

Eternity's Great Gifts: Jesus Christ's Atonement, Resurrection, Restoration

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Zawadi Kuu za Milele: Upatanisho wa Yesu Kristo, Ufufuko, Urejesho

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We find in Easter in Jesus Christ peace, becoming, and belonging—that which is enduringly real and joyful, happy and forever.

Years ago, our early-morning gospel class memorized Bible verses. Naturally I was drawn to short passages. This included John 11:35—the shortest verse in scripture, only two words—“Jesus wept.”

For me now, that Jesus weeps in sorrow and joy testifies of the miraculous reality: the divine Son of God came into physical mortality and learned according to the flesh how always to be with and bless us.

When we cry out in grief or joy, Jesus Christ understands perfectly. He can be present in the moments when we most need eternity's great gifts: Jesus Christ's Atonement, Resurrection, restoration.

Mary and Martha weep for their brother Lazarus, who has died. Moved with compassion, Jesus weeps. He raises Lazarus to life.

Jesus beholds Jerusalem on the eve of the Passover. He weeps, unable to gather His people as a hen would her chicks. Today His Atonement gives us hope when we sorrow for what could have been.

The Lord of the vineyard weeps as He asks His servants, which could include us as ministering brothers and sisters, “What could I have done more for my vineyard?”

Mary stands bereft at the sepulchre. Jesus gently asks, “Why weepest thou?” He knows

Tunapata katika Pasaka katika amani ya Kristo, kuweza kuwa na kuwa sehemu ya—kile ambacho ni cha kudumu na cha shangwe, cha furaha na milele.

Miaka mingi iliyopita, darasa letu la injili la mapema asubuhi lilikuwa la kukariri mistari ya Biblia. Kwa kweli mimi nilivutiwa na vifungu vya maneno vifupi. Hii ilijumuisha Yohana 11:35—aya fupi zaidi katika maandiko, ni maneno mawili tu—“Yesu alilia.”

Kwangu mimi sasa, kwamba Yesu analia kwa huzuni na shangwe inashuhudia juu ya uhali-sia wa kimiujiza: Mwana mtakatifu wa Mungu alikuja kimwili duniani na akajifunza kulingana na mwili jinsi gani daima anaweza kuwa nasi na kutubariki.

Tunalipolia kwa huzuni au shangwe, Yesu Kristo anaelewa kikamilifu kabisa. Yeye anaweza kuwa yupo katika nyakati ambazo tunahitaji zaidi zawadi kuu za milele: Upatanisho wa Yesu Kristo, Ufufuko, urejesho.

Mariam na Martha walilia kwa ajili ya kaka yao Lazaro, ambaye alikuwa amefariki. Kwa huruma, Yesu analia. Anamfufua Lazaro.

Yesu anaiona Yerusalemu siku ya mkesha wa Pasaka. Yeye analia, kwa kushindwa kuwakusanya watu Wake, kama kuku akusanyavyo vifaranga wake. Leo Upatanisho Wake unatupa matumaini tunapohuzunika kwa kile ambacho kingekuwa.

Bwana wa shamba la mizabibu analia anapowaagiza watumishi Wake, ambao ingeweza kujumuisha na sisi kama akina kaka na akina dada watumishi, “Je, ningefanya nini zaidi kwa ajili ya shamba langu la mizabibu?”

Mariam anasimama akiwa mnyonge kaburini. Yesu kwa upole anamwuliza, “Kwa nini

“weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” Resurrection brings dawn for all.

In Book of Mormon lands, as the faithful multitude arises to Him, Jesus’s joy is full. He weeps.

“And he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.

“And when he had done this he wept again.”

This is Easter in Jesus Christ: He answers the longings of our hearts and the questions of our souls. He wipes away our tears, except our tears of joy.

When our tears flow, we sometimes apologize, embarrassed. But knowing that Jesus Christ understands life’s pains and joys can give us strength beyond our own as we navigate bitter and sweet.

In South America, a father sobs. A sparkle in his life, his young daughter, has died. “I would give anything to see her again,” he cries in my arms. I cry too.

At the Puebla Mexico Temple dedication, tears of happiness wet the face of a dear sister. Her features radiate faith and sacrifice. She says, “Todos mis hijos están aquí en el templo hoy” — “All my children are here in the temple today.” Generations gathered in the house of the Lord bring tears of joy and gratitude.

