

3 Nephi 15-18

I. Jane Maylan: Summer of the Lambs

II. 3 Nephi 15:

1-10 *Old things pass away and all things become new*

1-2 Remember and do

3-10 New Law = Christ; Old Law = Moses

“There are those within the Church who are disturbed when changes are made with which they disagree or when changes they propose are not made. They point to these as evidence that the leaders are not inspired...Changes in organization or procedures are a testimony that revelation is ongoing. While doctrines remained fixed, the methods and procedures do not” (Boyd K. Packer, *CR*, October 1989, p. 18).

“Keep in mind that the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ are divine. Nobody changes the principles and doctrines of the Church except the Lord by revelation. But methods change as the inspired direction comes to those who preside at a given time...You may be sure that your brethren who preside are praying most earnestly, and we do not move until we have the assurance, so far as lies within our power, that what we do has the seal of divine approval” (Harold B. Lee, *Ensign*, January 1971, p. 10).

“Enduring well is clearly an essential part of mortality’s planned refining process. Refining requires heat. Refining also requires time” (Neal A. Maxwell, *If Thou Endure it Well*, p. 3).

“Endurance is even more than elasticized courage, for it underwrites all the other virtues across the expanse of life. Without endurance, the other virtues would be episodic; faith would be fitful, and virtue transitory” (Neal A. Maxwell, *Wherefore, Ye Must Press Forward*, p. 112).

11-24 *Jesus teaches about the “Other Sheep”*

12 Ye are my disciples

17-18 Other Sheep

19-24 Ye are the other sheep

See Millett & McConkie, pp. 104-107

“The lost sheep are not just the people who don’t come to church. The lost sheep is a mother who goes down into the valley of the dark shawdows to bring forth children. The lost sheep is a young person, far away from home and faced with loneliness and temptation. The lost sheep is a person who has just lost a critically needed job; a business person in financial distress; a new missionary in a foreign culture; a man just called to be a bishop; a married couple who are misunderstanding each other; a grandmother whose children are forgetting her. I am the lost sheep. You are the lost sheep” (Bruce C. Hafen, *The Broken Heart*, p. 60).

3 Nephi 16:

1-3 *The Lost tribes of Israel*

4-20 *The fullness of the Gentiles to come in*

7 Truth and fulness restored

8 Unbelieving Gentiles

10-15 Gentiles toast

19-20 Power of Lord in our lives

Mini Lesson: The Individual Nature of Christ

1. The Savior loves and values us
2. He wants to heal us
3. He knows us by name
4. The Individual Nature - touching the one

The Individual Nature of Christ

In a general conference not long ago, Elder John R. Lasater shared the following experience: Some years ago, it was my privilege to visit the country of Morocco as part of an official United States government delegation. As part of that visit, we were invited to travel some distance into the desert to visit some ruins. Five large black limousines moved across the beautiful Moroccan countryside at considerable speed. I was riding in the third limousine, which had lagged some distance behind the second. As we topped the brow of a hill, we noticed that the limousine in front of us had pulled off to the side of the road. As we drew nearer, I sensed that an accident had occurred and suggested to my driver that we stop.

The scene before us has remained with me for these many years. An old shepherd, in the long, flowing robes of the Saviors day, was standing near the limousine in conversation with the driver. Nearby, I noted a small flock of sheep numbering not more than fifteen or twenty. An accident had occurred. The king's vehicle had struck and injured one of the sheep belonging to the old shepherd. The driver of the vehicle was explaining to him the law of the land. Because the king's vehicle had injured one of the sheep belonging to the old shepherd, he [the shepherd] was now entitled to one hundred times its value at maturity. However, under the same law, the injured sheep must be slain and the meat divided among the people. My interpreter hastily added, 'But the old shepherd will not accept the money. They never do.' Startled, I asked him why. And he added, 'Because of the love he has for each of his sheep.' It was then that I noticed the old shepherd reach down, lift the injured lamb in his arms, and place it in a large pouch on the front of his robe. He kept stroking its head, repeating the same word over and over again. When I asked the meaning of the word, I was informed, 'Oh, he is calling it by name. All of his sheep have a name, for he is their shepherd, and the good shepherds know each one of their sheep by name.' It was as my driver predicted. The money was refused, and the old shepherd with his small flock of sheep, with the injured one tucked safely in the pouch on his robe, disappeared into the beautiful deserts of Morocco. (CR, April 1988, p. 86-87.)

There is much we can learn from that poignant experience. Although the story is true, I would also like to view it as a parable or analogy. From this experience, we can learn the following truths regarding our relationship with the Savior: 1) He loves us, and values us more than any material possession, 2) He wants to heal us, 3) He knows us by name, and 4) When we are injured, he carries us, teaches us, and helps us work out our salvation as individuals.

The Savior Loves and Values Us

There is no dispute among the Latter-day saints regarding the worth of souls. We know from modern-day scripture that the "worth of souls is great in the sight of God." (D&C 18: 10). The question hinges upon the word "great." Can we put a numerical value, or a price tag on "greatness?" Personally, I feel that the Lord values us much more than we value ourselves. Consider what Brigham Young taught on this subject: "The least, the most inferior person now upon the earth -- is worth worlds." (*Journal of Discourses* 9: 124). What a powerful concept! The very "lowliest" person on this earth is worth more to the Savior than any one "thing" or "possession." As we contemplate all of the riches of the earth, the Lord tells us that we are worth more to him than any of those things. That concept is very difficult for the finite mind to comprehend. In

harmony with Brigham Young, the late Richard L. Evans once declared:

We know of no one in life who isn't an important person. We know of no man on the street (or in the gutter, for that matter) who isn't a child of God with the same rights and with the same relationship to his Father in heaven as all the rest of us have. We know of no one, young or old, from infants to elderly individuals, whose past or whose potential we would want to appraise as being unimportant. We know of no one we see in any public place - on subways or busses, or walking in shabby shoes - or any boy selling papers, or any abandoned urchin, who doesn't have an inestimable, unknown potential here and hereafter (*The Man and the Message*, p. 304).

On one occasion in Salt Lake City, Elder Thomas S. Monson was attending a Stake conference as the presiding apostle. He was accompanied by Paul C. Child, who was at that time a member of the General Church Welfare Committee, and had been Elder Monson's former Stake President. During President Child's remarks, he asked the priesthood brethren this question: "What is the worth of a human soul?" As was characteristic of President Child, he called on a young Elder's Quorum President, who incidently, was not paying very close attention. The startled brother responded: "Brother Child, could you please repeat the question?" The question was repeated, and after what seemed to be a long time, the Quorum president responded, "Brother Child, the worth of a human soul is its capacity to become as God." Every priesthood bearer present pondered the significance of that response. Brother Child leaned over to President Monson and declared, "A profound reply; a profound reply." (Monson, *Live the Good Life*, p. 11-12.)

Indeed, we all are children of our Heavenly father, and He loves us unconditionally - so much that he was willing to sacrifice his only son. At a recent church-wide satellite broadcast, Elder Jeffery R. Holland stated, "The Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest manifestation of God's love ever demonstrated in the history of this world." Indeed, there is no greater manifestation of God's love for us than the atonement. Moreover, our Savior loves us infinitely too. As in the story told by Elder Lasater, the Shepherd would not accept "one hundred times" the value at maturity for his injured sheep. We are his sheep and He is our Shepherd. No matter how "injured" we are, He is always there for us. Elder Holland has declared: "Just because God is God, just because Christ is Christ, they cannot do other than care for us and bless us and help us if we will but come unto them, approaching their throne of grace in meekness and lowliness of heart. *They can't help but bless us. They have to. It is their nature*" (*Ensign*, April 1998, p. 19; emphasis added). Moreover, Paul taught in Corinthians, "we are bought with a price." We belong to the Savior, and are therefore, never alone.

