

# “BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM”

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The Savior’s Sermon on the Mount is a divine call to a higher righteousness. It is an invitation to an enlightened obedience, an elevated discipleship that incorporates the spirit of the law—that Spirit which breathes life and light and liberty into every facet of our being (see D&C 88:13; 2 Corinthians 3:6, 17). It is a message that has inspired and lifted millions of people throughout the globe and through the centuries, but it has special relevance to those who have come out of the world by covenant into the marvelous light of Christ (see 3 Nephi 12:1–2).

## DOING THE WILL OF GOD

In Matthew’s account, the Lord warned his listeners about false prophets and reassured them that true prophets could be known by their fruits—by the goodness of their lives and their works and the sweetness of their doctrine. Then he issued a sober warning: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew

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7:21). Christianity is about more than quaint conversation. Talk is cheap. Discipleship entails much more than saying the good word, even saying the good word to the Master.

Luke's version of the Savior's words are similarly chilling:

And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like:

He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock; and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great. (Luke 6:46–49)

“When the kingdom of heaven comes in all its fulness,” Leon Morris observed, “it will not be people’s profession that counts, but their profession as shown in the way they live. . . . Jesus is not saying that it is a bad thing to say to him ‘Lord, Lord,’ but that it is insufficient. He has just made emphatically the point that a person’s deeds show what the person is [that prophets are known by their fruits], and he is now saying that words are not the significant thing. It is easy for anyone to profess loyalty, but to practice it is quite another thing.”<sup>1</sup> In fact, “the call to righteousness encompasses personal virtue, private devotion, and unselfish social behaviour; and to these things seemingly supernatural powers are incidental.”<sup>2</sup>

On this latter point, Craig L. Blomberg has written: “It also is interesting that prophecy, exorcisms, and miracle workings all characterize ‘charismatic’ activity, which has a tendency, by no means universal, to substitute enthusiasm and the spectacular for more unglamorous obedience. . . . But these external demonstrations prove nothing. The question is whether one’s heart has been cleansed inwardly.”<sup>3</sup> President Joseph F. Smith thus warned: “Show me Latter-day Saints who have to feed upon miracles, signs and visions in order to keep them steadfast in the Church,

and I will show you members of the Church who are not in good standing before God, and who are walking in slippery paths. It is not by marvelous manifestations unto us that we shall be established in the truth, but it is by humility and faithful obedience to the commandments and laws of God."<sup>4</sup>

Paul instructed the Galatian Saints, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25). In today's parlance, the Apostle is essentially saying, "If we talk the talk we really ought to walk the walk." To the Romans he explained that "not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Romans 2:13). James likewise counseled the household of faith to "be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). John the Beloved wrote near the end of the meridian dispensation, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18).

One of the imposing challenges we face in this enlightened age is to get the gospel from our minds to our hearts, to seek for and allow the power of the blood of Christ to transform us into men and women who *do* what we say and *are* what we say. People who speak or teach publicly of noble values and eternal verities; who can discourse to congregations upon godly attributes for hours; and who can, without even straining, cite scriptural verses or quote passages or set forth steps and formulae for celestial success but who at the same time are malicious and mischievous with another's reputation, who exercise their office in littleness and mean-spiritedness, who sow discord among their fellows (see Proverbs 6:19), and who have chosen in their heart of hearts to be unrighteous in the dark—these are double-minded and unstable in all their ways (see James 1:8). The gospel of Jesus Christ has yet to begin the arduous journey from their heads to their hearts. Now, to be sure, each of us lives well beneath our spiritual privileges; every one of us finds that there is some gap between our ideals and our actions. We are not speaking, however, of falling short despite our best efforts; rather, we are addressing the far more serious concern of hypocrisy, of being purveyors but not practitioners of the word.

