



# The Path of the Peacemaker

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I am grateful to be with you today on another great day at BYU–Idaho. I pray that the Holy Ghost will be with us today that you might know what Heavenly Father wants you to do to establish His peace in your life.

You and I are the children of the covenant, born into mortal life and come to the kingdom of God at a wondrous and critical time. This is the fullness of times when scattered Israel is being gathered, when Zion is being established, when the kingdom of God is rolling forth, and when families on both sides of the veil are being sealed forever in the temples of the Lord. This is the great latter-day work of bringing people to Christ. It is the work of peace.

Long ago God promised Abraham that his children would do this marvelous work. Of that covenant, and of us, the Lord said:

Ye are the children of the prophets; and ye are of the house of Israel; and ye are of the covenant which the Father made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham: And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.<sup>1</sup>

As Elder Russell M. Nelson taught so eloquently: “Prophets have long known that the Abrahamic covenant was to be fulfilled *only* ‘in the latter days.’ That’s our day! We are those covenant people!”<sup>2</sup>

You are the children of the covenant, the children of promise; and you are heirs to all the blessings and all the commitments and responsibilities of Abraham.<sup>3</sup> The Savior Himself taught that “Abraham’s children,

... do the works of Abraham.”<sup>4</sup> The works of Abraham are the Lord’s work, the works of peace. Listen to Abraham’s own words:

And, finding there was greater happiness and **peace** and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers ... and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a **prince of peace**....<sup>5</sup>



A prince of peace (or a princess of peace) is a peacemaker. When you hear the word “peacemaker,” it is natural, and very important, to think of a mediator, someone who calms troubled waters and helps people resolve conflicts and disputes. In your lives you will have many opportunities to help people in conflict communicate their feelings, find common ground, and resolve their differences. Those opportunities may come as roommates, as parents, as home and visiting teachers, as bishops or Relief Society presidents. They may come in your neighborhoods, in your communities, at work.



You may have already discovered that helping others resolve conflict depends on the application of gospel principles like love, kindness, forgiveness, and service. If you are faithful and prayerful in this work, the Holy Ghost will guide and strengthen you in applying these principles, and the Lord will work through you to bless the lives of His children.



Resolving conflict is an important part of the work of peace. But a loving Heavenly Father desires to give us more. He has prepared for His children a deeper peace, the “peace of God, which passeth all understanding.”<sup>6</sup> This peace is more than the resolution of contention or conflict. It is peace of conscience and peace of mind—a positive, deep, uplifting sense of well-being. It is a sweet, powerful feeling of total harmony with Heavenly Father, with your true spiritual identity, and with your brothers and sisters.

Such peace is one of the sweet gifts of the Spirit. It has been sought by the faithful in all ages and times.

But it seems especially sweet and especially needed in times like ours—times of turmoil when the world is in commotion.

Brothers and sisters, I talk today of peace because Heavenly Father wants you to walk in peace. He wants you to establish peace. He wants you to be peacemakers.

I want to talk about what I will call the path of the peacemaker and what you need to do to establish peace. My starting point is a framework given to us by President Monson:

The consequences of conflict are so devastating that we yearn for guidance—even a way to ensure our success as we seek the path to **peace**.... May I suggest three ideas to prompt our thinking and guide our footsteps:

1. Search inward;
2. Reach outward; and
3. Look heavenward.<sup>7</sup>

The beginning of our study of the path of the peacemaker is our relationship with God the Father and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Let’s begin with “look heavenward.”

## LOOK HEAVENWARD

Please turn with me to Doctrine and Covenants, section 19, verse 23. In this verse the Savior gives us the grand key to peace:

Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me.<sup>8</sup>

When the Lord says “learn of me” and “listen to my words,” he is pleading with us to study carefully and to follow what He taught in verses 13 and 15-20:

Wherefore, I command you to repent, and keep the commandments which you have received...

... lest ... your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not.

For behold, I, God have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.

Wherefore, I command you again to repent....<sup>9</sup>

These are powerful, challenging words. But they are full of love and mercy and the promise of peace. The path of the peacemaker is the path of faith in Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of the world. It is the path of sincere repentance and whole-hearted obedience. It is the path of baptism for the remission of sins, the Gift of the Holy Ghost, and spiritual rebirth.

