




By Elder Edward Dube  
Of the Seventy

# Gaining My Faith

One Step  
at a Time



*Gaining a testimony takes time. Often it takes small experiences coming together.*

One of the defining moments in my life happened for me at the age of 10 when I spent two weeks learning Catholic doctrine at the Loreto Roman Catholic Mission, about 20 miles (32 km) away from my rural home in Silobela, Zimbabwe. I have come to know and love the Savior Jesus Christ and to look up to the Lord through these early lessons and impressions.

While I was in the Catholic chapel, I saw paintings with scenes from the Savior's life pasted on the wall: scenes of Jesus Christ's birth, teaching in the temple, praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, carrying the cross to Calvary, being crucified at Golgotha, and His Resurrection. It really made me feel sad to see those nails and thorns. By the time I got to the painting of the Crucifixion, my eyes were filled with tears. And each time I would cry and say, "Hey, He really went through a lot, just for me."

During the confirmation ceremony, one of the priests looked into my eyes

and said, "You are the light of the world" (see Matthew 5:14). Then, pointing to a burning candle, he quoted the Savior's words: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

As I learned more about Jesus, I wanted to be of service to others. For example, we would have to fetch our water five miles (8 km) away from our village. Often, women in the village, including my mother, carried a 20-liter container on their heads filled with water. After my experience at the Catholic seminary, I often pushed a 200-liter (about 50 gallons) container of water to help my mother, and I helped two other widows who were our neighbors. I had a good feeling each time I helped others.

These experiences helped develop my faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and indirectly prepared me to accept the gospel of Jesus Christ when I was 22 years old.

## RECEIVING THE BOOK OF MORMON

I grew up during a time of change in my country. The white-minority led by Ian Smith declared independence from Britain in 1965. That prompted United Nations sanctions and sparked years of civil war that lasted until 1980, which marked Zimbabwe independence. When I finished my schooling, I moved to a city to work and didn't attend any church for several years.

One day I was playing with the sons of my boss. They were nine and seven years old. They said, "You know that our father is the branch president in our Church." They explained what a branch president is and, without thinking, I said, "Your father will not go to heaven." I realized I had made a big mistake, and I thought desperately about what I could say to them to make them forget my comment. At the end of the day, when they saw their father, they ran to him and repeated what I had said. I thought I would lose my job.

My boss had earlier shown me a jacket from when he had been in the military that showed he had killed. That's why I had said what I did. In a very calm way, he asked me why I said that. I said, "Boss, remember, you told me that you killed in the war. In the Bible it says, 'Thou shalt not kill.'"

He asked me which church I attended. I told him that I used to attend the Catholic Church but hadn't gone for seven years. He shared experiences in the Old Testament about wars and hostilities, and then he gave me a copy of the Book of Mormon. I was so excited that I didn't lose my job.

He gave me the Book of Mormon in 1981, but I did not read it or even open it for two years. One Sunday I was bored when my friends were out of town, so I picked up the book and went to a nearby railway station and read. When I read that day, I could feel the

motivation to do good, but what really touched me later on in my reading was 3 Nephi 11. I read about the surviving Nephites who had come through war and turmoil, and then the Savior Jesus Christ appeared to them.

My country had been through our own war for 15 years. Some of the people I had grown up with in my village had gone to war and did not make it back. Others were crippled for life.

So, while reading about the Nephites, I felt as though the Savior Jesus Christ was reaching out to me when He said, "Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may . . . feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world" (3 Nephi 11:14).

I felt as though He was reaching out to me personally, inviting me to come unto Him. It hit me that I could do this. It changed everything.

## GAINING MY TESTIMONY

It took several months to gain courage to go to church. I knew where the church was, but there were no missionaries in our little branch. In February 1984, I walked into the Kwekwe chapel. I wanted to walk back out. I wasn't sure I belonged and sat at the back, ready to bolt. After the opening exercises, the branch president, Mike Allen, bore his testimony about the Savior Jesus Christ and the Book of Mormon. I felt connected. The next person also bore his testimony about the Savior and the Book of Mormon, and so did the third one. I was euphoric. I couldn't get the courage to go to the pulpit, so I stood where I was and said, "I love Jesus. I'm reading the Book of Mormon." And I sat down. That was the beginning of my testimony.

Those testimonies were the Lord's way of reaching out to me because



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it helped me feel that I belonged there.

I felt that these were my brothers and sisters.

During the following days I prayed for them and for acceptance. I met members there who were so kind and who helped me.

A lot happened that day when I walked into the chapel. I wonder what would have happened if those members hadn't borne their testimonies. You never know whether there is someone who is struggling. When you stand up and say what you feel, it may be exactly what someone needs to hear.

Bear your testimonies often. When you do, you strengthen yourselves and others around you. Stand for what you know. As you follow the counsel from the Book of Mormon, you will draw closer to the Savior.

## **DRAW CLOSE TO THE SAVIOR**

The time I spent at the Loreto Roman Catholic Mission started me on the road to becoming a disciple of the Savior Jesus Christ. Since then I have learned that being a disciple is a process and we need to keep moving forward regardless of our weaknesses and limitations. When we embrace the invitation: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48), we will progress toward eternal life "line upon line, precept upon precept" (see Doctrine and Covenants 98:12).

We know the road will not always be easy, and we will experience some hardships and heartaches in the process, but looking up to the Lord is the only way to find peace in our lives.

The Atonement of the Savior Jesus Christ is everything to me. I know that the Savior is reaching out to us. We need to look up, follow Him, and reach out to lift others as He reaches out and lifts us. ■