

“What Manner of Men and Women Ought We to Be?”

ALL Are Alike Unto God, 2014
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Tom Christofferson

At this tender time for my family, I am grateful to my brothers for their willingness to plan our father’s funeral events around my commitment to join with you today. It seems particularly appropriate to be with you to pay tribute to both of my parents, for their great legacy is their sure witness of the Savior and the gift of loving as He loves.

I have been asked to share some of the insights that I have gained from my experiences, especially in my relationship with the church. I would make two quick points as we begin: first, as you surely understand I speak for myself only; and second, my journey is a work in progress, and thus I share my experiences as a means of relating some lessons I have learned along the way, rather than as a prescription that anyone else should follow the same path. To my mind, one of the most wonderful aspects of our theology is the opportunity and requirement that each of us must know for ourselves the mind and will of the Lord for our lives.



I was raised in an active Mormon family, I was born in Utah and we moved to New Jersey when I was three and to the suburbs of Chicago when I was nine. I served in the Canada Montreal Mission under extraordinary leaders, President and Sister Wayne and Marlene Owens. Before and after my mission I attended BYU. Without having the words to describe my knowledge, I sensed from about age five that I was different from my brothers in a significant way, and by the time of my freshman year at BYU I knew that I was gay but I also knew that I loved the gospel and that my identity was tightly connected to the church.

After my mission, it became increasingly difficult to integrate my desire for same-gender connectedness with my hopes for my life, and with the promises of my patriarchal blessing. Thinking that if I did all the right things the feelings I had would go away, I was married in the Los Angeles temple and that marriage was annulled some months later. The tuition for the school of experience can be dear, as we know, but to my great and lasting regret a large portion of that cost was borne by the talented and loving woman to whom I was married. That marriage ended as it became obvious to me that I could not, with any integrity in my soul, continue to pretend to be a straight LDS man.

As I decided I would try to understand and experience my life as a gay man, I felt the honest way to begin was to seek excommunication. I could not resolve in my own mind, and I certainly didn’t see any examples around me at that time, how one could be a gay Mormon (thankfully, that situation is becoming very different now). At the time, though, this seemed a pretty clear choice and therefore I did not feel any bitterness about that course of action, nor about the high council court experience. And so for a couple of decades, my only connection to the church was when I would visit my parents and attend Sacrament Meeting with them.



While living in San Francisco -- a stereotype, I know -- almost twenty years ago, I met Clarke Latimer, and after many months of dating we decided to build our lives together. At the time Clarke attended a church that practiced a wonderful gospel of social engagement and had an amazing choir. And at various times in our life together, Clarke and I have attended services of other denominations, and generally while they have been incredibly affirming of LGBT congregants, and active practitioners of a gospel of Christian good works in their communities; ironically and sadly, it has seemed to me that they were much less affirming of the actuality of Jesus Christ, of the reality of His atoning sacrifice, and of the singular veracity of the gospel He brought. Despite a successful career and a very happy life, over time I began to feel more strongly the lack of a clear spiritual dimension in my life.



Let me backtrack a bit in the story to talk about my dear parents and my relationship with them. I know that it was a struggle for them to reconcile their rock-solid faith in the gospel with their unconditional love for their gay son. Quite soon after I came out, they took an opportunity to express to my brothers and their wives their determination that nothing would be allowed to break the circle of love that binds all of us together as a family. As they expressed it, while none of us is perfect as individuals, we can be perfect in our unconditional love for each other. They loved and embraced Clarke upon getting to know him.

We had an experience during a time when they came to visit us in Oakland where Mom's health took a downturn and, as Clarke was a hospital administrator at Alta Bates Medical Center, he was able to arrange for a doctor to see her immediately even though it was a holiday. That day, Clarke determined that he wanted to make a mid-career change and go to medical school in order to become a primary care physician: a process that required of him a decade of incredibly hard work and commitment. Over the years, and with those skills, Clarke has been a devoted and tender caretaker of my mother and father.

