

The Living Water of Jesus Christ

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Good evening, brothers and sisters. Sister Burton and I are delighted to be with you this evening. We are grateful to the First Presidency for this assignment, although we feel overwhelmed both by the weight of the assignment and by the technology that allows us to join together while being physically gathered in a host of locations.

Statistics and Forecasts

Over the last forty-five days we have enjoyed a period of thanksgiving and a period of celebrating the births of the Son of Man and the prophet of the Restoration, Joseph Smith. We have survived, with little or no inconvenience, the much-discussed Y2K phenomenon. In the aftermath of this event, some people seem to be glad and relieved it's over, while others are a bit sad and disappointed that it turned out to be largely a one-hundred-billion-dollar nonevent.

We have concluded a year and are a few days into a new one. That is just long enough for most of us to have violated our New Year's resolutions. I think it is best to leave to others the debate as to whether we have concluded a decade, a century, or a millennium. I'll just note that the controversy is not new. Two hundred years ago, on 26 December 1799, the *London*

Times declared that the nineteenth century began in the year 1801, not 1800, and in typical British fashion, said: "It is a silly, childish discussion, and only exposes the want of brains of those who maintain a contrary opinion." Despite that stinging statement, I will risk exposing my mental frailties by indicating that I find it easier to "go with the media flow" and adopt the odometer approach to the issue. When the numbers turn from 999 to 1,000, I say, "Let the celebration begin!" Besides, what's wrong with having two millennium parties?

The media has bombarded us with the results of polls designed to identify the best and worst of almost everything. For example, we've recently learned that Albert Einstein made the most important contribution to mankind during the past century,¹ and Michael Jordan was the century's best athlete.² We've learned more about the best, worst, most, least, top, and bottom than, I suspect, we ever really wanted to know. We have been inundated with trivia and comparative statistics.

H. David Burton was the Presiding Bishop of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this fireside address was given at BYU on 9 January 2000.

I'm sure the cockles of your hearts have been warmed with the vital information that nearly 60 percent of Americans of all ages eat peanut butter at least once a week, and 83 percent prefer the smooth variety.³

I was interested to read that the alumni of a prestigious university voted Bill Gates, a college dropout, the most influential business leader of the past seventy-five years.⁴ They also identified the automobile as the most important consumer product of the period, explaining that the internal combustion engine beats the personal computer operating system Windows by a mile.⁵ They gave the computer the nod for the best business innovation,⁶ and Microsoft was the most influential company.⁷ These same alumni selected World War II as the most significant event of the century because of the impact it had on most all segments of life on this planet.⁸

Of much greater importance, this same group of intellectually upscale alumni were asked to make two forecasts. The first: What will be better twenty-five years from now than it is today? The second: What will be worse than we experience today? As to what they thought will be better, they identified race relations, health care, education, and the environment. We all look forward to these much-needed improvements in society. They thought, however, that the next quarter century would see a further loss of confidence in government, an increased economic disparity between the rich and the poor, and a continuation of the already precipitous decline in values and morality.⁹ If the forecasts prove to be accurate, the predicted declines are very worrisome. Many would say that values and morality for a large segment of society have already hit rock-bottom levels.

What the World Needs Is Jesus Christ

I'm certainly not clairvoyant, nor do I have solutions for all of the maladies that plague society and mankind today. I go back to a popular song from my misspent youth. The song is entitled *What the World Needs Now Is*

Love. The lyrics of the song explain that what the world needs now is love, sweet love. To that beautiful line of lyric, I add: "What the world needs now is love, sweet love—for the 'good news' of Jesus Christ." Certainly if we allow the gospel of our Savior and Redeemer to penetrate our souls, there will be no need to be concerned with forecasts of further declines in values and morals. There will be no poor among us. We will have confidence and faith in those who represent us in government. In fact, values and morality will be celestial.

I recently read with great interest a biographical article in *Time* magazine. The article, "In Death's Throat," was written by Robert Hughes, an art critic for *Time*. It seems that Mr. Hughes was in Australia when he was involved in a devastating head-on automobile accident on a remote highway in Western Australia. Charlie Fishhook, an Aborigine, came upon the accident scene and sounded the critical alarm for help. A friend, Danny O'Sullivan, upon hearing of the accident, used his radio and cell phone to summon help from the nearest town, seventy-five miles away. He then raced to Robert's side to reassure him that assistance was on its way. Aborigines of the Bidyadanga people formed a semicircle around the car and chanted a prayerful song. A Filipina nurse from the Bidyadanga settlement comforted his badly broken body until police and medics airlifted him to the Royal Perth Hospital. Skilled physicians operated for thirteen hours to carefully restore his body. His loving and deeply concerned family arrived from the United States to keep vigil until he awoke from a thirty-day coma.

