

The Love of God

By Elder Benjamin M. Z. Tai
Of the Seventy

Te here o te Atua

Nā Elder Benjamin M. Z. Tai
Nō te Hitu 'Ahuru

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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.

Tē fa'ā'ite pāpū nei au ma te 'oa'oa ē, 'o Iesu Mesia te here o te Atua. Tōna here nō tātou, e mea maita'i roa ia, nō tātou tāta'itahi te reira 'e e mea tu'utu'u 'ore.

I te hōē tau ve'ave'a, e tere tō mātou i te hōē vāhi mo'emo'e, 'ua tāoto mātou tō'u 'utuāfare i rāpae, vai taha'a noa mai te ra'i. I nī'a ia mātou e nehenehe te Viri'ō Feti'a e 'ite maita'ihia, 'ua 'i te feti'a e 'aita e nehenehe e tai'o 'e te tahi taime, te feti'a rere. I roto i tō mātou fa'ahiahia rahi i mua i teie poietera'a a te Atua, 'ua roa'a te hōē tū'atira'a hau e 'oia. Aita roa atu tā māua nā tamari'i, tei ora na i Hong Kong, i fa'ari'i a'enei i teie huru 'itera'a. 'Ua ani mai rātou, ma te feruri 'ore ē, tē ora rā anei rātou i raro a'e i te ra'i mai tei mātauhia i te fare. 'Ua tāmata vau e fa'ata'a atu, hōē ā ana'e ra'i, 'e nā te mata'i 'ino rā 'e te mōri, i te vāhi tā mātou i ora na, e fa'atāponi i teie mau feti'a noa atu tei reira ihoā rātou.

Tē ha'api'i nei te Bibilia ē « 'O te fa'aro'o nei, 'o te ti'aturi ia i te mau mea e tia'ihia nei, te 'ite i te mau mea 'aore e hiohia nei ». 'Ia ha'apoirihia ana'e tō tātou hi'ora'a pae vārua 'e te mau fa'ahemara'a o teie ao teretetiā, mai te peu e fa'āhipa tātou i te fa'aro'o i te Atua 'e i tāna Tamaiti ia Iesu Mesia, e fa'ari'i ia tātou i te ha'apāpūra'a māmarama nō tō rāua ti'ara'a mau 'e tō rāua aroha ia tātou.

I roto i te Buka a Moromona, 'ua 'ite te peropheta Lehi i te « hōē tumu rā'au, tōna hotu mea hina'arohia i te mau mea ato'a mea hina'arohia ho'i 'ia fa'ā'oa'oa » 'e « e mea monamona a'e 'e te mau mea ato'a ». I tōna 'amurā'a i te hotu, 'ua 'i tōna vārua i te 'oa'oa rahi, 'e 'ua hina'aro 'oia i tōna 'utuāfare 'ia 'amu ato'a. Tē ha'api'i nei tātou ē, e hōho'a teie tumu rā'au nō te « here o te Atua » 'e mai ia Lehi, e nehenehe ato'a tātou e fa'ari'i i

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

te 'itera'a pāpū 'oāoa nō te Atua 'ia ani manihini ana'e tātou iāna i roto i tō tātou orara'a.

E hōho'a Iesu Mesia nō te here o te Metua i te ao ra nō tātou. Nā roto i tāna tūsia tāra'hara, 'ua mamae 'Oia nō tā tātou mau hara 'e 'ua pēpē nō tō tātou 'ino. 'Ua amo 'oia i tō tātou mau mau'ui i ni'a iāna, te mau 'oto, 'e 'ua rave i ni'a iāna i tō tātou mau pēpē 'e te mau ma'i. E tono mai 'oia i te Vārua Maita'i nō te tamarū ia tātou, 'e teie ho'i te hotu o te Vārua, te 'oāoa, te hau, 'e te fa'aro'o, tē fa'a'i ia tātou i te ti'a'ira'a 'e te here.

