



By Carol F. McConkie

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The Soul's Sincere Desire

Every moment of precious prayer can be holy time spent with our Father, in the name of the Son, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

In the struggles of mortality, we are never left alone to accomplish our work, to fight our battles, to face adversity or unanswered questions. Jesus Christ taught with a parable “that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” He told of a judge who did not honor God and did not have any regard for mankind. Repeatedly, a widow came before him, pleading to be avenged of her adversary. For a while, the judge would offer her no relief. But as a result of her faithful, consistent pleading, the judge finally thought, “Because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.”

Then Jesus explained:

“Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him . . . ?

“I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.”

And then the Lord asks this question: “Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”¹

Prayer is essential to developing faith. When the Lord comes again, will He find a people who know how to pray in faith and who are prepared to receive salvation? “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”² We are children of a loving

Heavenly Father, and we may enjoy personal communion with Him when we pray “with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ”³ and then act in accordance with the answers we receive by the promptings of the Holy Ghost. In faith we pray, we listen, and we obey, that we might learn to become one with the Father and the Son.⁴

A prayer of faith opens the way to receive glorious heaven-sent blessings. The Savior taught:

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

“For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”⁵

If we expect to receive, we must ask, seek, and knock. In his search for truth, Joseph Smith read from the scriptures, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”⁶ In answer to his prayer of faith, the heavens were opened. God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, descended in glory and spoke to Joseph Smith, ushering in the dispensation of the fulness of times. For us, miraculous healing, powerful protection, divine knowledge, liberating forgiveness, and precious peace are among the answers

that come when we offer up a “soul’s sincere desire”⁷ in faith.

We pray to our Father in the name of Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost, thus engaging all three members of the Godhead in our utterances.

We pray to our Heavenly Father and Him only because He is “God in heaven, who is infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting . . . , the framer of heaven and earth, and all things which are in them.” As our Creator, He gave commandments that we “should love and serve him, the only living and true God, and that he should be the only being whom [we] should worship.”⁸

As you pray to Heavenly Father in faith, “he will console you in your afflictions, . . . [and ye may] feast upon his love.”⁹ President Henry B. Eyring shared that his father’s prayers during a losing battle with cancer taught him the deeply personal relationship between God and His children:

“When the pain became intense, we found him in the morning on his knees by the bed. He had been too weak to get back into bed. He told us he had been praying to ask his Heavenly Father why he had to suffer so much when he had always tried to be good. He said a kindly answer came: ‘God needs brave sons.’

“And so he soldiered on to the end, trusting that God loved him, listened to him, and would lift him up. He was blessed to have known early and to never forget that a loving God is as close as a prayer.”¹⁰

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ because our salvation is in Christ, and “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”¹¹ We come unto the Father in the sacred name of Jesus Christ¹² because He is



our Advocate with the Father and He does plead our cause.¹³ He suffered, bled, and died to glorify His Father, and His merciful petition on our behalf opens the way for each of us to obtain peace in this life and everlasting life in the world to come. He does not want us to suffer longer or endure more trials than needed. He does want us to turn to Him and allow Him to ease our burdens, to heal our hearts, and to cleanse our souls through His purifying power. We never want to take His name in vain with rote and repetitious words. Sincere prayers offered in the holy name of Jesus Christ are an expression of our devoted love, our eternal gratitude, and our steadfast desire to pray as He prayed, to do as He did, and to become as He is.

We pray by the power of the Holy Ghost because “he that asketh in the Spirit asketh according to the will of God.”¹⁴ When we pray with faith, the Holy Ghost can guide our thoughts so that our words harmonize with the will of God. “Ask not, that ye may consume it on your lusts, but ask with a firmness unshaken, that ye will yield to no temptation, but that ye will serve the true and living God.”¹⁵

“It is not only important that we shall know how to pray, but it is equally important that we shall know how to receive the answer to our prayer, to be discerning, to be alert, to be able to see with clear vision and

understand with clear intention God’s will and purpose concerning us.”¹⁶

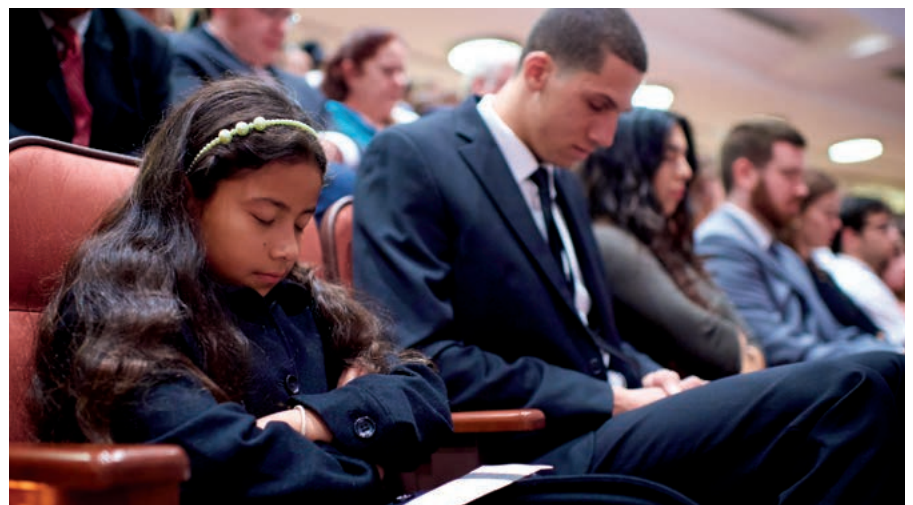
President Eyring shared: “I have had prayers answered. Those answers were most clear when what I wanted was silenced by an overpowering need to know what God wanted. It is then that the answer from a loving Heavenly Father can be spoken to the mind by the still, small voice and can be written on the heart.”¹⁷

