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Taking upon Ourselves the Name of Jesus Christ

May we faithfully take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ—by seeing as He sees, by serving as He served, and by trusting that His grace is sufficient.

My fellow brothers and sisters, recently, as I was pondering President Russell M. Nelson’s charge to call the Church by its revealed name, I turned to where the Savior instructed the Nephites about the name of the Church.¹ As I read the Savior’s words, I was struck by how He also told the people that “ye must take upon you the name of Christ.”² This caused me to look at myself and ask, “Am I taking upon myself the Savior’s name as He would have me do so?”³ Today I would like to share some of the impressions I have received in answer to my question.

First, to take upon ourselves the name of Christ means we faithfully strive to see as God sees.⁴ How does God see? Joseph Smith said, “While one portion of the human race is judging and condemning the other without mercy, the Great Parent of the universe looks upon the whole of the human family with a fatherly care and paternal regard,” for “His love [is] unfathomable.”⁵

A few years ago my older sister passed away. She had a challenging life. She struggled with the gospel and was never really active. Her husband abandoned their marriage and left her

with four young children to raise. On the evening of her passing, in a room with her children present, I gave her a blessing to peacefully return home. At that moment I realized I had too often defined my sister’s life in terms of her trials and inactivity. As I placed my hands on her head that evening, I received a severe rebuke from the Spirit. I was made acutely aware of her goodness and allowed to see her as God saw her—not as someone who struggled with the gospel and life but as someone who had to deal with difficult issues I did not have. I saw her as a magnificent mother who, despite great obstacles, had raised four beautiful, amazing children. I saw her as the friend to our mother who took time to watch over and be a companion to her after our father passed away.

During that final evening with my sister, I believe God was asking me, “Can’t you see that everyone around you is a sacred being?”

Brigham Young taught:





Savior asked us, “For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye?”¹⁹

I recently learned about an experience in the life of Elder James E. Talmage that caused me to pause and consider how I love and serve those around me. As a young professor, before he became an Apostle, in the height of the deadly diphtheria epidemic of 1892, Elder Talmage discovered a family of strangers, not members of the Church, who lived near him and who were stricken by the disease. No one wanted to put themselves at risk by going inside the infected home. Elder Talmage, however, immediately proceeded to the home. He found four children: a two-and-a-half-year-old dead on the bed, a five-year-old and ten-year-old in great pain, and a weakened thirteen-year-old. The parents were suffering with grief and fatigue.

Elder Talmage dressed the dead and the living, swept the rooms, carried out the soiled clothing, and burned filthy rags covered with the disease. He worked all day and then returned the next morning. The ten-year-old died during the night. He lifted and held the five-year-old. She coughed bloody mucus all over his face and clothes. He wrote, “I could not put her from me,” and he held her until she died in his arms. He helped bury all three children and arranged for food and clean clothing for the grieving family. Upon returning home, Brother Talmage disposed of his clothes, bathed in a zinc solution, quarantined himself from his family, and suffered through a mild attack of the disease.²⁰

So many lives around us are at stake. Saints take the Savior’s name upon themselves by becoming holy and ministering to all regardless of where or how they stand—lives are saved as we do so.²¹

“I wish to urge upon the Saints . . . to understand men and women as they are, and not understand them as you are.”⁶

“How often it is said—‘Such a person has done wrong, and he cannot be a Saint.’ . . . We hear some swear and lie . . . [or] break the Sabbath. . . . Do not judge such persons, for you do not know the design of the Lord concerning them. . . . [Rather,] bear with them.”⁷

Can any one of you imagine our Savior letting you and your burdens go unnoticed by Him? The Savior looked upon the Samaritan, the adulterer, the tax collector, the leper, the mentally ill, and the sinner with the same eyes. All were children of His Father. All were redeemable.

Can you imagine Him turning away from someone with doubts about their place in God’s kingdom or from anyone afflicted in any manner?⁸ I cannot. In the eyes of Christ, each soul is of infinite worth. No one is preordained to fail. Eternal life is possible for all.⁹

From the Spirit’s rebuke at my sister’s bedside, I learned a great lesson: that as we see as He sees, ours will be a double victory—redemption of those we touch and redemption of ourselves.

Second, to take upon ourselves the name of Christ, we must not only see as God sees, but we must do His work and serve as He served. We live the two great commandments, submit to God’s will, gather Israel, and let our light “shine before men.”¹⁰ We receive and live the covenants and ordinances of His restored Church.¹¹ As we do this, God endows us with power to bless ourselves, our families, and the lives of others.¹² Ask yourself, “Do I know anyone who does not need the powers of heaven in their lives?”

