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A Prophet's Message to the World (and you)

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Hello friend,

I'm thankful for you.

It doesn't matter if we know each other very well or not. Because you are reading this, we have a connection. These words connect us. I wrote them and you are reading them. Even if we don't know each other at all, or you've never read anything I've written before, you are now starting to know something about me because you are reading what came from me (although many times it feels like it comes from a more divine source.) Sharing words is very powerful.

And that is why the most important thing that happened this week was that the prophet of the world shared words with the world.

If you haven't watched President Nelson's message, please take 11 minutes and watch it now (or after church.) If you want to know what a prophet of God would say to the world during this unprecedented time (in other words, what God would say) then watch his message here:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=youtu.be&v=tlclLxGmVrl>

(Go ahead. You can read this later. I'll still be here when you get back. Plus, my words aren't as important as his:) You might even watch it again.)

What did you notice about his message?

He first gave us perspective by sharing how many tragedies and sorrows he has seen during his life, along with many wonderful discoveries and inventions. As a man of science and faith he is deeply concerned about the pandemic, recognizing the scientific and medical things that need to be done to end the spread of the virus, along with the need for faith, to deal with the many other ills that plague our world, including hate, civil unrest, racism, violence, dishonesty, and lack of civility. No medication or operation can fix these spiritual woes and maladies that we face.

But there is a remedy: the healing power of gratitude.

And it is agreed upon by both scientists and people of faith that gratitude has powerful benefits.

It is fast acting and long lasting.

It provides us with a greater perspective on the very purpose and joy of life.

President Nelson shares his own personal tragedies of losing his wife and two daughters, then shares the many wonderful things he is grateful for, along with things that all people of the earth can be thankful for, including the opportunity to serve each other, and for our trials that help us learn.

Then he prescribes two activities to experience the healing power of gratitude:

1) Just for the next 7 days, turn social media into your own gratitude journal, posting every day what and who you are grateful for, and why. Then at the end of the 7 days, see if you feel happier and more at peace. As we flood social media, perhaps it will fulfill in part, the promise that the Father gave to Abraham, that through his descendants, all families of the earth shall be blessed.

2) Let us unite in thanking God through daily prayer.

He gave the examples of Jesus, who taught us to pray and give thanks to God, stated clearly that prayer brings forth miracles.

Then setting an example, as a prophet of God, he prayed for the world and everyone in it.

That in itself is power. But he invited us to do the same, pouring out your heart in gratitude to God, and petitioning him to heal our hearts, families, societies, and the world at large.

It was a powerful prayer of a prophet.

As I thought about his message, I thought it was interesting that a prophet would ask us to get involved in social media. I know some members who have tried to stay away from social media have had a difficult time with this request. But wanting to be faithful, they've dusted off their old accounts, or created new ones, and tried to do what the prophet has asked, even uncomfortably.

But this is why this request makes sense to me. He is a latter day prophet. A prophet for these times. And as such, he knows how to influence the world in this day. His goal is for all the people of the world to have peace, joy, hope, and faith.

Therefore, he knows that this request will accomplish two things:

1) As people list what they are thankful for, they will have more peace, joy, and hope because they will lessen the impact of their sorrows, and

2) As everyone shares what they are thankful for in the places where most of the world will see it, others will think of similar things in their own life that they are thankful for, and the spirit of gratitude will spread throughout the earth, spreading joy, peace and thanksgiving.

The second request may be obvious, for each of us to pray every day, because we know that's good for us to do. But he is counting on the power of the entire world uniting in petitioning to God for peace.

Sometimes we have united family prayers for a specific individual or need in our family. Sometimes we have ward fasts and prayers for people or situations in our ward. If those are effectual, then uniting the entire world in prayer should be a powerful spiritual event.

Think of our day, and the opportunity a prophet has to actually speak to most of the entire world. And to have a relatively few people spread the message to all the peoples of the world. This is special.

So, if you are struggling to follow the prophet's direct invitation for specific activities, I invite you to remember the Old Testament story of Naaman, who was a respected captain of the armies of Syria, yet contracted leprosy. He was told the prophet Elisha could heal him, so he went to visit him. But when the prophet wouldn't even come out of his house to see him, and sent a servant to tell Naaman to wash himself 7 times in the dirty river Jordan to be clean of the leprosy, he went away angry and didn't understand the request. There were certainly more clean rivers to wash in.

Then what happened next is in this verse in 2 Kings 5:13:

"And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?"

Then Naaman did as the prophet instructed and was healed.

These may seem like small things that the prophet has requested. And you might be thinking that it'll all be fine if everyone else does this except me. But you'll be the one missing out. Missing out on divine blessings of healing, peace, joy, and other untold blessings that come from following a prophet of God.

As adopted seed of Abraham through the tribes of Israel, let us help fulfill the promise God made to Abraham, that "all the families of the earth be blessed." (Abraham 2:11)

I am blessed because of you.

Thank you so much.

Bishop Williams

Join us at Sacrament meeting today at 1:00pm.

Today Group B (last names M-Z) is invited to come to church in person. Everyone else can watch the broadcast here:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzQM_SmjDFmwHAA6Ifjtseg/live

Also, to schedule a tithing settlement appointment pick a time on my calendar here:

<https://calendly.com/bishoprexawilliams>

And we have a wonderful new story posted by Brother Michael on our ward web site here:

<https://pennycreek.org/2020/11/22/a-pivotal-moment/>

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