



Gratitude for the Atonement

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Of the Seventy

Near the end of His earthly ministry, the Savior went with His disciples to the Mount of Olives, to the Garden of Gethsemane.

We read in Luke, in the New Testament:

“And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.

“And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

“And he was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,

“Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

“And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

“And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:39–44).

It was there that the Savior paid the price for all the sorrows, sins, and transgressions of every human being who ever lived or

ever will live. There He drank the bitter cup and suffered so that all who repent may not suffer. Following this dreadful experience, He was taken to Golgotha and was nailed to a cross, which was another brutal and painful torture He had to go through in bringing about the Atonement for all humankind.

No human being can imagine what the Savior really suffered when He took this heavy burden upon Him. In a revelation given through the Prophet Joseph Smith in March 1830, we get a glimpse of this suffering when the Savior declared:

“For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

“But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

“Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

“Nevertheless, glory



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be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men” (D&C 19:16–19).

Ultimately, our lives can be healed only through the Atonement. A member described his feelings as he went through the repentance process and discovered the healing power of the Atonement: “The time between transgressing and confessing was terrible. I constantly lived in the knowledge of the terrible thing I had done. I was in a state of deep darkness, depressive and lethargic, first

hopeless and tortured by fears, however, never doubting the truth of the gospel and the saving power of the Atonement. I knew that for me there was only one way to get healed.

“To confess to my wife and my children what I had done was the most difficult thing that I ever did in life. Thereafter, the further way of repentance, to confess before my bishop and the stake president, was not so difficult. Finally, I could relieve myself of the burden which I had brought upon

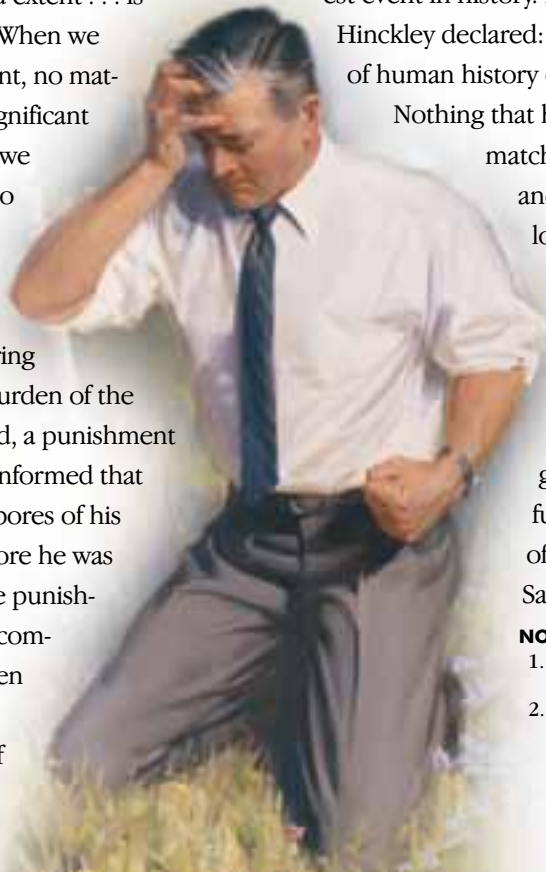
myself. I felt relieved with the excommunication and the resulting perspectives.

“What joy it was when I was permitted to be baptized and again could have the Holy Ghost with me. Finally, the promise of the Atonement was fulfilled in the clearest and most beautiful way when my blessings were restored again.

“During the course of years, my wife and I experienced that the Atonement brings relief and healing not only to the sinner, but further than that, it has the power to heal and restore the victim as well. Of this I testify with deep gratitude.”

If we understood the great love the Savior had for us when He atoned for our sins, we would always love Him, be grateful to Him, and keep His commandments.

As President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) observed: “One of the greatest sins, both in magnitude and extent . . . is the sin of ingratitude. When we violate a commandment, no matter how small and insignificant we may think it to be, we show our ingratitude to our Redeemer. It is impossible for us to comprehend the extent of his suffering when he carried the burden of the sins of the whole world, a punishment so severe that we are informed that blood came from the pores of his body, and this was before he was taken to the cross. The punishment of physical pain coming from the nails driven in his hands and feet, was not the greatest of



his suffering, excruciating as that surely was. The greater suffering was the spiritual and mental anguish coming from the load of our transgressions which he carried. If we understood the extent of that suffering and his suffering on the cross, surely none of us would wilfully be guilty of sin. We would not give way to the temptations, the gratification of unholy appetites and desires and Satan could find no place in our hearts. As it is, whenever we sin, we show our ingratitude and disregard of the suffering of the Son of God by and through which we shall rise from the dead and live forever. If we really understood and could feel even to a small degree, the love and gracious willingness on the part of Jesus Christ to suffer for our sins we would be willing to repent of all our transgressions and serve him.”¹

The Atonement of the Savior is the greatest event in history. President Gordon B. Hinckley declared: “No other act in all of human history compares with it.

Nothing that has ever happened can match it. Totally unselfish and with unbounded love for all mankind, it became an unparalleled act of mercy for the whole human race.”²

May we always be grateful for this wonderful gift, the Atonement of the Son of God, our Savior and Redeemer. ■

NOTES

1. *The Restoration of All Things* (1945), 199.
2. “At the Summit of the Ages,” *Liabona*, Jan. 2000, 87; *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 73.



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