

Hope Because of Him

Cooper Mountain Ward Sacrament Meeting December 24, 2023

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Hope

- If you were to ask me for a one-word sermon on Christmas I would say “Hope”
- Why would I choose that word?
- What is it I hope for?
- Why do I have hope?

- The church has a beautiful video titled “The Christ Child”
- Birth of the Savior, the shepherds and the wise men
- Every time I watch this, I am moved by the depiction of the head wise man
 - As he kneels down and offers his gifts to the Christ Child
 - He is overcome with emotion
- I see in his face The realization of all his hopes **Because of Him, the Christ child**

Hope in being clean

- Isaiah 1:18
"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool "
- My Hope is that I can receive mercy and grace as I repent that I may be clean, **Because of Him**
- Isaiah 53:5 (Speaking of Christ)
" But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed"
- My hope is that I may be healed from the effects of sin. **Because of Him**

Hope in the resurrection

- Alma 42:23
“the atonement bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead.”
- I have hope that I shall live again, **Because of Him**
- This became very personal to me when for the first time, with the death of my mother I came face to face with that question – Is there life after death? Will I see her again?
 - Much of who I am today I attribute to my mother’s influence.
 - It was my mother who taught me faith as a young boy.
 - She was still teaching me about faith as she was facing her immanent passing to the other side.
 - My mother had cancer and about the time it was clear that her days left were few I would visit her and we would talk about many things
 - Her faith was burning just as bright as it ever was and was reflected in the things she would say to me
 - Her faith in the afterlife was:
 - That she was going to meet her loved ones
 - That we would be together again
- I am grateful for the hope that I have that one day I can be with my mother and other loved ones again **Because of Him**
- While there was and is still sorrow in the parting with my mother, death has no sting **Because of Him**

Hope when things are broken

- Isaiah 61: (Speaking of Christ)

The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are* bound;

... to comfort all that mourn;

... to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;....

- Joseph B Wirthlin

"Each of us will have ... those days when the universe itself seems shattered and the shards of our world lie littered about us in pieces. We all will experience those broken times when it seems we can never be put together again. " ("Sunday Will Come," *Ensign*, Nov 2006, 28–30)

- There are many reasons we may feel this way :
 - Loss of a loved one
 - Feeling that we can't measure up and perhaps never can measure up
 - We have been wronged most horribly.
 - Because of hurtful words of another.
 - Because of tragedy.
- Perhaps we contemplate our future and wonder if things might ever be better
- The scriptures teach us that the Savior descended below all.
 - (Alma 7:11) Suffered pain, afflictions, and temptations of every kind... That he might know how to succor his people
- In short there is nothing you or I will experience or feel that the Savior cannot understand nor have compassion for.
- Because of faith and understanding of this, I have hope that I can receive beauty for ashes **Because of Him**

Testimony

- I like to think that the wise man depicted in the video understood these things and as he gazed on the Christ child, he saw in him all his hopes
- I can relate to that.
- During the Christmas season I see in the birth of the savior my hopes
- Why?
- It is because of the witnesses I've received of Christ.
 - Some witnesses are small and contribute like glue around other witnesses that make up the whole of my testimony of Jesus Christ
 - Some witnesses burn very bright and shout that He is the Christ
- Because of those witnesses I have faith in and a testimony of Jesus Christ
- My testimony and witness to all of Christ is that lives with all that implies.
- My testimony is He wrought the Atonement which has the power to make all the things you and I hope for possible – **All Because of Him**