In cruel civil war, families and neighbors did unspeakable things to each other. Bitter tears are slowly giving way to hope. Her voice trembling, a woman in a small village says, “Neighbor, before I go to my grave, I want you to know where to find your missing family members.”

A radiant bride and handsome groom are being sealed in the house of the Lord. She is 70 years old, as is he. A beautiful bride, she has worthily waited for this day. She shyly swishes her bridal dress this way, then that way. We shed joyful tears. God’s promises are fulfilled. His covenants bring blessings.

While home teaching a widowed sister, a young Boyd K. Packer learned a tender lesson. Following a disagreement with her husband, the sister had called out a final hurtful remark. An

unalia?” Yeye anajua “kulia kunaweza kudumu kwa usiku mmoja, lakini furaha huja asubuhi.” Ufufuko unaleta pambazuko kwa watu wote.

Katika nchi za Kitabu cha Mormoni, umati wa walio waaminifu unainuka kuja Kwake, shangwe ya Yesu imejaa. Yeye analia.

“Na aliwachukua watoto wao wachanga, mmoja mmoja, na kuwabariki, na kuomba kwa Baba juu yao.

“Na baada ya kufanya hivi alilia tena.”

Hii ni Pasaka katika Yesu Kristo: Yeye anajibu matamanio ya mioyo yetu na maswali ya nafsi zetu. Yeye anafuta machozi yetu, isipokuwa machozi ya shangwe yetu.

Machozi yetu yanapotiririka, wakati mwingine tunaomba msamaha, tunaabika. Lakini kwa kujua kwamba Yesu Kristo huelewa huzuni na shangwe za maisha yetu hilo hutupatia nguvu zaidi ya tulizonazo sisi wenyewetunapopitia machungu na matamu.

Huko Amerika ya Kusini, baba analia.

Mwanga katika maisha yake, binti yake mdogo, amefariki dunia. “Nitatoa chochote ili kumwona tena,” alilia mikononi mwangu. Nami nililia pia.

Kwenye uwekaji wakfu Hekalu la Puebla Mexico, machozi ya furaha yalilowesha uso wa dada mmoja mpendwa. Sura yake iliangaza imani na dhabihu. Yeye anasema, “Todos mis hijos están aquí en el templo hoy” — “Watoto wangu wote wako humu hekaluni leo.” Vizazi kukusanika katika nyumba ya Bwana, inaleta machozi ya shangwe na shukrani.

Katika vita vya kikatili vya wenyewe kwa wenyewe, familia na jirani walifanyiana mambo yasiyoweza kusemekana. Machozi ya hasira pole pole yanatoa njia ya tumaini. Sauti yake ikitemeka, mwanamke mmoja katika kijiji kidogo anasema, “Jirani kabla sijaenda kaburini mwanangu, ninataka wewe ujue pale unaweza kuwapata wanafamilia wako wanaokesekana.”

Bibi harusi mwenye kung’ara na bwana harusi mwenye kupendeza wanaunganishwa katika nyumba ya Bwana. Ana umri wa miaka 70, kama mumewe. Bibi harusi mrembo, alikuwa anastahili siku hii. Bibi harusi kwa soni, aliweka vazi lake la harusi liwe hivi, mara liwe vile. Tulimwaga machozi ya shangwe. Ahadi za Mungu zinatimizwa. Maagano Yake huleta baraka.

Wakati akimfundisha nyumbani dada mjane mmoja, kijana Boyd K. Packer alijifunza somo moja muhimu. Kufuatia kutokukubaliana na mume wake, dada huyu alizungumza maneno

unexpected accident took her husband's life that day. "For fifty years," the widow sobbed, "I've lived in hell knowing that the last words he heard from my lips were that biting, spiteful remark."

Easter in Jesus Christ helps us mend, reconcile, make right our relationships, on both sides of the veil. Jesus can heal grief; He can enable forgiveness. He can free us and others from things we or they have said or done that otherwise bind us captive.

Easter in Jesus Christ lets us feel God's approbation. This world tells us we are too tall, too short, too wide, too narrow—not smart, pretty, or spiritual enough. Through spiritual transformation in Jesus Christ, we can escape debilitating perfectionism.

With Easter joy, we sing, "Death is conquered; man is free. Christ has won the victory." Christ's Resurrection frees us from death, from time's frailties and physicality's imperfections. Jesus Christ's Atonement also restores us spiritually. He bled from every pore, weeping blood as it were, to provide us escape from sin and separation. He reunites us, whole and holy, with each other and God. In all good things, Jesus Christ restores abundantly—not only what was but also what can be.