Sin and wickedness and all the emotions that flow from them—anger, guilt, pain, cynicism, cruelty, hatred, darkness, sorrow—are like a cancer in our spirit. There is no peace for the soul wounded by sin. But the miracle of the Atonement is that we can repent and be healed. We can be completely rid of the cancer of sin, and we can find peace. This is what the Savior meant when he said:

O all ye that are spared because ye were more righteous than they, will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?<sup>10</sup>

Through the power of the Atonement of Christ, we can be reborn of the Spirit, “[put] off the natural man and [become] a saint,”<sup>11</sup> “humble, ... submissive and gentle; easy to be entreated; full of patience and long-suffering.”<sup>12</sup> This is what it means to “walk in the meekness of my Spirit.”<sup>13</sup>

The Savior’s glorious promise is, “and you shall have peace in me.”<sup>14</sup> The healing, redeeming power of the Atonement brings peace to the soul. In the words of Elder Richard G. Scott:

God wants each of His children to enjoy the transcendent blessing of peace of conscience. A tranquil conscience invites freedom from anguish, sorrow, guilt, shame, and self-condemnation. It provides a foundation for happiness.

... Peace of conscience can come only from God through a righteous, obedient life.<sup>15</sup>

This is the path of the peacemaker.

## SEARCH INWARD

We look heavenward to find the Savior and peace of conscience. But peacemakers must also learn to “search inward” to find peace of mind. The Savior taught that even those who are firmly grounded in His gospel suffer the storms of mortal life. Though we may have peace of conscience, those storms may rob us of peace of mind and hurt our ability to be peacemakers. But we can learn to “search inward” and with the help of the Savior restore peace of mind.

We may experience a thousand different things that rob our minds of peace. At their root, however, is a gap between what we want our lives to be and what

we are afraid is going to happen. Consider, for example, the parable of the two mirrors:

The King of the land sent one of his sons and one of his daughters off on an important journey to establish peace in the land.



The brother and sister set off and followed the King's directions carefully. Then, unexpectedly, there arose a great storm. The wind blew, the rain was heavy, and swirling debris obscured the path. The son and daughter took refuge in a small hut. In the hut were two mirrors beckoning for their attention and focus. Each mirror showed them a vision of the future with them in the picture.

The first mirror was full of darkness and swirling fog. The son and daughter saw themselves in despair, lost, hungry and cold, unable to complete the journey. The mirror seemed to whisper, "Turn back; it's hopeless; give up."



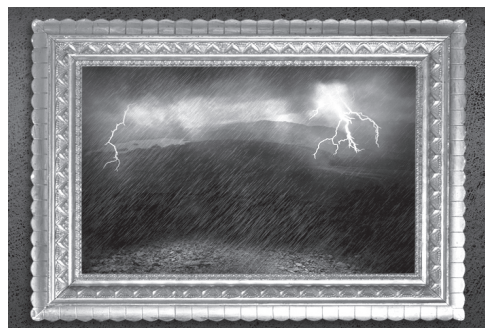
The second mirror was bright and clear. They could see the storm, but they saw themselves making their way through it, completing their journey and establishing peace.



The second mirror seemed to whisper, "Carry on; walk in the light; the way is sure; you can do it." They chose the second mirror, left the hut with confidence, fought their way through the storm, and completed their journey.

You and I are often like the son and daughter. We keep the commandments and make progress in our journey of peace. But we encounter storms of life that bring uncertainty, anxiety, and stress.

When the storms come, the same two mirrors beckon for our attention. The first mirror is the mirror of fear; its perspective is the fallen world. When we look into the mirror of fear, we see a future that is dark and unhappy, full of failure, self-doubt, and



even despair. The mirror of fear is the mirror of the adversary who whispers, “Things are going to be bad. It’s not going to work. It’s all your fault. You’re not going to make it. Give up.”

The second mirror is the mirror of hope and faith. It is the mirror of Christ; its perspective is eternal. In that mirror we see ourselves as beloved, valiant spirit children of Heavenly Father, here on earth to gain the experiences of mortality and to learn to be obedient and faithful. The Spirit whispers that the Savior, who has all power over all things, loves us and will help us through anything that happens. If we look into the mirror of Christ, trust in Him and in His timing, we will face our storms with hope and stop the cascade of fear.