Many spend their lives seeking to "prove" that the Resurrection of Jesus took place or to prove that the Book of Mormon story took place in

this or that corner of the world in an effort to confirm one's hope through rational explanations. In the words of Alister McGrath, "While we can never hope to prove conclusively that the gospel is true, we can nevertheless trust totally in the reliability of God. So many people long for certainty and find themselves totally perplexed when they cannot prove the truth of the gospel to their friends, or even to themselves. Yet the gospel is not primarily about a set of ideas whose truth can be proved before the court of reason. *The gospel is relational. It concerns a personal transforming encounter with the living God.*"<sup>5</sup>

We are, in fact, able to move beyond an intellectual conviction through adopting a believing attitude that impels one to action. "If any man will *do* [the Father's] will," Jesus said, "he shall *know* of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17; emphasis added). In the same vein, Moroni pointed out that we receive no witness until after the trial of our faith (see Ether 12:6), meaning, in this case, the obedient test of our beliefs. Paying a full tithing leads one to know that the promise of Malachi 3:10 is sure, not just because unexpected checks come in the mail or financial security is immediately forthcoming, but also, and perhaps more important, because one has trustingly been willing to "walk to the edge of the light, and perhaps a few steps into the darkness," discovering then that "the light will appear and move ahead of you."<sup>6</sup> Home and visiting teachers gradually come to sense the profound value of Christlike service through loving and caring for those assigned to them. Men and women, boys and girls come to know in an especially meaningful way that regularly searching the scriptures, as directed by Church leaders, brings peace and perspective and promptings and personal power. We do, and we come to know.

#### COSTLY GRACE

Faith is the total trust, complete confidence in, and ready reliance upon the perfect merits, tender mercy, and endless grace of Jesus Christ for salvation. It is a gift of the Spirit (see I Corinthians 12:9; Moroni 10:11), a divine endowment that affirms to the human heart the identity and redemptive mission of the Savior. It is only through exercising faith in the name of Jesus Christ—meaning his power or authority, his atoning mission and work—that salvation comes to the children of men (see

Acts 4:12; Mosiah 3:17). The Atonement of Christ "bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance" (Alma 34:15). Elder Orson Pratt wrote:

The grace and faith by which man is saved, are the gifts of God, having been purchased by him not by his own works, but by the blood of Christ. Had not these gifts been purchased for man, all exertions on his part would have been entirely unavailing and fruitless. Whatever course man might have pursued, he could not have atoned for one sin; it required the sacrifice of a sinless and pure Being in order to purchase the gifts of faith, repentance, and salvation for fallen man. Grace, Faith, Repentance, and Salvation, when considered in their origin, are not of man, neither by his works; man did not devise, originate, nor adopt them; superior Beings in Celestial abodes, provided these gifts, and revealed the conditions to man by which he might become a partaker of them. Therefore all boasting on the part of man is excluded. He is saved by a plan which his works did not originate—a plan of heaven, and not of earth.<sup>7</sup>

In his enlightening and inimitable style, C. S. Lewis stated:

At first it is natural for a baby to take its mother's milk without knowing its mother. It is equally natural for us to see the man who helps us without seeing Christ behind him. But we must not remain babies. We must go on to recognise the real Giver. It is madness not to. Because, if we do not, we shall be relying on human beings. And that is going to let us down. The best of them will make mistakes; all of them will die. We must be thankful to all the people who have helped us, we must honour them and love them. But never, never pin your whole faith on any human being; not if he is the best and wisest in the whole world. There are lots of nice things you can do with sand; but do not try building a house on it.<sup>8</sup>

We as mortals simply do not have the power to fix everything that is broken. Complete restitution, as we know it, may not be possible. President Boyd K. Packer explained:

Sometimes you *cannot* give back what you have taken because you don't have it to give. If you have caused others to suffer unbearably—defiled someone's virtue, for example—it is not within your power to give it back. . . .

If you cannot undo what you have done, you are trapped. It is easy to understand how helpless and hopeless you then feel and why you might want to give up. . . . Restoring what you cannot restore, healing the wound you cannot heal, fixing that which you broke and you cannot fix is the very purpose of the atonement of Christ.