Jesus's life and light testify of God's love for all His children. Because God our Father loves all His children in every age and land, we find His loving invitation to come find peace and joy in Him in many traditions and cultures. Wherever, whenever, whoever we are, we share divine identity as children of the same Creator. In similar spirit, followers of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity share religious heritage in Father Abraham and covenant connection through events in ancient Egypt.

Father Abraham came to Egypt and was blessed.

Joseph, sold into servitude in Egypt, knew Pharaoh's dream meant seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. Joseph saved his

ya mwisho yaliyomuumiza. Ajali isiyo tarajiwa ilitoa uhai wa mume wake siku ile. "Kwa miaka hamsini," mjane huyu alilia kwa kwikwi, "Ni-meishi jehanamu kwa kujua kwamba maneno ya mwisho aliyosikia kutoka katika midomo yangu yalikuwa machungu, ya chuki."

Pasaka katika Kristo inatusaidia kurekebi-sha, kupatanisha, kuweka sawa uhusiano wetu, pande zote mbili za pazia. Yesu anaweza kuponya huzuni, Yeye anaweza kuwezesha msamaha. Yeye anaweza kutuweka huru sisi na wengine kuto-kana na vitu ambavyo sisi au wengine wamesema au kufanya ambavyo vinginevyo hutuweka utumwani.

Pasaka katika Yesu Kristo hutufanya sisi tuhi-si idhinisho la Mungu. Ulimwengu huu unatu-ambia kwamba sisi ni warefu sana, wafupi sana, wapana sana, wembamba sana, wajanja sana—tuo-sio na akili sana, warembo, au wa kutosha kiroho. Kupitia mabadiliko ya kiroho katika Kristo sisi tunaweza kuepuka ukamilifu wa kulemaza.

Kwa shangwe ya Pasaka, sisi tunaimba, "Mauti ameshindwa; mwanadamu yu huru. Kristo amelea ushindi." Ufufuko wa Kristo unatuweka huru kutokana na mauti, kutokana na nyakati za udhaifu na kasoro za kimwili. Upatanisho wa Yesu Kristo pia unaturejesha kiroho. Yeye alitokwa na damu katika kila kinyweleo, akilia machozi ya damu kama ilivyokuwa, ili kutuepusha kutoka dhambini na kutengwa. Yeye anatuunganisha, kikamilifu na kitakatifu, na kila mmoja wetu na Mungu. Katika vitu vyote vizuri, Yesu Kristo anarejesha kwa wingi—siyo tu kile kilichokuwa bali pia kile kinachoweza kuwa.

Maisha na nuru ya Yesu vinashuhudia juu ya upendo wa Mungu kwa watoto Wake wote. Kwa sababu Mungu Baba yetu anawapenda watoto Wake wote katika kila umri na nchi, tunapata mwaliko Wake wa upendo wa kuja kupata amani na shangwe katika Yeye katika desturi nyingi na tamaduni. Mahali popote, wakati wowote, mtu yeyote, tunashiriki utambulisho wa kiungu kama watoto wa Muumbaji yule yule. Katika roho hiyo hiyo, wafuasi wa Uislamu, Uyahudi na Ukristo wanashiriki urithi wa kidini katika Baba Ibrahimu na muunganiko wa kiagano kupitia matukio huko Misri ya kale.

Baba Ibrahimu alikuja Misri na alibarikiwa.

Yusufu, aliuza utumwani huko Misri, alijua ndoto ya Farao ilimaanisha miaka saba ya neema ikifuatiwa na miaka saba ya baa la njaa. Yusufu

family and his people. Joseph wept when he saw God's larger plan, where all things work together for good for those who keep their covenants.

Moses, raised in Egypt in Pharaoh's household, received and later restored the keys for the gathering of God's children.

Fulfilling prophecy, Joseph, Mary, and the infant Christ child sought refuge in Egypt. In Cairo, a devout Muslim believer reverently says: "The Quran teaches that Joseph, Mary, and the baby Jesus found safety and sanctuary in my country. In my country, Jesus as a toddler ate our food, took His first steps, said His first words. Here in my country, we believe trees bent low to give Him and His family fruit. His being in my country blessed our people and land."