He Wants To Heal Us

In the New Testament, Jesus taught, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30.) Truly, the Savior wants us to come unto him to be healed, uplifted, and strengthened. His hand is outstretched, waiting for us to grasp on.

Regarding these comforting verses in Matthew, President Howard W. Hunter further explained:

In biblical times the yoke was a device of great assistance to those who tilled the field. It allowed the strength of a second animal to be linked and coupled with the effort of a single animal, sharing and reducing the heavy labor of the plow or wagon. A burden that was overwhelming or perhaps impossible for one to bear could be equitably and comfortably borne by two bound together with a common yoke...Why face life's burden's alone, Christ asks, or why face them with temporal support that will quickly falter. To the heavy laden it is Christ's yoke, it is the power and peace of standing side by side with a God that will provide the support, balance, and strength to meet our challenges and endure our tasks here in the hard pan field of mortality (*Ensign*, Nov. 1990, p. 18).

In another talk, President Hunter reminded us that, "...what ever Jesus lays his hands upon lives" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1979, p. 65). It is our responsibility to exercise faith in the Savior, believe that he wants to make us whole, and allow the Master to make up the deficits in our life. To some, however, this seems nearly

impossible. For some of the Savior's sheep feel that they have sinned to terribly, that their problems are too complex, or that they will never be whole again. For those who have bought into that philosophy, Elder Jeffery R. Holland has warned:

If there is one lament I cannot abide, it is the poor, pitiful, withered cry, "Well, that's just the way I am." If you want to talk about discouragement, that's one that discourages me. I've heard it from too many people who want to sin and call it psychology. And I use the word sin to cover a vast range of habits, some seemingly innocent enough, that nevertheless bring discouragement, doubt and despair.

You can change anything you want to change, and you can do it very fast. Another satanic suckerpunch is that it takes years and eon's of eternity to repent. That's just not true. It takes exactly as long to repent as it takes you to say, "I'll change" - and mean it. Of course there will be problems to work out and restitutions to make. You may well spend - indeed, you had better spend - the rest of your life proving your repentance by its permanence. But change, growth, renewal, and repentance can come for you as instantaneously as they did for Alma and the sons of Mosiah...

Do not misunderstand. Repentance is not easy or painless or convenient. It is a bitter cup from hell. But only Satan, who dwells there, would have you think that a necessary and required acknowledgment is more painful than permanent residence. Only he would say, "You can't change. You won't change. It's too long and hard too change. Give up. Give in. Don't repent. You are just the way you are." That is a lie born of desperation. Don't fall for it." (*However Long and Hard the Road*, pp. 6-7.)

Indeed, the Savior loves us, and believes in us. It is never too late to change. Satan would have us believe otherwise, but those negative feelings, and poor self worth do not come from a loving Christ - they come from the Father of all lies.

On the other hand, there are some Saints who feel that their relationship with the Savior is where it should be. There is always more that they can do, but they are on the path, and striving. However, their problem is that they have close family members, friends, children, families they home teach, students, or other "sheep" that have gone astray. These "lost sheep" have let go of the iron rod, fallen off the path, and desperately need the Savior. Orson F. Whitney provided these comforting words to those Shepherds who ache for their sheep that have gone astray:

You parents of the willful and tile wayward! Don't give them up. Don't cast them off. They are not utterly lost. The Shepherd will find his sheep. They were his before they were yours - long before he entrusted them to your care; and you cannot begin to love them as he loves them...Our Heavenly Father is far more merciful, infinitely more charitable, than even the best of his servants, and the Everlasting Gospel is mightier in power to save than our narrow finite minds can comprehend (*CR*, April 1929, p. 110).

Certainly, the Lord wants to heal us and our families. He is so merciful, and at times his mercy seems unmerited, or undeserving. Sometimes it takes kindness, patience, and love unfeigned to bring sheep who have strayed back to the Shepherd. However, other times, what some psychologists refer to as "tough love" is the only remedy. Brother George Horton shared an important lesson that was taught to him recently. He tells of an occasion in the Holy Land where a visitor approached a shepherd and inquired as to why the sheep he was carrying appeared to have a cast on one of its front legs.

Asking if the leg had been broken, the shepherd said, "Yes." The visitor expressed sympathy and wanted to know how. The shepherd said, "I broke it." Seeing the shock upon the visitor's face, he continued. "This lamb kept straying from the flock - despite all I could do to prevent it. I knew its life was in jeopardy. I broke the leg so he would have to be carried. In a few weeks, the leg will be strong enough to walk, and the lamb will have gained a bond of love for me and will not stray again. (*1991 Old Testament Symposium*, "Insights from the Holy Land That Help Us More Effectively Teach the

Old Testament," Brigham Young University, p. 8.)

So it is with each of us. As His sheep, oftentimes we rebel, stray off the beaten path, and forget God. Our priorities become insignificant, and our focus muddled. Through it all, a wise and loving Father in heaven allows trials and obstacles to come into our lives. In turn, we draw close to the Shepherd and come into his loving arms. We discover, or often rediscover, his love and plan for us. Hopefully, we will never stray from his purposes and promises ever again.

He Knows Us By Name

In Elder Lasater's experience, he learned that the Shepherd named each of his sheep. Through an interpreter he was told, "...good shepherds know each of their sheep by name." It is my belief that the Savior knows each of our names as well. He knows us in a very personal way. When we consider our relationships as mortals, I would like to think that Jesus Christ knows us just as intimately as our parents, friends, leaders, Bishops, and other relatives. Elder Holland declared,

I testify ...of God's limitless love for his children, of his unquenchable desire to help us heal our wounds, individually and collectively. He is our Father...God is not dead, and he is not an absentee landlord. God is not uncaring, or capricious, or cantankerous. Above all, he is not some sort of divine referee trying to tag us off third base (*Ensign*, Nov. 1993, p. 14).

Truly, he is our father who loves and cares for us in an individual way. He is not trying to "catch us" in the act, or trick us, or ruin our day for that matter, by causing guilt to sweep over our sin-stained souls. He loves us so much, that he was willing to provide His only son for our salvation. His only intention, and sole motivation is to bring us back to him. (See I Nephi 6:4).

Contemplate this experience shared by Elder Melvin J. Ballard. As you read this account, try to visualize it.

I found myself one evening in the dreams of the night, in that sacred building, the Temple. After a season of prayer and rejoicing, I was informed that I should have the privilege of entering into one of those rooms, to meet a glorious personage, and as I entered the door, I saw, seated on a raised platform, the most glorious Being my eyes have ever beheld, or that I ever conceived existed in all the eternal worlds. As I approached to be introduced, he arose and stepped towards me with extended arms, and he smiled as he softly spoke my name. If I shall live to be a million years old, I shall never forget that smile. He took me into his arms and kissed me, pressed me to His bosom, and blessed me, until the marrow of my bones seemed to melt! When He had finished, I fell at His feet, and as I bathed them with my tears and kisses, I saw the prints of the nails in the feet of the Redeemer of the world. The feeling that I had in the presence of Him who hath all things in His hands, to have His love, His affection, and His blessings was such that if I ever can receive that of which I had but a foretaste, I would give all that I am, all that I ever hope to be, to feel what I then felt (as cited in Bryant S. Hinckley, *The Faith of Our Pioneer Fathers*, pp. 226-27.)