My parents were married for nearly sixty-eight years before my dear mother passed away two and a half years ago. Our father turned 94 at the beginning of this month, and my brothers and I count as a particular blessing from our Heavenly Father that we were given so many years of association with our wonderful parents. I recall one conversation with my father when I told him how much I love him and how greatly I appreciate the charity and empathy he shows to me. He was quiet for a few moments and then said, *"I've thought about what would have happened if I went home and told my father I was gay, and I'm very sure he would have thrown me out of the house and had nothing to do with me ever again."* Then Dad said, *"I think each generation gets better at parenting and learning to show our love."*

On another occasion just a few years ago my parents and I talked about how best we could be united in our prayers; we came to the determination that we could acknowledge in our prayers our faith that Heavenly Father is perfectly righteous and perfectly just, and that some of the things we don't understand today we leave in His hands. I also know they have never ceased praying that there would be a way for me to fully return to membership in the church, likewise for Clarke, and that is another prayer where we have been united. I am so very grateful for the example I have seen of perfect love.



When visiting my parents, Clarke and I would attend church with them and, since my Dad's birthday is at the beginning of April, we were often there during General Conference and would watch sessions with them or attend a session at the Conference Center. I came to hunger for the restored gospel in my life, having arrived at the same conclusion as Peter:

*"Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?
Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go?
Thou hast the words of eternal life."¹*

About seven years ago, when Clarke and I moved to New Canaan, Connecticut, I knew there was an LDS ward in town, and I began to periodically attend Sacrament Meeting. I would time it so that I arrived just after the meeting had begun, I would sit in the back rows of the cultural hall (on those hard and uncomfortable folding chairs), and I would bolt the minute "Amen" was uttered in the closing prayer. I began to think that acting like a thief in the night in order to go to church was a rather odd approach, so I called the bishop and asked if I could arrange a visit with him. We sometimes speak of the "tender mercies"² of the Lord, and this occasion was one for me.



My dear Bishop, Bruce Larson, had been in his position for only a few months. He was an investment banker at Goldman Sachs who a couple years earlier had been asked to head Human Resources for the investment bank, including their diversity programs. I told him of my background and of my desire to attend church meetings. He immediately said that I would be welcome, as would Clarke, and that he looked forward to getting to know us. He asked me to bear my testimony, which was unexpected, and my expression was halting but sincere of my witness of the Book of Mormon and of the restoration of the gospel. He said that he would like to talk to the ward council, let them know of our conversation and see if they would have any ideas on how I might participate. We spoke again the next week and he said that the ward council wanted me to know that we would be very welcome, and he encouraged us to actively join church meetings and activities. I asked the bishop what I should say to other members if they asked if I had a wife. He thought for a moments and then said, "well, I don't think it's a good idea to lie at church, do you?"

In the early months as I began to attend more regularly, but still only Sacrament Meeting, many times I would feel out of place and uncomfortable because I didn't know anyone other than the bishopric, who made a point of saying hello every time I walked through the door. But I keenly felt the Spirit of the Lord during meetings. After a particularly powerful Fast and Testimony Meeting, I spent some time writing the testimony I wanted to possess, both the things that I could then say with certainty and the things that I aspired to know. That summer, the bishop issued a challenge to all ward members to read and study the Book of Mormon during the school vacation break. I joined in reading and was reminded that I knew, as I had known since my teenage years, that this book is indeed another testament and witness of Christ, and that Joseph Smith, as the instrument of its translation, was the prophet of the restoration of the gospel.

One Sunday morning as we were visiting, the bishop expressed the thought that other ward members managed to be there for the full three hour block and that I likely had similar stamina, so I started attending Sunday School and was invited to meet with the High Priests group, and after more time had passed, invited to give the lesson from time to time.

¹ John 6:67-68

² Psalms 51:1



Preparing for these remarks today, I sent my recollections to Bishop Larson to make certain my retelling of them to you would be accurate. May I share one portion of his reply?

“On the first night that we met in my home, ... (the) thing that stands out boldly in my mind was my request of you to end our first encounter with a word of prayer. I recall of our meeting that I was as surprised at how quickly and effortlessly I was prompted and inspired to make that request, as I was to acknowledge that, of course, you are welcome in our ward family. I firmly believe that prayer, which was humble, heartfelt and full of the spirit, strengthened both of us for the road that lay ahead... I know it allowed me a glimpse into your heart and soul at the very onset of our relationship and immediately reaffirmed in my own mind that acceptance, love, friendship and a place in the ward was there for EVERYONE. As Jesus said to the Nephites, ‘And ye see that I have commanded that none of you should go away, but rather have commanded that ye should come unto me, that ye might feel and see; even so shall ye do unto the world’³.⁴

As I have come to know and love the other members of my ward -- and I say “my” ward even though I have sometimes described myself as “the most active non-member of the New Canaan Ward” -- I occasionally have to remember that as wonderful as it is to feel wanted and welcomed there, “no more a stranger, nor a guest”⁵; the purpose of my participation is to commune with the Spirit, to progress on my road of discipleship, and to support others on their journey.



