mwambie Shetani, "Sio leo." Mweke nyuma yako.

Hisi mvuto ule, huzuni ya kimungu inayoku-geuzakwa Mwokozi wako na tazama neema Yake ikiingia maishani mwako na ndani ya maisha ya wale unaowapenda. Ninaahidi kwamba daki-ka ile tunapoleta moyo uliovunjika kwa ujasiri Kwake, Yeye kwa haraka yuko pale.

Ikiwa ulimwona mtu akizama, je, usingen-yosha mkono kumwoko? Je, unaweza kufikiria Mwokozi wako akiukataa mkono wako ulion-yoosha? Ninamfikiria akipiga mbizi majini, akishuka chini ya vitu vyote ili kutuina ili tuweze kuvuta hewa safi! Hakuna anayeweza kuzama chini zaidi ya pale nuru ya Kristo inapoangaza.

Mwokozi daima ni mng'aavu zaidi ya giza la aibu. Yeye kamwe hatashambulia thamani yako. Hivyo tazama kwa makini.

Fikiria kwamba mkono huu huwakilisha thamani.

Mkono huu huwakilisha utiifu. Pengine umeamka asubuhi hii, ukasema sala yenye maana na kupekua maandiko ili kuisikia sauti ya Mungu. Umefanya maamuzi mazuri na unawa-tendea watu wanaokuzunguka kama vile Kristo alivyotenda. Unasikiliza mkutano mkuu! Utiifu wako uko hapa!

Au pengine mambo hayakwenda vizuri sana. Umepambana hivi karibuni kufanya vitu vidogo na rahisi ili kuunganika na mbingu. Umefanya baadhi ya maamuzi ambayo haujisikii fahari kuyafanya.

Thamani yako iko wapi? Je, mkono huu ume-sogea hata kidogo?

Thamani yako haijafungwa kwenye utiifu. Thamani yako iko palepale, haibadiliki kamwe. Ulipewa na Mungu na hakuna chochote amba-cho wewe au mwingine yeyote anaweza kufanya kuibadilisha. Utiifu huleta baraka; hilo ni kweli. Lakini thamani si moja ya baraka hizo. Thamani yako daima ni "kubwa mbele ya Mungu," bila kujali maamuzi yako yamekupeleka wapi.

Japo ninafanya makosa, ninatakakubakika ka uhusiano wa agano na Kristo na nitakuambia kwa nini.

Nilichukua masomo ya kupiga mbizi wakati nakua na kujifunza kwamba majaji wanapotoa alama za upigaji mbizi, wanaangalia utekelezaji.

toes pointed and a small splash? Then they do something extraordinary. They factor in the degree of difficulty.

Everyone is diving with their own degree of difficulty. And your Savior is the only one who truly knows the difficulty you are diving with. I want a relationship with the one person who gets me, who knows my heart and how hard I'm trying!

He knows the mists of darkness are descending on all of us travelers and that our journey passes by the river of filth—so even when we're holding to the iron rod, we're going to get splashed.

Coming unto Christ is saying, "Will you help me?" with hope, a revealed assurance that His arms are extended to you always. I believe this fresh view of repentance means that even though we don't have perfect obedience yet, we try affectionate obedience now, choosing to stay, again and again, because we love Him.

Remember King Benjamin's people, who had no more disposition to do evil but only to do good continually? Do you think they packed up their tents, went home, and never made another mistake? Of course not! The difference is they no longer wanted to sin. They had affectionate obedience! Their hearts were turned and tuned to God while they struggled!

Once, at the beach, I saw a bird flying into the wind, flapping its wings so hard, almost frenetically, but staying in the same place. Then I noticed another bird, higher up. It had caught an updraft and was floating easily, unburdened in the wind. That's the difference between trying to do this by ourselves and turning to our Savior, letting Him lift us, with "healing in his wings."

As mission leaders in Australia, during our last visit with each missionary, we talked about 3 Nephi 17, where the people were close to the Savior and could hear Him praying for them. We asked, "If you could hear the Savior praying for you, what do you think He would say?"

To hear their answers was one of the most Spirit-filled experiences of my life. Every one of those missionaries would pause, and tears would

Je, kuingia kulikuwa wima kabisa, vidole vikiwa vimenyoochwwa na urushaji mdogo wa maji? Ki-sha wanafanya jambo fulani kubwa zaidi. Wana-jumlisha pamoja kiwango cha ugumu.

Kila mmoja anapiga mbizi kwa kiwango chake cha ugumu. Na Mwokozi wako ndiye pekee anayejua kwa hakika kiwango cha ugumu unachopigia mbizi. Ninataka uhusiano na mtu anayenielewa, anayejua moyo wangu na jinsi ninavyojaribu kwa juhudi zote!

Yeye anajua ukungu wa giza unashuka kwetu sote wasafiri na kwamba safari yetu inapitia kwenye mto wenye uchafu—hivyo hata wakati tunaposhikilia fimbo ya chuma, tutarushiwa maji.

Kuja kwa Kristo ni kusema, "Unaweza kunisaidia?" kwa tumaini, hakikisho lililofunuliwa kwamba mikono Yake imenyoochwwa kwako daima. Ninaamini mtazamo huu mpya wa toba humaanisha kwamba japobado, hatuna utiifu mkamilifu, tunajaribu utiifu wa upendo kwa Mungusasa, tukichagua kubaki, tena na tena, kwa sababu tunampenda.

