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Peaceable Followers of Christ

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Sat, Jun 12, 2021 at 8:43 PM

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Hello friend,

You are awesome. Really. Thank you for being you.

Also, things are getting awesome. It seems like we are really turning the corner with this pandemic and there is light at the end of this long, dark, historic tunnel.

And that means we will be going back to our regular Sunday services meeting schedule soon! In fact, the plan for our stake is to go back to regular second hour in-person meetings on July 4th, Independence Day!

We will continue to offer a virtual broadcast for high risk individuals for sacrament meetings, but our second hour meetings of Sunday School, Priesthood, Relief Society, and Primary will proceed as they did before the pandemic, in person, with no virtual broadcasting options.

I know this is a big change for us. Some may welcome it gladly, and others may not quite be ready for it. That's okay. We need to have compassion and understanding for all. You are welcome to return in person when you are ready.

We all experience the world differently. Our faith and beliefs develop and change over time based on the experiences we have. We need to recognize this fact, respect others and allow them to journey differently than us. As we love unconditionally we learn to act more like our Savior, and be ambassadors for peace.

Peace is when there is no contention, argument, or anger. We can have peace with our fellow brothers and sisters without all having the same belief systems. I have wonderful, peaceful relationships with many co-workers who share completely different religious beliefs than me. But for some reason, the world feels the need to contend and stir up anger, strife, and division between people who are different from each other. Anger and contention is unnecessary. We have systems designed to handle our differences. We don't need to hate those who believe differently than we do.

Jesus told the Nephites,

"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." (3 Nephi 11:29)

Instead, Jesus said to "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;" (Matt 5:44; Luke 6: 27-28; 3 Nephi 12:44)

The word 'enemies' means that there will be people who won't like you, but you can't control them. You don't have to agree with their beliefs, or condone their behavior in order to love them. That is a real difficult concept to grasp. How is it possible? Many people of the world don't understand it. You and I might not grasp it fully either. But I think it has something to do with this doctrine:

Each person is a child of God.

We just need to remember that. Knowing the divine nature of each person and the plan God has for all of us should help us love them. That doesn't mean it's easy. But we can do it.

Ponder it. What did Christ really mean when he said to love your enemies? And more importantly, what does it mean for you today?

Love, love, love, love, love. Sometimes I have to say it over and over again in my mind at certain times to help it sink in. You know, the times when I may not be feeling it, but I need to feel it for another person, that's when I need it the most, and I remember my Savior's compassion and unconditional love for all.

It's a good thing I have Jesus Christ and all you good disciples of Christ to be an example for me. That's why we gather and associate and serve with one another. We all need help to be more Christlike. That's why we have a church. And it's

awesome. You're awesome (like I said at the beginning.)

Thank you for your love, the pure love of Christ. We call that 'charity' because of the teachings of Mormon which he taught to those "that are of the church, that are the peaceable followers of Christ" (Moroni 7:3) I invite you to study that chapter in the Book of Mormon (Moroni 7) and strive to apply it in your life.

Let's be the 'peaceable followers of Christ'.

Take care.

Bishop Williams

P.S.

- Tomorrow is the second Sunday, so that means we'll have youth classes for our second hour.
- Also there's a special church-wide broadcast for singles at 3:00pm PT. Here is some info about it:
<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/event/face-to-face-for-single-adults>
- For all families with youth in Seminary, Seminary Graduation will be tomorrow at the Stake Center at 5:00pm PT.
- Sacrament meeting will be in person at 9:00am Sunday and at our regular Zoom link here:

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

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.