Robert Hughes, in writing about his near-death experience, said:

I am a skeptic to whom the idea that a benign God created us and watches over us is somewhere between a fairy story and a poor joke. People of a religious bent are apt, under such conditions, to see the familiar images of near-death experience—the tunnel of white light with Jesus beckoning at the end, as

*featured in the memoirs of a score of American K Mart mystics. Jesus must have been busy when my turn came: he didn't show. There was, as far as I could tell, absolutely nothing divine on the other side.*¹⁰

Several weeks after Robert's story appeared, several letters to the editor of *Time* magazine were received and published. A perceptive gentleman by the name of Pedro Costa from Portugal wrote, wishing to ask Robert the following question:

*I would like to ask [Robert Hughes] if he also didn't see Christ among the Aborigine family that found him, the Bidyadanga people who chanted to keep him alive, the Filipina nurse who wept for him, his friend Danny who raced to save his life, the police and the medics who got to the scene, the medical personnel who decided to fly him to Royal Perth Hospital, the people who operated for 13 hours—or in the midst of relatives and friends who gave him the support and affection he talks about in his article. Hughes just might have missed Jesus in such a crowd.*¹¹

From Stellenbosch, South Africa, Marius J. DeWaal profoundly wrote: "Robert Hughes said of his near-death experience that Jesus didn't show. But one cannot expect to find Christ in death if one has not known him in life."

We know our loving Father in Heaven and our Savior, Jesus Christ, most often minister to our needs through the efforts of typical, garden-variety people like you and me. We too often look for dramatic, divine intervention in our lives and lose sight of Jesus in the crowd of marvelous, kind, thoughtful, and generous people who live the principles of the gospel of Him who is our Savior and Redeemer. Mr. DeWaal so gently reminds us that this mortal life is the time for us to find, serve, and know Jesus and the principles He taught in life. We will undoubtedly find it difficult to identify with Christ in death if we have not known Him in life.

I am reminded of the well-worn and oftentold story of

a little crippled boy who ran a small newsstand in a crowded railroad station. He must have been about twelve years old. Every day he would sell papers, candy, gum, and magazines to the thousands of commuters passing through the terminal.

One night two men were rushing through the crowded station to catch a train. One was fifteen or twenty yards in front of the other. It was Christmas Eve. Their train was scheduled to depart in a matter of minutes.

The first man turned a corner and in his haste . . . plowed right into the little crippled boy. He knocked him off his stool, and candy, newspapers, and gum were scattered everywhere. Without so much as stopping, he cursed the little fellow for being there and rushed on to catch the train. . . .

It was only a matter of seconds before the second commuter arrived on the scene. He stopped, knelt, and gently picked up the boy. After making sure the child was unhurt, the man gathered up the scattered newspapers, sweets, and magazines. Then he took out his wallet and gave the boy a five-dollar bill. "Son," he said, "I think this will take care of what was lost or soiled. Merry Christmas!"

Without waiting for a reply the commuter now picked up his briefcase and started to hurry away. As he did, the little crippled boy cupped his hands together and called out: "Mister, Mister!"

The man stopped as the boy asked, "Are you Jesus Christ?"

*By the look on his face, it was obvious the commuter was embarrassed by the question. But he smiled and said, "No, son, I am not Jesus Christ, but I am trying hard to do what He would do if He were here."*¹²

Mr. Hughes may not have been able to detect the Savior among the many who ministered to his needs, nor is he likely to find Christ in death without knowing Him in life. But this crippled boy readily recognized the Christlike demeanor of one of Jesus' disciples. I am convinced that we can find, know, and experience the tender, unconditional love of Jesus of Nazareth as we serve Him by serving our fellowmen.