Mnawakumbuka watu wa Mfalme Benjamin, ambao hawakuwa na nia ya kutenda uovu tena bali kutenda mema daima? Je, mnadhani walifungasha mahema yao, wakaenda nyumbani na hawakutenda makosa tena? Bila shaka hapa-na! Tofauti ni kwamba hawakutaka tena kutenda dhambi. Walikuwa na utiifu wa upendo kwa Mungu! Mioyo yao iligeuka na kumgeukia Mungu wakati wakipambana!

Mara moja, ufukweni, nilimwona ndege akipaa katika upepo, akipigapiga mabawa yake kwa nguvu, akikaribia kupata hasira, lakini akibaki sehemu moja. Kisha nikamwona ndege mwingine, juu zaidi. Alikuwa kwenye anga la juu na alikuwa akielea kwa urahisi, bila bughudha katika upepo. Hiyo ndiyo tofauti ya kujaribu kufanya hili sisi wenyewe na kumgeukia Mwokozi, tukimruhusu atuinue, kwa "uponyaji katika mbawa zake."

Kama viongozi wa misioni huko Australia, wakati wa kuonana mara ya mwisho na kila mmissionari, tulizungumza kuhusu 3 Nephi 17, ambapo watu walikuwa karibu na Mwokozi na waliweza kumsikia Akisali kwa ajili yao. Tuliuliza, "Ikiwa ungeweza kumsikia Mwokozi akisali kwa ajili yako, unadhani angesema nini?"

Kusikia majibu yao ulikuwa moja ya uzoefu wa kiroho zaidi wa maisha yangu. Kila mmoja wa wale wamisionari angetulia, na machozi yangeja-

fill their eyes as we reminded them, “Your Savior knows the degree of difficulty you’re experiencing. He’s felt it!”

This is what those missionaries quietly and tenderly shared: One sister said, “Jesus would tell the Father, ‘She’s doing her very best. I know how hard she is trying.’” An elder said, “With everything that’s happened in his life, I’m so proud of him.”

Let’s try this. Tonight, before you pray, imagine Jesus Christ close by. He is your Advocate with the Father. Ask yourself, “What would my Savior say to the Father about me?”

And then become silent.

Listen for that voice that says good things about you—the voice of the Savior, your finest friend, and your Father in Heaven, who is really there. Remember, Their love and your worth are always great, no matter what!

I stand here to witness that Jesus Christ gives light to those who sit in darkness. So, on those days when you feel that voice telling you to hide, that you should hide in a dark room all by yourself, I invite you to be brave and believe Christ! Walk over and turn on the Light—our Perfect Brightness of Hope.

Bathed in His light, you’ll see people all around you who have felt alone too, but now, with the light on, you and they will wonder, “Why were we so afraid in the dark? And why did we stay there so long?”

“May the Lord of Lights wrap you in His arms and console and love you continually.” May we love Him continually and choose Him, again and again. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

za macho yao pale tulipowakumbusha, kwamba “Mwokozi wako anajua kiwango cha ugumu unaoupitia. Yeye ameuhisi!”

Hiki ndicho wamisionari wale walijibu taratibu na kwa unyenyekevu: Mmisionari mmoja wa kike alisema “Yesu angemwambia Baba, ‘huyu anafanya kadiri ya uwezo wake. Ninajua jinsi gani anavyojaribu kwa uwezo wake wote.’” Mmisionari wa kiume alisema, “Kwa yote yanayotokea katika maisha yake, ninajivunia yeye.”

Hebu tujaribu hili. Usiku wa leo, kabla hujasali, mfikirie Yesu Kristo akiwa kando yako. Yeye ni Mwombezi wako kwa Baba. Jiulize “Ni kipi Mwokozi wangu angemwambia Baba kunihusu?”

Na kisha nyamaza.

Isikilize sauti ile inayosema mambomazuri kuhusu wewe—sauti ya Mwokozi, rafiki yako mwema na Baba yako wa Mbinguni, ambaye hakika yupo. Kumbuka, upendo Waona thamani yakodaima ni kubwa, bila kujali chochote!

Ninasimama hapa kushuhudia kwamba Yesu Kristo hutoa nuru kwa wale wanaokaa gizani. Hivyo, katika siku zile unapohisi sauti ile ikiambia ujifiche, kwamba unapaswa kujificha kwenye chumba chenye giza ukiwa peke yako, ninakualika uwe jasiri na umwamini Kristo! Simama, tembea na uwashe Nuru—Mng’aro wetu Mkamilifu wa Tumaini.

Ukiwa umefunikwa na nuru Yake, utawaona watu waliokuzunguka ambao wamehisi upweke pia, lakini sasa, wakiwa na nuru iliyowashwa, wewenawaomtastaajabu, “Kwa nini tulikuwa na hofu gizani? Na kwa nini tulibaki huko kwa muda mrefu?”

“Na Bwana wa Nuru akufunike katika mikonono Yake na akufaraji na kukupenda daima.” Na tumpende Yeyesiku zote na tumchague tena na tena. Katika jina la Yesu Kristo, amina.