



By Elder Neil L. Andersen  
*Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles*

## We Talk of Christ

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*As the world speaks less of Jesus Christ, let us speak more of Him.*

I express my love for you, our beloved friends and fellow believers. I have admired your faith and courage during these past months, as this worldwide pandemic has disrupted our lives and taken precious family members and dear friends.

During this period of uncertainty, I have felt an unusual gratitude for my sure and certain knowledge that Jesus is the Christ. Have you felt that way? There are difficulties that weigh upon each of us, but always before us is He who humbly declared, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”<sup>1</sup> While we endure a season of physically distancing ourselves from others, we need never endure a season of spiritually distancing ourselves from Him who lovingly calls to us, “Come unto me.”<sup>2</sup>

Like a guiding star in a clear, dark sky, Jesus Christ lights our way. He came to earth in a humble stable. He lived a perfect life. He healed the sick and raised the dead. He was a friend to the forgotten. He taught us to do good, to obey, and to love one another. He was crucified on a cross, rising majestically three days later, allowing us and those we love to live beyond the grave. With His incomparable mercy and grace, He took upon Himself our sins and our suffering, bringing forgiveness as we repent and

peace in the storms of life. We love Him. We worship Him. We follow Him. He is the anchor of our souls.

Interestingly, while this spiritual conviction is increasing within us, there are many on the earth who know very little of Jesus Christ, and in some parts of the world where His name has been proclaimed for centuries, faith in Jesus Christ is diminishing. The valiant Saints in Europe have seen belief decline in their countries through the decades.<sup>3</sup> Sadly, here in the United States faith is also receding. A recent study revealed that in the last 10 years, 30 million people in the United States have stepped away from believing in the divinity of Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup> Looking worldwide, another study predicts that in the decades ahead, more than twice as many will leave Christianity as will embrace it.<sup>5</sup>

We, of course, revere the right of each to choose, yet our Heavenly Father declared, “This is my beloved Son: hear him.”<sup>6</sup> I witness that the day will come when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ.<sup>7</sup>

How are we to respond to our changing world? While some are neglecting their faith, others are searching for the truth. We have taken upon ourselves the name of the Savior. What more are we to do?

## The Preparation of President Russell M. Nelson

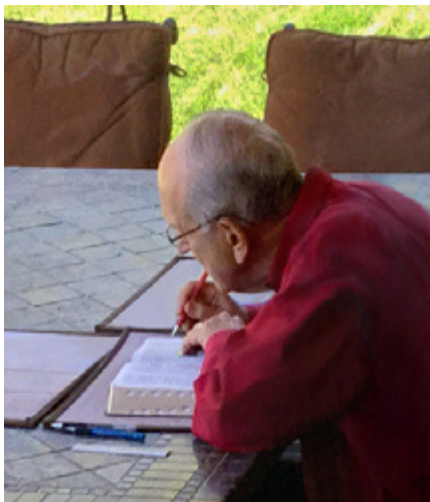
Part of our answer may come as we remember how the Lord tutored President Russell M. Nelson in the months prior to his call as President of the Church. Speaking one year before his call, President Nelson invited us to more deeply study the 2,200 references of the name *Jesus Christ* listed in the Topical Guide.<sup>8</sup>

Three months later, in April general conference, he spoke of how, even with his decades of devoted discipleship, this deeper study of Jesus Christ had greatly affected him. Sister Wendy Nelson asked him about its impact. He replied, “I am a different man!” He was a different man? At age 92, a different man? President Nelson explained:

“As we invest time in learning about the Savior and His atoning sacrifice, we are drawn to [Him]. . . .

“. . . Our focus [becomes] riveted on the Savior and His gospel.”<sup>9</sup>

The Savior said, “Look unto me in every thought.”<sup>10</sup>



*If a renewed study of the Savior helped prepare President Nelson, could it not help prepare us as well?*



*San Lucas Sacatepéquez, Guatemala*

In a world of work, worries, and worthy endeavors, we keep our heart, our mind, and our thoughts on Him who is our hope and salvation.

If a renewed study of the Savior helped prepare President Nelson, could it not help prepare us as well?

In emphasizing the name of the Church, President Nelson taught, “If we . . . are to have access to the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ—to cleanse and heal us, to strengthen and magnify us, and ultimately to exalt us—we must clearly acknowledge Him as the source of that power.”<sup>11</sup> President Nelson taught us that consistently using the correct name of the Church, something that might seem like a small thing, is not small at all and will shape the world’s future.