In the book of Mark, Chapter 5, a marvelous story takes place. There is a man named Jarius who has a daughter, and she is dying. He tells the Savior, "My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live" (Mark 5:23.). Jarius must have had great faith to believe that the living Christ could heal his daughter. He implores Jesus to follow him, and so Jesus does. Now as I imagine this story, which is easy to do because I have six daughters at home, I think I would be in an extreme hurry. This is an obviously an emergency. However, Jesus, with that personal touch, takes time to minister to the people along the path. If I were Jarius, I think I would have become very frustrated. After all, this is a 911 call, and the Healer doesn't seem to be in a big hurry. In fact, Jesus stops and takes the time to heal a woman who had a disease for 12 years. Or another words, she has been sick for the entire life-span of Jarius's daughter. Further, and not to be insensitive, but if this woman has suffered for so long, what is one more hour, or maybe even one more day going to hurt? I would think that this woman who

has suffered so long still probably has a few more "ticks on the clock," but for Jarius's daughter, time is running out. Nevertheless, Jesus takes the time to heal this woman of faith, and treats her very kindly. Meanwhile, Jarius, as I imagine, probably used every mode of self restraint to keep himself from grabbing Jesus and physically carrying him to his own home. In verse 35, we learn that a messenger from the home of Jarius declares that "Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?" That's it. Jesus just wasn't fast enough. The daughter of Jarius is dead, and now the only thing left to do is call the mortuary. I'm sure Jarius was heart broken, and perhaps even a little upset at Jesus. If only they would have ran, or walked a little faster, his daughter probably would have lived.

Nevertheless, Jesus sensed the faith that Jarius possessed. Indeed, Jarius knew that Jesus could heal! Then, Jesus spoke these comforting words: "Be not afraid, only believe." Jesus taught the words echoed by Joseph Smith years later: that doubt and fear cannot exist in the same mind at the same time. As they approached the home of Jarius, the assembled throng was weeping. The Savior's response to the weeping crowd was, "Why make ye this ado (uproar), and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth (39)." This once tearful crowd, now shifted their emotional gears very quickly, and began to laugh. They thought that the Savior's words were so absurd. Although they ridiculed him for saying that the young maiden was only sleeping, Jesus "put them all out" and went into where the damsel was lying. He then took the deceased child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise (41)." The young twelve-year old girl immediately arose, and all present were greatly astonished.

Now, this story is very significant for a few reasons. For one, it teaches us the important lesson of the "Power of Christ", who is able to essentially raise a child, or anyone for that matter, from the dead. Second, we learn of Christ's personal touch. He could have easily sent someone else to heal the young girl, or told Jarius, like he did in other instances, to exercise faith, go home, where he would find his daughter "made whole." However, Jesus taught the power of the personal touch, the importance of the individual, and the love he has for his sheep. There is a third point that is just as moving. "Talitha Cumi" is an Aramaic translation. Some Aramaic scholars feel that "Talitha" was not referring to a damsel in general, but that it was the name of Jarius's daughter. If this is true, we have a powerful account of the True Shepherd calling one of his sheep by name. Indeed, he knows us, and he loves us!

The Shepherd's Individual Nature/Touching the One

On one occasion, President Heber J. Grant taught:

Not only did Jesus come as a universal gift, He came as an individual offering with a personal message to each one of us. For each one of us, he died on Calvary and His blood will conditionally save us. Not as nations, communities or groups, but as individuals. (*Juvenile Instructor*, 64:697).

Truly, the Savior's message is very personal. He died for you and for me in a very individual way. In accordance with President Grant, President David O. McKay taught, "We are not saved as congregations nor as groups, but we are saved as we come into the world as individuals, and the Lord's purpose is to save the individual, each being precious in his sight." (*CR*, April 1957.) Although Joseph Smith taught that the atonement was effective for "all the worlds," it was also an offering for each one of us. This is what the Book of Mormon refers to as the "Condescension of God." "To condescend," Robert L. Millet explains, "is literally to 'go down with' or to 'go down among.'" (*The Power of the Word*, p. 11.) Elder McConkie added that condescension is "the act of descending to a lower and less dignified state, or waving the privilege of one's rank and status..." (as cited in Millett, *The Power of the Word*, pp. 11-12). Dean Millet continues: "One of the remarkable discoveries of those who come to know him who is Eternal is that God's infinity as the Almighty does not preclude either his immediacy or his intimacy as a loving Father of spirits." (*The Power of the Word*, p. 12.) As with our Heavenly Father's condescension, so it is with Jesus Christ, his son. Jesus the Creator, Jesus the Father of this earth, Jesus -the Messiah for millions, can also be our closest, most intimate friend. Do we know the condescension of God? To me, one of the most thrilling concepts of the Gospel is that a person so glorious, grand, and divine as the Savior of this world, can know me personally. How that works, and how Jesus knows my name out of the billions of people on this planet, I have no idea. But I know that he does.

Furthermore, the way Jesus operates, and ministers to his sheep is a pattern for each of us as leaders, teachers, and parents to follow. At a recent seminar I attended, I had a conversation with a psychologist regarding families. He told me that in his studies, he has learned that the most influential, most salient, and most profound experiences in the lives of children was not the family vacations to Disney Land, or the Christmas when all of the cousins came. The most potent and valuable events in the lives of children, according to children, were the "one-on-one" times spent with Mom or Dad, brother or sister. It was the time "my dad took me to his office one day, just me and him." Or, "the time my Mom and I spent the day shopping, and then we went to the park." To think of the thousands of dollars parents spend each year to keep up with the "Joneses" in the name of "self-esteem", or the time and dollars expended for lessons, and sports - gifts all in the spirit of building self-worth.

These things are all good, and one could argue maybe even necessary, but if they are not accompanied by individual time -quality and quantity, they will be in vain. Children don't need money, they need individual love. They don't need to be rushed off to twelve different extracurricular activities in a week, they need to wrestle on the family room floor with their dad. They don't need the most expensive designer jeans on the rack, they need sit at the kitchen table with their mother and share the joys and sorrows of school, friends, music, or whatever else they are involved in.

Indeed, the "power of one" is a vital concept in bringing souls unto Christ. In this church, we will always stress the importance of the individual over any program. For example, In Jane Malan's heart-rending talk entitled, "The Summer of the Lambs," she provides more insight into the condescension of God, and the power of one. Once again, the story is about shepherds and sheep. One summer, Jane and her brother inherited a flock of about 300 motherless sheep. From that experience, they learned many powerful lessons. One of the vital lessons learned was the effectual influence of individual nurturing - one-on-one time. As Jane and her brother Clay were having difficulty in feeding the lambs, they learned that there was only one "sure-fire" way in which the lambs would partake of food, and consequently, survive. Sister Malan reflected, "The only way we could be sure they [the lambs] were being fed was to pick them up in our arms, ...and feed them like babies" (*Ensign*, November 1989, p. 78). Likewise, the only way we might feed the saviors lambs, is to feed them with our own individual time, and love. Sometimes it is the personal touch that is most remembered, and most penetrating.