God's plan of moral and mortal agency allows us to learn by our own experience. Some of our greatest life lessons come from things we would never choose. In love, Jesus Christ descended below and ascended above all things. He rejoices in our divine capacities for creativity and delight, kindness without hope for reward, faith unto repentance and forgiveness. And He weeps in sorrow at the enormity of our human suffering, cruelty, unfairness—often brought by human choice—as do the heavens and the God of heaven with them.

Each Easter spring season testifies that spiritual sequence and convergence are both part of the divine pattern of atonement, resurrection, and restoration through Jesus Christ. This sacred and symbolic convergence comes not by accident or coincidence. Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter celebrate Christ's Atonement and Resurrection. As today, every April 6 we commemorate the establishment and organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This Restoration is a reason we gather the first Sunday each April in general conference.

Restoration also came as the resurrected Jesus Christ, Moses, Elias, and Elijah returned priesthood keys and authority at the newly dedicated Kirtland Temple on Easter Sunday, 1836. In

aliokoa familia yake na watu wake. Yusufu alilia alipoona mpango mkubwa wa Mungu, ambamo mambo yote yatafanyika kwa pamoja kwa faida ya wale wanaoshika maagano yao.

Musa, alilelewa huko Misri katika kaya ya Farao, alipokea na baadaye kurejesha funguo za kuwakusanya watoto wa Mungu.

Wakitimiza unabii, Yusufu, Mariamu na mtoto mchanga Kristo walikimbilia huko Misri. Huko Kairo, Muislamu wa dhati aminiye kwa unyenyekevu anasema: "Kuran inafundisha kwamba Yusufu, Mariamu na mtoto Yesu walipata usalama na mahali patakatifu katika nchi yangu. Katika nchi yangu, Yesu kama mtoto mchanga alikula chakula chetu, alitembea hatua Zake za kwanza, alisema maneno Yake ya kwanza. Hapa katika nchi yangu, tunaamini miti iliinama chini ili kumpa Yeye na familia Yake matunda. Kuwepo Kwake katika nchi yangu kulibariki watu na nchi."

Mpango wa Mungu juu ya maadili na haki ya kujiamulia duniani vinaturuhusu kujifunza kwa uzoefu wetu sisi wenyewe. Baadhi ya masomo makuu ya maisha yanakuja kutokana na mambo ambayo tusingeweza kuchagua. Katika upendo, Yesu Kristo alijishusha chini na kupanda juu ya vitu vyote. Yeye anafurahia katika uwezo wetu wa kiungu wa ubunifu na furaha, ukarimu pasipo matumaini ya thawabu, imani katika toba na msamaha. Na analia kwa huzuni kwa wingi wa mateso yetu ya kibinadamu, ukatili, ukosefu wa haki—mara nyingi vikiletwa na chaguzi za kibinadamu—kama ilivyo kwa mbingu na Mungu wa mbinguni pamoja nao.

Kila majira ya kuchipua ya Pasaka yanashuhudia kwamba mfuatano na muunganiko wa kiroho vyote ni sehemu ya mpangilio wa kiungu wa upatanisho, ufufuko na urejesho kupitia Yesu Kristo. Muunganiko huu mtakatifu unakuja siyo kama ajali au kwa bahati tu. Jumapili ya Matawi, Wiki Takatifu na Pasaka husherehekea Upatanisho na Ufufuko wa Yesu Kristo. Kama leo, kila siku ya Aprili 6 tunakumbuka kuanzishwa na kuundwa kwa Kanisa la Yesu Kristo la Watakatifu wa Siku za Mwisho. Urejesho huu ndio sababu tunakusanyika kila Jumapili ya kwanza ya kila mwezi wa Aprili katika mkutano mkuu.

Urejesho pia ulikuja pale Yesu Kristo aliyefufuka, Musa, Elia na Eliya, waliporejesha funguo za ukuhani na mamlaka kwenye Hekalu jipya na lililowekwa wakfu la Kitland siku ya Jumapili

that setting on that day to the restored Church of Jesus Christ came God's authority and blessings to gather His children, prepare His children to return to Him, and unite families for eternity. Restoration that day fulfilled prophecy by occurring both on Easter and Passover.

Including the Kirtland Temple, I recently visited sacred places in Ohio where the Prophet Joseph and others saw in vision God our Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. The Prophet Joseph saw what heaven is like. In heaven, Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, "saves all the works of his hands" in a kingdom of glory. The only exceptions are those who willfully "deny the Son after the Father has revealed him."