### A Promise for Your Preparation

I promise you that as you prepare yourselves, as President Nelson did, you too will be different, thinking more about the Savior, speaking of Him more frequently and with less hesitation. As you come to know and love Him even more deeply, your words will flow more comfortably, as they do when you speak of one of your children or of a dear friend. Those listening to you will feel less like debating or dismissing you and

more like learning from you.

You and I speak of Jesus Christ, but maybe we can do a little better. If the world is going to speak less of Him, who is going to speak more of Him? We are! Along with other devoted Christians!

### Speaking of Christ in Our Homes

Are there images of the Savior in our homes? Do we talk often to our children about the parables of Jesus? “The stories of Jesus [are] like a rushing wind across the embers of faith in the hearts of our children.”<sup>12</sup> When your children ask you questions, consciously think about teaching what the Savior taught. For example, if your child asks, “Daddy, why do we pray?” You might respond, “That’s a great question. Do you remember when Jesus prayed? Let’s talk about why He prayed and how He prayed.”

“We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, . . . that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins.”<sup>13</sup>

### Speaking of Christ in the Church

This same scripture adds that “we preach of Christ.”<sup>14</sup> In our worship services, let us focus on the Savior Jesus Christ and the gift of His atoning sacrifice. This does not mean we cannot tell an experience from

our own life or share thoughts from others. While our subject might be about families or service or temples or a recent mission, everything in our worship should point to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thirty years ago, President Dallin H. Oaks spoke of a letter he had received “from a man who said he had attended [a sacrament] meeting and listened to seventeen testimonies without hearing the Savior mentioned.”<sup>15</sup> President Oaks then noted, “Perhaps that description is exaggerated [but] I quote it because it provides a vivid reminder for all of us.”<sup>16</sup> He then invited us to speak more of Jesus Christ in our talks and class discussions. I have observed that we are focusing more and more on Christ in our Church meetings. Let’s consciously continue with these very positive efforts.

### Speaking of Christ with Others

With those around us, let us be more open, more willing to talk of Christ. President Nelson said, “True disciples of Jesus Christ are willing to stand out, speak up, and be different from the people of the world.”<sup>17</sup>

Sometimes we think that a conversation with someone needs to result in them coming to church or seeing the missionaries. Let the Lord guide them as they are willing, while we think more about our responsibility to be a voice for Him, thoughtful and open about our faith. Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf has taught us that when someone asks us about our weekend, we should be willing to happily respond that we loved hearing the Primary children sing, “I’m trying to be like Jesus.”<sup>18</sup> Let us kindly witness our faith in Christ. If someone shares a problem in his or her personal life,

we might say, “John, Mary, you know that I believe in Jesus Christ. I have been thinking about something He said that might help you.”

Be more open on social media in talking about your trust in Christ. Most will respect your faith, but if someone is dismissive when you speak of the Savior, take courage in His promise: “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you . . . for my sake. . . . For great is your reward in heaven.”<sup>19</sup> We care more about being His followers than being “liked” by our own followers. Peter counseled, “Be ready always to give an answer [for] the hope that is in you.”<sup>20</sup> Let us talk of Christ.

The Book of Mormon is a powerful witness of Jesus Christ. Virtually every page testifies of the Savior and His divine mission.<sup>21</sup> An understanding of His Atonement and grace saturates its pages. As a companion to the New Testament, the Book of Mormon helps us better understand why the Savior came to rescue us and how we can more profoundly come unto Him.

Some of our fellow Christians are, at times, uncertain about our beliefs and motives. Let us genuinely rejoice with them in our shared faith in Jesus Christ and in the New Testament scriptures we all love. In the days ahead, those who believe in Jesus Christ will need the friendship and support of one another.<sup>22</sup>

As the world speaks less of Jesus Christ, let us speak more of Him. As our true colors as His disciples are revealed, many around us will be prepared to listen. As we share the light we have received from Him, His light and His transcendent saving power will shine on those willing to open their hearts. Jesus said, “I . . . come [as] a light into the world.”<sup>23</sup>



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### Lifting Our Desire to Speak of Christ

Nothing lifts my desire to speak of Christ more than visualizing His return. While we do not know when He will come, the events of His return will be breathtaking! He will come in the clouds of heaven in majesty and glory with all His holy angels. Not just a few angels but *all* His holy angels. These are not the cherry-cheeked cherubim painted by Raphael, found on our Valentine cards. These are the angels of the centuries, the angels sent to shut the mouths of lions,<sup>24</sup> to open prison doors,<sup>25</sup> to announce His long-awaited birth,<sup>26</sup> to comfort Him in Gethsemane,<sup>27</sup> to assure His disciples at His Ascension,<sup>28</sup> and to open the glorious Restoration of the gospel.<sup>29</sup>

Can you imagine being caught up to meet Him, whether on this side or the other side of the veil?<sup>30</sup> That is His promise to the righteous. This amazing experience will mark our souls forever.