Consider for a moment, all of the ordinances that we do in the Church. Each one is performed on a "one-to-one" basis. Whether it be a father's blessing, or partaking of the sacrament. I remember when our family lived in Mesa, Arizona, we had the privilege and blessing of welcoming identical twin baby daughter's into our family. I remember the day of their blessing how nervous I was. I wanted to give each one of them a special, and individual blessing. With fasting and prayer, and the Lord's help, that desire came to fruition. Each daughter was given a blessing that was separate and individual. At the time, the promises did not make much sense, but now that those daughter's are 6 ½ years old and their personalities are established, those blessings make much more sense. I am so grateful that the ordinances performed in this church are done in such a personal way.

Regarding this principle, President Howard W. Hunter, stated:

I have always been impressed that the Lord deals with us personally, individually. We bless babies one at a time, even if they are twins or triplets. We baptize and confirm children one at a time. We take the sacrament, are ordained to the priesthood, or move through the ordinances of the temple as individuals - as one person developing a [personal] relationship with our Father in Heaven...Heaven's emphasis is on each individual, on every single person. (President Howard W. Hunter, "Eternal Investments," *address to CES Religious Educators*, 10 Feb. 1989, p. 4.)

Similarly, a colleague and good friend of mine, Randall Wright, inquired: Have you ever stopped to consider the way physical touch is used in the Lord's church today? The handshake, special blessings, anointings and sealings, ordinations, confirmations, baptisms, and temple

ordinances all use touch to transfer power and the love of the Savior, following the righteous example of the Savior and using this power in our own homes can bring abundant blessings. (*A Case for Chastity*, p. 58.)

Certainly, touch transfers power, and power changes lives. One such person who was aware of this concept was Joseph Smith. On one occasion, while many of the Saints were encamped near the Salt River in 1834, L.O. Littlefield related this experience:

While there the men were paraded outside of the camp for exercise and instruction. This was an unpleasant feature for me, as I was too young and too small of stature to act with them men. This created within me, as I remember, some lonesome reflections. I sat down on a rock where the men were passing, the better to observe their movements. While thus seated, the Prophet Joseph Smith, who happened to be passing by in quite a hurry, noticed me.

He stepped to where I sat alone. It might have been my isolated position that attracted him. I know not the motive; but that man, who to me appeared so good and so Godlike, really halted in his hurry to notice me - only a little boy. Placing one of his hands upon my head, he said: "Well, bub, is there no place for you?"

This recognition from the man who I then knew was a prophet of God created within me a tumult of emotions. I could make him no reply. My young heart was filled with joy to me unspeakable. (*Juvenile Instructor*, 27:109 [15 Feb. 1892], as Quoted in *A Case For Chastity*, pp. 58-59)

Truly, by small and simple means, are great things brought to pass. (Alma 37:6-7.) It was a small touch, and a few passing words, but it changed Lyman Littlefield forever. I would like to close with one last example. It typifies the value of the individual, the power of one, and the human touch.

I seem to be at rock bottom in my life. I'm so depressed." That was my journal entry from February of 1981. I was nineteen years old, attending school at the Brigham Young University Campus in Laie, Hawaii. I lacked direction and purpose and felt that my life was floundering. My reason for coming to Hawaii seemed clear: my family was experiencing some serious problems, and I wanted to get away from them. Upon arriving in Hawaii, I found that I was not any happier. Surfing, swimming, playing on the beach - none of these activities seemed to fill the emptiness I felt. With time I learned that it was not my family I was trying to get away from. I was really running away from myself.

I had fought off all pressures of going on a mission. My testimony had weakened over the years, and it became increasingly difficult to understand the role the Church played in my life. At BYU-Hawaii I was slow to make friends. I had a chip on my shoulder, and people could detect it. My countenance and appearance seemed to underscore the fact. I kept my hair down to my shoulders, and because I was in violation of the standards code, I would tuck my hair into a baseball cap whenever going to class. No one was going to make me get a haircut. My hair had become a symbol of my rebellion and unhappiness.

Although I had closed myself off to family and friends, deep down I wanted to change. I wanted to be loved. But because of family problems, because of past mistakes I'd made, and because of my feelings of inadequacy, I would not open myself up, nor did I know how to. I did not love myself, and therefore I concluded that no one else could love me either. What was there to love?"

One day I heard that President Spencer W. Kimball was coming to Hawaii and was to speak on campus to a gathering of members in the newly constructed sports arena. I had never seen the Prophet before. The Sunday he was to speak, I dressed, walked over to the arena and took a seat on the back row. I was very moved by President Kimball's remarks and expressions of love.

After arriving back at my dorm room, I lay on my bed thinking about the wonderful words that had been spoken and how I felt during the talks. I was restless and wanted to get away - to think about my life and try to understand myself. I walked to the Hawaii Temple located near campus and sat on a stone bench in front of the entrance. I sat there for some time poring over my life, wondering why I had elected to take certain pathways.

I suddenly noticed that a small number of people were excitedly gathering around the entrance of the Temple. Moments later, President Kimball and some of the other General Authorities emerged from the building. As they shook the prophet's hand and embraced him, I watched from a distance away, too frightened to approach him. I feared that he, as a prophet of God, would be able to discern the present state of my spirit and would peer into my eyes, seeing the mistakes I had made. I also feared that he would see my long hair, chastise me for breaking the rules and possibly have me kicked out of school. And so I quietly watched as he proceeded down the walkway across from where I stood.

The image of what then happened will always remain with me. President Kimball stopped and gazed into my frightened eyes. I prayed he would not come toward me. And yet he left the group he was traveling with and walked directly toward me. The feeling of shame that engulfed my soul made me want to get up and run from him. When he reached me, he threw his arms around my neck, kissed my cheek, and whispered in my ear, "I love you." I shall never forget the warmth and love I felt. I could not dispute it - he loved me. I actually felt his love for me. I then did something I hadn't done for a long, long time - I cried. I couldn't control myself. I went behind the temple and continued to sob. That pure love had melted away my anger and bitterness and made me realize that I did have worth. I felt that I was loved, and that if my Father in Heaven had been there, he would have told me the same thing - that he truly loved me. (*A Case For Chastity*, p. 61-63.)

So, we end where we began: with shepherds ministering to their sheep. The worth of a soul is truly great in the eyes of God. He loves us, and wants each of us to return to him. To make that possible, he placed others on our path. With each others help, we, as his sheep, will make it back to the Shepherd. He hears our cry's of distress and calls us by name. Do we hear the voice of the Shepherd calling out, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30)? It is my prayer that we will hear his voice, and follow him.

3 Nephi 17:

1-4 *The Savior commands the people to prepare for additional instruction*

1 I must return to my Father

2-3 You go home and ponder - I'll come back tomorrow

"To ponder is to meditate, to think, to feast, and to treasure. It is more than a mental method, it is a spiritual striving to obtain and to understand truth. We should follow the process taught by the Savior to the Nephites as he taught them sacred principles. He then instructed them to 'Go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand, and prepare your minds for the morrow' (3 Nephi 17:3)" (L. Lionel Kendrick, *Ensign*, May 1993, pp. 14-15).

"Pondering is more than reading words; it is searching for meanings that will help us as we relate to one another and as we make choices in our lives. It is allowing the word to move from our minds to our hearts. The Spirit bears witness to our hearts as we prayerfully seek to know the things of our Heavenly Father....By so doing, we help [our children] keep the eternal perspective always in focus so they never forget who they are and where they are and where they are going" (Ann G. Wirthlin, *Ensign*, May 1998, p. 10).

