

# Walking in the Light of His Love

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Not long ago, on the campus of Brigham Young University, I was teaching a New Testament class focused on the life of Jesus Christ. At the conclusion of a discussion focused on the hypocrisy<sup>1</sup> of those who questioned the Savior's authority and the signs<sup>2</sup> given of His Second Coming, I had a student approach me to ask a question. His motive seemed pure as he reflected: "The scriptures state that in the last days, if it were possible, even the very elect will be deceived.<sup>3</sup> Sister Platt, how will I know Him? I don't want to be deceived."

My first thought was to turn to the scriptures and reexplore what we had just studied in class pertaining to the signs of Christ's Second Coming. But the Spirit prompted otherwise. Instead, I asked a question much like one the Lord has asked on various occasions: "Do you know Him now? Is He familiar to you?" Or, in the words of Jesus, "What think ye of Christ?"<sup>4</sup>

His eyes filled with tears. "No. I don't think I know Him as I should. Please teach me how I can come to recognize Him."

His honest inquiry is reflective of every disciple's desire. How can a sincere seeker of truth come to know and recognize Jesus Christ so he or she is not deceived?

Certainly we live in the last days, and many are deceived, "for Satan is abroad in the land, and he

goeth forth deceiving the nations."<sup>5</sup> Yet the role of the adversary is essential to agency. He is total darkness in contrast to the light of Christ's love. We can choose to walk in Christ's light. The Lord has established a pattern that, when applied, helps us to avoid deception. The promise is that he or she who

*prayeth, whose spirit is contrite, the same is accepted of me if he obey mine ordinances.*

*He that speaketh, whose spirit is contrite, whose language is meek and edifieth, the same is of God if he obey mine ordinances.*

*And again, he that trembleth under my power shall be made strong, and shall bring forth fruits of praise and wisdom, according to the revelations and truths which I have given.<sup>6</sup>*

Simply stated, those who emulate the Savior by walking in the light of his love, observe God's covenants with real intent, and follow the Holy Ghost with humility will be protected from deception. The Savior establishes a pattern of obedience for us to follow.

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*Jennifer Brinkerhoff Platt, a visiting assistant professor of ancient scripture, delivered this address at the BYU Religious Studies Center Easter Conference on 27 March 2015.*

### **Emulating the Savior**

Author Edward LeRoy Hart's text for the hymn "Our Savior's Love" illuminates a process for discerning truth from God. Hart reminisced that the inspiration for writing the words to the hymn grew out of a simile reflecting a simple, everyday observation: he had watched shoppers assess the true color of a piece of fabric by holding it up to the sunlight, as the natural light gives the most accurate representation of the color.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, the most accurate assessment of whether something is true or not is in the light of our Savior's love. When we hold our character to the light of the Son, He will show us the truth of who we are and correct our course so we can make adjustments to more accurately reflect His light. Our challenge is to prioritize our time to perform works in the natural light of the Lord rather than in the artificial light of the adversary. As we seek daily to walk in the light of His love, we come to recognize Him, know Him, and pattern our lives after His works while becoming worthy receptacles of His light.

General conference is a context for self-reflection, assessment, and increasing in light and knowledge. The words of living prophets and apostles draw clear and accurate light into our lives. When we study and review their teachings on a regular basis, we see specific ways to refine our discipleship. Choosing to act promptly on invitations given from the conference speakers will increase our awareness of the Spirit in our lives while also refining and developing our character. An example of an invitation to act is found in the April 2014 general conference. Elder M. Russell Ballard invited the Church to study the missionary guide *Preach My Gospel*:

*I invite all members, regardless of your current calling or level of activity in the Church, to obtain a copy of Preach My Gospel. It is available through our distribution centers and also online. The online version can be read or downloaded at no cost. It is a guidebook for missionary work—which means it is a guidebook for all of us. Read it, study it, and then apply what you learn to help you understand how to bring souls to Christ through invitation and follow-up.*<sup>8</sup>