This is what the Savior meant when He said,

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.<sup>16</sup>

We know that things will happen to disrupt our peace of mind. We live in a fallen world, and things happen to everyone. But whether a disruption lasts a long time or a brief moment depends on us. It is our choice. I know that is true. Sister Clark and I have faced many storms in our lives. In those experiences we have learned that we have to choose to look into the mirror of Christ. It requires an act of both faith

in the Lord Jesus Christ and personal determination. Our natural instincts will take us right to the mirror of fear. But we have our agency, and we don’t have to take counsel from our fears. We can choose hope and say, “I am not going to look into the mirror of fear. I am going to fix my eyes on the mirror of Christ, trust the Lord, and act in faith.”

I know from my own experience that if you choose the mirror of Christ you authorize the Holy Ghost to minister to you. He will “show unto you all things what ye should do.”<sup>17</sup> Your feelings of self-worth and confidence in the Lord will grow, and peace of mind will return. You will go forward, acting in faith to face the storm and work through it. This is the path of the peacemaker.

## REACH OUTWARD

Brothers and sisters, we have “looked heavenward” and “searched inward” to find peace of conscience and peace of mind. But we cannot be at peace ourselves and we cannot be peacemakers unless we “reach outward” to bring peace to others.

In His ministry to the Nephites, the Savior said:

For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another.

Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away.<sup>18</sup>

But behold I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you;<sup>19</sup>

This is the work of the peacemaker. And there is much, much work to do. You and I live in a very contentious world. From the headlines in the newspapers, it is easy to believe that anger and contention are all around us. And sometimes they are! There are so many examples where people get angry and contend with one another—in traffic, in apartment life, in neighborhoods, at work, and sometimes even in families.

But you and I have made a covenant to be peacemakers, and we can stop these networks of anger and contention and help people in conflict find common ground. Now, some of you may be thinking, “I could never do that. It is way too hard.” But remember who you are. You are the children of the covenant. When Sarah wondered how she could bear Isaac in her old age, the Lord said, “Is any thing too hard for the Lord?”<sup>20</sup>

I know it is not too hard for the Lord to help you be the Lord’s peacemakers in the latter-days—even when the challenge may seem daunting. Let me give you a current example.

We have just come through an election season full of scorn and ridicule, anger, and even hatred. The language of our national political discourse has become coarse and spiteful, full of lies and distortion. Candidates have attacked each other with half-truths, innuendoes, and outright false and slanderous claims. Politics has lost all semblance of civility.

This is not just something that happened in the media. Regular, everyday people, perhaps even some of us, have spoken words of scorn and ridicule about political candidates. And you may have heard anger seeping into political discussions and into attitudes about our national leaders.

That has been particularly true in the aftermath of the vote on Proposition 8 where we have seen modern political discourse at its very worst. Anger and scorn and ridicule have been poured out upon the Church and upon individual Latter-day Saints. Temples have

been picketed; and many, many chapels have been defaced. Individual Latter-day Saints have been targeted for venomous attacks, and some have been driven out of their jobs.

But no matter what the provocation may be, there is no place in the life of a peacemaker for contention, anger, scorn, or ridicule. Politics is not some kind of “covenant free zone” where your sacred promises are of no effect. It is Satan who “stir[s] up the hearts of men with anger,”<sup>21</sup> and it is Christ the Lord whose doctrine it is “that such things should be done away.”<sup>22</sup>

In politics, in traffic, in your apartment, at work, wherever you are, the duty of the peacemaker is clear: do not start the ripple of scorn and ridicule; do not propagate it if you hear it; do not retaliate when people attack; help people resolve their differences and stop the network of contention and anger dead in its tracks. Stop it with acts of kindness and respect. Stop it with gentle humor or sweet reason. Stop it with love and prayer. Stop it with whatever means the Spirit of the Lord directs. But stop it; and then act in faith to help others find the deeper peace of God.

When you establish peace in this way, you act with what Elder Robert D. Hales called Christian courage:

May our conversations with others always be marked by the fruits of the Spirit—“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, [and] temperance” (Galatians 5:22–23).

To ... all who seek to know how we should respond to our accusers, I reply, we love them. Whatever their race, creed, religion, or political persuasion... we must... help them,... be an example for them,... [and] pay the price of discipleship by answering [them] with Christian courage.<sup>23</sup>

This is our calling. This is what the children of the covenant, the children of Abraham are and what they do: they reach outward to their brothers and sisters

to bring peace that goes down deeper and deeper into the soul. There are different levels of peace, and peacemakers work at every level: they calm troubled waters, stop the network of anger and contention, and help their brothers and sisters resolve conflicts; they bring love, hope and peace to people in need with kind words, a helping hand, and acts of service that lift and strengthen; and they help their brothers and sisters find peace at its deepest level in the Lord Jesus Christ. You and I know such peacemakers. They have touched our lives.