4 I'll go show myself to the lost tribes

"God be with you. I have the same feeling as perhaps the Master had when he bid goodbye to the Nephites. He said he perceived that they were weak, but if they would go to their homes and ponder what he said, he would come again and instruct them on other occasions. So likewise, you cannot

absorb all that you have heard and that we have talked about, but go to your homes now and remember what you can, and get the spirit of what has been done and said, and when you come again, or we come to you, we will try to help you further with your problems” (Harold B. Lee, *CR*, October 1972, p. 177).

“The family is the basic unit of the kingdom of God on earth. The Church can be no healthier than its families...It is the duty of parents to so teach by example and precept that the child will fill the measure of his creation and find his way back to the glories of exaltation. Wise parents will see to it that their teaching is orthodox, character-building, and faith promoting...It is the responsibility of the parents to teach their children. The Sunday School, the Primary, the MIA and other organizations of the Church play a secondary role” (Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, pp. 331-332).

“Man must take time to meditate, to sweep the cobwebs from his mind, so that he might get a more firm grip on the truth and spend less time chasing phantoms and dallying in projects of lesser worth... Take time to meditate. Ponder the meaning of the work in which you are engaged. The Lord has counseled, ‘Let the solemnities of eternity rest upon your minds’ (D&C 43:34). You cannot do that when your minds are preoccupied with the worries and cares of the world” (Ezra Taft Benson, *Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p. 390).

- 5-12 *Jesus heals the sick*
 5 OK, I’ll stay longer
 6-10 Jesus feel compassion to heal
 11-15 A spiritual primary class

“You parents and you families whose lives must be reordered because of a handicapped one, whose resources and time must be devoted to them, are special heroes. You are manifesting the works of God with every thought, with every gesture of tenderness and care you extend to the handicapped loved one. Never mind the tears nor the hours of regret and discouragement; never mind the times when you feel you cannot stand another day of what is required. You are living the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in exceptional purity. *And you perfect yourself in the process*” (Boyd K. Packer, *CR*, 6 April 1991, p. 8).

“To worship the Lord is to put first in our lives the things of his kingdom, to live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God, to center our whole hearts upon Christ and that salvation which comes because of him. It is to walk in the light as he is in the light, to do the things that he wants done, to do what he would do under similar circumstances, to be as he is. To worship the Lord is to walk in the Spirit, to rise above the carnal things, to bridle our passions, and to overcome the world” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrines of the Restoration*, p. 371).

“Perfect worship is emulation. We honor those whom we imitate. The most perfect way of worship is to be holy as Jehovah is holy. It is to be pure as Christ is pure” (Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, p. 568).

“His invitation in verse 11 [3 Ne. 17:11] was neither casual nor inconsequential. “He *commanded* that their little children should be brought.” (Emphasis added.) And notice what verse 11 *doesn’t say*. It doesn’t say never mind the little ones because they aren’t accountable yet. It doesn’t say the children were to be taken elsewhere so they wouldn’t disrupt the proceedings. And it doesn’t imply that the children won’t understand. But it does teach that children need to learn the significant things of the kingdom. God’s children share with all of us the divine right to spiritual enlightenment.

““So they brought their little children and set them down upon the ground round about him, and Jesus stood in the midst.” (3 Ne. 17:12.) Do any of us ever consider serving children to be beneath

us? Clearly the Savior felt that the Nephite children were worthy not only to be in his presence, but they were also worthy of his time and his attention. The children needed *him*, and he stood right in their midst.

“Verse 12 also indicates that Jesus waited “till they had *all* been brought to him.” He wasn’t looking for a representative sample, and he wasn’t content with just some of the children. He wanted them *all* to be there, and he ministered to them all.

“Then Jesus prayed unto the Father so powerfully that “no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things.’ (3 Ne. 17:17.) And the children were there! They heard that prayer; they saw that event, and they were affected by it. Children can understand and should witness marvelous events—events like priesthood blessings, special ward and family fasts, the testimonies and prayers of their parents and leaders, and gospel discussions with people they love.

“He took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.’ (3 Ne. 17:21.) Jesus was ministering to a group of about 2,500 men, women, and children. Consider how much time it must have taken for him to bless and pray over each child, “one by one.” He must have held many of them in his arms or on his lap. And he wept because he was overcome with joy.

“He spake unto the multitude, and said unto them: Behold your little ones.’ (3 Ne. 17:23.) Jesus specifically directed the attention of the multitude to the children. To me, the word behold is significant. It implies more than just “look and see.” When the Lord instructed the Nephites to behold their little ones, I believe he told them to give attention to their children, to contemplate them, to look beyond the present and see their eternal possibilities.

“And as they looked to behold . . . they saw the heavens open, and they saw angels descending out of heaven as it were in the midst of fire; and they came down and encircled those little ones about, and they were encircled about with fire; and the angels did minister unto them.’ (3 Ne. 17:24.)

“I can’t help but wonder what would have happened if the multitude had just looked and not beheld with spiritual eyes. Would they have seen the angels descend? Could they have watched their children encircled about with fire? Would they have been able to observe as the angels ministered to their children? It’s significant to me that later the Savior gave the most sacred teachings only to the children, then loosed their tongues so they could teach the multitude. (See 3 Ne. 26:14.)

“Is it any wonder that following the Savior’s visit to the Nephites, they lived in peace and righteousness for two hundred years? Because of miraculous instructions, blessings, and attention they and their children received, righteousness was perpetuated by their children’s children for many generations.

“Let us not underestimate the capacity and potential power of today’s children to perpetuate righteousness. No group of people in the Church is as receptive to the truth, both in efficiency of learning and with the greatest degree of retention. No group is as vulnerable to erroneous teaching, and no group suffers more from neglect or abuse. Children cannot provide for themselves. We, the adults of the world, must open the way for them. Our little children worldwide deserve to be “remembered and nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way.” (Moro. 6:4.)

“Jesus gave us a clear pattern to follow in fulfilling our responsibility to nurture and teach children. Our challenges differ from those of the Nephites because we live in a different time. But the Savior’s way is timeless. In his church, there can be no other way. As he demonstrated, our physical presence and attention is vital to the children in our families, church, and communities. We can know their needs and minister to them when we spend time with them. We can behold our children in their eternal perspective and see that they all know of the Savior and learn the significant truths of his gospel. We can help them witness marvelous spiritual events. They can hear our earnest prayers in their behalf. We are their ministering angels on earth if we follow the Lord’s example” (Michaelene P. Grassli, “Behold Your Little Ones,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 92-94).

“In the pure and perfect and proper sense, no one can speak or pray in the name of Christ unless he speaks or prays by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is within our capability, as the Lord’s people, to do this because ‘we have the mind of Christ’ (I Corinthians 2:16)” (Bruce R. McConkie, *New Witness*, p. 383).

21-25 *Angels attend and fire encircles the Little Children*

“No gift bestowed upon us so precious as children. They are proof that God still loves us. They are the hope of the future” (James E. Faust, *Ensign*, May 1987, p 80).

“When we realize just how precious children are, we will not find it difficult to follow the pattern of the Master in our association with them” (Thomas S. Monson, *Ensign*, May 1990, p. 53).