This tangible and measurable act has the potential to profoundly influence the lives of those who choose to obey. Not long after this invitation was extended, I chose to initiate a study of *Preach My Gospel*. This was something I had felt drawn to for years, yet it wasn't until Elder Ballard's invitation that I finally began to study the manual. I found myself particularly drawn to chapter 6—"How Do I Develop Christlike Attributes?"—and the attribute activity found within that chapter.<sup>9</sup> This personal assessment invites us to reflect upon our fallen nature and how we can conquer the natural man through the Atonement of Christ by focusing on and seeking to acquire His attributes. Through my study of attributes such as faith, charity, humility, and hope, I recognized the intentionality of the Savior in His teachings. While being deliberate and purposeful is not one of the listed attributes in the manual, I believe that the attribute of being intentional shapes all other Christlike attributes.

Exploring the various teaching methods<sup>10</sup> of the Messiah helps to illuminate His intentional and deliberate approach to life. As the Master Teacher, our Lord utilized techniques to best meet the needs of whomever He was interacting with. There were times when He used His surroundings to help others to understand what He was intending for them to learn. Ordinary circumstances became magnificent with the touch of the Master's hand. Questions invited learners to self-reflect and search for understanding. Miraculous healings evidenced His power to heal not only the physical but the spiritual ailments of broken souls. Objects such as nets, coins, wheat, and various other things anchored gospel truths in the visual memory.

Likewise, the context of learning was as important as the content of His teachings. The Sermon on the Mount is more fully understood when we imagine gathering on the Galilean hillside that became the schoolroom for the autobiographical sketch written in His deeds.<sup>11</sup> Consider the profound meaning Jesus brought to the annual ritual of the Feast of Tabernacles. This joyous celebration "included the lighting of four great menorahs in the Temple courtyard to signify the covenant

people's roles as the light unto the nations."<sup>12</sup> It was amid the brilliance of the four seventy-five-foot-high lighted menorahs that Christ declared, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."<sup>13</sup> This ritual now acclaimed meaning beyond an annual celebration to ignite the house of Israel to truly illuminate the world. Indeed, one of the Lord's previous teachings becomes a call to come and fan the flame of our faith in the light of His love:

*Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*

*Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*

*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*<sup>14</sup>

Jesus taught in parables to veil meaning and to give understanding to those with faith and intelligence sufficient to understand.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, our lives are living parables filled with experiences that can be viewed as either mere stories or customized tutoring, fitted for our own learning and understanding. Christ's teachings, like every moment of His life, are purposeful and focused on His mission of fulfilling the will of the Father by drawing men and women unto Him so they might return to the Father.<sup>16</sup> Studying *Preach My Gospel*, particularly Christ's attributes, increases our desire to bring meaning to everything we do. When we seek to be like Him, we will perform even menial tasks with greater intention.

### **Keeping Covenants with Real Intent**

Bringing meaning to our day-to-day tasks helps us to walk in the light of His love. I believe that many of us do good things every day but perhaps have become complacent and routine in our performance, forgetting to acknowledge or recognize the power of doing small and simple things with great meaning and purpose. For years now I have studied the power of ritual and the

impact intentionality has on the most mundane occurrences. Rather than performing our day-to-day routines with little thought or effort, the most ordinary event can become rich in meaning. This is a practice of emulating Christ's approach to life by bringing purpose into the details of our lives. We can ritualize the ordinary.

Rather than associate the word *ritual* with pagan ceremonies or animal sacrifices, consider a ritual as performing an act with sacredness by seeking for symbolic meaning. Rituals are a fundamental aspect of the ordinances and covenants associated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Alonzo Gaskill, a researcher of rites and rituals, has noted:

*Mormons are traditionally not an extremely ritualistic people—at least not in their Sunday worship, nor in their day-to-day lives. Consequently, some find very little meaning in liturgy or ritual. Indeed, some Saints struggle to "see symbolically," per se. One LDS scholar suggested that we Latter-day Saints "have become an asymbolic society, and, as a result, we do not understand the power of our own rites of passage." This same source added that most of us make little effort "to understand the meanings of our own rituals or what ritual behavior implies." Consequently, we fail "to comprehend or internalize the messages contained in ritual symbols."*<sup>17</sup>

Seeking for meaning in rituals helps us to internalize the intent of Christ's message. Rituals lead us to conversion. Converted disciples walk in Christ's light and are not deceived.

