In the Sacred Grove, Joseph Smith learned about repentance. See what you can learn from his experience.
The First Vision teaches us a lot about Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and Their plan for us. But did you know that the First Vision also teaches us about forgiveness of sins? One of the first things that the Savior told Joseph when he appeared to him was “Joseph, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee.” For many days after, Joseph experienced great joy and love. Here are three things we learn from Joseph’s experience with the Savior.

1. The First Vision Teaches Us That the Savior Has Power to Forgive Us

Joseph’s experience teaches us that the Savior has the power to forgive sins. Christ is eager to forgive us when we humbly seek Him as Joseph did. He wants us to be able to repent and return to live with Him. In fact, that is the whole purpose of Heavenly Father’s plan. As He taught, “Behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

2. The First Vision Shows Us the Blessings of Repentance

Imagine how Joseph must have felt to have the Savior Himself appear and forgive his sins! Joseph wrote that his “soul was filled with love” and that “for many days [he] could rejoice with great joy.” Although the Savior Himself may not appear to us as He did to Joseph, we too can experience the love and joy of repentance that come through the Holy Ghost.

Repent and Be Blessed

“All hearts must repent and be pure, and God will regard them and bless them in a manner that they could not be blessed in any other way.”

Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 73.
3 The First Vision Sets the Stage for Future Blessings Related to the Atonement of Jesus Christ

When He appeared to Joseph Smith, Jesus Christ testified that He had been “crucified for the world.” He forgave Joseph’s sins, which set the stage for the full Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, including the priesthood and saving ordinances that help us to repent and be forgiven. We can experience these blessings when we are baptized, when we worthily partake of the sacrament each week, when we attend the temple, and as we keep our covenants.

What Does This Mean for You?
Just as the Savior knew and loved Joseph, He knows and loves you. The Savior wants to forgive, no matter what our sins may be. Joseph was a good, honest man wanting to come closer to Christ. “No one need suppose me guilty of any great or malignant sins,” he wrote (Joseph Smith—History 1:28). In comparison, the sons of Mosiah in the Book of Mormon were described as “the very vilest of sinners” (Mosiah 28:4). Yet both were able to experience the blessings of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and were forgiven of their sins.

No matter where you are, you are never too far gone. As you exercise faith unto repentance, you too can experience the great love and joy that Joseph felt when he came to know his Savior and the blessings of His Atonement.

NOTES

YOU ARE NEVER TOO FAR GONE

“However late you think you are, however many chances you think you have missed, however many mistakes you feel you have made or talents you think you don’t have, or however far from home and family and God you feel you have traveled, I testify that you have not traveled beyond the reach of divine love. It is not possible for you to sink lower than the infinite light of Christ’s Atonement shines.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2012 general conference (Ensign or Liahona, May 2012, 33).