Over the centuries people have been introduced to the Savior in many different ways. For the Apostle Paul it was during the miracle that occurred on the road to Damascus. Many have come to know Christ as they have been exposed to the written testaments of Book of Mormon prophets. Still others are extended introductions by the legions of missionaries who labor with devotion. Neighbors feel the Savior's presence as their souls are softened by the kindly deeds of others. Caregivers come to feel the warm glow of the gospel of Jesus as they unselfishly minister, often for extended periods, to the needs of family members and friends. For some, crises and disasters encourage them to reach for the security blanket offered by Him who offers perfect consolation. For most people, the discovery of Jesus comes by the method He authored Himself: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7:17), and "Seek me diligently and ye shall find me" (D&C 88:63).

Jesus Christ Offered Living Water

Early in the ministry of the Savior, He and some of His disciples were traveling from Jerusalem to Galilee. At about noonday they found refuge from the heat, dust, and thirst of their travels at a well in Samaria. As the disciples sought nourishment in a nearby town, Jesus was alone at the well. He was joined by a Samaritan woman who had come to draw water. Interesting dialogue occurred between Jesus and the woman.

Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. . . .

Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.
[John 4:7, 9–15]

It is this living water, freely offered by Jesus Christ, that we all seek to quench our own spiritual thirst and that is critically needed to end the gospel drought that continues to plague mankind. As His disciples, we are the primary distribution system for delivering the living water from its everlasting source to His cherished children in need. We largely determine who will receive the water as we, by our service, control the irrigation system head-gates. We preserve the purity of the water as we reflect to the world the value of the living water in our own lives. If we irrigate when the living water is required, rather than when it is convenient for us, we determine its vitality. It is only the living water of Jesus Christ that can and will bring a happy, successful, and everlasting life to the children of men.

I spend a fair amount of time on airplanes. When I make a reservation, I always request an aisle seat. More often than not there is another person seated between me and the window of the plane. Airplane talk is most often very general, but one of the questions that traveling companions usually get around to is: What do you do for a living? When asked, I usually respond in a matter-of-fact way by saying, "Oh, thanks for asking. I'm in the business of saving souls." Usually a questioning expression comes on their

face. Some respond by asking me to repeat my statement while they think about a suitable response, and others readily ask for an explanation. It is a marvelous opportunity to have a gospel-centered conversation with someone who, because they are enclosed between me and the window, finds it nearly impossible to move away. Think about it, my young brothers and sisters. By virtue of our membership in His church, are we not all in the business of saving souls? Of course we are. First our own, and we are to then assist our neighbors to do the same by offering them the living water of Jesus Christ.

The Savior Taught in Parables

Over the years I have desired to have been present when special events in the ecclesiastical history of the world have taken place. To be standing behind a large tree in the Sacred Grove when the Father and the Son appeared to young Joseph Smith would have been a supernal experience. To be present in the Kirtland Temple to witness the restoration of the holy priesthood to Joseph and Oliver would have been marvelous. To have been present among the eleven Apostles in Gethsemane while Jesus petitioned His Father one last time would have been, to use current terminology, awesome. In like fashion, I would have dearly loved to have trod the dusty roads of Judea, Galilee, and Perea to sit at the feet of the Savior as the Master Teacher taught with the aid of parables. During His earthly ministry, Jesus often used these thought-provoking short stories to convey a moral or spiritual truth. The short stories used real scenes or events that occur in nature or human life. Jesus' parables depicted true-life situations and have a vigorous moral and religious application. Understanding comes with some contemplation.

Jesus was not argumentative. His teachings were delivered with the strength of plainness and simplicity. When the haughty, self-righteous Pharisees recalled the false doctrines and Jewish traditions of more than a thousand years, Jesus most often introduced His rebuttal with the

simple phrase "I say." To the humble seeker after truth, He was gentle, even willing to dispense His living water with patience and simplicity. To the question "Who is my neighbor?" He responded with the forceful and absolutely clear parable of the good Samaritan. When repentance, mercy, or forgiveness needed to be taught, parables about the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son were eloquently presented. The New Testament records forty-four of the Savior's parables.

We know not the depth of the reservoir of parables the Savior used, but we know that the disciples who consistently followed and traveled with Him, and who over time gained a degree of gospel sophistication, wondered why He repeatedly used simple parables. After hearing the parable of the sower, they inquired:

Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. . . .

Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. [Matthew 13:10–11, 13]

If it were important for the disciples of Jesus to partake of the living water by understanding the principles presented in parable form, then perhaps we should consider it important as well as we minister in a Christlike way. Let me whet your appetite for parables by mentioning just a few.