Understanding how to approach a ritual helps us to make the ordinary into meaningful, symbolic experiences. According to Barbara Fiese,<sup>18</sup> a ritual is a symbolic event that has three fundamental parts: preparation for the event, participation in the event, and reminiscence of the event. These three elements of a ritual can (and often do) overlap, with participation being the predominant element. For instance, an individual may remember and reflect on past participation in a ritual while preparing for a future event. Within the context of a ritual, a group or community defines themselves

and demonstrates their values and beliefs through the use of artifacts, symbols, and communication.<sup>19</sup>

Any ordinary occurrence can become sacred when the act is planned for, participated in with purpose, and then reminisced. This can be applied to making your bed, driving the carpool, studying for an exam, eating a meal with a loved one, studying the scriptures, praying—everything we do. We can emulate the life of the Master by doing ordinary things with great intent.

While all of Christ's deeds were purposeful, none were more meaningful than those done in the final hours of His life. In His last twenty-four hours of mortality, He taught His disciples in a way to protect them and enlighten them for the remainder of their lives. In an upper room, He gathered His disciples for the most important Passover meal. This season for the Jews of recognizing the destroying angel passing over the children of Israel was about to take on new meaning as the Paschal Lamb was soon to be sacrificed for the salvation of every sinful soul. This ritual was planned for, participated in with great intention, and remembered by all who participated in it, as well as any who read of the event.

The Lord's charge to "make ready"<sup>20</sup> the Passover meal included the attendance of a temple ceremony that prepared and slew a lamb. This ceremony included chanting passages from Psalm 81:

*Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me;*

*There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god.*

*I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.*

*But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would [have] none of me.*

*So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels.*

*Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!<sup>21</sup>*

Also included was the Hallel found in Psalm 113–18, with a response of "Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now

prosperity. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord."<sup>22</sup> Herbs and unleavened bread were acquired to make the meal complete. These preparations were vital for participating in the ritual.

Together the holy men (one being unholy) gathered in this final supper. In this setting, the Lord identified his betrayer, cast him out, and then performed the ordinance. The attendees needed to be worthy of partaking of the supper, particularly because this meal was part of the important work of completing the law of Moses. As Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught:

*It is pleasant to suppose that this is the one Paschal supper over which Jesus presided, and that, therefore, he offered **the last symbolic sacrifice** preparatory to his offering of **the only real sacrifice** which would free men from their sins. If this is the case, the only sacrifices in which he involved himself (and there is a certain reverential fitness about such being the case) would be the symbolical one on Thursday whose emblems betokened the infinite and eternal one on Friday. Thus he would endorse and approve all of the similitudes of the past and announce their fulfillment in him. Thus also would the past, the present, and the future all be tied together in him, with the assurance held out to all the faithful of all ages, that all who look to him and his atoning sacrifice shall be saved.<sup>23</sup>*

The ritual of the Last Supper was a preparatory ritual for the ultimate sacrifice described by Amulek in the Book of Mormon. This great and last sacrifice

*bring[s] salvation to all those who shall believe on his name; this being the intent of this last sacrifice, to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance.<sup>24</sup>*

The sacrament was followed by the ordinance of washing feet and the teachings exclusive to John 13–17. The deliberate Messiah desired that His disciples be armed with righteousness, prepared not only for what the coming hours held for each of them but also for their lifetime

of persecution. They needed His light in order to not be deceived. The fundamental themes of the teachings captured by John pertain to serving and loving one another,<sup>25</sup> showing love for the Lord by keeping the commandments, and preparing for the promised Comforter.<sup>26</sup> Using powerful symbols of a vine and branches, He assured them that their good works would be purged, tested, and pruned in order to bring forth more fruit.<sup>27</sup> Unlike the fig tree<sup>28</sup> that had been cursed days before, the Lord's disciples were invited to bring forth good works, to be fruitful. The great Intercessory Prayer<sup>29</sup> demonstrates the profound unity between the Father and the Son. Here the Lord committed to making an intercession for all; He accounted for His mortal mission and pled for us to become one as He and the Father are one.

