

“Draw Near unto Me”

President Henry B. Eyring—*Second Counselor in the First Presidency*—April 2025

1 Jesus Christ loves each of us. He offers us the opportunity to draw closer to Him.

2 We take His name upon us when we enter His kingdom by covenant. He is the resurrected and glorified Son of God. We are mortals, subject to sin and death. Yet, in His love for each of us, the Savior invites us to come closer to Him. Here is His invitation to us: “Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” (D&C 88:63).

3 There are times we feel close to the Savior Jesus Christ. And yet, sometimes during our mortal trials, we feel some distance from Him and wish for an assurance that He knows what is in our hearts and loves us as individuals. The Savior’s invitation includes the way to feel that assurance. Draw near Him by always remembering Him. Seek Him diligently through scripture study. Ask through heartfelt prayer to Heavenly Father to feel closer to His Beloved Son.

4 Jesus Christ loves each of us. He offers that opportunity to draw closer to Him. As with a loving friend, you will do it in much the same way, by communicating through prayer to Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ, listening for cherished guidance from the Holy Ghost, and then serving others for the Savior cheerfully. Soon you would feel that blessing of drawing nearer to Him.

5 He stood in the midst of them and “saith unto them, Peace be unto you.” (Luke 24:36). He then reviewed the prophecies of His mission to atone for the sins of all His Father’s children and to break the bands of death. “And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. “And ye are witnesses of these things.” (Luke 24:46–48).

The Pure Love of Christ

[A1] Rather than being satisfied with describing what charity is like, Mormon provides a straightforward definition of what charity actually is. With simple and absolute clarity, Mormon defines charity as “the pure love of Christ” (Moroni 7:47). Like all definitions of charity, Mormon’s interpretation places divine love at the very core. Thus, some may feel that the Book of Mormon precept of charity really doesn’t differ all that much from the other scriptural or traditional definitions. “It’s still all about love,” they may point out, “and everything else is only decoration.” But Mormon’s definition is much more than decoration. It is explicit rather than implicit, particularly in the way he connects charity inseparably to Christ. Some may ask, Can you really go wrong with love—in any form? But Mormon taught that “if ye have not charity, ye are nothing” (Moroni 7:46) and that “whoso is found possessed of it [charity] at the last day, it shall be well with him” (Moroni 7:47). Obviously, saying that charity is important is an understatement. But what if people understate charity and are left with a form that isn’t even the same charity Mormon spoke of? What if the present understanding of charity has already shifted from the divine precept taught in the Book of Mormon? ...

[A2] In Paul’s letter to Timothy, he wrote of the conditions of our day: “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come,” and he described a world filled with people who are proud, disobedient, unholy, traitors, liars, and immoral (see 2 Timothy 3:1–7). Included in Paul’s list of perils is “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof,” and Paul concludes, “from such turn away” (v. 5). Some may question how perilous “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” could really be. To really understand the possible peril of this particular circumstance, we could ask, in what ways do we embrace “forms of godliness” but deny its source of power? ...

[A3] Consider how easily society embraces forms of godliness while, at the same time, vehemently opposes any type of connection with God. Typically society readily accepts the acts of Jesus Christ—kindness, compassion, promotion of peace, understanding, and love—but will not acknowledge any serious connection these acts have with Christ and His doctrines or precepts. “For many,” wrote Robert L. Millet, professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University, “the doctrine of Christ has been replaced by the ethics of Jesus.” Thus, some enjoy the “ethical” aspects of the ministry of Jesus but cannot tolerate the doctrinal teachings of the divine Christ. In short, they love the form of godliness but despise the power thereof, namely, God. It is in this sense that charity is really little more than a “form of godliness” and is disconnected from its power—the divine.

[A4] This disconnect can also be seen in the etymology of charity. Technically, the English word charity is derived from adaptations from the Old French *charité*, based on the Latin *caritatem*. Scripturally, the Vulgate New Testament derived charity from the Latin *caritas*, while Greek versions are based on *agape*. All these terms are roughly translated as love. It is true that many other words describing aspects of love have also been used to define charity. Words like benevolence, affection, kindness, or esteem all come to mind. Even though every word either originated from some form of the term love or was associated with it, it should be pointed out that in earlier times, these definitions of charity were framed under the rubric of divine love. In short, the early word sources for charity were connected, in some way, with the divine Christ.

[A5] Clearly, the precept of charity taught in the Book of Mormon is not really the same charity so often discussed today. It is only what Elder Neal A. Maxwell called a “particularized charity,” or “the pure love of Christ,” that will serve us well in the last days. The precept of charity as contained in the Book of Mormon is particular in that it is divinely connected and can never be reduced to mere ethical behavior—as good as ethics may seem. Because it is divinely connected, charity must be understood from a godly perspective that, in turn, has divine expectations and outcomes making possible divine empowerment to change.