Why would angels administer to these children? After all, Christ himself had just prayed for and blessed them. What could the angels do that he couldn’t? These children had been through horrific experiences the past week. More than likely, these angels took these children on their laps, wiped their tears and runny noses, and held them tightly for some time. If I died and my small children survived me through similar events, I can’t think of anyone better than those angels to take care of my precious ones. Like Christ, they have power to heal, to “make it better.”

Story: See Vaughn J. Featherstone, *The Incomparable Christ*, p. 9-10

“In essence, I explained at the funeral that as soon as that sweet, little soul had passed through the veil, she would have been cradled in the arms of a loving Father in Heaven. With one caress He could removed every horror, every terror, every indignity as though it had never happened. I then explained that if God could do that on the other side of the veil, I was convinced that He could do the same thing on this side of the veil for Rachael’s parents. They could know that their innocent, sweet little daughter was totally healed. They need not carry the burden of hate, vengeance, anger, and bitterness that cankers and darkens the soul. According to the supreme goodness of God, they could leave justice to Him. Justice is beautiful and will be satisfied. Nothing shall be left undone. I thank God every day of my life for the other dimensions of the Atonement” (Vaughn J. Featherstone, *The Incomparable Christ*, p. 10).

“One of the experiences that has reached the deep center of my soul in recent years was to hear a choice bishop share with others in a meeting the tender feelings of his heart concerning the loss of his wife to cancer, an experience many other husbands and wives and families well understand.

“Twenty years earlier he had watched his mother pass through severe suffering before she died, and he had carried with him through the years a sense of resentment for the anguish she had endured. With his wife’s ordeal, however, harsh as it was for her and in a measure for her family, his anger sublimated into a closer spiritual relationship with the Lord, and he was able more gracefully to share her burden.

“Shortly before she died, his wife asked him to give her a blessing for relief from the intense pain. They both wept as he laid his hands on her head and talked with the Lord, ‘and,’ he said, ‘I felt the spiritual presence of our Father in Heaven. I had the strongest sensation that someone else was there weeping with us!’ Near the end, severely physically debilitated, she said, ‘Never have I been more whole!’

“They had felt the strong sensation that He was there, ‘weeping with us.’ Of course; why not? Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus; he wept over Jerusalem’s portending afflictions; and he wept when he came to the American continent and knelt with his people, and especially when ‘he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.’ (3 Ne. 17:21; see also 3

Ne. 17:22; John 11:35; Luke 19:41)” (Marion D. Hanks, “A Loving, Communicating God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 64-65)

Mini Lesson: Children: Heritage From the Lord: Gifts From God

Picture of Baylee

Thoughts on Abuse

Song: “Please, don’t let them hurt the Children”

21-22 “One by One”

Story: President Kimball, Saints of the Dominican Republic, *Ensign*, May 1981, pp. 45-46.

3 Nephi 18:

1-14 *Sacrament instituted among Nephites*

“Sacrifice stopped and sacrament started. It was the end of an old era, the beginning of the new. Sacrifice looked forward to the shed blood and bruised flesh of the Lamb of God. The sacrament was to be in remembrance of his spilt blood and broken flesh, the emblems, bread and wine, typifying such as completely as had the shedding of the blood of animals in their days” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:720).

“We must come, however, to the sacrament table hungry. If we should repair to a banquet where the finest of earth’s providing may be had, without hunger, without appetite, the food would not be tempting, nor do us any good. If we repair to the sacrament table, we must come hungering and thirsting after righteousness, for spiritual growth...if we have sincerely repented and put ourselves in proper condition, we shall be forgiven, and spiritual healing will come into our souls. It will really enter into our being. You have felt it. I am a witness that there is a spirit attending the administration of the sacrament that warms the soul from head to foot; you feel the wounds of the spirit being healed, and the load being lifted. Comfort and happiness come to the soul that is worthy and truly desirous of partaking of this spiritual food” (Melvin J Ballard, *Improvement Era*, October 1919, pp 1025-1031).

“The partaking of the Sacrament is one of the most sacred ordinances of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (David O. McKay, *Improvement Era*, 64:214).

If you remember, then you will follow! (Dallin H. Oaks, *Ensign*, May 1988, p. 29-32).

“The weekly opportunity of partaking of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is one of the most sacred ordinances of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and is further indication of His love for all of us. Associated with the partaking of the sacrament are principles that are fundamental to man’s advancement and exaltation in the kingdom of God and the shaping of one’s spiritual character” (David B. Haight, *Ensign*, May 1983, 14).

Ask students: What do you believe is the most precious possession we can have in mortality? Discuss their answers. Share the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks: “To have the continuous companionship of the Holy Ghost is the most precious possession we can have in mortality” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 50; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 38).

- Why is the gift of the Holy Ghost such a precious possession?
- How does that gift bless your life?

- What can you do to receive that gift in greater abundance?

Tell students that 3 Nephi 18 contains instructions from the Savior that can help us better understand the relationship between taking the sacrament and receiving the Holy Ghost. Remind students that in chapter 17 the Savior was about to leave the Nephites but decided to stay longer out of compassion for them. Knowing this can help students recognize the value of the Savior's additional teachings in chapter 18 and how those teachings can strengthen us when the Savior is not in our midst.

Read 3 Nephi 18:1–3, 8 and ask what ordinance the Savior performed. Read verses 4, 9 and discuss the following questions:

- What happened when the disciples ate the bread and drank the wine? (They were filled.)
- Read 3 Nephi 20:8–9. According to these verses, what were the people filled with?
- How can the sacrament help us be filled with the Spirit?

Invite a student to read the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks:

“The close relationship between partaking of the sacrament and the companionship of the Holy Ghost is explained in the revealed prayer on the sacrament. In partaking of the bread, we witness that we are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ and always remember Him and keep His commandments. When we do so, we have the promise that we will always have His Spirit to be with us (see D&C 20:77). . . .

“Not one of you . . . and not one of your leaders has lived without sin since his baptism. Without some provision for further cleansing after our baptism, each of us is lost to things spiritual. We cannot have the companionship of the Holy Ghost, and at the final judgment we would be bound to be ‘cast off forever’ (1 Nephi 10:21). How grateful we are that the Lord has provided a process for each baptized member of His Church to be periodically cleansed from the soil of sin. The sacrament is an essential part of that process.

“We are commanded to repent of our sins and to come to the Lord with a broken heart and a contrite spirit and partake of the sacrament in compliance with its covenants. When we renew our baptismal covenants in this way, the Lord renews the cleansing effect of our baptism. In this way we are made clean and can always have His Spirit to be with us. The importance of this is evident in the Lord's commandment that we partake of the sacrament each week (see D&C 59:8–9)” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 38).

Have students read 3 Nephi 18:7, 10–14; Doctrine and Covenants 20:77, 79 and tell what they learn about the sacrament. Discuss some of the following questions:

- What promises do we make when we take the sacrament?
- What do the bread and water represent?
- What can we do to make the sacrament more sacred and spiritual?

Read 3 Nephi 18:26–34 and ask:

- What does the Savior warn against in these verses?
- Why do you think it is important that we not take the sacrament unworthily?

Share the following statement by Elder Oaks to help students understand how we can take the sacrament worthily:

“I plead with all members of the Church, young and old, to attend sacrament meeting each Sabbath day and to partake of the sacrament with the repentant attitude described as ‘a broken heart and a contrite spirit’ (3 Nephi 9:20). I pray that we will do so with the reverence and worship of our Savior that will signify a serious covenant to ‘always remember him’ (D&C 20:77). The Savior himself has said that we should partake ‘with an eye single to my glory—remembering unto the Father my body which was laid down for you, and my blood which was shed for the remission of your sins’ (D&C 27:2).