God will work wonders among us as we sanctify ourselves.¹³ We sanctify ourselves by purifying our hearts.¹⁴ We purify our hearts as we hear Him,¹⁵ repent of our sins,¹⁶ become converted,¹⁷ and love as He loves.¹⁸ The

Finally, I believe that to take upon ourselves His name, we must trust Him. At a meeting I attended one Sunday, a young woman asked something like the following: “My boyfriend and I recently broke up, and he chose to leave the Church. He tells me he has never been happier. How can this be?”

The Savior answered this question when He said to the Nephites, “But if [your life is] not built upon my gospel, and is built upon the works of men, or upon the works of the devil, verily I say unto you [you will] have joy in [your] works for a season, and by and by the end cometh.”²² There simply is no enduring joy outside the gospel of Jesus Christ.

At that meeting, however, I thought about the many good people I know who struggle with great burdens and commandments that are daunting at best for them. I asked myself, “What else might the Savior say to them?”²³ I believe He would ask, “Do you trust me?”²⁴ To the woman with the issue of blood, He said, “Thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.”²⁵

One of my favorite scriptures is John 4:4, which reads, “And he must needs go through Samaria.”

Why do I love that scripture? Because Jesus did not *need* to go to Samaria. The Jews of His day despised the Samaritans and traveled a road around Samaria. But Jesus chose to go there to declare before all the world for the first time that He was the promised Messiah. For this message, He chose not only an outcast group but also a woman—and not just any woman but a woman living in sin—someone considered at that time to be the least of the least. I believe Jesus did this so that each of us may always understand that His love is greater than our fears, our wounds, our addictions, our doubts, our temptations, our sins, our broken families, our depression and anxieties, our chronic illness, our poverty, our abuse, our despair, and our loneliness.²⁶ He wants all to know there is nothing and no one He is unable to heal and deliver to enduring joy.²⁷

His grace is sufficient.²⁸ He alone descended below all things. The power

of His Atonement is the power to overcome any burden in our life.²⁹ The message of the woman at the well is that He knows our life situations³⁰ and that we can always walk with Him no matter where we stand. To her and to each of us, He says, “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but [shall have] a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”³¹

In any of life’s travels, why would you ever turn away from the only Savior who has all power to heal and deliver you? Whatever the price you must pay to trust Him is worth it. My brothers and sisters, let us choose to increase our faith in Heavenly Father and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

From the very depths of my soul, I bear testimony that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Savior’s Church, directed by the living Christ through a true prophet. My prayer is that we will faithfully take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ—by seeing as He sees, by serving as He served, and by trusting that His grace is sufficient to deliver us home and to enduring joy. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. See 3 Nephi 27:3–8.
2. See 3 Nephi 27:5–6; see also Doctrine and Covenants 20:77 and the covenant of the sacrament.
3. See Dallin H. Oaks, *His Holy Name* (1998) for a comprehensive study about taking upon ourselves and being a witness of the name of Jesus Christ.
4. See Mosiah 5:2–3. Part of the mighty change of heart among the people of King Benjamin who took upon themselves the name of Christ was that their eyes were opened to “great views.” Those who inherit the celestial kingdom are individuals who “see as they are seen” (Doctrine and Covenants 76:94).
5. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 39.
6. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 8:37.
7. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 278.





8. See 3 Nephi 17:7.
9. See John 3:14–17; Acts 10:34; 1 Nephi 17:35; 2 Nephi 26:33; Doctrine and Covenants 50:41–42; Moses 1:39. Elder D. Todd Christofferson also taught: “With confidence we testify that the Atonement of Jesus Christ has anticipated and, in the end, will compensate all deprivation and loss for those who turn to Him. No one is predestined to receive less than all that the Father has for His children” (“Why Marriage, Why Family,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 52).
10. See Matthew 5:14–16; 22:35–40; Mosiah 3:19; Doctrine and Covenants 50:13–14; 133:5; see also Russell M. Nelson, “The Gathering of Scattered Israel,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 79–81.
11. See Leviticus 18:4; 2 Nephi 31:5–12; Doctrine and Covenants 1:12–16; 136:4; Articles of Faith 1:3–4.
12. See Doctrine and Covenants 84:20–21; 110:9.
13. See Joshua 3:5; Doctrine and Covenants 43:16; see also John 17:19. The Savior sanctified Himself to have the power to bless us.
14. See Helaman 3:35; Doctrine and Covenants 12:6–9; 88:74.
15. See Joseph Smith—History 1:17, the first command given by God in vision to the Prophet Joseph Smith; see also 2 Nephi 9:29; 3 Nephi 28:34.
16. See Mark 1:15; Acts 3:19; Alma 5:33; 42:22–23; Doctrine and Covenants 19:4–20. Also ponder these two meditations on sin. First, Hugh Nibley writes: “Sin is waste. It is doing one thing when you should be doing other and better things for which you have the capacity” (*Approaching Zion*, ed. Don E. Norton [1989], 66). Mother of John Wesley, Susanna Wesley, wrote her son: “Take this rule. Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off your relish of spiritual things; . . . whatever increases the . . . authority of your