Recently, I have had the special privilege of a monthly scripture study session with my stake president. I feel so powerfully in those hours a spirit of love and brotherhood, as well as the enlightening power of the Holy Ghost, “for my soul delighteth in the scriptures, and my heart pondereth them”⁶. I know the demands on my stake president’s time are enormous, in his calling as well as professionally, and likewise for each of you who are in leadership callings, so I am especially grateful that he, and you, are willing to create time to do as did the Nephite disciples at the time of the Savior’s appearance, “they taught and did minister one to another”⁷.

I am learning, as Elder Neal A, Maxwell once said, “as you submit your will to God, you are giving Him the only thing you can actually give Him that is really yours to give. Don’t wait too long to find the altar or to begin to place the gift of your will upon it! No need to wait for a receipt; the Lord has His own special ways of acknowledging.” Elder Maxwell continued, “I testify to you that God has known you individually, for a long, long time.⁸ He has loved you for a long, long time. He not only knows the names of all the stars⁹. (He) knows your name and all your heartaches and your joys! By the way, you have never seen an immortal star; they finally expire. But seated by you [today] are immortal individuals—imperfect but who are, nevertheless, “trying to be like Jesus”¹⁰.¹¹

³ 3 Nephi 18:25

⁴ Letter from Bruce M. Larson, March 26, 2014, used with permission

⁵ “My Shepherd Will Supply My Need”, Isaac Watts; see also Ephesians 2:19, Psalms 23

⁶ 2 Nephi 4:15

⁷ 3 Nephi 26:19

⁸ See Doctrine and Covenants 93:23

⁹ See Psalms 147:4; Isaiah 40:26

¹⁰ Children’s Songbook, 78



I am learning that the process of submitting my will to His is not a one time event, but rather an ongoing effort each day to learn the principles of the gospel by living them, *“All the principles and ordinances of the gospel are in a sense but invitations to learning the gospel by the practice of its teachings”*¹², said President Harold B. Lee. I am learning that to pray, study and work for the gift of charity, the gift of loving purely as Christ loves is to catch a glimpse of what it is that Heavenly Father loves about each person with whom I interact. I am learning, in the words of Elder M. Russell Ballard, *“The love [of] the Savior ... is an active love. It is not manifested through large and heroic deeds but rather through simple acts of kindness and service.”*¹³ As with each of you, my ultimate effort is to act and become as the Savior desires, when he said, *“what manner of men [and women] ought ye to be? Verily, I say unto you, even as I am.”*¹⁴

To LGBT/SSA Brothers and Sisters

Specifically, may I apply that effort and goal to the experiences shared by those of you who identify as same-gender attracted or as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender? As my father observed, I also think each generation gets better in many ways. So, I hope that you don't need to spend twenty-plus years away from the church in order to appreciate what is to be found there. I hope that you have had or are having a similar experience to mine with a ward that welcomes you with open arms and open hearts. Even if that has not been your experience, I hope that you know and feel the love of our Heavenly Father for you, that you sense His awareness of you as an individual and that He intimately understands your cares and challenges, your desires and dreams.



I hope that wherever you are on your road of discipleship you are making prayer, scripture study and service to others indispensable elements in your life. It seems to me that we are occasionally so sure that we know what our Heavenly Father thinks – and of course, those are the times when we are certain that his thoughts would be disapproving and chiding – that we don't ask Him. We don't give Him the chance to enfold us with His love and to gently guide our path. In the same way we would not expect a toddler who has just mastered pulling herself upright and taking some tentative steps to sign up for the next New York Marathon, I am certain that our Heavenly Father has patience for us in our journey, while always providing clarity of the ultimate destination He desires for us to reach, He is far less focused on the velocity of our travel than on what we are learning about the qualities of His heart, and how our hearts are experiencing *“a mighty change”*¹⁵ as a result.

