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BE AT PEACE

I hope you will take time this Christmas season to sit for a few quiet moments and let the Savior's Spirit warm you and reassure you of the worthiness of your service, your offering, and your life.

It's always encouraging for me to contemplate the offering of service and sacrifice that Latter-day Saints make to their families, their wards, and their Heavenly Father. It's a consecrated, sacred thing. I don't believe there's a higher honor that can come to us than that the Lord would consider our offering as worthy and appropriate and that He would respect and receive it.

That is the great commendation of the Father to the Son when He refers to Him as "my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (3 Nephi 11:7; see also Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 9:35; D&C 93:15; Joseph Smith—History 1:17). What a beautiful title. What greater honor could there be than that God would say to you, "My beloved son" or "My beloved daughter," and that you would receive His commendation that your offering is acceptable to Him, "in whom I am well pleased."

I pray at this Christmas season that you might have some sense of the Lord's regard for your offering, some sense of how you stand in His eyes, some sense of the beloved status you occupy as His son or His daughter. And I pray that knowledge of that status may give you a great deal of comfort, reassurance, and confidence that you are approved in His eyes.





THE SAVIOR'S GIFT OF PEACE

"He who was burdened with sorrow and acquainted with grief speaks to every troubled heart and bestows the gift of peace. 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid' [John 14:27]."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Treasured Gifts," *Ensign*, Dec. 2006, 7.

The Savior's Birth

When we talk about the birth of Jesus Christ, we appropriately reflect on what was to follow. His birth was infinitely significant because of the things He would experience and suffer so that He might better succor us—all culminating in His Crucifixion and Resurrection (see Alma 7:11–12). But His mission also included the beauty of His service, the miracles of His ministry, the relief He brought to the suffering, and the joy He offered—and still offers—to the mourning.

I also like to think of what comes later. Two of my favorite verses speaking of that time are found at the end of chapter 7 in the book of Revelation:

"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

"For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Revelation 7:16–17; see also 21:4).

That captures for me the holy hope of what is coming, of what it will be like during the great Millennium and the celestial reign of Christ that follows.

With all of that to come, though, I think it's appropriate this time of year to just think about that baby in the manger. Don't be too overwhelmed or occupied with what is to come; just think about that little baby. Take a quiet, peaceful moment to ponder the beginning of His life—the culmination of heavenly prophecy but the earthly beginning for Him.

Take time to relax, be at peace, and see this little child in your mind. Do not be too concerned or overwhelmed with what is coming in His life or in yours. Instead, take a peaceful moment to contemplate perhaps the most serene moment in the history of the world—when all of heaven rejoiced with the message "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14).

Let the Spirit Warm You

Some years ago I heard a radio interview featuring Bishop Desmond Tutu, the




Anglican archbishop in South Africa. He had just published a book with his daughter about the reconciliation that had taken place in South Africa following apartheid.¹ Basically, the book's message is that there is good in all people.

During the interview the host asked a perceptive, inspired question of Bishop Tutu: "Have you found that your relationship to God has changed as you've grown older?"

Bishop Tutu paused and then said, "Yes. I am learning to shut up more in the presence of God."



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Take a peaceful moment to contemplate perhaps the most serene moment in the history of the world—when all of heaven rejoiced with the message “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

He recalled that when he prayed in his earlier years, he did so with a list of requests and solicitudes. He would approach heaven with what he called “a kind of shopping list.” But now, he said, “I think [I am] trying to grow in just being there. Like when you sit in front of a fire in winter, you are just there in front of the fire, and you don’t have to be smart or anything. The fire warms you.”²

I think that is a lovely metaphor—just sit with the Lord and let Him warm you like a fire in winter. You don’t have to be perfect or the greatest person who ever graced the earth or the best of anything to be with Him.

I hope you will take time this Christmas season to sit for a few quiet moments and let the Savior’s Spirit warm you and reassure you of the worthiness of your service, of

your offering, of your life. Sit quietly with that little baby and come away spiritually strengthened and better prepared for all that is going to come later. Let that moment be one of rest and refreshing and reassurance and renewal.

God grant you that blessing this Christmas as you, with me, bear witness of the Savior Jesus Christ—His centrality to our lives, to all human life, and to the very purpose of existence.

We worship Him, we serve Him, and we love Him. May your life reflect that love through your offering this Christmas season and always. ■

NOTES

1. Desmond Tutu and Mpho Tutu, *Made for Goodness: And Why This Makes All the Difference* (2011).
2. Desmond Tutu, in “Desmond Tutu, Insisting We Are ‘Made for Goodness’” (NPR interview by Renee Montagne, Mar. 11, 2010), npr.org.