How grateful we are for our beloved prophet, President Russell M. Nelson, who has lifted our desire to love the Savior and proclaim His divinity. I am an eyewitness to the Lord's hand upon him and the gift of revelation that guides him. President Nelson, we eagerly await your counsel.

My dear friends across the world, let us talk of Christ, anticipating His glorious promise: "Whosoever . . . shall confess me before men, him will I confess . . . before my Father."<sup>31</sup> I testify He is the Son of God. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. John 14:6.
2. Matthew 11:28.
3. See Niztan Peri-Rotem, "Religion and Fertility in Western Europe: Trends across Cohorts in Britain, France and the Netherlands," *European Journal of Population*, May 2016, 231–65, [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4875064](https://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4875064).
4. "[Sixty-five percent] of American adults



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- describe themselves as Christians when asked about their religion, down 12 percentage points over the past decade. Meanwhile, the religiously unaffiliated share of the population, consisting of people who describe their religious identity as atheist, agnostic or 'nothing in particular,' now stands at 26%, up from 17% in 2009" (Pew Research Center, "In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace," Oct. 17, 2019, [pewforum.org](https://www.pewforum.org)).
5. See Pew Research Center, "The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010–2050," Apr. 2, 2015, [pewforum.org](https://www.pewforum.org).
  6. Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35; see also Matthew 3:17; Joseph Smith—History 1:17.
  7. See Philippians 2:9–11.
  8. See Russell M. Nelson, "Prophets, Leadership, and Divine Law" (worldwide devotional for young adults, Jan. 8, 2017), [broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
  9. Russell M. Nelson, "Drawing the Power of Jesus Christ into Our Lives," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 40–41.
  10. Doctrine and Covenants 6:36.
  11. Russell M. Nelson, "The Correct Name of the Church," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 88.

12. Neil L. Andersen, "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 108.
13. 2 Nephi 25:26.
14. 2 Nephi 25:26.
15. Dallin H. Oaks, "Another Testament of Jesus Christ" (Brigham Young University fireside, June 6, 1993), 7, [speeches.byu.edu](https://speeches.byu.edu).
16. Dallin H. Oaks, "Witnesses of Christ," *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 30.
17. Russell M. Nelson, "Drawing the Power of Jesus Christ into Our Lives," 40.
18. See Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Missionary Work: Sharing What Is in Your Heart," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 17; "I'm Trying to Be like Jesus," *Children's Songbook*, 78.
19. Matthew 5:11–12.
20. 1 Peter 3:15.
21. "As [the Book of Mormon prophetic scribes] wrote their testimonies of the promised Messiah, they mentioned some form of his name on an average of every 1.7 verses. [They] referred to Jesus Christ by, literally, 101 different names. . . . When we realize that a verse usually consists of one sentence, it appears that we cannot, on the average, read two sentences in the Book of Mormon without seeing some form of Christ's name" (Susan Easton Black, *Finding Christ through the Book of Mormon* [1987], 5, 15).  
"While the words *atone* or *atonement*, in any of their forms, appear only once in the King James translation of the New Testament, they appear 35 times in the Book of Mormon. As another testament of Jesus Christ, it sheds precious light on His Atonement" (Russell M. Nelson, "The Atonement," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 35).
22. Those leaving Christianity in the United States are younger. "More than eight-in-ten members of the Silent Generation (those born between 1928 and 1945) describe themselves as Christians (84%), as do three-quarters of Baby Boomers (76%). In stark contrast, only half of Millennials (49%) describe themselves as Christians; four-in-ten are religious 'nones,' and one-in-ten Millennials identify with non-Christian faiths" ("In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues," [pewforum.org](https://www.pewforum.org)).
23. John 12:46.
24. See Daniel 6:22.
25. See Acts 5:19.
26. See Luke 2:2–14.
27. See Luke 22:42–43.
28. See Acts 1:9–11.
29. See Doctrine and Covenants 13; 27:12–13; 110:11–16; Joseph Smith—History 1:27–54.
30. See 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17; Doctrine and Covenants 88:96–98.
31. Matthew 10:32.