Matthew O. Richardson

“The Pure Love of Christ”: The Divine Precept of Charity in Moroni 7

<https://rsc.byu.edu/living-book-mormon-abiding-its-precepts/pure-love-christ-divine-precept-charity-moroni-7>

<https://8ward.eu>

6 Just as His beloved disciples, every child of Heavenly Father who has chosen to enter through the gate of baptism is under covenant to be a witness of the Savior and to care for those in need throughout our mortal lives. This commitment was made plain for us by the great Book of Mormon prophet Alma centuries ago at the Waters of Mormon: “As ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light; “Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places ... , even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, ... that ye may have eternal life.” (Mosiah 18:8–9). As you are faithful to these promises, you will find that the Lord keeps His promise to be one with you in your service, making your burdens light. You will come to know the Savior, and in time you will come to be like Him and “be perfected in him.” (Moroni 10:32). By helping others for the Savior, you will find that you are drawing nearer to Him.

7 Many of you have loved ones who are wandering off the path to eternal life. You wonder what more you can do to bring them back. You can depend on the Lord to draw closer to them as you serve Him in faith. You may remember the Lord’s promise to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon when they were away from their families on His errands: “My friends Sidney and Joseph, your families are well; they are in mine hands, and I will do with them as seemeth me good; for in me there is all power.” (D&C 100:1). As you bind up the wounds of those in need, the Lord’s power will sustain you. His arms will be outstretched with yours to succor and bless the children of our Heavenly Father.

8 Every covenant servant of Jesus Christ will receive His direction from the Spirit as they bless and serve others for Him. Then they will feel the Savior’s love and find joy in being drawn closer to Him.

B Christ’s love is personal and relational

In some patterns of worship, it is thought that the way to convey proper relationships to God is to cultivate darkness, magnify distance, use only the kinds of music, or words, or ceremonial procedure which invoke awe and even irrational fear. The testimony of the restored temple is that God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ yearn not to widen that gap, but to close it. In the house of the Lord we may come to him in light, in intimacy, and in holy embrace. And he will ... [in the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith] “manifest himself in mercy in his house.” That is love.

Truman G. Madsen *The Temple and the Atonement* Meridian Magazine, July 28, 2003
<https://latterdaysaintmag.com/article-1-881>

C Burdens provide opportunities to practice virtues that contribute to eventual perfection.

[C1] Life presses all kinds of burdens on each of us, some light but others relentless and heavy. People struggle every day under burdens that tax their souls. Many of us struggle under such burdens. They can be emotionally or physically ponderous. They can be worrisome, oppressive, and exhausting. And they can continue for years.

[C2] In a general sense, our burdens come from three sources. Some burdens are the natural product of the conditions of the world in which we live. Illness, physical disability, hurricanes, and earthquakes come from time to time through no fault of our own. We can prepare for these risks and sometimes we can predict them, but in the natural pattern of life we will all confront some of these challenges. Other burdens are imposed on us by the misconduct of others. Abuse and addictions can make home anything but a heaven on earth for innocent family members. Sin, incorrect traditions, repression, and crime scatter burdened victims along the pathways of life. Even less-serious misdeeds such as gossip and unkindness can cause others genuine suffering. Our own mistakes and shortcomings produce many of our problems and can place heavy burdens on our own shoulders. The most onerous burden we impose upon ourselves is the burden of sin. We have all known the remorse and pain which inevitably follow our failure to keep the commandments.

[C3] Burdens provide opportunities to practice virtues that contribute to eventual perfection. They invite us to yield “to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and [put] off the natural man and [become] a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and [become] as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon [us], even as a child doth submit to his father.” Thus burdens become blessings, though often such blessings are well disguised and may require time, effort, and faith to accept and understand. Four examples may help explain this:

[C4] First, Adam was told, “Cursed shall be the ground for thy sake,” which meant for his benefit, and “by the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.” Work is a continual burden, but it is also a continual blessing “for [our] sake,” for it teaches lessons we can learn only “by the sweat of [our] face.”

[C5] Second, Alma observed that the poverty and “afflictions [of the poor among the Zoramites] had truly humbled them, and that they were in a preparation to hear the word.” He added, “Because ye are compelled to be humble blessed are ye.” Our economic challenges may help prepare us to hear the word of the Lord.

[C6] Third, because of the “exceedingly great length of [their] war,” many Nephites and Lamanites “were softened because of their afflictions, insomuch that they did humble themselves before God, even in the depth of humility.” Political unrest, social disorder, and, in some areas of the world, modern Gadianton robbers may humble us and motivate us to seek heavenly shelter from societal storms.

[C7] Fourth, Joseph Smith was told that the terrible things he suffered for years at the hands of his enemies would “give [him] experience, and ... be for [his] good.” The suffering we experience through the offenses of others is a valuable, though painful, school for improving our own behavior.

[C8] Further, bearing up under our own burdens can help us develop a reservoir of empathy for the problems others face. The Apostle Paul taught that we should “bear ... one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.” Accordingly, our baptismal covenants require that we should be “willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light; yea, and [be] willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort.”

L. Whitney Clayton *That Your Burdens May Be Light*

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2009/10/that-your-burdens-may-be-light>