When I think of peacemakers, I think of President Monson listening to promptings to visit someone in need, or traveling somewhere to give a blessing, or phoning someone to offer words of love and encouragement. I see him in hundreds of funerals, in a hundred different living rooms, in hospitals and nursing homes with words of love and hope.

President Monson has set for us a marvelous example of the peacemaker, and he has called us to be peacemakers. In his first general conference as president of the Church, he issued an invitation to the less active and the spiritually wounded. In that invitation he reminded us that we are the children of Abraham:

In this spirit, we again issue that heartfelt invitation: Come back. **We reach out to you in the pure love of Christ** and express our desire **to assist you** and **to welcome you into full fellowship**. To those who are wounded in spirit or who are struggling and fearful, we say, Let us **lift you and cheer you and calm your fears**.<sup>24</sup>

This is a clear and unmistakable call to us from the prophet of the Lord to be peacemakers. I pray that you and I will hear that call and reach out to help our brothers and sisters. When we do, we will not only lift a burden, or offer words of encouragement, or strengthen someone's resolve to do what is right, we will bring the Spirit of the Lord into the lives we touch. We will help them come unto Christ.

You and I know from our own experience that the only way to find the deep peace of God is through the Atonement of Christ. Whether they are roommates at BYU–Idaho, members of your family, your own children, less active brothers and sisters, or neighbors in your community who are not members of the Church, you can reach outward and help them find the deep peace of God by sharing with them the plan of salvation and the principles of the gospel. And you can extend that opportunity to people on the other side of the veil when you serve in the temples of the Lord. No matter where they are in their own journey, when you act in faith to share what you know is true, they will see the peace that is in you and they will see and feel the Savior's love through you. If they choose to listen and obey, they, too, will find the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding."<sup>25</sup> This is the path of the peacemaker.

#### TESTIMONY

Brothers and sisters, we are the children of Abraham and this is the path we are called to walk:

- **Look Heavenward:** Act with faith in Christ to repent and keep His commandments.
- **Search Inward:** When storms come, look to the future in the mirror of Christ, choose hope and go forward in faith.
- **Reach Outward:** Stop the network of anger and contention, help people in conflict find common ground, lift and strengthen them with love and service, share the gospel, and help them come unto Christ.

If you walk this path, you will be the peacemakers the Lord will use to gather scattered Israel, establish Zion, and prepare the earth for His return.

I bear you my witness that Jesus of Nazareth is the Savior and Redeemer of the world. He is the living

Son of the living God. His church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is the kingdom of God on the earth. I know that Jesus is the Prince of Peace. He leads and guides His church through His living prophet, President Thomas S. Monson. I pray that you and I will follow the prophet and lift and strengthen and bring peace to our brothers and sisters.

I leave you today with my love and my witness and this blessing: that through your faithfulness you will walk in peace with the Prince of Peace and you will become a peacemaker in His holy hands.

- 1 3 Nephi 20:25
- 2 Elder Russell M. Nelson, "Young Adults and the Temple,"  
*Ensign*, Feb. 2006, 12-17
- 3 See Galatians 3:26-29
- 4 John 8:39
- 5 Abraham 1:2 (emphasis added)
- 6 Philippians 4:7
- 7 Thomas S. Monson, "Finding Peace," *Ensign*, Mar. 2004, 3  
(emphasis added)
- 8 D&C 19:23
- 9 D&C 19:13, 15-20
- 10 3 Nephi 9:13
- 11 Mosiah 3:19
- 12 Alma 7:23
- 13 D&C 19:23
- 14 Ibid
- 15 Richard G. Scott "Peace of Conscience and Peace of Mind,"  
*Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 15
- 16 John 16:33
- 17 2 Nephi 32:5
- 18 3 Nephi 11:29-30
- 19 3 Nephi 12:44
- 20 Genesis 18:14
- 21 3 Nephi 11:30
- 22 Ibid
- 23 Robert D. Hales, "Christian Courage: The Price of Discipleship,"  
*Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 72-75
- 24 Thomas S. Monson, "Looking Back and Moving Forward,"  
*Ensign*, May 2008, 87-90 (emphasis added)
- 25 Philippians 4:7

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