As His mortal ministry began, Jesus declared His mission to bless us each with all we are willing to receive—in every time, every land, every circumstance. After fasting 40 days, Jesus went into the synagogue and read, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."

Poor, brokenhearted, captive, blind, bruised—that's each of us.

The book of Isaiah continues the Messianic promise of hope, deliverance, assurance: "Appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, ... give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

Thus, we cry out, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

Each Easter season, we celebrate, as a symbolic whole, eternity's great gifts through Jesus Christ: His Atonement; His (and the promise of our) literal Resurrection; Restoration of His latter-day Church with priesthood keys and authority to bless all God's children. We rejoice in the garments of salvation and the robe of righteousness. We shout, "Hosanna to God and the Lamb!"

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his

ya Pasaka, 1836. Katika mazingira yale siku ile kwa urejesho wa Kanisa la Yesu Kristo yalikuja mamlaka ya Mungu na baraka ya kuwakusanya watoto Wake, kuwaandaa watoto Wake kurudi Kwake na kuziunganisha familia milele. Urejesho siku ile ulitimiza unabii kwa kutokea katika siku ya Pasaka na Kumbukizi ya kukombolewa kwa wana wa Israeli kutoka utumwani Misri.

Ikijumuisha Hekalu la Kirtland, hivi karibuni nilitembelea maeneo matakatiifu huko Ohio mahali ambapo Nabii Joseph na wengine walimwona katika ono Mungu Baba yetu na Mwana Wake Yesu Kristo. Nabii Joseph aliona jinsi mbinguni kulivyo. Huko mbinguni, Baba wa Mbinguni, kupitia Yesu Kristo, "anaokoa kazi zote za mikonoyake" katika ufalme wa utukufu. Tofauti pekee ni kwa wale ambao kwa makusudi "wanamkana Mwana baada ya kuwa Baba amemfunua."

Huduma Yake ya duniani ilipoanza, Yesu alitamka misheni Yake ya kutubariki kila mmoja kwa vyote tulivyo tayari kupokea—katika kila wakati, kila nchi, kila hali. Baada ya kufunga kwa siku 40, Yesu alienda katika sinagogi na kusema "Roho wa Bwana yu juu yangu, Kwa maana amenitia mafuta kuwahubiria maskini habari njema, amenituma kuponya waliovunjika moyo, kuwatangazia wafungwa kufunguliwa kwao, na vipofu kupata kuona tena, kuwaacha huru waliometwa."

Maskini, waliovunjika moyo, wafungwa, vipofu, waliojeruhiwa—hiyo ni kila mmoja wetu.

Kitabu cha Isaya kinaendeleza ahadi ya Kimasiya ya tumaini, ukombozi, uhakika: "Kuwagizia hao waliao katika Sayuni, ... wapewe taji ya maua badala ya majivu, mafuta ya furaha badala ya maombolezo, vazi la sifa badala ya roho nzito."

Hivyo, sisi tunalia, "Nitafurahi sana katika Bwana, nafsi yangu itashangilia katika Mungu wangu; maana amenivika mavazi ya wokovu, amenifunika vazi la haki."

Kila majira ya Pasaka tunasherehekea, kama ishara, zawadi kuu za milele kupitia Yesu Kristo: Upatanisho Wake, Ufufuko Wake halisi (na ahadi ya ufufuko wetu halisi), Urejesho wa Kanisa Lake la siku za mwisho lenye funguo za ukuhani na mamlaka ya kuwabariki watoto wote wa Mungu. Tunashangilia katika mavazi ya wokovu na vazi la haki. Tunapiga kelele, "Hosana kwa Mungu na Mwanakondoo!"

"Kwa maana jinsi hii Mungu aliupenda ulim-

only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

May we each find in Jesus Christ atonement, resurrection, and restoration—peace, becoming, and belonging—that which is enduringly real and joyful, happy and forever, I pray in His holy name, Jesus Christ, amen.

wengu, hata akamtoa Mwanawe wa pekee, ili kila mtu amwaminiye asipotee, bali awe na uzima wa milele.”

Na kila mmoja wetu apate katika Yesu Kristo upatanisho, ufufuko na urejesho—amani, kuwa, na kuwa wa sehemu ya—kile ambacho kinadumu kweli na chenye shangwe, furaha na kisicho na mwisho, ninaomba katika jina Lake takatifu, Yesu Kristo, amina.