The pinnacle of the Lord's mortal mission begins in the weary journey to the Mount of Olives, the place of Atonement. Every intentional deed he had performed in his lifetime prepared Him for this singular experience. Yet His cognitive understanding of what He was to do did not match the experience.<sup>30</sup> Uttering words of submission and total surrender qualified Him as the Savior of the world. With great drops of blood, He bore the torment of pain, suffering, sin, and the calamity of every human soul.<sup>31</sup>

The all-night trials led Him to Golgotha. Here the experience of Gethsemane was repeated as He hung on the cross and completed His work of redemption.<sup>32</sup> God the Father must have sequestered Himself in the farthest corner of the universe during that unimaginably dark and lonely moment of death.

*That the supreme sacrifice of the Son might be consummated in all its fulness, the Father seems to have withdrawn the support of His immediate Presence [while Jesus was on the cross], leaving to the Savior of men the glory of complete victory over the forces of sin and death.<sup>33</sup>*

Christ's willingness to have "trodden the winepress alone"<sup>34</sup> sheds the brightest and purest light

on the human family in that brilliant and glorious moment of redemption.

We commemorate and reignite this redemptive light in our weekly ritual of the Passover. The sacrament is our reminder of His sacrifice as we renew our covenantal commitment to walk with Him. But does routine participation negate our opportunity for communion with the Lord? How can we approach this invitation to the Lord's Supper with greater intention, performing it as a sacred ritual rich in symbolic meaning? First we must come to understand the richness of its meaning. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland has taught:

*Perhaps we do not always attach that kind of meaning to our weekly sacramental service. How "sacred" and how "holy" is it? Do we see it as **our** passover, remembrance of **our** safety and deliverance and redemption?*

*With so very much at stake, this ordinance commemorating our escape from the angel of darkness should be taken more seriously than it sometimes is. It should be a powerful, reverent, reflective moment. It should encourage spiritual feelings and impressions. As such it should not be rushed. It is not something to "get over" so that the real purpose of a sacrament meeting can be pursued. This **is** the real purpose of the meeting. And everything that is said or sung or prayed in those services should be consistent with the grandeur of this sacred ordinance.<sup>35</sup>*

These few minutes each week are among the most significant rituals we participate in as Latter-day Saints. How then do we prepare for it and participate in it with greater intention? While we are not required to slay a lamb or gather herbs and unleavened bread, ours is a careful preparation measured in our deeds and efforts to remember all that we have promised to do. The passage of time between the partaking of the sacrament from Sunday to Sunday is a cycle of preparation and remembrance. This is sacramental living. President Joseph Fielding Smith taught that the sacrament is a renewal of our covenants and thus an incentive for righteousness.<sup>36</sup> We measure our faith by our works. Thus our desires to prepare for the sacrament are performed with great faith,

remembering the works of Jesus Christ and seeking to pattern our lives after His.

*If a man fully realized what it means when he partakes of the sacrament, that he covenants to take upon him the name of Jesus Christ and to always remember him and keep his commandments, and this vow is renewed week by week—do you think such a man will fail to pay his tithing? Do you think such a man will break the Sabbath day or disregard the Word of Wisdom? Do you think he will fail to be prayerful, and that he will not attend his quorum duties and other duties in the Church? It seems to me that such a thing as a violation of these sacred principles and duties is impossible when a man knows what it means to make such vows week by week unto the Lord and before the saints.*

*If we have the right understanding, we will live in full accord with the principles of truth and walk in righteousness before the Lord. How can we receive his Spirit otherwise? I can see the significance in the commandment the Lord has given us to assemble frequently and partake of these emblems in commemoration of his death. It is our duty to assemble and renew our covenants and take upon us fresh obligations to serve the Lord.<sup>37</sup>*

The Holy Ghost guides and directs our preparations as we remember our covenants. It is a beautiful cycle of preparing and remembering, the two working in tandem. We can prepare specifically and deliberately in the hours and moments prior to partaking of the emblems of the sacrament. Elder Russell M. Nelson taught:

*We commemorate His Atonement in a very personal way. We bring a broken heart and a contrite spirit to our sacrament meeting. . . .*

*. . . This is not a time for conversation or transmission of messages but a period of prayerful meditation as . . . members prepare spiritually for the sacrament.<sup>38</sup>*

Disciplining ourselves with quiet self-reflection transforms the power of the ritual. Ours is the offering of a broken heart and contrite spirit, the requirement the Lord requested of the Nephites with the completion of the law of Moses. The way we converse and communicate is a reflection

of the value we place on the covenant we have renewed. We seek to mourn with those that mourn, to comfort, to bless, and to lift. This is demonstrated in the example of Sister Susan Bednar, the wife of Elder David A. Bednar. Elder Bednar noted:

*Before attending her sacrament meetings, Sister Bednar frequently prays for the spiritual eyes to see those who have a need. Often as she observes the brothers and sisters and children in the congregation, she will feel a spiritual nudge to visit with or make a phone call to a particular person. And when Sister Bednar receives such an impression, she promptly responds and obeys. It often is the case that as soon as the “amen” is spoken in the benediction, she will talk with a teenager or hug a sister or, upon returning home, immediately pick up the phone and make a call. As long as I have known Sister Bednar, people have marveled at her capacity to discern and respond to their needs. Often they will ask her, “How did you know?” The spiritual gift of being quick to observe has enabled her to see and to act promptly and has been a great blessing in the lives of many people.<sup>39</sup>*

Our preparation for the sacrament shapes the way we live our covenants. Coming to the feast of the Lord’s Supper each week with a desire to act in faith demonstrates our willingness to always remember Him and thus do as He would do if He were here among us.

### **Following the Spirit with Humility**

Similarly, the way we participate in the actual rite matters very much. While the prayers and administration of the sacrament are prescribed, our receiving of the sacrament is not prescriptive. In those brief moments we are invited to ponder the magnitude of the Atonement while making our own sacrificial offering in the similitude of the Son: the offering of contrite brokenness. This is a moment of absolute focus and fixed determination to “ponder anew what the Almighty can do.”<sup>40</sup>

The actual participation in the ritual is brief. Thus the prospect of reminiscing is expanded by continually preparing for the next opportunity to

worship in the ritual of the sacrament. In the case of this practice, the remembering is bound with a promise. In our willingness to strive to always remember Him and keep His commandments, we are promised to have His Spirit to be with us always.<sup>41</sup> This promise should be taken at face value. We are intended to have the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost, the third member of the Godhead, with us always.

Establishing a priority of seeking the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost should be of utmost importance, as He helps us to order the demands of our daily lives. In that upper room setting, the Savior promised:

*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*<sup>42</sup>

The Holy Ghost's mission is to testify of Jesus Christ and the Atonement. He bears witness of the pure light of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace and our source of absolute truth.

This experience of ritualizing the sacrament has been a blessing in my life. Not long ago I had a profound experience with partaking of the emblems of the sacrament. On this particular Sunday I needed to be in two places at the same time: a ward conference and a Primary children's sacrament meeting presentation. I knew I could figure out how to juggle both events but decided to pray to know where I should be. The answer was simple and came as a thought: the name of a man in our stake who was in a serious battle with cancer came to mind. He lived in the ward that was having their ward conference. I went to his ward.

As I sat in the back of the chapel contemplating the prompt to be there, I found myself filled with emotion. While I did not see this man in the congregation, I felt grateful that I had acted in obedience to the simple prompting. We sang one

of my favorite sacrament hymns, "In Humility, Our Savior." The words penetrated my heart:

*In humility, our Savior,  
Grant thy Spirit here, we pray,  
As we bless the bread and water  
In thy name this holy day.  
Let me not forget, O Savior,  
Thou didst bleed and die for me  
When thy heart was stilled and broken  
On the cross at Calvary.*

*Fill our hearts with sweet forgiving;  
Teach us tolerance and love.  
Let our prayers find access to thee  
In thy holy courts above.  
Then, when we have proven worthy  
Of thy sacrifice divine,  
Lord, let us regain thy presence;  
Let thy glory round us shine.*<sup>43</sup>

My whole soul seemed to be responding to the pleas of this song. I found myself reflecting on the Atonement and my opportunity to change. I desired to understand more of the humility of our Savior. My heart desired an example, a visualization of humble service.

