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Of the Seventy

The Savior's Touch

As we come unto Him, God will come to our rescue, whether to heal us or to give us the strength to face any situation.

- for joy); Isaiah 14:12–13 (“exalt my throne above the stars of God”); Revelation 12:7–11 (there was a war in heaven).
5. “The Prophet Joseph Smith described *agency* as ‘that free independence of mind which heaven has so graciously bestowed upon the human family as one of its choicest gifts’ [*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (1977), 49]. This ‘free independence of mind,’ or agency, is the power that allows individuals to be ‘agents unto themselves’ (D&C 58:28). It encompasses both the exercise of the will to choose between good and evil or differing levels of good or evil and also the opportunity to experience the consequences of that choice. Heavenly Father loves His children so much that He wants us to reach our full potential—to become as He is. To progress, a person must possess the innate capacity to make his or her desired choice. Agency is so fundamental to His plan for His children that ‘even God could not make men like himself without making them free’ [David O. McKay, “Whither Shall We Go? Or Life’s Supreme Decision,” *Deseret News*, June 8, 1935, 1]” (Byron R. Merrill, “Agency and Freedom in the Divine Plan,” in Roy A. Prete, ed., *Window of Faith: Latter-day Saint Perspectives on World History* [2005], 162).
 6. In her novel *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, author J. K. Rowling has Hogwarts headmaster Dumbledore say something quite similar to young Harry Potter. It is wonderful advice to us as well. I have used it in messages before and think it is worth repeating.
 7. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, *we shall be like him*; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2; emphasis added).
While such a transformation may be beyond our ability to comprehend, “the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:
“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, *and joint-heirs with Christ*; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.
“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the *glory which shall be revealed in us*” (Romans 8:16–18; emphasis added).
 8. See Matthew 28:16–20.
 9. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*, 33.
 10. See Luke 9:59–62.
 11. See LeGrand Richards, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, rev. ed. (1966).

Roughly 2,000 years ago, the Savior came down from the mountain after teaching the Beatitudes and other gospel principles. As He walked, He was approached by a man sick with leprosy. The man showed reverence and respect as he knelt before Christ, seeking relief from his affliction. His request was simple: “Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.”

The Savior then extended His hand and, touching him, said, “I will; be thou clean.”¹

We learn here that our Savior always wants to bless us. Some blessings may come immediately, others may take longer, and some may even come after this life, but blessings will come in due time.

Much like the leper, we can find strength and comfort in this life by accepting His will and knowing that He wants to bless us. We can find the strength to face any challenge, to overcome temptations, and to understand and endure our difficult circumstances. Surely, in one of the most crushing





moments of His life, the Savior's strength to endure was deepened as He said to His Father, "Thy will be done."²

The leper did not make his request in a pretentious or demanding manner. His words reveal a humble attitude, with high expectations but also with a sincere desire that the will of the Savior be done. This is an example of the attitude with which we should come unto Christ. We can come unto Christ with the certainty that His desire currently is and always will be the best for our mortal and eternal lives. He has an eternal perspective that we do not have. We must come unto Christ with a sincere desire that our will be swallowed up in the will of the Father, as His was.³ This will prepare us for eternal life.

It is very hard to imagine the physical and emotional suffering that weighed on the leper who came unto the Savior. Leprosy affects the nerves and skin, causing disfigurement and disability. Additionally, it led to great social stigma. Someone stricken with leprosy had to leave their loved ones and live isolated from society. Lepers were considered unclean, both physically and spiritually. For this reason, the law of Moses required that lepers wear torn clothing and call out, "Unclean!" as they walked.⁴ Sick and despised, lepers ended up living in abandoned houses or in the tombs.⁵ It is not hard to imagine that the leper who

approached the Savior was broken.

Sometimes—in one way or another—we too can feel broken, whether due to our own actions or those of others, due to circumstances we can or cannot control. In such moments, we can place our will in His hands.

Some years ago, Zulma—my wife, my better half, my best part—received some difficult news just two weeks before the wedding of one of our children. She had a tumor in her parotid gland, and it was growing rapidly. Her face began swelling, and she was to immediately undergo a delicate operation. Many thoughts ran through her mind and weighed on her heart. Was the tumor malignant? How would her body recover? Would her face become paralyzed? How intense would the pain be? Would her face be permanently scarred? Would the tumor return once removed? Would she be able to attend the wedding of our son? As she lay in the operating room, she felt broken.

In that very important moment, the Spirit whispered to her that she had to accept the will of the Father. She then decided to place her trust in God. She strongly felt that whatever the result, His will would be the best for her. Soon she drifted into surgical sleep.