When your desire is firm and you are willing to pay “the uttermost farthing,” the law of restitution is suspended. Your obligation is transferred to the Lord. He will settle your accounts.<sup>9</sup>

This strength, this enlivening influence, this spiritual change about which we have been speaking does not come to us just because we work harder or longer hours. It comes as a result of working smarter, working in conjunction with the Lord God Omnipotent. President Brigham Young testified, “My faith is, when we have done all we can, then the Lord is under obligation, and will not disappoint the faithful; He will perform the rest.”<sup>10</sup>

#### GRACIOUS WORKS

Latter-day Saints have often been critical of those who stress salvation by grace alone, while we have often been criticized for a type of works-righteousness. The gospel is in fact a gospel covenant—a two-way promise. The Lord agrees to do for us what we could never do for ourselves—to forgive our sins, to lift our burdens, to renew our souls and re-create our nature, to raise us from the dead, and qualify us for glory hereafter. At the same time, we promise to do what we *can* do: come unto Christ by covenant, commit our lives to him as Lord and Master, receive the appropriate ordinances (sacraments), love and serve one another, and do all in our power to put off the natural man and deny ourselves of ungodliness. We know, without question, that the power to save us, to change us, to renew our souls, is in Christ. True faith, however, always manifests itself in *faithfulness*. “When faith springs up in the heart,” Brigham Young

taught, "good works will follow, and good works will increase that pure faith within them."<sup>11</sup>

A. W. Tozer stated: "Within the household of God among the redeemed and justified there is law as well as grace; not the law of Moses . . . but the kindly law of the Father's heart that requires and expects of His children lives lived in conformity to the commandments of Christ. If these words should startle anyone, so let it be and more also, for our Lord has told us plainly and has risen up early and sent His apostles to tell us that we must all give account of the deeds done in the body." Tozer added that at the time of judgment "the question will not be the law of Moses, but how we lived within the Father's household; our record will be examined for evidence of faithfulness, self-discipline, generosity beyond the demands of the law, courage before our detractors, humility, separation from the world, cross carrying and a thousand little deeds of love that could never occur to the mere legalist or to the unregenerate soul."<sup>12</sup>

Latter-day Saints believe, with their Christian brothers and sisters, that salvation is a gift (D&C 6:13; 14:7), but we also emphasize that a gift must be received (D&C 88:33). One's receipt of the ordinances of salvation and one's efforts to keep the commandments are extensions and manifestations of true faith. So on the one hand, Latter-day Saint scripture and prophetic teachings establish the essential truth that salvation is free (see 2 Nephi 2:4; 26:25, 27–28) and that it comes by grace, through God's unmerited favor. On the other hand, ancient and modern prophets set forth the equally vital point that works are a necessary though insufficient condition for salvation. We will be judged according to our works, *not according to the merits of our works* but to the extent that our works manifest to God who and what we have *become* through the transcendent powers of Christ. We are saved by grace alone, but grace is never alone.

Note the following statements from early Christian fathers (references are to volumes of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*):

"The way of light, then, is as follows. If anyone desires to travel to the appointed place, he must be zealous in his works" (Barnabas, 1:148).

"We are justified by our works and not our words" (Clement of Rome, 1:13).

“The tree is made manifest by its fruit. So those who profess themselves to be Christians will be recognized by their conduct” (Ignatius, 1:55).

“This, then, is our reward if we will confess Him by whom we have been saved. But in what way will we confess Him? We confess Him by doing what He says, not transgressing His commandments. . . . For that reason, brethren, let us confess Him by our works, by loving one another” (Second Clement, 7:518).

“If men by their works show themselves worthy of His design, they are deemed worthy of reigning in company with Him, being delivered from corruption and suffering. This is what we have received” (Justin Martyr, 1:165).

“Let those who are not found living as He taught, be understood not to be Christians, even though they profess with the lips the teachings of Christ. For it is not those who make profession, but those who do the works, who will be saved” (Justin Martyr, 1:168).

“The matters of our religion lie in works, not in words” (Justin Martyr, 1:288).

“Whoever . . . distinguishes himself in good works will gain the prize of everlasting life. . . . Others, attaching slight importance to the works that tend to salvation, do not make the necessary preparation for attaining to the objects of their hope” (Clement of Alexandria, 2:591).