In those first moments of the passing of the sacrament, I heard someone coming into the chapel. At the door was my friend, the man whose name had come to my mind that morning. He required the help of his brother and a walker. This man who was facing death slowly made his way to take his position at the right of the bishop, as he was serving as a counselor in the bishopric. I watched him struggle, unable to move on his own. I marveled as he took the steps to the rostrum. He didn't have to be there, nor did he need to take his place on the stand. The entire congregation seemed to be in awe of his effort to perform his duty of being where he was supposed to be. Tears flowed freely as I watched him, and the Spirit whispered, "Here is an example of humility." This was one of those precious, parabolic moments, filled with customized tutoring in response to heartfelt need.

In that moment I had a clear view of myself in the true light of the Son. I could see more of my potential to be a dutiful disciple. The Spirit testified a simple truth to me: perform your duty in humility. Here was an example of an offering of a broken heart and contrite spirit. I was changed by the example of another.

My friend died a few weeks later. At the viewing prior to the funeral service, his wife told me that he had awoken that morning with a desire to bear his testimony. While the opportunity to stand and testify with words was not granted, he testified to all of us that day in his deeds.

This man exemplified his love for the Lord through his actions, reminding us that the Savior wants us to know Him. Christ invites us to come quickly unto Him. His love casts darkness away. We are protected from deception when we choose to walk in His light as we see ourselves as we really are and as we really can be. This true, honest, penetrating light shows us the truth of all things. Indeed, “our Savior’s love shines like the sun with perfect light.” He lights our way, leading us back into His sight, “to share eternal life.”<sup>44</sup>

#### Notes

1. See, for instance, the chief priests and elders questioning the Lord’s authority in Matthew 21:23, followed by three parables in response. Then Jesus denounces hypocrisy in Matthew 23.

2. Matthew 24 and Joseph Smith—Matthew expound upon the signs given by the Savior in response to his disciples’ inquiry as to what the signs of our Lord’s coming will be.

3. See Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:22.

4. Matthew 22:42.

5. D&C 52:14.

6. D&C 52:15–17.

7. See “Our Savior’s Love,” *History of Hymns*, episode 20, Mormon Channel, 26 October 2009.

8. M. Russell Ballard, “Following Up,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 80.

9. See *PMG*, 115–26.

10. A careful study of the teaching resource *Teaching, No Greater Call: A Resource Guide for Gospel Teaching* (Salt Lake City: The Church of

Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999) provides greater insight into teaching methods of the Lord. Additionally, Robert J. Matthews has a thorough treatment of many of the Savior’s teaching methods in his book *A Bible! A Bible!* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990).

11. President Harold B. Lee said, “Christ came not only into the world to make an atonement for the sins of mankind but to set an example before the world of the standard of perfection of God’s law and of obedience to the Father. In his Sermon on the Mount the Master has given us somewhat of a revelation of his own character, which was perfect, or what might be said to be ‘an autobiography, every syllable of which he had written down in deeds,’ and in so doing has given us a blueprint for our own lives” (*Decisions for Successful Living* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973], 55–56).

12. D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner, *Verse by Verse: The Four Gospels* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006), 766; see also Bible Dictionary, s.v. “feasts,” 673.

13. John 8:12.

14. Matthew 5:14–16.

15. See Bible Dictionary, s.v. “parables,” 740–41.

16. See 3 Nephi 27:14–15.

17. Alonzo L. Gaskill, *Sacred Symbols: Finding Meaning in Rites, Ritual, and Ordinances* (Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, 2011), 2; quoting Suzanne E. Lundquist, “Native American Rites of Passage: Implications for Latter-day Saints,” in John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks, eds., *By Study and Also by Faith*, 2 vols. (Provo: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1990), 1:441–43.

