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Why We Share the Gospel

*As Latter-day Saints, we each have a missionary purpose—
to invite others to come unto Christ.*

The first chapter of *Preach My Gospel* asks a question that applies to every member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: “What is my purpose as a missionary?”

The answer, summarized in one sentence, is given there as follows: “Invite others to come unto Christ by helping them receive the restored gospel through faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.”¹

Members As Missionaries

We are all asked to be missionaries. And to be effective in sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, we must have this purpose in our mind, feel it in our heart, accept it in our soul, and act upon it. When we do, it both inspires and guides us in sharing the gospel. We must keep clear the distinction between the purpose of sharing the gospel, on the one hand, and the means of achieving that purpose, on the other hand.

It is not our purpose just to participate in discussions about the gospel or to talk to anyone and everyone we can about the Church or merely to set goals and make plans. These things are important, but they are a means to an end, and that end is bringing people to Christ.



BE READY TO SHARE

“Your exemplary lives will attract the interest of your friends and neighbors. Be ready to give an answer to those who ask why you live as you do. Be ready to give a reason for the hope and joy that they see in you [see 1 Peter 3:15]. When such questions come, you might respond by saying, ‘Let’s ask the missionaries! They can help us!’ ”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Catch the Wave,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 45.

Centered in Missionary Purpose

Consider some examples of what happens when our efforts to share the gospel are centered in missionary purpose:

1. We will teach people in a way that helps them truly understand the gospel and why and how they should repent. We will listen to and respond to what is in the investigator’s mind and heart.
2. We will seek and listen to the Holy Ghost to discern who is feeling the Spirit as we talk.
3. Planning—as families, in ward councils, and with full-time missionaries—will become a tool for ensuring that the things that need to happen to bring about conversion and baptism are, in fact, identified, remembered, and followed through for each individual investigator.
4. We will rejoice in our opportunity to feast upon the word of God because our study will have purpose. We will be searching for answers to our investigators’ questions of the soul as well as our own.
5. We will invite people to attend Church meetings, not simply because we believe that is what we are supposed to do but also because we understand that participation in church is essential for the investigator to develop a stronger desire for baptism and to establish a foundation for enduring to the end in the gospel covenant. With that ultimate purpose in mind, the invitation to attend church will have greater urgency, the explanation of the importance of Sabbath worship and what to expect in a Latter-day Saint Sunday service will be

different, and the spirit that attends our words will have a persuasive power that would not otherwise be present.

Internalize and Understand

Please do not ignore chapter 1 of *Preach My Gospel* and its question “What is my purpose as a missionary?” Internalize the purpose of bringing people to Christ through the principles and ordinances of the restored gospel, and you will understand that sharing the gospel is not a program; it is a cause—the cause of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Internalize the purpose of inviting people to come unto Christ, and you will understand that the world has no access to atoning grace and salvation but through The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You will understand what sharing the gospel is all about, and you will be up and about your Father’s business. You will know that the full-time missionaries, as did the sons of Mosiah, teach “with power and authority of God” (Alma 17:3), and you will invite them to teach the gospel to those to whom you have already extended the invitation to “come and see” (John 1:39).

Our Invitation—Come unto Christ

For me, the missionary purpose captures the majesty of the work and the glory of God (see Moses 1:39). What endeavor is more magnificent than bringing the children of God to ultimate salvation through the grace of their Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ? Remember that our missionary purpose is not only to warn others but also to save them, not only to teach but also to baptize, not only to bring others unto Christ but also to make them steadfast in Christ to the end.

Our invitation to the world is to come unto Christ. Coming unto Christ is an abbreviation, a way of describing in three words the plan of salvation. It means to obtain the fruits of His Atonement and Resurrection—ultimately eternal life. Eternal life depends on the exercise of our moral agency, but it is possible only through the grace of Jesus Christ. To come unto Him means to do what is required to lay hold upon that grace—the pardoning, sanctifying, transforming, redeeming power of His infinite, atoning sacrifice.

This good news, the gospel, is best expressed by Jesus Himself in the Book of Mormon:

“Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you—that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

“And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil—

“And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works” (3 Nephi 27:13–15).

Glad Tidings and Good News

Thus, at its foundation, the gospel, or good news, is that we have a Father in Heaven who, because of His love for us, sent His Only Begotten Son to redeem us from sin and death. The Son, in perfect obedience to the Father, to whom He gives the glory, offered His life to that end. He purchased us with His blood, and we answer to Him for our lives (see 1 Corinthians 6:19–20). He is now our Judge. He is justice personified.