In reality, and as we have emphasized already, the work of salvation of the human soul is a product of divine grace, coupled with true faith and its attendant actions. There exists what might be called a synergistic relationship. C. S. Lewis explained: “Christians have often disputed as to whether what leads the Christian home is good actions, or Faith in Christ. . . . You see, we are now trying to understand, and to separate into watertight compartments, what exactly God does and what man does when God and man are working together.”<sup>13</sup> Thus the grace of God, provided through the intercession of the Savior, is free yet expensive; it is costly grace, Dietrich Bonhoeffer has written, “costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. . . . Above all, it is *costly* because it cost God the life of his Son, . . . and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is *grace* be-



cause God did not reckon his Son too dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered him up for us."<sup>14</sup>

#### WHAT MATTERS MOST

After stating that only those who do the will of the Father will enter the kingdom of God, we learn something of the context from the Joseph Smith Translation: "For the day soon cometh, that men shall come before me to judgment, to be judged according to their works" (Joseph Smith Translation [JST], Matthew 7:31; note to v. 21). Continuing from the King James Version: "Many will say to me in that day [the Day of Judgment], Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:22–23). It is almost as though our Lord is addressing two sides of the same coin. On one side, only those who do the works of the Father have any hope of salvation in his kingdom. On the other side, clearly the performance of works alone will not open the gates of heaven. Why? Because even though certain persons—*many* persons, in the language of Christ—prophesy, exorcise demons, and otherwise perform "many wonderful works"—the Lord and Redeemer, then serving in his capacity as the keeper of the gate (see 2 Nephi 9:41), the one to whom all judgment has been committed (see John 3:35; 5:22)—*does not know them*.

Is this a matter of visual or cognitive recognition? Hardly. Has Jesus simply forgotten their identity? Surely not. He remembers only too well. In fact, what he remembers is what many will wish he would forget. "Jesus will therefore say to those who claim Him but never trusted in Him, I never knew you. 'I have never known you as My disciples, and you have never known Me as your Lord and Savior. We have no intimate part of each other. You chose your kingdom, and it was not My kingdom.'"<sup>15</sup> Noteworthy is the fact that the JST alters the King James Version to reflect: "And then will I say, *Ye* never knew *me*; depart from me ye that work iniquity" (JST, Matthew 7:33).<sup>16</sup>

Later the Gospel of Matthew contains what we have come to know as the three parables of preparation (Matthew 25), with the Savior speaking of a day "before the Son of Man comes" (JST, Matthew 25:1, note to v. 1). Here the Master delivers first of all the parable of the ten virgins (vv.

1–13). When the unwise virgins eventually make their way to the marriage chamber, the doors have been shut. “Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not” (vv. 11–12). And once again the JST alters the passage to read, “Verily I say unto you, *You know me* not” (v. 11; emphasis added).<sup>17</sup> If we do not confess him before others, then he will not confess us to the Father in a coming day (see Matthew 10:32; Luke 12:8).

A little more than a century before the coming of Jesus Christ to earth, the great Nephite prophet Alma found himself, as the newly called high priest over the Church, deeply troubled and distressed as he encountered spreading transgression within the Church, “for he feared that he should do wrong in the sight of God. And it came to pass after he had poured out his whole soul to God, the voice of the Lord came to him”—marvelous counsel that we still draw upon within the restored Church.

This is my church; whosoever is baptized shall be baptized unto repentance. And whomsoever ye receive shall believe in my name; and him will I freely forgive.

For it is I that taketh upon me the sins of the world; for it is I that hath created them; and it is I that granteth unto him that believeth unto the end a place at my right hand.

For behold, in my name are they called; and *if they know me they shall come forth*, and shall have a place eternally at my right hand.

And it shall come to pass that when the second trump shall sound *then shall they that never knew me come forth* and shall stand before me.

And then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, that I am their Redeemer; but they would not be redeemed.

And *then I will confess unto them that I never knew them*; and they shall depart unto everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. (Mosiah 26:13–14, 22–27, emphasis added)

“I never knew you, and you never knew me!” Elder Bruce R. McConkie paraphrased. “Your discipleship was limited. . . . Your heart was not so centered in me as to cause you to endure to the end; and so for a time and a season you were faithful; you even worked miracles in my name; but in the end it shall be as though I never knew you.”<sup>18</sup>