Noa atu te here o te Atua nō te tāto'ara'a, tē vai ra iho'a vetahi ē 'imi noa nei i te reira, 'e tē vai ato'a rā e hina'aro nei i te here o te Atua 'aita rā e ti'aturi ē, e au te reira nō rātou. 'E tē vai ato'a rā vetahi e tāmata noa nei 'ia tāpē'a maita'i i te reira. Tē ha'api'i nei te pāpā'ira'a mo'a 'e te Fatu ia tātou ē, e nehenehe noa tātou e fa'ari'i i te here o te Atua, nā roto i te maita'i 'o Iesu Mesia, 'ia tātara-hapa tāmau, te fa'a'orera'a i te hapa, fa'aitoitōra'a 'ia ha'apa'o i Tāna fa'auera'a, 'e e tāvini ia vetahi ē ma te tai'o 'ore. E fa'ari'i ato'a tātou i te here o te Atua 'ia rave ana'e i te mau peu e huti ia tātou i pihā'i iho iāna, mai te 'āpara'ura'a iāna i te mau mahana ato'a nā roto i te pure 'e te tuatāpapa'ara'a pāpā'ira'a mo'a, 'e te fa'ae'ara'a i te rave i te mau peu e fa'aātea nei iāna, mai te vai te'ote'ora'a, te 'aimārōra'a 'e te 'orurehau.

'Ua ani manihini te presideni Russell M. Nelson ia tātou 'ia « tātara, ma te tauturu a te Fa'aora, i te mau hu'ahu'a tahito i roto i tō tātou orara'a » 'e 'ia « ha'apae i te tāiroiro ». Tē hōro'a nei 'oia ia tātou tāta'itahi i te rāve'a 'ia « ha'apa'ari maita'i atu ā i tō tātou niu pae vārua » nā roto i te « fa'atūmura'a i tō tātou orara'a i ni'a [i te Fa'aora] 'e i ni'a i te mau 'oro'a 'e te mau fafaura'a o tāna hiero ». 'Ua fafau mai 'oia ē, « 'a ha'apa'o ai tātou i tā tātou mau fafaura'a nō te hiero, matara rahi a'e te mana ha'apūai o te Fatu nō tātou [...] E 'ite tātou i te here rahi o Iesu Mesia 'e tō tātou Metua i te ao ra ma te 'auhune rahi ! »

E hoa tō'u, i ha'amaita'ihia e te hōē 'utuāfare nehenehe mau 'e te hōē tōro'a maita'i. 'Ua tau'i te orara'a i te taera'a mai te ma'i tei fa'a 'ere i tāna 'ohipa, 'e 'ua fa'aru'ehia mai e te vahine. Noa atu te fifi i te reira nā matahiti, nā tōna here i tāna mau tamari'i 'e te mau fafaura'a tāna i rave e te Atua tei turu pāpū iāna. I te hōē rā mahana 'ua fa'aro'o 'oia ē 'ua fa'aipoipohia 'e tē hina'aro nei tōna hoa fa'aipoipo mātāmua e fa'a'ore i tā rāua tāatira'a hiero. 'Ua pe'ape'a 'oia 'e 'ua turori ato'a te mana'o. 'Ua 'imi 'oia i te hau 'e te māmarama i roto i te

visit, I received the following message from him:

“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.

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

fare o te Fatu. Te mahana i muri a'e i tōna tere fārereira'a iā'u, 'ua fa'ari'i au i te hōē poro'i mai nō roto mai iāna :

« I nā pō ra, 'ua fa'ari'i au i te hōē 'itera'a i roto i te hiero. I tō'u iho mana'o 'ua vai noa na te mana'o tāhitohito i roto iā'u [...] 'Ua 'ite au ē, e ti'a iā'u 'ia tau'i ē 'ua pure tāmāu vau 'ia nā-reira-hia i teie hepetoma tāāto'a [...] I roto i te hiero i na pō ra, 'ua 'ite roa vau i te Vārua i te 'iritirā'a i te mā'ino'ino i roto i tō'u 'āau [...] 'Aue ho'i te tāmahanahanara'a i te reira [...] 'Ua ha'amāmāhia te hōē zugo taimaha mau i ni'a iā'u ».

Noa atu tē fārerei noa nei 'oia i te tana mau fifi, mea poiherehia nā tō'u hoa i teie 'itera'a tana i te fare o te Fatu, i reira te mana fa'aora o te Atua i te tautururā'a iāna 'ia piri atu i te Atua, 'ia vai 'oāoa noa i tōna orarā'a ē 'ia fa'aiti mai i te uru-pu'upu'u nō ananahi.

'Ia fārerei ana'e tātou i te here o te Atua, e nehenehe tātou e amo i te mau fifi ma te 'ōhie 'e e auraro i tōna hina'aro ma te o'ao'a. Tē ti'aturi nei tātou e ha'amana'o te Atua i tana nā fafau'a ē 'o tātou, e hi'o mai 'oia i tō tātou mau fifi, 'e fa'ati'amā 'oia ia tātou i te tītira'a. E hina'aro tātou e fa'a'ite i te 'oāoa tā tātou e fa'ari'i nei 'e tō tātou 'utuāfare 'e tei herehia. Mai te 'utuāfare o Lehi, e ti'amārā'a tō te tāata 'ia mā'iti i te 'amurā'a i te hotu 'aore rā 'aita, tei ia tātou rā te mā'itira'a 'ia here, 'ia fa'a'ite 'e 'ia ani manihini ia rātou 'o tā tātou i here, 'ia fa'ari'i ato'a i te here o te Atua.