You and I strive to avoid *“looking beyond the mark”*¹⁶ and we endeavor not *“to counsel the Lord, but to take counsel from his hand”*, thus we know *“that he counseleth in wisdom, and in justice, and in great mercy, over all his works”*¹⁷. As we seek Heavenly Father's counsel in our lives, I believe

¹¹ “Remember How Merciful The Lord Hath Been”, Elder Neal A. Maxwell, April 2004 General Conference

¹² “What Lack I Yet?” President Harold B. Lee, *Stand Ye In Holy Places*

¹³ “Finding Joy Through Loving Service”, Elder M. Russell Ballard, April 2011 General Conference

¹⁴ 3 Nephi 27:27

¹⁵ Alma 5:2, Alma 5:12-13

¹⁶ Jacob 4:14

¹⁷ Jacob 4:10



He can help us learn to use the experiences we have as LGBT/SSA individuals, as well as some of the attributes and traits that accompany us in this life, to aid us in our quest to become like His Son. You and I can see, *“that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good”*¹⁸, that because of these experiences you and I can be more sensitive to the challenges of others, more willing to pardon, more eager to encourage, more determined to avoid judging. *“I the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men.”*¹⁹ The Prophet Joseph Smith said:

*“Don’t be limited in your views with regard to your neighbors’ virtues. ... You must enlarge your souls toward others if you [would] do like Jesus. ... as you increase in goodness, let your hearts expand—let them be enlarged towards others—you must be longsuffering and bear with the faults and errors of mankind. How precious are the souls of men!”*²⁰

Being women and men seeking to be like Jesus, we can be consistently diligent in seeking out those who seem alone or uncomfortable in our wards and taking the initiative to make them feel welcome; we can choose our own home teaching routes as we pray to recognize the needs of others; and as we recognize the imperative in Jesus’ question, *“And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?”*²¹; we can be first to utter the kind word; first to offer praise; last to criticize or find fault.

Another way we may become like the Savior is to use our experiences and faith to lift others around us. In that effort we have a unique opportunity, among our circle of friends, in our workplaces, and even in our various activities, such as participation with LGBT civil liberties groups: in that we may be the only believing Mormon other people there will meet. Simply by being who we are, LGBT/SSA Latter-day Saints, we may be able to build bridges of understanding, tolerance and respect for the church and for its members. I also find that this determination to be like Him in all settings offers a way for us to validate our progress on the road of discipleship: we can do an honest self-examination, from time to time, and ask ourselves whether those who interact with us see *“the image of God engraven upon [our] countenances”*²²; if they feel when they are with us, the spirit of peace and compassion of one who has placed Christ in the center of his or her life; and whether they therefore feel a desire to know what we know and to feel what we feel.



We may also be able to support and encourage those who love us, and who struggle to reconcile their faith in the gospel with their hopes and dreams for our lives; we may help them to learn with us the meaning of praying for and receiving *“daily bread”*²³ as each day we pray and seek for strength to change our circumstances, rather than praying for our circumstances to be changed ... (to) become agents who *“act”* rather than objects to be *“acted upon”*²⁴, in the words of Elder David A. Bednar²⁵.

¹⁸ Doctrine and Covenants 122:7

¹⁹ Doctrine and Covenants 64:10

²⁰ Joseph Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 23.

²¹ Matthew 5:47

²² Alma 5:19

²³ See “Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”, Elder D. Todd Christofferson, CES Fireside January 2011

²⁴ 2 Nephi 2:26

²⁵ “In the Strength of the Lord”, Elder David A. Bednar, BYU Devotional, October 2001



I find the experience of Nephi and his father instructive. You will recall that after Lehi and his family had received the Liahona, and were continuing to travel in the wilderness, that one day while hunting Nephi broke his steel bow. He records that his brothers were angry because without that bow they obtained no food and that their families suffered because they were already weary from traveling and lack of food made things even more difficult. This circumstance caused even his faithful prophet-father to murmur. And then we read (and the last sentence is the critical one):

“And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did make out of wood a bow, and out of a straight stick, an arrow; wherefore, I did arm myself with a bow and an arrow, with a sling and with stones. And I said unto my father: Wither shall I go to obtain food?”²⁶

As with Nephi, even in circumstances of great distress, we can help parents and others we love regain their footing and faith as we invite them to help us find direction through the Spirit of the Lord.

