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## Gather the Willing

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Sat, May 15, 2021 at 6:27 PM

Hello my friend,

I'm sitting in a tent at Cascade Park listening to the early morning chorus of birds sing-song. (Do you remember how to sing in church? ;)

It's a beautiful day to be out in nature and enjoying the company of friends. I'm at the Aaronic Priesthood Commemoration campout (or Fathers and Sons campout.) Yesterday was an exceptional sunny and warm day too. We gathered at Lee Field, set up tents, played games in the field and told stories around the campfire. Brother Walker, Stake Young Men President, shared an inspiring message and we ate yummy cookies and milk (individually wrapped, of course.)

After a long time of being isolated from people due to the pandemic, it is wonderful to gather as a large group and enjoy interactions in the great outdoors.

Often, we don't appreciate something until it is gone.

And now the whole world has had the shared experience of being isolated, and not able to gather.

So, we are all beginning to appreciate the wonderful blessing and privilege it is to now be able to gather in certain circumstances. We're enjoying gathering.

And that is awesome, because what this does is help us appreciate the great work of the Lord: to gather Israel.

Along with our prophet, President Nelson, who said this is the most important work on the earth, there are many scriptural references for this gathering effort.

"For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee." (Isaiah 54:7)

"And verily I say unto you, I give unto you a sign, that ye may know the time when these things shall be about to take place—that I shall gather in, from their long dispersion, my people, O house of Israel, and shall establish again among them my Zion" (3 Nephi 21:1)

"And that the gathering together upon the land of Zion, and upon her stakes, may be for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth." (D&C 115:6)

I think you might agree that there's a storm out there in the world today. And everyone needs refuge. The Everett Washington Stake, and specifically, the Penny Creek Ward is a refuge from the storm. Not necessarily because our people are so wonderful (although you are) but it's the restored gospel of Jesus Christ that is the refuge.

We are only inviting others to gather with us, to come and see. They have their choice. And they can choose not to gather and be part of Israel or Zion. It is a gathering of choice, those who are willing.

Maybe the most important one to gather is yourself. Are you willing? Am I?

"I'm already here in Zion," you might say. But are you willing to listen or 'hear the word of the Lord'? The word that is unique to you and your circumstance. The Lord knows us individually. He will give us His word for us, if we ask. Then we must be obedient to what He says.

It's a small thing, but a great work.

"Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great. Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days." (D&C 64:33-34)

The Lord is gathering us. He wants to feed us 'the good of the land of Zion'.

Will you listen, gather, and invite the others to gather?

I'm talking figuratively about gathering by bringing others into the fold of the restored gospel, but hopefully our desire and appreciation to gather physically will prompt our desire for gathering in the Lord's way. Everything is connected.

I'm glad to be connected to you in this stake of Zion.

Thank you for your sustaining love and support of me and others in the ward as we gather under the pavilion of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Take care!

Bishop Williams

P.S.

Tomorrow is youth and adult Sunday School during the second hour. The adult Zoom link is here:

<https://zoom.us/j/93564972961?pwd=OGZCcUtxSjZjTVRvbE4wY2YwM0dKZz09>

The youth link will be sent separately.

Sacrament meeting will be in person at 9:00am, and on our regular Zoom webinar:

<https://zoom.us/j/92685846361>

Also, big news flash: we get to sing hymns now in Sacrament meeting!

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You received this email because you made your email address available to your local Church leaders. It was sent by Rex Williams, whose calling is Bishop.