Nō te tauturu ia rātou 'ia fa'ari'i i te here o te Atua, tītauhia ia tātou 'ia fa'ahotu i te huru Mesia mai te haeha'a, te aroha, te aumihi 'e te fa'āoroma'i 'e te fa'afāriura'a ia vetahi ē i te Fa'aora ra, nā roto i te pēera'a i nā fa'auera'a rahi e piti nō te here i te Atua 'e te here i tō tāata tupu.

'Ua fifihia tā māua tamaiti i te mana'o faufa'a 'ore 'e te ha'afaufāra'a iāna iho i tōna 'āpīra'a. 'Ua pure māua tā'u vahine 'ia 'ite nāhea 'ia tauturā'a iāna, 'e 'ua tae i te mana'o ē, e rave māua i te mea ato'a tā te Fatu e ani. I te hōē mahana, 'ua fa'auruhia vau 'ia ani i te presideni peresibutero ē, 'aita ānei 'oia i mātau i te tāata tā māua tā'u tamaiti e tere e hāhaere. 'Ua feruri 'oia 'e i muri iho, 'ua ani mai 'oia 'ia hāhaere māua i te hōē tuahine e ma'i rahi tōna 'e ma te parau fa'ati'a a te presideni 'āma'a, 'ia 'āfa'i i te 'ōro'a mo'a i te mau Sābati ato'a. 'Ua 'oāoa roa vau, 'aita rā vau i pāpū i te mana'o o tā'u tamaiti 'ia nā reira i te mau hepetoma ato'a.

I tō māua tere mātāmua, aroha atu ra māua nō teie tuahine, nō te mea tei roto 'oia i te ma-mae rahi tāmāu. 'Ua māuruuru 'oia nō te 'ōro'a

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?

If you would like to feel the love of God more abundantly in your life, may I invite you to con-

mo'a, 'e mea au nā māua e hāhaere iāna 'e tāna tāne. I te hōē rā Sābati, i muri iho ma'a tere iti tō māua, 'aita vau i reira nō te haere, 'ua fa'ahama-na'o rā vau i tā'u tamaiti i tā māua tuha'a 'ohipa. I tō'u taera'a atu i te fare, hina'aro 'oi'oi roa vau i te parau 'āpī nō te tere hahae. 'Ua pāhono mai tā'u tamaiti ē, 'aita 'oia i mana'o 'ua rave tōna mau hoa i te mau 'ohipa fa'ahia mai te reira. Parau fa'ahou mai 'oia ē, 'ua rave 'oia i tōna taeae 'ei tauturu 'e 'ua tere maita'i te 'oro'a, terā rā 'ua 'oto ri'i teie tuahine i te hepetoma tā'ato'a nō te mea 'ua tītau manihini 'oia i tōna mau hoa nō te tahi 'āru'i mātā'ita'ira'a teata, 'aita rā te video i tere. 'Ua hi'ohi'o tā'u tamaiti i ni'a i te natirara nō te rāpā'au i teie fifi 'e 'ua ti'a iāna 'ia tā'tā'i i te reira. 'Ua 'oa'oa 'oia ē, e nehenehe 'oia e ti'aturihia nō te hōro'a i te tauturu i taua tuahine ra 'ia 'oa'oa i terā mahana. 'Ua fa'ari'i 'oia i te here o te Atua.

Mai te mea tē poiri noa nei tō 'outou orara'a noa atu tā 'outou tauto'ora'a rahi, 'ia mana'o 'outou ē, 'aita tā 'outou mau pure i fa'arō'ohia, 'aore rā 'aita 'outou ē 'ite rā i te here o te Atua, e ha'ama-na'o na, e faufa'a tō tā 'outou tauto'ora'a 'e, mai te mau feti'a e vai nei i te ra'i ra, tē fa'aro'o nei te Metua i te ao ra 'e Iesu Mesia, 'ua here rāua ia 'outou.

