

ASIA LOCAL PAGES

ASIA AREA LEADER MESSAGE

Discovering the Doctrine in the Sacrament Hymns

By Elder Benjamin Tai

Of the Seventy

In the New Testament accounts of the Last Supper, we learn that the Savior Jesus Christ observed the Passover with His disciples, instituted the ordinance of the sacrament, and “when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives” (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26) where, in the Garden of Gethsemane, He suffered for the sins of all mankind.¹

As latter-day disciples of Jesus Christ, each Sabbath we commemorate His atoning sacrifice through the ordinance of the sacrament. Like the disciples of old, each of us in our sacrament meetings are invited to “watch,” “tarry,” and “pray” with the Savior for “an hour”² as we remember Him and all that He has done on our behalf. Like the Savior, we too can prepare for this sacred time by singing and contemplating hymns, especially those that teach us about His divine role as our Redeemer.

Elder Peter F. Meurs of the Seventy has taught, “The sacrament hymn is an especially important part of our sacrament experience. Music elevates our thoughts and feelings. The sacrament hymn has even greater influence when we focus on the words and the powerful doctrine taught. We learn much from words such as ‘Bruised, broken, torn for us,’ ‘Let us remember and be sure our hearts

and hands are clean and pure,’ and ‘Where justice, love, and mercy meet in harmony divine!’

“As we sing a hymn in preparation to partake of the emblems, the words can become part of our covenant commitment. Consider, for example: ‘We love thee, Lord; our hearts are full. We’ll walk thy chosen way.’”³

Our hymnal contains many beautiful hymns that specifically reference the Savior, His Atonement, and the ordinance of the sacrament. At the bottom of each hymn, scriptural references can be found through which the underlying doctrine can be further explored and studied.

Through singing these hymns with our hearts, minds, as well as our voices, and through contemplating the wonderful doctrine expressed, we allow ourselves to be filled with gratitude, love, and peace through the power of the Holy Ghost.

A few years ago, I attended a sacrament meeting with a mind troubled

by the challenges and worries of the day. When the sacrament hymn commenced, together with the congregation I sang and thought about the following words:

*In humility, our Savior,
Grant thy Spirit here, we pray,
As we bless the bread and water
In thy name this holy day.*

*Let me not forget, O Savior,
Thou didst bleed and die for me
When thy heart was stilled and
broken
On the cross at Calvary.*

*Fill our hearts with sweet forgiving;
Teach us tolerance and love.
Let our prayers find access to thee
In thy holy courts above.*

*Then, when we have proven worthy
Of thy sacrifice divine,
Lord, let us regain thy presence;
Let thy glory round us shine.⁴*

As I began to sing, I felt the need and desire to repent and to be humble. This was followed by a vivid understanding of the symbolism behind the emblems of the sacrament and that the Savior sacrificed Himself for me. I became acutely aware that His stilled and broken heart made it possible for



Elder Benjamin Tai



my heart to be filled with forgiving, tolerance, and love; and that through His grace I may one day be worthy to be in His presence. At the conclusion of the hymn, my mind was at peace and my heart was full of joy and gratitude for the challenges and opportunities encountered in life. I was ready to partake of the sacrament.

Each week as we prepare to partake of the sacrament, may we:

- ponder the words of the sacrament hymn and be attentive to promptings to act,
- take time to read the scriptural references associated with the hymn and study the underlying doctrine,

- sing the hymn with our heart, mind, and voice, and
- remember the Savior's invitation to us to tarry, watch, and pray with Him each sacrament service

As we do so, we will discover greater peace, love, joy, and confidence through the gospel and greater meaning to our weekly sacrament experience. ■

NOTES

1. While there is no record of the name of the hymn sung on that Passover evening, many scholars believe it likely to be Psalms 113–18, which is usually sung during Passover and contains many messianic references.
2. See Matthew 26:38, 40–41.
3. Peter F. Meurs, "The Sacrament Can Help Us Become Holy," *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 86.
4. "In Humility, Our Savior," *Hymns*, no. 172.

as many sisters as was expected. However, they began with an opening hymn and prayer. And slowly more sisters started coming in. There was a message from the stake Relief Society president. She displayed different kinds of lights and explained about each light, comparing it with the qualities of the sisters. It was a beautiful message.

Then the actual part of the sisters came. It was time for them to showcase or present their topics.

Here I would like to talk about the dedication and the commitment of one group of sisters of a small branch of another city which belongs to our stake. They had to travel two-and-half to three hours to join the activity. They began with the presentation of being righteous women. They were indeed righteous women by example.

Each group of sisters came forward and presented their topics in the form of skits. Every one of them had put in a lot of effort to convey the message in a spiritual way and with a little bit of humor.

We all laughed and enjoyed ourselves, but in the end of each presentation, we were touched by the Spirit for the messages they carried about how to be happy always, how to be articulate and different, how to be self-reliant, and how to prepare for the temple.

It was amazing to see how the sisters joined hands together, both young and old, in acting it out. Lastly it was concluded by the testimonies of a few sisters who strengthened ours for their commitment to the gospel.

LOCAL PAGES

Bengaluru Stake Relief Society Activity

By Mary Xavier

"Turn on your lights"—Sister Sharon Eubank's message for October 2017—was the theme of our stake Relief Society activity for this year 2018.

The purpose was to unite sisters, increase their self-worth, and enlighten their minds toward ministering and temple preparation.

All were excited. The preparations from the stake activity committee began. They started planning, organizing, and assigning sisters for the activity.

We were five wards and one branch, which was a big number to coordinate. Each ward's sisters were assigned with

a topic to present on the day of activity with a skit or presentation.