In the fifteenth chapter of Luke, the Master Teacher counseled us about bringing living water to those who are lost. Luke recorded that a great multitude made up of publicans, sinners, Pharisees, and scribes gathered around the Savior. He took the opportunity to use parables and metaphors to teach the rather hostile group. He said:

What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine

in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. [Luke 15:4–7]

Without wasting words, Luke goes from lost sheep to a lost piece of silver in recording another of Jesus' teachings: "Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?" (Luke 15:8). She, like the shepherd, then rejoices with her neighbors. The Savior concluded His teaching with the widely quoted parable of the prodigal son:

A certain man had two sons:

And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. [Luke 15:11–12]

We all know that with his agency he managed to spend all he had been given in riotous living and then returned to seek forgiveness—all to the dismay of his brother, who had remained in the service of his father. The father, counseling the faithful son, said:

Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found. [Luke 15:31–32]

In perhaps the most personal of His parables, the Savior identified Himself with the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the homeless, sick, and imprisoned. "I was an hungred, and ye

gave me meat: . . . I was a stranger, and ye took me in" (Matthew 25:35).

So many of our Father's children are burdened with earthly cares or with the stain of sin, poverty, pain, disability, loneliness, bereavement, or rejection. The living water of Jesus is sure and certain to those who find Him and trust Him. He who stilled the winds and waves can bring peace to the repentant sinner and to the suffering saint. We as His agents are not only to declare His word but also to deliver the living water unto the least of His brethren, just as He Himself would do if He were here.

A lawyer chose to challenge the Savior on a point of doctrine. Attempting to entrap Jesus, he asked, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25). Jesus responded with a question of His own: "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" (Luke 10:26). The response of the lawyer, as recited from the law, was perfect: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke 10:27). Jesus acknowledged the answer and then replied, "This do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10:28).

Having failed to confound the Master, the lawyer seemed embarrassed. He sought justification by making a further inquiry: "And who is my neighbour?" (Luke 10:29). We should be very grateful for the lawyer's second question. From it came one of the most insightful of the Savior's parables.

You remember the setting: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, . . . leaving him half dead" (Luke 10:30). Since our Primary days, we have heard about this certain man. We wonder at the failure of the priest and the Levite to render aid, and we say: "Surely, I would have helped. Surely, I would have stopped. Surely, I would not have looked the other way."

The parable continues:

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. [Luke 10:33–34]

Upon completing the parable, the Savior asked the lawyer, “Which now of these three . . . was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?” (Luke 10:36). The lawyer quickly identified the one who had shown mercy—the kind and caring traveler from Samaria. Jesus admonished him to “go, and do thou likewise” (Luke 10:37).

During His ministry the Savior used two wonderful parables regarding the requirement that we develop our God-given talents. The parable of the entrusted talents was given directly to His Apostles. The Savior told about a man who was leaving on a long trip and wanted to distribute his possessions to his servants. To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one. To each man he gave according to his ability.

You remember the story—while the master was away, the one who received five talents put them to use and made five more talents. The one who received two talents put them to use and made two more talents, but the one who received one talent hid it in the ground. Upon his return, the giver of the talents called for an accounting.

Unto the servants who had doubled their talents, the master said, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Matthew 25:21 and 23). To the servant who hid his talent and did not multiply it, the one talent was taken from him and given to the servant who had ten talents.

The parable of the pounds was given to a mixed multitude on the Savior’s last journey

from Jericho to Jerusalem (see Luke 19:12–26). Although there are some differences in the two parables, in essence they teach the same truths and principles.

From the men endowed with many talents, more was expected than from the men with lesser talents, yet all were expected to multiply whatever they were given. In each parable, however, although relatively little was expected of the men given one talent, each failed to use his talent. Good use of the talent on the part of the men given one talent was just as important and necessary as on the part of the men given two and five talents.

A Modern Parable

Although we have put the Christmas season to bed, may I share a modern parable entitled the “Parable of the Shopper.” A woman tells the story of what occurred on a bus:

I had been Christmas shopping all day long. When the bus finally arrived, it was packed with holiday shoppers in the same exhausted mood as I. I sank into the only vacant place, near the back, by a very handsome gentleman. He politely helped me to situate my packages and even held some of them himself. . . .

[After jovial conversation among the passengers, the gentleman] began in a quiet, melodious voice, deepened with experience, to teach me a lesson that I have never forgotten.