18. Dr. Fiese is a professor of human development and family studies. She focuses on the role of routine and ritual in family life, particularly the family mealtime (see Barbara H. Fiese, *Family Routines and Rituals* [New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2006]).

19. For further discussion on the application and implication of ritual, see Jennifer A. Brinkerhoff, “Being a Good Ethiopian Woman: Participation in the ‘Buna’ (Coffee) Ceremony and Identity” (PhD dissertation, Arizona State



University, 2011); and Jennifer Brinkerhoff Platt, *Living Your Covenants Every Day* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2013).

20. Mark 14:15 and Luke 17:8.

21. Psalm 81:8–13.

22. Psalm 118:25–26.

23. Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah: From Bethlehem to Calvary* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979–81), 4:29; emphasis in original.

24. Amulek taught the apostate Zoramites of the need for an atonement in Alma 34. The passage quoted here is found in verse 15.

25. Discipleship is evidenced by the way we love one another: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34–35).

26. The disciples had associated with the Lord for three years. And for reasons we do not know, “the Holy Ghost did not operate in the fulness among the Jews during the years of Jesus’ mortal sojourn” (Bible Dictionary, s.v. “Holy Ghost,” 704). This promise of continual companionship allowed the disciples to walk by faith with an unseen member of the Godhead at their side. It is as if the Lord is saying that they are not intended to be comfortable but that they will be comforted with the assistance of the Comforter. “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).

27. The Lord assured them, “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:4–5).

28. As a symbol of the fruitlessness of Israel, the Lord curses a fig tree to demonstrate his power while teaching the necessity of doing more than appearing to be committed but rather doing good works (see Matthew 21:17–21).

29. See John 17.

30. Elder Neal A. Maxwell said: “Later, in Gethsemane, the suffering Jesus began to be ‘sore amazed’ (Mark 14:33), or, in the Greek, ‘awestruck’ and ‘astonished.’ Imagine, Jehovah, the Creator of this and other worlds, ‘astonished’! Jesus knew cognitively what He must do, but not experientially. He had never personally known the exquisite and exacting process of an atonement before. Thus, when the agony came in its fulness, it was so much, much worse than even He with his unique intellect had ever imagined! No wonder an angel appeared to strengthen Him! (See Luke 22:43.) The cumulative weight of all mortal sins—past, present, and future—pressed upon that perfect, sinless, and sensitive Soul! All our infirmities and sicknesses were somehow, too, a part of the awful arithmetic of the Atonement. (See Alma 7:11–12; Isaiah 53:3–5; Matthew 8:17.) The anguished Jesus not only pled with the Father that the hour and cup might pass from Him, but with this relevant citation. ‘And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me.’ (Mark 14:35–36.)” (Neal A. Maxwell, “Willing to Submit,” *Ensign*, May 1985, 72–73.)

31. See Alma 7:12.

32. James E. Talmage explained, “It seems, that in addition to the fearful suffering incident to crucifixion, the agony of Gethsemane had recurred, intensified beyond human power to endure” (*Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1916], 661). Additionally, Elder Bruce R. McConkie said, “All of the anguish, all of the sorrow, and all of the suffering of Gethsemane recurred during the final three hours on the cross” (*Mortal Messiah*, 4:232).

33. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 661.

34. Isaiah 63:3.

35. Jeffrey R. Holland, “This Do in Remembrance of Me,” *Ensign*, November 1995, 68; emphasis in original.

36. President Joseph Fielding Smith reminded us that “our faith is always measured by our works. If we fully appreciated the many blessings which are ours through the redemption made for us, there is nothing that the Lord could ask of us that we would not anxiously and willingly

do" (*Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith*, ed. Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1955], 2:346).

37. Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:346.

38. Russell M. Nelson, "Worshiping at Sacrament Meeting," *Ensign*, August 2004, 26–27.

39. David A. Bednar, "Quick to Observe," BYU devotional address, 10 May 2005.

40. "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty," *Hymns*, 2002, no. 72.

41. See Moroni 4–5; D&C 20:77, 79.

42. John 14:26–27.

43. "In Humility, Our Savior," *Hymns*, no. 172.

44. "Our Savior's Love," *Hymns*, no. 113.

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