And these were the topics covered:

- Being righteous
- Being articulate/different/distinct
- Being happy
- Preparing for the temple
- Being self-reliant
- Ministering/the worth of souls

Each ward started preparing for their presentation on the activity day. The long wait came to an end.

It was a beautiful morning. When the activity began, there were not

We all were given a framed picture of lights to remind us to turn on lights that we have and give light to others and also to help others to turn on theirs as well. Along with it was a reminder of the four things President Nelson challenged the sisters to do

during the last general conference.

On the whole, the activity was great! The stake Relief Society presidency had planned very hard to put all this together for us to learn and enjoy at the same time. They even had to work till midnight to pack those

gifts for the sisters. We could see and feel the love and dedication they had for all of us and they turned on their lights. The sisters from the KGF Branch were different and articulate by setting an example of traveling so far to show how much they loved the Lord. ■

JEFFREY D. ALLRED



President Russell M. Nelson of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is interviewed by Sergio Rubin, Argentine journalist and biographer of Pope Francis, in Montevideo, Uruguay.

Women in Church

By Kausalya

KGF Branch

I'm grateful to be a woman in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. And I go with the voice of what President Nelson has said in a recent general conference: "We need *your* strength, *your* conversion, *your* conviction, *your* ability to lead, *your* wisdom, and *your* voices."¹

"'Many churches are ruled by men, at the exclusion of women,' said Mr. Rubin. 'Is this the case for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?'

"'Well,' said President Nelson, 'you should talk to a woman about that.'

"President Nelson then turned and looked at Sheri Dew, executive vice president of Deseret Management Corporation, the CEO of Deseret Book Company, and former Relief Society General Presidency member.

"'Can you help with this answer about the role of women in the Church?' he asked

her. He motioned her into camera range.

"Sister Dew told Mr. Rubin that he would have a hard time finding a church where more women have more authority than in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"'There are hundreds of thousands of women, right now, who have legitimate leadership opportunities and expectations. As women in the Church we teach and preach, we expound doctrine, we serve missions as full-time proselyting missionaries, and we have leadership responsibilities,' she said.

"Then she added, 'I actually feel ennobled by being a Latter-day Saint woman. Every opportunity for growth I have ever had has come because of the Church.'

"President Nelson looked at Mr. Rubin and said, 'It is better coming from a woman than from me.'

"Mr. Rubin agreed. 'That is a live testimony,' he said.

"The message was powerful. When given the chance to talk about women in

the Church, our prophet had not spoken about Church doctrine or priesthood authority. He had not spoken of his wife or nine daughters. And he did not draw from one of the many sermons he has delivered about women. Instead, he called on a woman to speak for herself.

"President Nelson's invitation to Sister Dew seemed like an invitation to me as well. The Church needs my voice as a Latter-day Saint woman. That is what I know now that I didn't know before the South America ministry tour.

"I will never forget the way President Nelson watched as Sister Dew answered Mr. Rubin's question. It was a look that reflected gratitude and trust for all Latter-day Saint women.

"President Nelson's messages to women have always been profound.

"'My dear sisters, we need you!'" he said during the October 2015 general conference. 'We need *your* strength, *your* conversion, *your* conviction, *your* ability to lead, *your* wisdom, and *your* voices.'

"It's a sentiment I know he means.

"The Church needs our voices. Let's be ready. President Nelson has called on each of us to speak for ourselves."² ■

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, "A Plea to My Sisters," *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 96.
2. Sarah Jane Weaver, "How President Nelson Taught Me That the Church Needs My Voice as a Latter-day Saint Woman," Nov. 19, 2018, Church News section of LDS.org.

Family History— Importance of our Four Generations

By Sister Saraswathi Rajendran

Coimbatore Third Branch,
Coimbatore District

It's been eight years since we stepped into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We had no clue about family history work at the time of our conversion. But when we heard about baptism for the dead, we began studying about it and learned that we could perform baptisms for our dead ancestors. This knowledge was a cause for excitement, knowing that our ancestors who had died could receive baptism and live with our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

It was very hard when we initially started gathering information on our family, but we didn't stop. Our faith in the Lord made a way for us to find information for up to five generations. Section 2 of the Doctrine and Covenants speaks of promises made to the fathers, that their children would remember them.

Christ instituted the new and everlasting covenant in the New Testament, but our fathers lived in the old covenant and needed to enter/receive the new covenant, yet how could they when they were already dead? For that matter, our Lord, who is fair and just, from the beginning provided a way for them to be judged according to men in the flesh. Which means they needed



to receive the ordinances performed for the living and only the living could stand in for the dead.

Without our fathers, we would not be born to enjoy the new and everlasting covenant, and without us they cannot receive the necessary ordinances of the everlasting gospel. I believe for this reason; verse 15 of section 128 says we cannot be made perfect without them. There is a link and a powerful connection that ties our dispensation to theirs.

We felt joy and happiness when we got baptized for our progenitors and felt that they had become free and clean to be judged worthy to be with the Lord. Great was our happiness that I, along with my husband, had the courage to initiate this work for them and be the reason for their redemption. We learned the great significance of proxy baptism in the process.

Family history work is greatly important because when we perform the ordinances for them, we become their “saviours . . . on mount Zion”

(Obadiah 1:21) and in a way help them obtain salvation. Imagine our joy when we meet all those we baptized for in the Resurrection and hear their words of gratitude to us. Eternal life means eternal happiness, and Jesus Christ wants us to feel what it is like to be a savior to someone we may not even know and be able to rejoice with them.

I know family history work is a restored truth in our day. I know He loved me enough to lead me into this gospel, in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, amen. ■

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