Later, she wrote poetically in her diary: "On the surgeon's table I bowed before Thee, and surrendering to Thy will, I fell asleep. I knew I could trust

Thee, knowing that nothing bad can come from Thee."

She found strength and comfort from surrendering her will to that of the Father. That day, God blessed her greatly.

Whatever our circumstances might be, we can exercise our faith to come unto Christ and find a God we can trust. As one of my children, Gabriel, once wrote:

*According to the prophet, God's face is brighter than the sun and His hair is whiter than snow and His voice roars like the rushing of a river, and next to Him man is nothing. . . . I am crushed as I realize that even I am nothing. And only then do I fumble my way to a God I can trust. And only then do I discover the God I can trust.*⁶

A God we can trust emboldens our hope. We can trust Him because He loves us and wants what is best for us in every circumstance.

The leper came forward because of the power of hope. The world gave him no solutions, not even comfort. Thus, the Savior's simple touch must have felt like a caress unto his entire soul. We can only imagine the deep feelings of gratitude the leper must have had at

the Savior's touch, especially when he heard the words "I will; be thou clean."

The story states that "immediately his leprosy was cleansed."⁷

We too can feel the touch of the Savior's loving, healing hand. What joy, hope, and gratefulness come to our souls in knowing that He wants to help us to be clean! As we come unto Him, God will come to our rescue, whether to heal us or to give us the strength to face any situation.

At any rate, accepting His will—not our own—will help us understand our circumstances. Nothing bad can come from God. He knows what is best for us. Perhaps He will not remove our burdens right away. Sometimes He can make those burdens feel lighter, as He did with Alma and his people.⁸ Ultimately, because of covenants, the burdens will be lifted,⁹ either in this life or at the holy Resurrection.

A sincere desire that His will be done, along with an understanding of our Redeemer's divine nature, helps us develop the kind of faith that the leper showed in order to be cleansed. Jesus Christ is a God of love, a God of hope, a God of healing, a God who wants to bless us and help us be clean. That is what He wanted before coming to this earth when He volunteered to rescue us when we fall into transgression. That is what He wanted in Gethsemane when He faced humanly incomprehensible pain during the agony of paying the price of sin. That is what He wants now when He pleads on our behalf before the Father.¹⁰ That is why His voice echoes still: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."¹¹

He can heal us and lift us up because He has the ability to do it. He took upon Himself all the pains of body and spirit so that His bowels



would be filled with mercy in order to be able to help us in all things and to heal us and lift us up.¹² The words of Isaiah, as cited by Abinadi, put it beautifully and movingly:

"Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. . . .

... He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."¹³

This same concept is taught in this poem:

*"O Carpenter of Nazareth,
This heart, that's broken past repair,
This life, that's shattered nigh to death,
Oh, can You mend them, Carpenter?"*

*And by His kind and ready hand,
His own sweet life is woven through
Our broken lives, until they stand
A New Creation—"all things new."*

*"The shattered [substance] of [the] heart,
Desire, ambition, hope, and faith,
Mould Thou into the perfect part,
O, Carpenter of Nazareth!"¹⁴*

If you feel that in any way you are not clean, if you feel broken, please know that you can be made clean, you can be mended, because He loves you. Trust that nothing bad can come from Him.

Because He "descended below all things,"¹⁵ He makes it possible for all

things that have been broken in our lives to be mended, and thus we can be reconciled with God. Through Him, all things are reconciled, both things that are on the earth and things that are in heaven, making "peace through the blood of his cross."¹⁶

Let us come unto Christ, taking all necessary steps. As we do, may our attitude be one of saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." If we do so, we can receive the Master's healing touch, alongside the sweet echo of His voice: "I will; be thou clean."

The Savior is a God we can trust. He is the Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah, of whom I testify in His holy name, even Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Matthew 8:2–3.
2. Matthew 26:42.
3. See Mosiah 15:7.
4. See Leviticus 13:45.
5. See Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary* (1973), 1:174.
6. See also Proverbs 3:5–6; Doctrine and Covenants 110:2–3; Moses 1:2–10.
7. Matthew 8:3.
8. See Mosiah 24:8–15.
9. See Mosiah 24:13–16.
10. See Doctrine and Covenants 45:3–5.
11. Matthew 11:28.
12. See Alma 7:12.
13. Mosiah 14:4–5.
14. George Blair, "The Carpenter of Nazareth," in Obert C. Tanner, *Christ's Ideals for Living* (Sunday School manual, 1955), 22; in Jeffrey R. Holland, "Broken Things to Mend," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2006, 71.
15. Doctrine and Covenants 88:6.
16. Colossians 1:20; see also 2 Corinthians 5:18–20.