

## Reach out to Rescue in Love

Stake Conference Saturday Night Adult Session, April 30, 2016  
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### Seek and Save that which was lost

- This past Christmas season a verse of scripture resonated with me.
  - I have pondered this verse and it is the basis for my thoughts today
- **Mat 18:11**  
For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.
- The Savior then goes on to speak of leaving the 99 and rescuing the 1.
- He made a similar statement in a different setting
- **Luke 19:10**  
For the Son of man is come to *seek* and to save that which was lost.

### We are all lost

- We are all lost in some way or in some degree or another and need saved
- They are different ways in which we "are lost" and need rescued
- We all have different challenges
- We all have different weakness and strengths
- We all need in some way to change and become like the Savior to return to our Heavenly Father

## **Ministered one by one and put forth his hand**

- In the seeking and finding – the rescue the Savior would have us be his hands
- As we look to the Savior in how to reach out there are several principles we can learn
  - Christ taught the multitudes but he ministered one by one
    - Reaching out to rescue is almost always a one on one thing
  - He put forth his hand
  - Thomas S Monson  
"Not only by precept did Jesus teach, but also by example. He was faithful to his divine mission. He stretched forth his hand that others might be lifted toward God." ("With Hand and Heart", Jan 1995 Ensign)
  - We need to stretch forth our hand with compassion and love
  - To rescue we need to reach out – give of ourselves
- I will talk about some ways and examples we reach out to rescue in Love

## **Reach out to share the gospel**

- Sometimes those that are lost are not members of our faith
- Eric Olsen and the dental hygienist
  - I asked if I could share this
- Name Changed

Eric is here tonight and it is possible that the dental hygienist in this story is also here. If you are here, although you agreed along with Eric to let me use your story he asked me to change your name because he wasn't sure you want to be specifically identified.

So I will use the name of Nancy in this experience. It's my wife's name and so it is the best name I could think of!

I have known Eric a long time and one thing you can say about him is he is always reaching out to rescue, whether it is non-members or the youth in our ward. He is always looking to others.

Here are his own words then:

"It has been in my nature since becoming active and serving a mission to set aside reservations and open my mouth. It doesn't hurt that I have an advanced background in assessing human behavior and people. I naturally want to understand people's life experience."

"In that light when I went to get my teeth cleaned I figured it was an opportunity to meet new people.

Nancy was my hygienist that day. She was an alternative looking person, attractive but out of place - unnatural hair color, multiple piercings, including her nose, kind but with a rather quiet cold outward focus.

We exchanged some pleasantries and I asked her if I could tell her a few things about her that might help her after my teeth were cleaned. I know she thought I was nuts but she agreed.

When done I expressed to her that her life was not fulfilling and that it was clear she had dreams but no plan, skills but no realization of her true worth. I also mentioned that she tries to get through each day rather than live through life and that she might call me to learn how to look forward in life instead of look back, and realize who she truly is. I told her other things that brought in the Spirit but those are for her alone.

A few days later she called me. We spoke a few more times, and I introduced her to the YSA sisters (Not just referred, introduced, big difference).

Shortly after starting to take the missionary lessons she went on a cruise with her daughter and her daughter's grandmother. During that cruise she emailed me and commented she wanted to keep reading the book of Mormon and was learning things she had never imagined and feeling things that were helping her see the world and people around her differently. She specifically commented 'how is it that I could have believed in Jesus my whole life and yet never known these truths?'

She desires to be baptized now, date TBD. When she gets baptized, she will strengthen us as much as she has been strengthened."

Eric had this to say about his interaction with Nancy:

I didn't judge her with internal biases when I saw her outward appearance. I learned some time later that her father left her as a young girl and her mom was addicted to drugs. When still a young girl her dad committed suicide. She was young and alone by most measures. Desiring more from life, she met a man who

became the father of her daughter. He was also a drug addict and a year after her daughter was born, she left him in hopes of a better life. He committed suicide a year after that.

Even with all this pain, her life is a victory. She overcame depressing circumstances, cared for her daughter, fought to educate herself and did all she could for her daughter.

Nancy now has her real hair back, only her ears have earrings and her relationship with her 8-year-old daughter is dramatically improved. Her daughter loves church. Today, she is an absolute professional, a great mom, has a growing testimony and a love for life. She is hopeful about the future and what it has in store for her and a plan in motion. She can now see the Lord's hand in her life. When we talk about the veil being lifted I think sometimes it's that we are able to see the Lord's hand in our lives and even more, realize it in the moment."

- If you were to ask Eric he would tell you than in reaching out to touch someone and lift him or her, he himself has been lifted up.

## **Reach out to those members who have lost their way**

- Sometimes those that are lost **are** members of our faith
- Sometimes our seeking those that lost takes a long, steady effort
- John Barnocky – Sam Friend
  - Baptized in 2000 in Florida
  - His wife a member, who back and forth active/inactive
  - Active for a while then both went inactive
  - Moved here to Oregon in 2003 to the Cooper Mt Ward.
  - Sam Friend assigned to be their home teachers
  - While the home teachers were welcome John and his wife did not come to church
  - For years Sam faithfully visited them every month, developing a friendship and bringing the Spirit to their home
  - A few years ago I was assigned as Sam's home teaching companion
  - We visited the Barnocky's for about 6 months – trial came
  - John's wife left him
  - John turned to the Savior and his home teachers
  - We supported John through his divorce
  - Because of the relationship and trust that a Home teacher had established a journey to change and activity in the church began
  - John adopted by the Friend family
  - Visit our ward today and you will find John sitting with the Friend family
  - The plan is that soon we will be in the temple with John as he does proxy baptisms for his parents
  - John's goal is to receive the MP and go to the temple for himself
- A faithful home teacher was the Savior's hands to help rescue a member who was lost and is now found