“Hear now the parable of the shopper.” . . . “A woman went forth to shop, and as she shopped, she carefully planned. . . . The hard-earned money was divided, and the many purchases were made with the pure joy and delight that is known only to the giver. Then the gifts were wrapped and placed lovingly under the tree.

“In eager anticipation she scanned each face as the gifts were opened.

“‘What a lovely sweater,’ said the eldest daughter, ‘but I think I would prefer blue.’ . . .

“‘Thank you for the cassette player, Mother. It’s just what I’ve always wanted,’ said her son. And then aside, secretly to his sister, he continued. ‘I told

her I wanted the one with the automatic reverse and an extra speaker. I never get what I want!’

“The youngest child spoke out with the spoiled honesty of her age, ‘I hate rag dolls! I wanted a china doll.’ . . .

“One gift still lay under the tree. The woman pointed it out to her husband. ‘Your gift is still there.’

“‘I’ll open it when I have time,’ he stated. ‘I want to get this bike put together first.’

“How sad it is,” continued his soft, beautiful voice. “When gifts are not received in the same spirit they are given. To reject a thoughtful gift is to reject the loving sentiment of the giver himself. And yet, are we not all sometimes guilty of rejecting?”

He was not talking only to me, but to all of those on the bus. . . .

He took a present from my stack.

“This one,” he said, holding it up and pretending to open the card, “could be to you.”

He pointed to a rough-looking, teenage boy in a worn denim jacket and pretended to read the gift card.

“‘To you I give My life, lived perfectly, as an example so that you might see the pattern and live worthy to return and live with Me again. Merry Christmas from the Messiah.’

“The gift of example is a precious yet often rejected gift.” . . .

“This one,” he said, holding up a pure, white present, “is for you.” He held out the gift to a worn-looking woman, who in earlier years must have been a real beauty and was still attractive in her slim black skirt, black tights, and heels. She . . . allowed her tears to slip without shame down her painted face.

“‘My gift to you is repentance. This Christmas I wish you to know for certain that though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow, and I the Lord will remember them no more. Have a happy New Year. Signed, your Advocate with the Father.’

“Ah, repentance, something every Christian needs,” said my seat mate.

“But that isn’t all. No, here is a big, red package.” He looked around the group and brought a ragged, unkempt, little child forward. “This big, red

package would be for you if He were here. The card would say, ‘On this Christmas and always, My gift to you is love. My love is pure! It is not dependent on what you do or what you look like. I love you as you have been, as you are now, and as you will be in the future. From your brother, Jesus.’” . . .

“And this silver package to you, madam,” he said with a bow . . . to an aging grandmother two rows behind.

“Yes, it would be for you, because you would appreciate it most of the time. His precious gift to you would be the gift of salvation. The surety that you will rise from the grave and live again with a perfect, resurrected body. The card would read, ‘I give this precious gift freely to you and all men, by laying down My life for you. Signed, your Saviour.’

“One final gift,” said my seat mate. “The greatest of all the gifts of God. Eternal life! A chance to receive the same quality of life that Christ Himself lives. But though this gift is to all men, it must be assembled. He has given us the instructions. They are here in the scriptures.” He tore off the paper to reveal a worn, well-used book. . . .

He stood up. He was leaving, making his way slowly down the aisle. He paused just as he reached the front and said, “One last gift. Peace! 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.” [John 14:27]

With those words, he was gone.¹³

How we receive these gifts, these precious gifts from the Babe of Bethlehem, is the telling point. Are we exchangers? Is there really anything else we would rather have? Is there a feature missing? It is what we do with a gift long after we have opened it that shows our appreciation. Have we used it, worn it, displayed it, or cherished it?

How does Christ feel when we don’t even take time to use His gift of repentance, the one He purchased at such a great price? How sad it is when gifts are not received in the same spirit they are given.

We Must Dispense the Living Water

Principles taught by parable, if learned well and followed, help us to be dispensers of the living water of Jesus Christ. President Gordon B. Hinckley reminds us that “given what we have and what we know, we ought to be a better people than we are. We ought to be more Christlike, more forgiving, more helpful and considerate to all around us.”¹⁴

The following verse reminds us of simple, everyday things we can do to be sensitive to the needs of others. The scriptures remind us that it is by doing the small and simple things well that souls are saved.