- body over your mind; that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may be in itself” (*Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings*, ed. Charles Wallace Jr. [1997], 109).
17. See Luke 22:32; 3 Nephi 9:11, 20.
 18. See John 13:2–15, 34. On the eve of His Atonement, the Savior washed the feet of one who betrayed Him, of another who denied Him, and of still others who fell asleep in His most needed hour. He then taught, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you.”
 19. Matthew 5:46.
 20. See John R. Talmage, *The Talmage Story: Life of James E. Talmage—Educator, Scientist, Apostle* (1972), 112–14.
 21. See Alma 10:22–23; 62:40.
 22. 3 Nephi 27:11.
 23. In Matthew 11:28, 30, the Lord says: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. . . . For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Also consider 2 Corinthians 12:7–9: Paul describes suffering a very powerful “thorn in the flesh,” which he prayed to have removed. Christ said to him, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” See also Ether 12:27.
 24. See Mosiah 7:33; 29:20; Helaman 12:1; Doctrine and Covenants 124:87.
 25. See Luke 8:43–48; Mark 5:25–34. The woman with the issue of blood was in desperate need and out of options. She had suffered for 12 years, had spent all her resources on physicians, and was getting worse. Cast out from her people and family, she purposefully made her way through a large crowd and plunged herself at the Savior. She had complete trust and faith in the Savior, and He felt her touch on the hem of His garment. From that faith He instantly and completely healed her. He then called her “daughter.” She was no longer an outcast but a member of God’s family. Her healing was physical, social, emotional, and spiritual. Challenges may

stretch out for years or a lifetime, but His promise of healing is sure and absolute.

26. See Luke 4:21; John 4:6–26. Luke, not John, records that early in Jesus’s ministry, He went to His own synagogue in Nazareth, read a passage from Isaiah prophesying of the Messiah, and then declared, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” This is the first recorded time the Savior speaks of Himself as the Messiah. However, at Jacob’s well, John records the first time that Jesus declares His Messiahship in an open forum. In this setting, since the Samaritans were considered non-Jews, Jesus also taught that His gospel was for all, both Jew and Gentile. This declaration occurs at the “sixth hour,” or at noon, when the earth receives its fullest light from the sun. Jacob’s well is also in the valley near the exact spot where ancient Israel ceremonially covenanted with the Lord after entering into the land of promise. Interestingly, on one side of the valley is a dry mountain and on the other side is a mountain full of springs of life-giving water.
27. Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught: “When in situations of stress we wonder if there is any more in us to give, we can be comforted to know that God, who knows our capacity perfectly, placed us here to succeed. No one was foreordained to fail or to be wickled. . . . When we feel overwhelmed, let us recall the assurance that God will not overprogram us” (“Meeting the Challenges of Today” [Brigham Young University devotional, Oct. 10, 1978], 9, speeches.byu.edu).
28. President Russell M. Nelson has taught:

“In a coming day, you will present yourself before the Savior. You will be overwhelmed to the point of tears to be in His holy presence. You will struggle to find words to thank Him for paying for your sins, for forgiving you of any unkindness toward others, for healing you from the injuries and injustices of this life.

“You will thank Him for strengthening you to do the impossible, for turning your weaknesses into strengths, and for making it possible for you to live with Him and your family forever. His identity, His Atonement, and His attributes will become personal and real to you” (“Prophets, Leadership, and Divine Law” [worldwide devotional for young adults, Jan. 8, 2017], broadcasts.lds.org).
29. See Isaiah 53:3–5; Alma 7:11–13; Doctrine and Covenants 122:5–9.
30. See Joseph Smith—History 1:17; Elaine S. Dalton, “He Knows You by Name,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2005, 109–11.
31. John 4:14.