

LESSON 8

Salvation Comes through Jesus Christ

Introduction

Our efforts to follow Jesus Christ and keep His commandments are necessary but insufficient to qualify us for salvation. Our salvation is made possible only through the merits, mercy, and grace of Jesus Christ. The doctrine of

Christ helps us understand that through His grace, we can learn the gospel, receive ordinances, and press forward on the path that leads to eternal life.

Background Reading

- Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Gift of Grace,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 107–10.
- L. Tom Perry, “The Gospel of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2008, 44–46.

Suggestions for Teaching

2 Nephi 2:6–9; 25:23; Mosiah 4:6–8

Salvation is possible because of Jesus Christ

Display and read the following statement by Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



“Many people wonder, ‘Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going?’ Our Eternal Father did not send us to earth on an aimless, meaningless journey. He provided for us a plan to follow. He is the author of that plan. It is designed for man’s progress and ultimate salvation and exaltation” (“The Plan of Salvation,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 69–70).

- When people discover that God has not left them to wander alone through mortal life but has provided a plan for their salvation, what do you think they might feel?

Invite students to read 2 Nephi 2:6–9, looking for what the prophet Lehi said makes salvation possible.

- According to Lehi, what makes salvation possible in God’s plan? (Students should identify the following: **We can be saved only through the merits, mercy, and grace of Jesus Christ.** You might share the following definition of what it means to be saved or to receive salvation: “*Salvation* in its true and full meaning is synonymous with *exaltation* or *eternal life* and consists in gaining an inheritance in the highest of the three heavens within the celestial kingdom. With few exceptions this is the salvation of which the scriptures speak” [Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (1966), 670].)

- What is meant by the *merits*, *mercy*, and *grace* of Jesus Christ? (The *merits* of Jesus Christ are His righteous acts, particularly His Atonement. *Mercy* refers to the compassion and forbearance He extends toward us despite our sins. *Grace* refers to the help He extends to us in the form of mercy, love, kindness, and the enabling power that allows us to receive eternal life and exaltation after we have expended our own best efforts. See also Bible Dictionary, “Grace.”)

To help deepen students’ understanding of this doctrine, display the following statement by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, and ask a student to read it aloud:



“We cannot earn our way into heaven; the demands of justice stand as a barrier, which we are powerless to overcome on our own.

“But all is not lost.

“The grace of God is our great and everlasting hope.

“Through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the plan of mercy appeases the demands of justice [see Alma 42:15]” (“The Gift of Grace,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 108).

- Why is a person’s own righteousness not enough to meet “the demands of justice” and obtain eternal life? (Though in time we may learn to live the commandments perfectly, no one has lived a perfect life except the Savior [see Romans 3:23]. Although we may stop sinning, we cannot erase the harm or the guilt of our past actions. This is why the Atonement and grace are necessary.)

Remind students that while we are saved only through the merits, mercy, and grace of Jesus Christ, the prophets in the Book of Mormon taught what we must do to access the Savior’s redeeming power.

Invite a student to read Mosiah 4:6–8 aloud, and ask the class to look for what King Benjamin taught we must do to receive salvation through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

- According to King Benjamin, what must we do to receive salvation through the Atonement? (Come to a knowledge of God and of the Atonement, put our trust in God, keep the commandments diligently, and continue faithfully to the end of our lives.)

Ask students to read 2 Nephi 25:23.

- What doctrine did Nephi teach regarding our salvation? (Students should identify the following doctrine: **Because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can be saved by grace after all we can do.** Help students understand that only through Jesus Christ can we become holy and like our Father in Heaven.)

To help students better understand this doctrine, invite a student to read aloud the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994):



"'After all we can do' includes extending our best effort. It includes living his commandments.

"'After all we can do' includes loving our fellow men and praying for those who regard us as their adversary. It means clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, and giving 'succor [to] those that stand in need of [our] succor' (Mosiah 4:16)—remembering that what we do unto one of the least of God's

children, we do unto him.

"'After all we can do' means leading chaste, clean, pure lives, being scrupulously honest in all our dealings and treating others the way we would want to be treated" ("Redemption through Christ after All We Can Do," *Liahona*, Dec. 1988, 5).