Even though we may not know the answers to the large questions in our lives -- our place in the Plan of Salvation, our opportunities to love and be loved in this life, the ways in which we can serve and bless the lives of those around us -- but rather, being left to work out those things in faith, through personal revelation, line upon line, precept upon precept, prayer upon prayer; isn't this an opportunity for us to draw closer to the Lord with ever-greater determination to be among those who *“are trying to be like Jesus”*? President Lee noted,

“The most important of all the commandments in the gospel to you and to me is that particular commandment which for this moment requires in each of us the greatest soul-searching to obey.”²⁷

As the age of coming out becomes steadily younger, I hope that our need for soul-searching and our inability to immediately answer these large questions will not mean abandoning the opportunities to mature and season in the gospel, to gain and grow a testimony, to see the conversion process at work in the lives of others, to serve a mission and selflessly give time and talents in full-time service to the Lord.



As Elder Mark E. Petersen said,

“[The Lord] asks us to join with Him in a work of salvation – a work of saving ourselves, but others as well. Said He: “the worth of souls is great in the sight of God; ... Wherefore, you” each one of you, each one of us, all of us – are called to aid Him in bringing light and eternal joy into our own lives and into the lives of others also.²⁸ It is the Lord himself who calls. And to what purpose? To help us become like Him.”²⁹

²⁶ 1 Nephi 16:20-23

²⁷ “What Lack I Yet?”, President Harold B. Lee, *Stand Ye in Holy Places*

²⁸ See Doctrine and Covenants 18:10-14

²⁹ “Even As I Am”, Elder Mark E. Petersen, April 1982 General Conference

To Parents



May I also speak specifically for a few moments with parents? First: thank you! Thank you for being here, but more especially thank you for the constant desire of your hearts, to bless, to sustain, to support and to love your children.

We know that we live in a time when Malachi's prophesy is being fulfilled that Elijah would return to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers³⁰, and you are the proof that the hearts of parents are also being turned to their LGBT/SSA children. My sense is that you bear the greater burden in this journey. Your care for your children, I believe, causes you to feel more deeply perhaps than we ourselves do, certainly when we are adults, the wounding sting of unkind words said about LGBT people, about what in the past has been called a choice, what is called a "lifestyle", what is called an "agenda". I know you are as grateful as I am for the clarity of the church's current position on the MormonsandGays.org website. And yet, the burden of knowing that there is still so much we have yet to understand weighs particularly heavily on you. Your righteous desire that your family will be together forever is a source of reassurance but also heartache, and perhaps both at the same time.

I believe that at least in some elements our desire for same-gender connectedness as well as gender identification are gifts of God and opportunities in our lives, and I also believe that we were placed in families to allow parents and siblings to likewise benefit from the growth that comes through challenges and adversity. However, that kind of growth is avoided or stunted when parents reject their children. We see the wickedness of a choice to emotionally or physically abandon children when we see the alarming statistics of LGBT teen homelessness and suicide. That choice cannot be inspired by or approved by the Lord! I am so very grateful for the constant love of my parents, and by your presence here I know your children have cause to be similarly grateful for your faithfulness to the responsibility of parenting.

In your desire to embrace your children, to protect them from cruelty, whether intentional or unknowing, that can be found in schools and perhaps even in the church, may I plead with you to "*quench not the Spirit*"³¹, in the words of Paul. Please don't protect them from the opportunity to do the hard work of learning to endure while working out their own salvation, nor distance yourselves from the same journey. Like Nephi: "*I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things.*"³² We are all pursuing the road of discipleship each day while continuing to pray for greater light and knowledge³³. I find very comforting this insight from Joseph Smith:

*"When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the gospel – you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave."*³⁴

³⁰ Malachi 4:5-6; 3 Nephi 25:5-6; Doctrine and Covenants 2:1-3

³¹ 1 Thessalonians 5:19

³² 1 Nephi 11:17

³³ See Doctrine and Covenants 50:24; Alma 45:12; "Light" and "Knowledge", Guide to the Scriptures

³⁴ Teachings: Joseph Smith, 268



Watching the daily life of my sweet father, I frequently wished and prayed that I could ease the challenges of pain, of decreased mobility, of dwindling energy, of boredom and loneliness, of no longer feeling needed; and I have come to learn that there is a monumental amount of enduring in “*enduring to the end*”³⁵. In the circle of life we are all inextricably bound to each other, and only through our Redeemer can we understand the purpose of pain and the point of stumbling blocks, the design of desire and the essential plan of justification and sanctification³⁶. God bless you, dear parents, for your determination to bear the burdens of those you love, for your willingness to wrestle with angels³⁷, for walking this road by our sides. I offer my faith and prayers in your behalf.