As the Savior entered the Garden of Gethsemane, His soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. In His agony, the only one He could turn to was His Father. He pleaded, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” But He added, “Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”¹⁸ Though sinless, the Savior was called upon to “[suffer]

pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind,” including the sicknesses and infirmities of His people. “[He] suffereth according to the flesh that he might take upon him the sins of his people, that he might blot out their transgressions according to the power of his deliverance.”¹⁹ Three times He prayed, “Father, thy will be done.”²⁰ The cup was not removed. In humble, faithful prayer He was strengthened to go forward and fulfill His divine mission to prepare for our salvation, that we might repent, believe, obey, and obtain the blessings of eternity.

The answers we receive in prayer may not be what we would desire. But in times of trouble, our prayers become a lifeline of love and tender mercy. In our pleading, we may be strengthened to go forward and fulfill all that we have been ordained to do. To His Saints living in perilous times, the Lord says, “Let your hearts be comforted . . . ; for all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God.”²¹

Whether we pray privately, with our families, at church, in the temple, or wherever we are; whether we pray with broken hearts and contrite spirits



seeking forgiveness, heavenly wisdom, or simply the strength to endure, we pray *always* with full hearts, drawn out unto God continually for our welfare and the welfare of those around us. Sincere desires offered in a spirit of gratitude for abundant blessings and gratitude for the lessons of life instill in our hearts steadfast faith in Christ, a “brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men.”²²

Prayer is a gift from God. We need never feel lost or alone. I testify that every moment of precious prayer can be holy time spent with our Father, in the name of the Son, by the power of the Holy Ghost. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. See Luke 18:1–8; see also Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 18:8 (in Luke 18:8, footnote *a*).
2. Romans 10:13.
3. Moroni 10:4.
4. See John 17:21–23. The Savior prayed that we would become one with the Father and the Son and be made perfect. We obtain unity with the Father and the Son as we believe the words of Christ and act in faith.
5. Matthew 7:7–8.
6. James 1:5.
7. “Prayer Is the Soul’s Sincere Desire,” *Hymns*, no. 145.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 20:17, 19.
9. Jacob 3:1–2.
10. Henry B. Eyring, “Families and Prayer,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Sept. 2015, 4.
11. Acts 4:12.
12. See Doctrine and Covenants 93:19–20.
13. See Doctrine and Covenants 45:3–5.
14. Doctrine and Covenants 46:30.
15. Mormon 9:28.
16. Melvin J. Ballard, “Our Channels of Power and Strength,” *Improvement Era*, Sept. 1923, 992; quoted in M. Russell Ballard, *Yesterday, Today, and Forever* (2015), 133.
17. Henry B. Eyring, “Write upon My Heart,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 86; *Liahona*, Jan. 2001, 100.
18. Matthew 26:39; see also verse 38.
19. Alma 7:11, 13.
20. See Matthew 26:39–44.
21. Doctrine and Covenants 101:16.
22. 2 Nephi 31:20.



By Elder Craig C. Christensen
Of the Presidency of the Seventy

“A Choice Seer Will I Raise Up”

Because Joseph was a prophet, we have more than a window into heaven—the very doorway to the eternities is open to us.

When Moroni first came to Joseph Smith, he warned that Joseph’s “name should be had for good and evil among all nations.”¹ We have seen the fulfillment of that prophecy. In the war between good and evil, the Restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith has both inspired believers who follow him and also provoked antagonists who fight furiously against the cause of Zion and against Joseph himself. This battle is not new. It began soon after young Joseph walked into the Sacred Grove and continues today with added visibility on the internet.

The Lord personally declared to Joseph Smith:

“The ends of the earth shall inquire after thy name, and fools shall have thee in derision, and hell shall rage against thee;

“While the pure in heart, and the wise, and the noble, and the virtuous, shall seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under thy hand.”²

Today I offer my testimony to all who seek to better understand the

sacred mission of Joseph Smith Jr., the Prophet of the Restoration.

We need not be timid about testifying of Joseph’s mission as prophet, seer, and revelator, for the Lord has always worked through prophets.³ Because of the truths restored through Joseph Smith, we know much more about our Heavenly Father and the Savior Jesus Christ. We know of Their divine attributes, Their relationship to each other and to us, and the great plan of redemption that allows us to return to Their presence.

Of Joseph, President Brigham Young declared: “It was decreed in the councils of eternity, long before the foundations of the earth were laid, that he should be the man, in the last dispensation of this world, to bring forth the word of God to the people and receive the fullness of the keys and power of the Priesthood of the Son of God. The Lord had his eye upon him . . . [for he] was foreordained in eternity to preside over this last dispensation.”⁴

In preparation for this great work, Joseph Smith was born into a loving family who experienced many of the everyday burdens and trials of life. As