The gospel message of glad tidings further declares that because of His atoning sacrifice, Jesus is also mercy personified. His mercy, merits, and grace are sufficient to pardon and cleanse us so that in the Day of Judgment we may stand holy and without spot before Him. (See 2 Nephi 2:8; Moroni 10:32–33.)



The missionary purpose in *Preach My Gospel* explains what must be done for this to happen. As it states, being pardoned and cleansed requires “faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.”²

Further in 3 Nephi 27, the Savior finishes His statement of what constitutes His gospel:

“And it shall come to pass, that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled [with the Holy Ghost]; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world. . . .

“And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.

“Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel” (3 Nephi 27:16, 19–21).

Faith and Commitment

As we share testimony of the gospel by the Spirit, those who are willing to hear will receive sufficient witness to begin to have faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement. That faith will give them the will to repent. Members and full-time missionaries can, again by the Spirit, teach them what changes they need to make and invite and commit them to act. The ultimate commitment we invite the investigator to accept and act upon is baptism in water. This baptism is followed by, or better said, completed by, the reception of the Holy Ghost, which brings a remission of sins as well as sanctification (see 2 Nephi 31:17).

This condition of standing justified and spotless before the Lord can be preserved throughout life if one continues to live by faith, repenting as needed and reinvigorating the baptismal promises. We call that enduring to the end. Those who endure to the end will have no fear of being judged according to their works, for they

JOIN IN THE WORK OF SALVATION

Learn how you can personally help with conversion, retention, and activation at hasteningthework.lds.org.

You can find additional information about the joy of sharing the gospel at lds.org/topics/missionary-work/change, and you can learn how to share the gospel online at lds.org/church/share.

will have been the works of faith and repentance and baptism of water and of the Spirit.

First Principles First

Hyrum Smith's statement captured in *Preach My Gospel* is profound: "Preach the first principles of the Gospel—preach them over again: you will find that day after day new ideas and additional light concerning them will be revealed to you. You can enlarge upon them so as to comprehend them clearly. You will then be able to make them more plainly understood by those [you] teach."³

In this statement, Hyrum Smith, the Patriarch, is explaining that these first principles, the heart of the gospel, are not fully comprehended in one review. Added light and deeper understanding will come over time in multiple revelatory experiences.

As members bear their testimonies and ask the full-time missionaries to assist them by teaching the gospel, remember that a growing comprehension of the gospel comes not only from study but also as we participate in sharing the gospel. If we study, prepare, and share gospel principles by the Spirit, we will "be able to make them more plainly understood," and the Spirit will instruct and bear witness to all who participate—members, missionaries, and investigators alike.

The Why, What, and How

The why, the what, and the how of missionary work are more compellingly proclaimed in the Book of Mormon than anywhere else. It is filled with examples of those who understood and labored to fulfill the missionary purpose. It contains the clearest expositions anywhere in scripture of the fundamental doctrines we should teach. It carries a converting spirit and a witness of the truth of these same doctrines. It will convert all who read it and pray about it with a sincere heart and with real intent (see Moroni 10:3–5).

The Book of Mormon establishes Jesus Christ in His true character as the Son of God and the Holy Messiah.



It inspires faith in Him. It brings people to Christ. We are eternally indebted to its authors and to the Prophet Joseph Smith for translating it by the gift and power of God.

I bear my witness that, as the Lord lives, the Book of Mormon is true. Its testimony of Jesus Christ is true. Its translator, Joseph Smith, is the great Prophet of the Restoration. Learn from the Book of Mormon, study it, teach from it, love it, and act upon it, and you will learn why we share the gospel and that it is our privilege and duty to invite and help others to come unto Christ. ■

From an address delivered at the seminar for new mission presidents at the Provo Missionary Training Center on June 22, 2008.

NOTES

1. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 1.
2. *Preach My Gospel*, 1.
3. *Preach My Gospel*, 6.

WORKING AS ONE

Members and missionaries can see themselves in the work of salvation as they live the gospel joyfully and as they invite others to participate in activities, Church services, and other events.

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: “We are all in this together. With fellow ward members and missionaries, we plan and pray and help one another. Please keep the full-time missionaries in your thoughts and prayers. Trust them with your family and friends. The Lord trusts them and has called them to teach and bless those who seek Him” (“It’s a Miracle,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 79).