Why would Jesus refer to those who had paraded their many impressive works as “workers of iniquity”? To the extent that such deeds of wonder were accomplished for the wrong reasons—to create a following or to acquire personal gain or fame—then surely they are evil, no matter how pleasing they may appear to the eye or the ear. The New King James Version has it: “Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness” (compare also the English Standard Version). Other modern translations render this passage as “Away from me, you evildoers” (New International Version, Today’s New International Version, New Revised Standard Version, The New American Bible, The New Jerusalem Bible) or “Out of my sight; your deeds are evil!” (Revised English Bible). Isaiah wrote, “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). Truly, a church that carries the name of Christ and is built upon the gospel of Jesus Christ will show forth the Father’s works in it. On the other hand, the works of men or the works of the devil are ephemeral and fleeting. The Risen Lord declared that “they have joy in their works for a season, and by and by the end cometh, and they are hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence there is no return” (3 Nephi 27:11).

Perhaps my favorite rendition of this Matthean passage is that provided in Eugene H. Peterson’s helpful paraphrase, *The Message*: “Knowing the correct password—saying ‘Master, Master,’ for instance— isn’t going to get you anywhere with me. What is required is serious obedience—*doing* what my Father wills. I can see it now—at the Final Judgment thousands strutting up to me and saying ‘Master, we preached the Message, we bashed the demons, our God-sponsored projects had everyone talking.’ And do you know what I am going to say? ‘You missed the boat. All you did was use me to make yourselves important. You don’t impress me one bit. You’re out of here.’”<sup>19</sup>

#### ON BECOMING

We are not called upon to perform the works of righteousness in order to pay back what we owe to Jesus Christ. We do not receive the ordinances of salvation, attend to our responsibilities within the Church, or serve one another through charitable actions in order to supplement the finished work of Christ. In reality, a Christ supplemented is a Christ

supplanted. Salvation or eternal life is free; it is the greatest of all the gifts of God (see 2 Nephi 2:4; D&C 6:13; 14:7). But “what doth it profit a man if a gift is bestowed upon him, and he receive not the gift? Behold, he rejoices not in that which is given unto him, neither rejoices in him who is the giver of the gift” (D&C 88:33).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks explained:

The Final Judgment is not just an evaluation of a sum total of good and evil acts—what we have *done*. It is an acknowledgment of the final effect of our acts and thoughts—what we have *become*. It is not enough for anyone just to go through the motions. The commandments, ordinances, and covenants of the gospel are not a list of deposits required to be made in some heavenly account. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a plan that shows us how to become what our Heavenly Father desires us to become. . . .

We are challenged to move through a process of conversion toward that status and condition called eternal life. This is achieved not just by doing what is right, but by doing it for the right reason—for the pure love of Christ. . . . The reason charity never fails and the reason charity is greater than even the most significant acts of goodness . . . is that charity, “the pure love of Christ” (Moroni 7:47), is not an *act* but a *condition* or state of being. Charity is attained through a succession of acts that result in a conversion. Charity is something one becomes.<sup>20</sup>

In other words, part of that conversion of which Elder Oaks spoke is a change in attitude, a change in motive, a change in desire—all undergirded by a change in heart. Each of us performs good works for a variety of reasons; our place on the continuum of motivation for service may be anywhere from earthly reward to good companionship to fear of punishment to loyalty and duty to a hope of eternal reward to charity.<sup>21</sup> As we seek for and cultivate the Spirit of God in our lives, that sacred influence gradually educates our desires, strengthens our consciences, buttresses our judgment, enhances our wisdom, refines our character, strengthens our hope in Christ, and transforms why we do what we do. Through this divine metamorphosis, we gain the mind of Christ (see I Corinthians 2:16).

We begin to attend church because we yearn to partake of the holy sacrament and commune with Deity. We search the scriptures, not only because the prophets have counseled us to do so but because we experience something akin to worship during our private devotions. We avoid worldly and degrading movies, TV programs, music, and computer use, not just because we might get into trouble, but, more important, because God is a Man of Holiness (see Moses 6:57), and we desire to be holy (see Leviticus 11:44; 1 Peter 1:16). In short, the truly converted soul loves our Heavenly Father, loves Jesus the Christ, and keeps the commandments as an expression of that love and of an undying gratitude for the great plan of happiness. "For this is the love of God," John writes, "that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3), meaning they are neither oppressive nor burdensome. "Christ longs to nourish our minds with his truth," Alister McGrath has written, "to raise our imaginations to new heights through his beauty; to open our hearts to his love; to surrender our wills to his purpose; and to allow his holiness to challenge the way we behave. In every way, Christ lays the most fundamental challenge to the root of our lives: in all things, he asks us to submit our entire being to his wise and loving rule. To know Christ is to begin this process of change and renewal."<sup>22</sup>

