

AMAZED AT THE LOVE JESUS OFFERS ME

By Cesar Lima Escalante

One Sunday before sacrament meeting, the bishop approached me and asked, “Can you help us bless the sacrament?” I said of course I would.

I went and got my hymnbook and then washed my hands before taking my place at the sacrament table. I opened the hymnbook, and the first hymn I saw was “I Stand All Amazed” (*Hymns*, no. 193). The meeting hadn’t started yet, so I began to read the first line: “I stand all amazed at the love Jesus offers me.” Immediately a feeling of profound love filled my heart.

The previous night I had been reading in the Bible about the end of the life of Jesus Christ—the parts involving the Last Supper, the Garden of Gethsemane, and His death and Resurrection. I imagined Jesus being tortured, beaten, and ridiculed by the executioners. I also pictured Jesus carrying out His atoning sacrifice in the Garden of Gethsemane while His disciples slept.

I realized that I was about to bless the bread and water that represent His body and blood. The sacrament

allows us to renew the covenant we made when we were baptized, which is to always remember Him, to keep His commandments, and to take His name upon us.

When sacrament meeting started, all of these thoughts were in my head. I felt profoundly that Jesus suffered in such a painful and incredible way that it is incomprehensible to us. The thought then came to me that He

endured the suffering because of His love for us—for me.

I felt so loved by the Lord that I couldn’t control my tears. I felt like I wasn’t worthy of what the Savior did for me. But I also felt that His love for me is perfect. A friend will lay down his life for his friends (see John 15:13). When the sacrament hymn started, I stood with another brother to begin the ordinance.



A SPIRITUALLY CLEANSING EXPERIENCE

“For the sacrament to be a spiritually cleansing experience each week, we need to prepare ourselves *before* coming to sacrament meeting. We do this by deliberately leaving behind our daily work and recreation and letting go of worldly thoughts and concerns. As we do, we make room in our minds and hearts for the Holy Ghost. . . .

“As we sing the sacrament hymn, participate in the sacrament prayers, and partake of the emblems of His flesh and blood, we prayerfully seek forgiveness for our sins and shortcomings. We think about the promises we made and kept during the previous week and make specific personal commitments to follow the Savior during the coming week.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Coming to Ourselves: The Sacrament, the Temple, and Sacrifice in Service,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 34.



We folded back the beautiful white tablecloth that covered the bread. As I held the bread, I knew I had the responsibility of breaking it as part of the ordinance, but I hesitated. The bread represents the body of Christ. I thought of the soldiers hurting the Lord, and I didn't want to break the bread. When I broke the first piece, I thought of the painful and humiliating way Jesus was treated prior to His death—the crown of thorns, the whipping, the suffering. The tears continued to roll down my cheeks as I prepared the bread.

Then the thought came to me that these painful and humiliating events were necessary. They were part of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and He made the sacrifice because of His love for me and each one of us.

I began to feel a great peace and joy. I broke every piece of bread carefully and slowly, knowing that what I held in my hands was about to be blessed and sanctified for a special purpose and represented something

very precious, beautiful, and extraordinary. I felt the great responsibility of doing this ordinance so that those in the meeting could renew a covenant with the Lord and receive the blessings of the Atonement.

When we finished, I saw the trays filled with the broken bread. The sight was marvelous and sublime. My companion said the prayer. Never before had I so clearly understood the phrase “that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son” (D&C 20:77).

When I partook of the bread, I felt my Savior's love once again. I felt protected, humbled, and determined to do what's right. I wanted to examine my life and repent of all I had done wrong.

I'm thankful to Jesus Christ for His love for me. I'm thankful that we can receive the blessings of His Atonement: to be forgiven of our sins and have the chance to return to our Heavenly Father. ■

The author lives in Mexico City, Mexico.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

What can I do during the week to prepare better to take the sacrament? What do I think about during the sacrament? Do I feel forgiveness and receive inspiration as I take the sacrament?