*There isn't much that I can do,
But I can share my bread with you,
And I can share my joy with you,
And sometimes share a sorrow too
As on our way we go.*

*There isn't much that I can do,
But I can sit an hour with you,
And I can share a story with you,
And sometimes share reverses, too,
As on our way we go.*

*There isn't much that I can do,
But I can share my flowers with you,
And I can share my books with you,
And sometimes share your burdens, too,
As on our way we go.*

*There isn't much that I can do,
But I can share my songs with you,
And I can share my mirth with you,
And sometimes come and laugh with you,
As on our way we go.*

*There isn't much that I can do,
But I can share my hopes with you,
And I can share my fears with you,
And sometimes shed some tears with you,
As on our way we go.*

*There isn't much that I can do,
But I can share my friends with you,
And I can share my life with you,
And oftentimes share a prayer with you,
As on our way we go.¹⁵*

You may remember a story about a ship's captain who had a problem with his pride. One night at sea, this captain saw what looked like the light of another ship heading toward him. He had his signalman blink to the other ship: “Change your course 10 degrees south.” The reply came back, “Change *your* course 10 degrees north.” The ship's captain answered, “I am a *captain*. Change *your* course south.” To which the reply came, “Well, I am a seaman first class. Change *your* course north.” This so infuriated the captain, he signaled back, “I say change *your* course south. I am on a battleship!” To which the reply came back, “And I say change *your* course north. I am in the lighthouse.”¹⁶

Like the poor ship's captain, there are many who desperately need the living water of Jesus the Christ to nourish their souls. But they do not realize it. Unless they are assisted in changing their course, they may find themselves shipwrecked upon the shoals of life. President Hinckley said:

The time has now come to turn about and face the future. This is a season of a thousand opportunities. It is ours to grasp and move forward. What a wonderful time it is for each of us to do his or her small part in moving the work of the Lord on to its magnificent destiny.¹⁷

May we enthusiastically respond to the needs of the downtrodden, rejoice in the repentant soul, magnify and use our talents to bless lives, identify with the hungry, and bring peace to the sinner. May we be worthy vessels to represent Him in doing unto the least of our brothers and sisters that which He Himself would do were He now here.

The apostles and prophets of our time have recently published to the world their testimony of the Living Christ. I use their words and join with them in their testament that

*Jesus is the Living Christ, the immortal Son of God. He is the great King Immanuel, who stands today on the right hand of His Father. He is the light, the life, and the hope of the world. His way is the path that leads to happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come. God be thanked for the matchless gift of His divine Son.*¹⁸

Of this great truth I too testify, in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. Frederic Golden, "Albert Einstein: Person of the Century," *Time*, 31 December 1999, 62–65.

2. "Top North American Athletes of the Century," ESPN <<http://www.espn.go.com/sportscentury/athletes.html>>.

3. See "Smooth or Chunky," *USA Today*, 8 March 1999, 1 <<http://www.usatoday.com/snapshot/life/1snap019.html>>.

4. See "Who's Number One?" *Harvard Business School Bulletin Online*, December 1999, 1 <<http://www.alumni.hbs.edu/bulletin/1999/december/survey/survey1.html>>.

5. See "Couch Potatoes and the Open Road," *Harvard Business School*, 1 </survey2.html>.

6. See "So What's New?" *Harvard Business School*, 1 </survey3.html>.

7. See "Up the Organization," *Harvard Business School*, 1 </survey4.html>.

8. See "The War That Changed the World," *Harvard Business School*, 1 </survey5.html>.

9. See "The World of the Future," *Harvard Business School*, 1 </survey6.html>.

10. Robert Hughes, "In Death's Throat," *Time*, 11 October 1999, 79.

11. Letters, "Looking Death in the Face," *Time*, 1 November 1999, 16.

12. Tom Anderson, "Christmas: A Message for Americans," *American Opinion* 14, no. 11 (December 1971): 13–14.

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14. Gordon B. Hinckley, "At the Summit of the Ages," *Ensign*, November 1999, 74.

15. Maude V. Preston, "Sharing," *Ideals* magazine.

16. *Hope Health Letter* [Kalamazoo, Michigan: Hope Health Institute], October 1993, 1; adapted and used with permission, HOPE Publications, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 616-343-0770. See also H. David Burton, *CR*, April 1994, 89; or "Courage to Hearken," *Ensign*, May 1994, 68.

17. Gordon B. Hinckley, *CR*, October 1997, 90–91; or "Look to the Future," *Ensign*, November 1997, 67.

18. "The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles," *Church News*, 1 January 2000, 3.