“I pray that we will also partake of the sacrament with the submissive manner that will help us accept and serve in Church callings in order to comply with our solemn covenant to take His name and His work upon us. I also plead for us to comply with our solemn covenant to keep His commandments” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 61).

Read 3 Nephi 18:5–6 and ask: What did the Lord promise He would give power to do? Invite an Aaronic Priesthood holder to explain his responsibilities in administering the sacrament. Ask the young men: How does it make you feel to perform this sacred duty? Ask the class:

- What can you do to make sure the ordinance is performed in a way that is pleasing to the Savior?
- What feelings should we have toward the young men who perform these priesthood duties? (see D&C 84:35–38).

Read the first two paragraphs in the following statement by Elder Oaks, and then assign several young men to each read one of the paragraphs that follow. After each paragraph, pause to ask the young man who read to share why he thinks that point is important, and invite the class to share their thoughts as well.

“Those who officiate in the priesthood act in behalf of the Lord (see D&C 1:38; 36:2). . .

“The principle I suggest to govern those officiating in the sacrament—whether preparing, administering, or passing—is that they should not do anything that would distract any member from his or her worship and renewal of covenants. This principle of nondistractedness suggests some companion principles.

“Deacons, teachers, and priests should always be clean in appearance and reverent in the manner in which they perform their solemn and sacred responsibilities. Teachers’ special assignments in preparing the sacrament are the least visible but should still be done with dignity, quietly and reverently. Teachers should always remember that the emblems they are preparing represent the body and blood of our Lord.

“To avoid distracting from the sacred occasion, priests should speak the sacrament prayers clearly and distinctly. Prayers that are rattled off swiftly or mumbled inaudibly will not do. All present should be helped to understand an ordinance and covenants so important that the Lord prescribed the exact words to be uttered. All should be helped to focus on those sacred words as they renew their covenants by partaking.

“. . . Brethren, remember the significance of those sacred prayers. You are praying as a servant of the Lord in behalf of the entire congregation. Speak to be heard and understood, and say it like you mean it.

“Deacons should pass the sacrament in a reverent and orderly manner, with no needless motions or expressions that call attention to themselves. In all their actions they should avoid distracting any member of the congregation from worship and covenant making.

“All who officiate in the sacrament—in preparing, administering, or passing—should be well groomed and modestly dressed, with nothing about their personal appearance that calls special attention to themselves. In appearance as well as actions, they should avoid distracting anyone present from full attention to the worship and covenant making that are the purpose of this sacred ordinance.

“This principle of nondistractedness applies to things unseen as well as seen. If someone officiating in this sacred ordinance is unworthy to participate, and this is known to anyone present, their participation is a serious distraction to that person. Young men, if any of you is unworthy, talk to your bishop without delay. Obtain his direction on what you should do to qualify yourself to participate in your priesthood duties worthily and appropriately.

“I have a final suggestion. With the single exception of those priests occupied breaking the bread, all who hold the Aaronic Priesthood should join in singing the sacrament hymn by which we worship and prepare to partake. No one needs that spiritual preparation more than the priesthood holders who will officiate in it. My young brethren, it is important that you sing the sacrament hymn. Please do so” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 39–40).

The Sacrament

“The word ‘sacrament’ is used by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to refer almost exclusively to the Lord’s Supper. The English word ‘sacrament’ derives from the Old French *sacrement* by way of Middle English; the Old French noun in turn is based on the Latin *sacramentum*, which denotes a sum deposited by the two parties to a suit (so name probably from being deposited in a sacred place) binding an agreement, oath of allegiance, or obligation” (Paul B. Pixton, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, p. 1243).

“The partaking of the Sacrament is one of the most sacred ordinances of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Associated with it are the principles fundamental in character-building and essential to man’s advancement and exaltation in the Kingdom of God” (David O. McKay, *Improvement Era*, 64:214).

“We have met to partake of the sacrament of the Lord’s supper, and we should endeavor to draw away our feelings and affections from things of time and sense. For in partaking of the sacrament we not only commemorate the death and sufferings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, but we also shadow forth the time when he will come again and when we shall meet and eat bread with him in the kingdom of God” (John Taylor, *The Gospel Kingdom*, p. 227).

“We must come ...to the sacrament table hungry. If we should repair to the banquet where the finest of earth’s providing may be had, without hunger, without appetite, the food would not be tempting, nor do us any good. If we repair to the Sacrament table, we must come hungering and thirsting for righteousness, for spiritual growth...If there is a feeling in our hearts that we are sorry for what we have done; if there is a feeling in our souls that we would like to be forgiven, then the method to obtain forgiveness is not through rebaptism, it is not to make confession to man, but it is to repent of our sins, to go to those against whom we have sinned or transgressed and to obtain their forgiveness, and then repair to the sacrament table where, *if we have sincerely repented and put ourselves in proper condition, we shall be forgiven, and a spiritual healing will come to our souls. It will really enter into our being. You have felt it. I am a witness that there is a spirit attending the administration of the Sacrament that warms the soul from head to foot. You feel the wounds of the spirit being healed, and the load is lifted*” (Melvin J. Ballard, *IE*, October 1919; emphasis added).

“With so very much at stake, this ordinance [the Sacrament] commemorating our escape from the angel of darkness should be taken more seriously than it sometimes is. It should be a powerful, reverent, reflective moment. It should encourage spiritual feelings and impressions. As such it should not be rushed. It is not something to ‘get over’ so that the real purpose of a sacrament meeting can be pursued. This *is* the real purpose of the meeting. And everything that is said or sung should be consistent with the grandeur of this sacred ordinance” (Jeffrey R. Holland, *CR*, October 1995, p. 89).

“To those who stagger or stumble, He [Christ] is there to steady and strengthen us. In the end He is there to save us, and for all this He gave His life. However dim our days may seem, they have been darker for the Savior of the world...In fact, in a resurrected, otherwise perfected body, our Lord of this sacrament table has chosen to retain for the benefit of His disciples the wounds in His hands and His feet and His side - signs, if you will, that painful things happen even to the pure and perfect; signs, if you will, that pain in this world is *not* evidence that God doesn't love you. It is the *wounded* Christ who is the captain of our soul - He who yet bears the scars of sacrifice, the lesions of love and humility and forgiveness. Those wounds are what He invites young and old, then and now, to step forward and see and feel (see 3 Nephi 11:15; 18:25). Then we remember with Isaiah that it was for each of us that our Master was ‘despised and rejected...; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief’ (Isaiah 53:3). All this we could remember when we are invited by a kneeling young priest to remember Christ always” (Jeffrey R. Holland, *CR*, October 1995, p. 91).

“We can be fortified by it [the sacrament] for whatever life requires of us, and in so doing we will be more compassionate to others along the way” (Jeffrey R. Holland, *CR*, p. 91).

“As we worthily partake of the sacrament, we will sense those things we need to improve in and receive the help and determination to do so. No matter what our problems, the sacrament always gives hope” (John H. Groberg, *Ensign*, May 1989, p. 38).