- In what ways have you experienced the Savior's grace helping you beyond your own abilities as you have extended your best efforts to come to Him?

Use the following statement, also by President Ezra Taft Benson, to help students ponder this question before they respond:



"As a Church, we are in accord with Nephi, who said, 'It is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.' (2 Nephi 25:23.) ...

"By grace, the Savior accomplished his atoning sacrifice so that all mankind will attain immortality.

"By his grace, and by our faith in his atonement and repentance of our sins, we receive the strength to do the works necessary that we otherwise could not do by our own power.

"By his grace we receive an endowment of blessing and spiritual strength that may eventually lead us to eternal life if we endure to the end.

"By his grace we become more like his divine personality" ("Redemption through Christ after All We Can Do," 4–5).

- What do you think we can do to show our gratitude for what Jesus Christ makes possible?

Testify that only through grace made possible through the Atonement of Jesus Christ can we overcome the effects of the Fall of Adam and Eve, obtain a remission of sins, overcome imperfections, and progress toward perfection. Encourage students to ponder whether they are doing all they can to receive the blessings of the Lord's grace.

2 Nephi 31:2, 10–21; 3 Nephi 11:31–40; 3 Nephi 27:13–22

The doctrine of Christ

Write the following references on the board:

2 Nephi 31:2, 10–21

3 Nephi 11:31–40

3 Nephi 27:13–22

Assign one part of the class to study 2 Nephi 31:2, 10–21, a second part of the class to study 3 Nephi 11:31–40, and a third part to study 3 Nephi 27:13–22. Before students begin, point out that these passages contain the terms “doctrine of Christ,” “my doctrine,” or “my gospel.” Explain that the doctrine or gospel of Christ consists of what Jesus Christ has done and continues to do to draw us to the Father. It also consists of what we must do to access the blessings of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Invite each group to identify and mark what their assigned verses teach about the doctrine of Christ—what Christ has done and what we must do.

After students have had a few minutes to study their assigned passages, ask them to list what they find on the board beside each reference. Then ask:

- What has Jesus Christ done to draw us to the Father?
- What are some of the things we must do to access the blessings of Christ’s Atonement? (We must have faith, repent, be baptized, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, endure to the end, and receive and obey personal revelation.)
- How might you summarize the importance of living the doctrine or gospel of Jesus Christ? (Students should identify a principle like the following: **As we live according to the doctrine of Christ, we can access the blessings of the Atonement and receive eternal life.**)

According to the needs of your students, consider asking questions like the following to help them further analyze the scripture passages they read:

- What is a phrase in 2 Nephi 31:20 that has particular meaning to you, and how does it help you access the blessings of the Atonement?
- As taught in 2 Nephi 31:13–14, 17, what does it mean to be baptized “by fire”? (A person receives the remission of sins and the cleansing that comes through the Holy Ghost.)
- According to 3 Nephi 11:39–40, why is so important for each person to accept the doctrine of Christ? (You may want to invite students to cross-reference this passage with Helaman 5:12.)
- According to 3 Nephi 27:14–16, what happens to us as we live according to the doctrine or gospel of Jesus Christ?

Conclude by displaying the following statement from *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service*. Invite students to read it and look for ways in which living the doctrine of Christ can bless them throughout their lives.

“Individuals and families begin to follow Christ as they exercise faith in Him and repent of their sins. They receive a remission of sins through baptism and by receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost

from one who has authority from God to perform these ordinances. They then endure to the end, or, in other words, they continue throughout their lives in exercising faith in Jesus Christ, repenting, and renewing the covenants they have made. These are not just steps that they experience once in their lives; rather, when repeated throughout life these principles become an increasingly rewarding pattern of living. In fact, it is the only way of living that will bring peace of conscience and enable Heavenly Father's children to return to live in His presence" (*Preach My Gospel* [2004], 6).

- In what ways has living the doctrine of Christ “become an increasingly rewarding pattern of living” for you?

Encourage students to ponder how well they are living the doctrine of Christ. Ask them to think about what they might do better to access the blessings of living the doctrine of Christ.

Student Readings

- 2 Nephi 2:6–9; 25:23; 31:2–21; Mosiah 4:6–8; 3 Nephi 11:31–40; 27:13–22.
- Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Gift of Grace,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2015, 107–10.