## Reach out to lift someone in need

- Sometimes the rescue we do is not to someone who is lost but who needs lifted
- Our Prophet is an example of this
  - How often have we read or heard of him taking time to reach out to lift someone in their extremities
  - How appropriate it is that the title of his biography is "To the Rescue"
- Jack Adams & Rod
  - Parkinson's disease is usually a long slow physical decline that accelerates as it gets advanced
  - Saw this with my grandfather
    - When I was young he took me fishing
    - When he was old I would drive over to Idaho and take him fishing
    - Treasured memories of Grandpa waiting for me to show up and the going with him
    - He suffered from Parkinson's disease and it was very tough on him and me
  - A longtime member of our ward, Jack Adams was diagnosed with Parkinson's a number of years ago
  - Jack was very articulate, he would do readings and acted in plays
  - He served a service mission in the Desert Industries teaching life skills
  - I was serving as bishop of the ward when he was diagnosed
  - He told me he wanted to be known as "Jack that had the shakes not shaky Jack"
    - Wavered physically but not spiritually or personally in the face of adversity
    - He faced this challenge in his life with grace and humor and faith
  - The past couple years the decline in his health has accelerated considerably
  - Difficult and heart wrenching to see for those who have known him
  - The beauty I have witnessed is the quiet, loving service provided his neighbor, Rod Barnes, who has been the Savior's hands to (D&C 61:5) "lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees"
  - This neighbor and friend has truly shown Christ-like service and love to Jack

### **Undone by the kindness of a stranger**

- Sometimes the rescue that is needed is a smile, or a kind word
- I like to think of myself as a person that would always be doing the reaching out or lifting others
- Yet I'm like us all – we all of us need this kind of lift some time or another
- If I can hold it together I will share with you a time when I was lifted
- I will read from my journal:

"Mom passed away the evening of March 27, 2013. Dad called me at 12:30 AM our time to let me know. I spent most of the rest of the night arranging a flight and packing before heading out to the airport at 4:00 AM. My flight took me to Salt Lake City and then connected to the Pocatello, Idaho airport.

This was of course a very emotional time even though I had been expecting her to pass away at anytime. I was holding it together pretty well though. While I was in the Delta lounge at the SLC airport I started calling some of Mom's best friends in the in our stake here in Oregon to let them know that Mom had passed away. While I was on the phone with Verlin Orton (Sister Orton was one of Mom's best friends), a complete stranger handed me a note and left. I never did see him again. As I hung up from the call I read the note.

The note simply read "Sorry for your Loss. Take Care"

I was completely undone by this simple act of kindness and the tears started flowing and the grieving for Mom's passing truly began."

- D&C 81:5  
Wherefore, be faithful; stand in the office which I have appointed unto you; succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees.

## **Reach out to a family member**

- Sometimes reaching out to rescue is within our own family
- Sometimes this can take the most patience and love of any rescue we might do
- At the last stake conference Bro Len Ogden shared how a brother, lost for many years was rescued
  - It was a story of love and patience and divine guidance and help
- Kevin & Scott
  - Our 2<sup>nd</sup> son
  - Grew up active, mission, temple marriage
  - Several years ago the wheels fell off
  - He lost his faith, lost his marriage, moved a long way away from his family
  - He did things ending up in a place of heartache and loneliness
  - A place that breaks his parents and siblings hearts
  - One of the only bright things in all this to me is how our family has reached out to him
  - He had great trepidation of how he would be received by his family during all this
  - In particular, I have been touched by his older brother
    - His older brother has been and continues to be Savior's hands in tirelessly reaching out to his brother to maintain those ties that bind us together
    - To lift him during the struggles that his brother is going through
- I am grateful to a son who reaches out to rescue within our family



## **Reach out to those who have passed on**

- There are many who are in need of a rescue who have passed on from this life
- Family History work is a one by one reaching out to them
- We have heard from several tonight who are doing this kind of rescue work
- Personally this kind of rescue work has blessed my life beyond measure
- Through the many hours and hours I have spent searching, researching, documenting and doing vicarious ordinances for them they have become precious to me and loved by me
- Most of these loved ones who are among those that are lost – Most often simply because they lived in a time and place where the gospel was not available to them
- This scripture has come to have great meaning to me:
  - D&C 138:58-59
  - "The dead who repent will be redeemed, through obedience to the ordinances of the house of God
  - And after they have paid the penalty of their transgressions, and are washed clean, shall receive a reward according to their works, for they are heirs of salvation."
- This gives me great hope and comfort that I might someday meet and rejoice with these loved ones that have gone before

## Though lost – We are known

- Though we are all lost in some way – we are not forgotten
- Isaiah 49:16  
"But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.  
Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.  
Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.
- We may feel forgotten or we may be lost but the Lord does not forget us
- Luke 19:10  
For the Son of man is come to **seek** and to save that which was lost.
- In this the Lord would have each of us be his hands
  
- The lord has someone for everyone here tonight to rescue
  - As you seek you will be led
- As you reach out and rescue others, you in turn will be lifted up to the savior
- That is my testimony