Conclusion



I love the scripture in Second Nephi that has been chosen as the theme of this conference, and particularly in the context of the verses that precede it:

Behold, doth he [the Lord] cry unto any, saying: Depart from me? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; but he saith: Come unto me all ye ends of the earth, buy milk and honey, without money and without price.

Behold, hath he commanded any that they should depart out of the synagogues, or out of the houses of worship? Behold, I say unto you, Nay.

Hath he commanded any that they should not partake of his salvation? Behold I say unto you, Nay; but he hath given it free for all men; and he hath commanded his people that they should persuade all men to repentance.

Behold, hath the Lord commanded any that they should not partake of his goodness? Behold I say unto you, Nay; but all men are privileged the one like unto the other, and none are forbidden.

For none of these iniquities come of the Lord; for he doeth that which is good among the children of men; and he doeth nothing save it be plain unto the children of men; and he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile.³⁸

As we contemplate what manner of women and men we seek to be, in order to become as He is, you and I recognize that until that day of perfect knowledge, as Elder Keith K. Hilbig said,

“The path to eternal life is not on a plateau. Rather, it is an incline, ever onward and upward. Hence ever-increasing spiritual understanding and energy are required to reach our destination.”³⁹

³⁵ See 2 Nephi 31:16; 3 Nephi 15:9; Doctrine & Covenants 18:22

³⁶ See Doctrine & Covenants 20:30-31 and 88:6; Moses 6:59-60; Helaman 3:35

³⁷ See Genesis 32:24-32, especially verse 26, “...I will not let thee go, except thou bless me”

³⁸ 2 Nephi 26:25-28, 33

³⁹ “Quench Not the Spirit Which Quickens the Inner Man”, Elder Keith K. Hilbig, October 2007 General Conference

The women and men we seek to become, effective and consistent disciples, pray and work for the gift of charity, *“the pure love of Christ”*⁴⁰, gratefully recognizing the Savior’s promise that as we are merciful to others, we shall obtain His mercy and grace.⁴¹ Can there be a greater blessing we would seek at His hand?

The manner of men and women we seek to become understand and embrace, with Elder Neal A. Maxwell, that *“The unrelenting reality, brothers and sisters, is that we are never very far away from the need for “faith unto repentance,” including repentance of our sins of omission. Such faith unto repentance is not just for next year or next month or next week, but also for [today and] tomorrow.”*⁴²

The manner of women and men we strive to be will answer Alma’s question affirmatively: *“I say unto you, can you imagine to yourselves that ye hear the voice of the Lord, saying unto you, in that day: Come unto me ye blessed, for behold, your works have been the works of righteousness upon the face of the earth?”*⁴³; such women and men feel to *“sing the song of redeeming love”*⁴⁴ in gratitude for the grace of our Savior and recognize, with President Henry B. Eyring, our *“priceless heritage of hope”*⁴⁵

I know that as we freely offer our will to Him, as we are humble, meek and teachable, as we access the enabling power of His atonement we will find peace, we will recognize that his *“yoke is easy and [His] burden is light”*⁴⁶, and we shall receive His grace and blessings in *“good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over”*⁴⁷. I know the gospel has been restored in our time in order that we might truly know our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ whom He has sent to offer the atoning sacrifice that makes possible eternal life and exaltation.⁴⁸ I offer my witness of and gratitude for Him whom we serve, in His name, Jesus Christ, amen.



⁴⁰ Moroni 7:47

⁴¹ Matthew 5:7; 3 Nephi 12:7

⁴² “The Pathway of Discipleship”, Elder Neal A. Maxwell, CES Fireside, January 1988

⁴³ Alma 5:16

⁴⁴ Alma 5:26

⁴⁵ “A Priceless Heritage of Hope”, President Henry B. Eyring, April 2014 General Conference

⁴⁶ Matthew 11:30

⁴⁷ Luke 6:38

⁴⁸ John 17:3