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Act for Joy

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Hi there, friend,

Did you miss it? I did. And I'm sorry.

You might not even have noticed, and that's okay.

I missed sending you an email last week. And I missed a couple weeks before that.

There's really no excuse, but I've had some weird travel situations that just made it difficult to write during those weeks. I'm sure you survived just fine without it.

Everyone is entitled to some breaks or mistakes, or some kind of failure at times. It's part of life. We are living in a fallen world, full of fallen creatures... us. And that's what allows us to feel joy.

Because we need opposition in all things. We learn this from Lehi in the Book of Mormon when he taught his son, Jacob, in 2 Nephi chapter 2:

"For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, my firstborn in the wilderness, righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad. Wherefore, all things must needs be a compound in one; wherefore, if it should be one body it must needs remain as dead, having no life neither death, nor corruption nor incorruption, happiness nor misery, neither sense nor insensibility.

Wherefore, it must needs have been created for a thing of naught; wherefore there would have been no purpose in the end of its creation. Wherefore, this thing must needs destroy the wisdom of God and his eternal purposes, and also the power, and the mercy, and the justice of God." (verses 11-12)

So, it's important to have opposition. This gives us purpose. To choose good over evil, and experience joy.

Lehi continues:

"And now, my sons, I speak unto you these things for your profit and learning; for there is a God, and he hath created all things, both the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are, both things to act and things to be acted upon. Wherefore, the Lord God gave unto man that he should act for himself." (verses 14, 16)

We are made to act. And that means taking some risk. We risk the possibility that we might fail or make a mistake. And that's okay. Because we have a Savior who made it possible for us to repent and change.

"And the days of the children of men were prolonged, according to the will of God, that they might repent while in the flesh; wherefore, their state became a state of probation, and their time was lengthened, according to the commandments which the Lord God gave unto the children of men. For he gave commandment that all men must repent; for he showed unto all men that they were lost, because of the transgression of their parents.

And now, behold, if Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen, but he would have remained in the garden of Eden. And all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end.

And they would have had no children; wherefore they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin.

But behold, all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things.

Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy." (verses 21-25)

That's you. You are to have joy. Joy is a deep sense of fulfillment and peace, even when bad things might happen. You can be sad at times, and experience all kind of emotions, that's part of our human experience, but overall, we are supposed to feel joy that we are alive and have a Father in Heaven who loves us, and a Savior, Jesus Christ, who sacrificed something immense for us, so that we can return to them and live in glory. That is something to be very joyful for.

I had an experience this week that gave me joy. It was an amazing exhilaration, yet also incredibly scary and difficult at the same time.

I was visiting my brother in Park City Utah, and he took me on a mountain bike ride in the mountains just outside his back yard. They didn't look like much from a distance, just some rolling hills full of bushes and some trees. But once we began traversing them, there was a huge network of trails all throughout the mountains. They were thin and very rocky at times, and also very steep, both uphill and downhill.

He said he was taking me on an easy path because I'm not in as good of shape as he is (he rides these every day.) Plus, I live at practically sea level here, and we were at 6500 feet elevation, so my lungs aren't used to that thin air.

Well, it wasn't easy. I was breathing very heavy, and had to take a few breaks while we were going uphill (mostly in the lowest gear.) But the downhill parts were super fun! We zig-zagged down between bushes, through little groves of trees, and over jagged rocks at high speeds. At any point, if I would have crashed, I probably would have been injured pretty bad, but I didn't think about that, I just kept looking forward, staying on the trail, and trusting that the bike would carry me over anything that was in my way.

And it did! I didn't crash! I learned that it was actually more safe to go fast over the jagged rocks because the momentum of the bike kept me upright and the shocks absorbed the bumps. "Point and shoot!" my brother would say, meaning, point my wheel down the trail and go fast, to help me not fear the terrain and trust my machine.

We eventually made it back to his house, and I didn't die! (Even though I was completely exhausted and I broke the bike chain about a mile from his house, but luckily it was mostly downhill so I just coasted back.) It was super difficult, scary, and dangerous, but I experienced joy! I acted. I overcame opposition. I made some mistakes, but in the end, I was preserved because I stayed on the path, and followed the master.

I hope you experience joy in your life. You don't have to go on a treacherous mountain bike ride, but you do have to act, and do things that make you happy, which might mean taking a little risk, however you define it. Doing something difficult, where you overcome some opposition, will bring you the joy of accomplishment. Whatever you do, stay on the path, and follow the Master.

Go act, and not be acted upon. You are the offspring of God!

You are loved... by many.

Take care,
Bishop Williams

P.S.

- Because it's a 5th Sunday, today during the second hour of church we have a special lesson for the adults, who will meet in the Relief Society room. All the youth will meet in the Priesthood room and have a special lesson too. Primary will meet as usual.
- You still have a chance to participate in the Fall 2021 Self-Reliance courses. The groups will begin meeting the week of September 5th, and run for 12 weeks. These are amazing learning experiences that will help you make changes in your life. You can choose from one of the following 5 courses:

1. Personal Finances
2. Starting and Growing Your Own Business
3. Education for Better Work
4. Finding a Better Job
5. Emotional Resilience

Contact Michele or David Roberts today at mdroberts8@comcast.net or davidaroberts8@gmail.com

- Stake Choir is meeting today from 4 to 5:30 at the Stake Center.

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.