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PURE Religion

Selfless service—forgetting ourselves, responding to the needs of others, and laying down our lives in their service—has always been a characteristic of disciples of Jesus Christ.

In Matthew chapter 11 the Savior teaches us a significant lesson by what He did *not* say in response to a question raised by disciples of John the Baptist:

“Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

“And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:

“The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them” (Matthew 11:2–5).

Rather than offer a short doctrinal explanation describing that He was, indeed, “he that should come,” the Savior responded by way of what He did—His example of service.

In the April 2014 general conference, Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reminded us: “We best serve our Father in Heaven by righteously influencing others and serving them. The greatest example who ever walked the earth is our Savior, Jesus Christ.”¹

Selfless service—forgetting ourselves, responding to the needs of others, and laying down our lives in their

service—has always been a characteristic of disciples of Jesus Christ. As King Benjamin taught more than 100 years before the birth of the Savior, “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17).

James reminds us that an essential aspect of “pure religion” is found in our service to others as we “visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction” (James 1:27). “Pure religion” is more than a declaration of belief; it is a demonstration of belief.

Love Your Fellow Travelers

In mid-July 1984, just weeks after my wife, Carol, and I were married in the Los Angeles California Temple, we were on our way to Utah, where I would begin my career and Carol would finish her college education. We were driving in separate cars. Between the two vehicles, we were transporting everything we owned.

About halfway to our destination, Carol pulled up alongside my car and began to motion to me. This was in the days before cell phones and smartphones, texting and Twitter. Seeing the expression on her face through her car window, I could tell she was not feeling well. She

communicated that she could continue driving, but I was worried for my new bride.

As we approached the small town of Beaver, Utah, she again pulled alongside, and I could tell she needed to stop. She was ill and could not continue. We had two cars full of clothes and wedding gifts, but unfortunately we had little money. A hotel room was out of our budget. I was not sure what to do.

Neither of us had ever been to Beaver, and not really knowing what I was looking for, we drove around for a few minutes until I saw a park. We pulled into the parking lot and found a tree with some shade, where I laid out a blanket so Carol could rest.

A few minutes later another car drove into the nearly empty parking lot and parked next to our two cars. A woman, about the age of our mothers, got out of her car and asked if anything was wrong and if she could help. She mentioned that she had noticed us as she drove by and felt she should stop. When we explained our situation, she immediately invited us to follow her home, where we could rest as long as we needed to.

We soon found ourselves on a comfortable bed in a cool basement bedroom of her home. Just as we had settled, this wonderful sister mentioned that she had a number of errands to run and that we would be left alone for a few hours. She told us that if we were hungry, we were welcome to anything we could find in the kitchen, and that if we left before she returned home, to please close the front door.

After getting some much-needed sleep, Carol felt better and we continued our trip without stopping by the kitchen. When we left, the kind woman had not yet returned home. To our chagrin, we didn't make note of the address and have never properly thanked our own good Samaritan, who stopped along the way and opened her home to strangers in need.

As I reflect upon this experience, the words of President Thomas S. Monson, who embodies the Savior's admonition to "go and do likewise" (see Luke 10:37) as much as any mortal, come to mind: "We cannot truly love God if we do not love our fellow travelers on this mortal journey."²

Wherever we encounter "fellow travelers"—on the road or in our homes, on the playground or in our schools, in the workplace or at church—as we seek, see, and act, we will become more like the Savior, blessing and serving along the way.

Seek

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"Unlike our precious Savior, we surely cannot atone for the sins of mankind! Moreover, we certainly cannot bear all mortal sicknesses, infirmities, and griefs (see Alma 7:11–12).

"However, on our smaller scale, just as Jesus has invited, we can indeed strive to become 'even as [He is]' (3 Nephi 27:27)."³

As we seek to become even as He is, with a sincere desire to bless "our fellow travelers," we will be provided opportunities to forget self and lift others. These opportunities may often be inconvenient, testing our true desire to become more like the Master, whose greatest service of all, His infinite Atonement, was anything but convenient. "Nevertheless," He states, "glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men" (D&C 19:19).

Sincerely seeking to be more like the Savior will allow us to see what we may not otherwise see. Our good Samaritan lived close enough to the Spirit to respond to a prompting and approach a stranger in need.

See

To see with spiritual eyes is to see things as they truly are and to recognize needs we may not have otherwise noticed. In the parable of the sheep and goats, neither those who were "blessed" nor those who were "cursed" had recognized the Savior in those who were hungry, thirsty, naked, or in prison. They responded to their reward by asking, "When saw we thee?" (See Matthew 25:34–39, 40–44).

Only those who had seen with spiritual eyes, recognizing the need, acted and blessed those who suffered. Our good Samaritan recognized the need as she saw with spiritual eyes.

Act

We may see needs around us but feel inadequate to respond, assuming that what we have to offer is not sufficient. As we seek to become even as He is and as we see needs in our fellow travelers through spiritual eyes, we must trust that the Lord can work through us, and then we must act.

Entering the temple, Peter and John encountered a man “lame from his mother’s womb” who asked them for alms (see Acts 3:1–3). Peter’s response is an example and an invitation to each of us:

“Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

“And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up” (Acts 3:6–7).

We may act by giving our time and talents, a kind word, or a strong back. As we seek and see, we will be placed in circumstances and situations where we can act and bless. Our good Samaritan acted. She took us to her home and provided us with what she had. In essence she said, “Such as I have give I thee.” It was exactly what we needed.

President Monson has taught these same principles:

“Each of us, in the journey through mortality, will travel his own Jericho Road. What will be your experience? What will be mine? Will I fail to notice him who has fallen among thieves and requires my help? Will you?

“Will I be one who sees the injured and hears his plea, yet crosses to the other side? Will you?

“Or will I be one who sees, who hears, who pauses, and who helps? Will you?

“Jesus provided our watchword, ‘Go, and do thou likewise.’ When we obey that declaration, there opens to our eternal view a vista of joy seldom equaled and never surpassed.”⁴

As we become more like the Savior by seeking, seeing, and acting, we will come to know the truthfulness of King Benjamin’s words: “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17). ■

NOTES

1. Richard G. Scott, “I Have Given You an Example,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 35.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Love—the Essence of the Gospel,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 91.
3. Neal A. Maxwell, “Apply the Atoning Blood of Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 22.
4. Thomas S. Monson, “Your Jericho Road,” *Ensign*, May 1977, 71.

SEEK SINCERELY



SEE WITH SPIRITUAL EYES



ACT AND BLESS