I te hōē taime 'a tere ai tāna mau pipi nā ni'a i te pahī, i reira rātou i te « tiria-haere-rā'ahia e te mata'are », haere atu ra te Fa'aora ia rātou ra nā ni'a i te 'are 'e 'ua parau atu rā ia rātou, « 'A fa'aitoito, 'o vau teie ; 'eiaha e mata'u ». I tō Petero hina'arora'a 'ia haere i te Fa'aora ra nā ni'a i te 'are, tārape atu rā Iesu iāna ma te paraura'a ē, « 'A haere mai ». 'E i tō Petero fa'aeara'a i te rōtahi 'e i tōna paremora'a, 'ua fa'atoro mai te Fa'aora i tāna rima nō te huti mai iāna 'e arata'i i te vāhi pāpū ma te paraura'a ē, « E teie nei tāata fa'aro'o hara'ini, e aha 'oe i mata'u ai ? »

I te taime iho tātou e fa'aruru ai i te mau mata'i i roto i tō tātou orara'a, e hina'aro ānei tātou 'ia fa'a'eta'eta 'e 'ia itoito noa ? Nāhea ia tātou 'ia ha'amana'o ē, 'aita te Fa'aora i ha'amo'e ia tātou 'e tei pīha'i iho 'oia ia tātou, pēnei a'e paha nā roto i te rāve'a 'aita tātou i mana'o ? 'Ua tae ānei te mana'o ē, e pe'e iāna ma te fa'aro'o nā te 'ē'a iho ā rā ē 'aita e mana'ohia e nehenehe ? E aha tāna mau rāve'a nō te amo ia tātou i te vāhi pāpū i te taime tātou e fifihia ai ? Nāhea tātou e hi'o ai iāna ma te fa'aro'o i roto i tō tātou mau mana'o tā'ta'ita-hi ma te fe'a'a 'ore 'aore rā te mata'u 'ore ?

Mai te peu tē hina'aro nei 'outou 'ia fa'ari'i i te here 'u'ana o te Atua i tō 'outou orara'a, tē tītau

sider 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.

manihini nei au 'ia feruri i teie mau tā'ahira'a :

'A tahi, fa'aea pinepinenō te ha'amana'o, e tamari'i 'outou nā te Atua 'e e feruri i te mau 'ohipa tā 'outou ē māuruuru nei.

'A piti, pure i te mau mahana ato'a, ma te ani i te Metua i te ao ra 'ia tauturu ia 'outou 'ia 'ite 'o vai mā tē hina'aro nei i tōna here.

'A toru, ani ma te 'ā'au tae aha tē nehenehe e rave 'ia tauturu i te tā'ata 'ia 'ite i te here o te Atua.

'E 'a maha, e pāhono 'o'ioi te fa'aurura'a i tae mai.

'Ia pure tāmau tātou 'e e ani nō rātou, e fa'a'ite mai te Atua 'o vai mā tē ti'a 'ia tauturu atu. 'E 'ia vitiviti tātou nō te rave, e nehenehe tātou e riro 'ei rāve'a pāhonora'a nāna i tā rātou mau pure. 'Ia nā reira 'o'ioi tātou, e fa'ari'i tātou i te mau pāhonora'a i tā rātou mau pure 'e e 'ite tātou i te here o te Atua i tō tātou iho orara'a.

Ma'a 'āva'e i ma'iri a'enei, tē tere ra māua tā'u vahine i te fenua 'Ānāmī, 'ua ma'ue te manureva nā roto i te hō'e vero rahi. Tā'ue'ue rahi te manureva, 'e e 'ite-roa-hia nā roto i te māmarama te mau ata 'ere'ere, te ua pūai 'e te pātiri. I muri i te ta'umara'a roaroa, tei ni'a mātou i te mau ata o te vero 'e i mua ia mātou te nehenehe o te ra'i 'ia hi'ohia. 'Ua fa'aha'amana'o te reira ia māua i te Metua i te ao ra 'e Iesu Mesia 'e tō rāua here rahi ia māua.

Te mau hoa here, 'ei tā'ata tei fa'ari'i i te here o te Atua, ma te 'o'aoa rahi, tē ha'apāpū nei au, 'o te Fa'aora Iesu Mesia te here o te Atua. Tōna here nō tātou, e mea maita'i roa ia, nō tātou tāta'itahi te reira 'e e mea tu'utu'u 'ore. 'A ha'apa'o noa ai tātou 'ia pe'e iāna, tē pure nei au 'ia 'i tātou i tōna here 'e 'ia riro tātou 'ei fare mōrī e arata'i nei ia vetahi i tōna ra here. Nā roto i te i'oa o Iesu Mesia, 'āmene.