## CONCLUSION

At the beginning of his great high priestly prayer, his intercession for all of his disciples then and now, a prayer that brought the Last Supper to a close, Jesus spoke, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). Life eternal comes to those who know their God, not just those who know *about* their God. Everlasting life comes to those who come to know him because they have served him faithfully (see Mosiah 5:15). Salvation comes to those who have yielded their hearts unto the Almighty and through that means been sanctified (see Helaman 3:35). Knowing God towers above all earthly attainments. Knowing Christ brings sublime joy and a settled fearlessness that empowers us to engage and endure any trial or trauma or tragedy. Indeed, as the Apostle Paul declared, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Philippians 3:8). The knowledge of our God—experiential

knowledge, covenant knowledge, relational knowledge—transcends all other discovery, all other intellectual acquisition. It is the knowledge that saves.

To know Christ is to have total trust in him, to have a complete confidence in him, to exercise a ready reliance upon him. Knowing Christ enables us to face life's vicissitudes optimistically, knowing also that our divine Redeemer has "prepared a house for man, yea, even among the mansions of [our] Father, in which man might have a more excellent hope" (Ether 12:32). We are strangers here, and with the infusion of Christian character comes a divine homesickness that whispers that we will never be at rest until we rest with our Lord. "To know Christ is to have the assurance that another country beckons us, as the Promised Land beckoned to Israel in the wilderness. Christ is the ground and guarantor that joy and glory lie on the far side of suffering. To know him is to anticipate passing through the valley of the shadow of death into the light of his presence."<sup>23</sup>

President Thomas S. Monson has encouraged us:

Let us, in the performance of our duty, follow in the footsteps of the Master. As you and I walk the pathway Jesus walked, let us listen for the sound of sandaled feet. Let us reach out for the Carpenter's hand. Then we shall come to know Him. . . . He commands, and to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings that they shall pass through in His fellowship; and they shall learn by their own experience who He is.

We will discover He is more than the Babe in Bethlehem, more than the carpenter's son, more than the greatest teacher ever to live. We will come to know him as the Son of God, our Savior and our Redeemer.<sup>24</sup>

Those who learn to strike a delicate balance between a lifelong trust and confidence in Jesus Christ and a sustained effort to keep the commandments and walk in the light will come to know their Lord and become partakers of the heavenly gift. The call in the Sermon on the Mount is, in fact, a call to a higher righteousness, an invitation to defy shallow categories and transcend false dichotomies: it is a call for

boldness coupled with tenderness, for obedience coupled with reliance, for dynamic individualism coupled with unconditional surrender, for leadership coupled with genuine humility. In short, we come to know the Master as our lives more closely parallel his life, as we gain “the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16).

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## NOTES

1. Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 178–79.
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3. Craig L. Blomberg, *The New American Commentary on Matthew* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 133.
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5. Alister McGrath, *Knowing Christ* (New York: Doubleday Galilee, 2002), 234; emphasis added.
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9. Boyd K. Packer, in Conference Report, October 1995, 22–23.
10. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards & Sons, 1851–86), 4:91.
11. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:155.
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13. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 131–32.
14. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan, 1960), 47–48; emphasis in original.
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16. Thomas A. Wayment, ed., *The Complete Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible: A Side-by-Side Comparison with the King James Version* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 23.
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19. Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs: Nav Press, 2002), 1757.
20. Dallin H. Oaks, in Conference Report, October 2000, 41, 43, emphasis in original; see also David A. Bednar, in Conference Report, October 2005, 47–50, for an application of this principle of “becoming” to missionary work.

21. See Dallin H. Oaks, *Pure in Heart* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), 37–49.
22. McGrath, *Knowing Christ*, 17–18.
23. McGrath, *Knowing Christ*, 94.
24. Thomas S. Monson, in Conference Report, April 1986, 50.