“What strength there would be in this Church if next Sunday every member who partakes of the sacrament would sense the significance of the covenant made in that ordinance; if every member were willing to take upon him the name of the Son, to be a true Christian, to be proud of it, and always to remember him in the home, in business, in society, always remember him and keep his commandments that he has given them. How comprehensive the blessing, and how significant the covenant we make each Sabbath day” (David O. McKay, as cited by Delbert L. Stapley, *BYU Speeches*, 8 May 1956).

“It is said of President Wilford Woodruff that while the sacrament was being passed, his lips could be observed in silent motion as he repeated to himself over and over again. ‘I do remember thee, I do remember thee’” (Marion G. Romney, *Ensign*, October 1976, p. 3).

“The weekly opportunity of partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's supper is one of the most sacred ordinances of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and is further indication of His love for all of us. Associated with the partaking of the sacrament are principles that are fundamental to man's advancement and exaltation in the kingdom of God and the shaping of one's spiritual character” (David B. Haight, *CR*, April 1983, pp. 16-17).

“Before partaking of this sacrament, our hearts should be pure; our hands should be clean; we should be divested of all enmity toward our associates; we should be at peace with our fellow men; and we should have in our hearts a desire to do the will of our Father and to keep all of His commandments. If we do this, partaking of the sacrament will be a blessing to us and will renew our spiritual strength” (George Albert Smith, *CR*, April 1908, p. 35).

“The sacrament is so sacred that it is recommended during the sacramental services, that no music be played, nor should there be any distractions whatsoever during the service. It is a time for meditation, a time for resolve, not a time for visiting, nor the chewing of gum, as so many people do, nor permitting our minds to dwell upon other things foreign to the sacred ordinance of the sacrament itself” (Delbert L. Stapley, *BYU Speeches of the Year*, 8 May 1956, p. 5).

15-21 *Watch and pray*

“Christ taught the Nephites that prayer is more than just a means to receive our Father in Heaven's generosity; rather, prayer itself is an act of faith as well as an act of righteousness. Prayer is

the defining act of the worshipper of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. This is because the act of prayer itself can change and purify us, both individually and as a group. As our Bible Dictionary states, 'The object of prayer is not to change the will of God, but to secure for ourselves and for others blessings that God is already willing to grant, but that are made conditional on our asking for them.' (P. 753.)

"In other words, prayers bring our desires and the desires of our Father into harmony, thus bringing us both the blessing we are seeking and also the blessing of greater unity with the Father. This practice is key to the collective and individual salvation of women and men.

"Elder Hyrum M. Smith expressed this idea well when he wrote, 'The prayer of faith is the secret of the strength of the Church.' (Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, *The Doctrine and Covenants Commentary*, rev. ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972, p. 194.)

"I have seen this verified in my own life. While we were living in California, one of our sons was seriously injured in an automobile accident. His skull was badly fractured, and doctors gave us very little encouragement that he would survive. Three days after he was admitted to the hospital, he contracted meningitis, and his condition worsened. Our family doctor and neighbor came to our home and said, 'All we can do now is pray.'

"And pray we did. For several weeks our neighbors, friends, and business associates joined us in praying for our son and for our own strength. After almost a month, our son's condition finally stabilized and then improved, and we were blessed to see him eventually recovered and smiling again.

"I would not wish a similar experience on anyone, but that terrible, difficult period taught us the principle that President Thomas S. Monson has taught the Church. Said he, 'Prayer is the passport to spiritual power.' (Ensign, Nov. 1990, p. 47.) During our son's illness, we saw and felt the spiritual power of prayer! Our ward had never prayed harder than it did then, and I don't think the members had ever been closer to each other. Our family was sustained by the collective faith and prayers of our friends. And even as our hearts were breaking in fear that we might lose our son, we felt closer to our Heavenly Father and more aware of our dependency on Him than at almost any other time in our lives.

"While the blessings we ask for and receive through prayer are undeniably magnificent, the greatest blessing and benefit is not the physical or spiritual blessings that may come as answers to our prayers but in the changes to our soul that come as we learn to be dependent on our Heavenly Father for strength.

"One mother told the following experience that helps to explain this idea. She said, 'Sometimes while we are eating, one of my children will get my attention and signal to me while his mouth is full of food. Grunting and waving, he will try to motion for me to do something for him. I know perfectly well that what he wants is for me to pour him a glass of milk, but I will wait until he uses words to ask me before I will do it. It's not that I can't understand what he wants but that I feel it is important for him to learn how to communicate well.'

"In much the same way that parents tutor their children in communication and courtesy, I believe that our Heavenly Father teaches us to pray because the very act of praying will improve us. We worship our Father in Heaven as all-knowing and all-powerful. Surely, as our Creator, He knows our cares, our worries, our joys, our struggles without our informing Him. The reason our Heavenly Father asks us to pray cannot be that we are able to tell Him something He does not already know. Rather, the reason He asks us to pray is that the process of learning to communicate effectively with Him will shape and change our lives as much as we are changed by learning to communicate as children.

"President Gordon B. Hinckley teaches it this way: 'There is something in the very posture of kneeling that contradicts the attitudes described by Paul; 'proud ... heady, highminded.' ...' (David E. Sorensen, "Prayer," *Ensign*, May 1993, 30-31).

"Perfect prayers are always answered. Proper petitions are always granted. The Lord never rejects a prayer uttered by the power of the Spirit, or denies a petition sought in the name of Christ, that accords with the divine will" (Bruce R. McConkie, *New Witness*, p. 384).

Invite four students to each read one of the following statements.

1. Elder Bernard P. Brockbank, who was then an Assistant to the Twelve, said:

“Proper sincere prayer to a living Father in heaven, through a living Savior and Mediator, is essential for protection from the power and evil influence of the devil” (*Ensign*, May 1974, 115).

2. Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, said of his upbringing:

“We were dressed in our home each morning, not only with hats and raincoats and boots to protect us from physical storm, but even more carefully our parents dressed us each day in the armor of God. As we would kneel in family prayer and listen to our father, a bearer of the priesthood, pour out his soul to the Lord for the protection of his family against the fiery darts of the wicked, one more layer was added to our shield of faith” (*Ensign*, May 1974, 98).

3. Elder Joe J. Christensen, then a member of the Presidency of the Seventy, said:

“Sending children out of your home without the spiritual protection of prayer is like sending them out into a blizzard without sufficient clothing” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 12).

4. Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, said:

“I like to compare the home evening, family prayer, and other associated activities of the Church for the saving of the family, when they are conscientiously carried out, with an umbrella. If the umbrella is not opened up, it is little more than a cane and can give little protection from the storms of nature. Likewise, God-given plans are of little value unless they are used” (in *Conference Report*, Oct. 1969, 23).

Read 3 Nephi 18:20–25 as a class. Ask students to think of another object (besides a coat, umbrella, or shield) that prayer can be likened to. Invite several students to share the object they thought of, and discuss how that object reminds them of prayer. Encourage students to seek Heavenly Father’s protection through daily personal prayer.

22-25 *Church should meet together often and Invite all to come unto Christ*

“...We might ask ourselves how the newcomers in our wards would be treated if we were the only ones they ever met. Every member of the Church should foster the attributes of warmth, sincerity, and love for the newcomers...Brothers and sisters, we members must help with the conversion process by making our wards and branches friendly places, with no exclusivity, where all people feel welcomed and comfortable” (M. Russell Ballard, *Ensign*, November 1988, pp. 28-29).

26-39 *The 12 Instructed to judge worthiness*

III. Closing