

Equality
Living Waters Ranch Retreat
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What if I talk so long that there are none of you left here by the time I finish?

I want to thank the organizers.

[Crosstalk]

(Closer? Really?)

I want to thank the organizers. These things are never easy to do. And the people who do this... (See now, okay, you can't see me.) The people that **do** are always called upon to make a number of sacrifices. And invariably, by the time one of these occurs, they've vowed never again to ever do another one of these things. And it's like childbirth: It takes awhile, and the memory diminishes. And they say, "Well, let's do another one," foolishly thinking that they won't get to this point again! But I want to thank all of those.

I was going to mention that we had people here... Kaai and McKenzie [Lincoln] that are traveled all the way from Hawaii. And what a remarkable thing it is to come that far. Until, of course, we have ~~Maksalt~~ [Maksad] and Holida who came from Turkmenistan to be here. And so, they win the prize. (I'm not sure what that prize is.) But they traveled the longest distance, and maybe the prize is you get to rest now. And he gets called "Max" to Americanize and make it easy for us. But I was saying, "It's Max on, Max salt." The real name is that: ~~Maksalt~~ [Maksad]. If you've seen Karate Kid... [Directed to Max and Holida:] I don't know, have you seen Karate Kid? She has, okay. Brother and sister with an interesting story to tell.

(I think if I move it closer, there's more of that, not less. But you're responsible. If you dislike the feedback, throw whatever leftover bread you have back there at that booth. And hopefully, it'll be stale enough to make an impact.)

There was a circumstance that came to many of our attention recently: a fellow named Randy Albalate who lost a friend of his, Delfin. And it occurred to me that I ought to mention the passing of his friend, as well as the passing of a number of other people: LueAnn Thayne, ~~Shane~~ [Shaylee] Achter, Lisa VanCampen, Tyson Hunt, Jody Bailey, Bob Bartel. Many of you probably don't know any of their names. Some of you probably may know one or another but probably don't know all. I can tell you that there isn't one who passes out of this world who's received a covenant from the Lord that isn't notable on the other side after their departure. No one is forgotten in the wisdom of the Lord.

Now, some practical stuff that **needs to be said**. Every one of you should do what you need to do to take care of your health. The average person who dies as a result of the COVID infection has 2.8 co-morbidities. That means that they have (on average) 2.8 other causes of their death. They don't die from one; they die from a multitude. I saw an Alta billboard at

the Alta Hospital, as you drive by. They have this neon sign that changes lettering to tell you things. One of the things that they circulated through on their billboard was that 80% of all strokes are preventable with 30 minutes a day of exercise. There is an expression about “when it comes to activity, you either use it or you lose it”—meaning that the body's capacity is designed to be retained by activity, by the things that you do. If you don't **do**, the body atrophies, you lose the capacity. Diet, exercise, smoking, alcohol, drugs, and just a general lifestyle—all of these things have an effect upon both your health and how long you will be here. That “eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die” is more or less “eat, drink, and be merry because tomorrow we're **causing** our death.”

So, during the years in which Bill Clinton was the President of the United States, he had an inner circle of folks advising the presidency and trying to move the agenda along, and they made this statement at one point: “Everything is political.” And I thought—at the time that they said, “Everything is political”—what nonsense that was. That was a statement of an objective to be achieved.

When I was little, I remember the adults saying that it's not polite to ever discuss politics or religion. You can be friends with someone, you can be bosom buddies with someone, but don't talk with them about politics or religion. That statement by the elders was purposeful. It was designed to prevent conflict over things that people feel strongly about.

So, when the Clinton administration folks are advocating that everything is political, what they're really advocating is that we need more conflict; we need more people to become angry with one another; we need to stir people up so that their hearts are alienated from each other because they feel intensely over some political issue. And make **everything** political. Make whether or not BYU's football team wins or loses a game against the University of Arizona's football team, played in the capital of sin—Las Vegas—political, and then we can get people even more angry than they would be over BYU playing the University of Utah.

There was a statement that grew out of that same Clinton era that was widespread—you saw it everywhere—that certain kinds of speech are not politically correct. “Oh, oh, oh, you shouldn't say that. That's not politically correct.” It seemed like nonsense when that was first emerging into the vocabulary. And yet, today I would bet you that among you folks (who are all here in agreement on certain principles of religion) that there would be **very sharp** disagreements between the group of you over some political issues. **That was an objective**—long pursued, artfully developed, carefully manipulated—in order to get us into the position where we are today: divided from one another and our hearts alienated from one another over things that largely don't matter.

People did not discuss politics or religion, because **they wanted to avoid being angry with one another**. There is a problem that is identified by the Lord in the Answer to the Prayer for Covenant that says, *Mankind has been **controlled** by the adversary through anger and jealousy, which has led to bloodshed and the misery of many souls.* That's the problem. And it's a **tool for control**. Then the next sentence presents the solution: *Even strong disagreements should not provoke **anger**, nor to invoke my name in vain as if I had part in your every dispute* (T&C 157:54, emphasis added).

I find it interesting that the way that is put is “to invoke the [Lord's] name in vain”—one of the “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain” commandments that we found in the ten commandments that are foundational **to** our society.

And so, the purpose is to get you stirred up to anger with one another and then to say—about a matter that's purely political—that **God** is involved because “I've prayed about it, and I feel righteous indignation in opposing your political view.” And then, the inverse is true as well. **They** feel righteously indignant at whatever it is that **you're** advancing. And so, we see everything is political. They've succeeded, and we've lost, and now anger becomes the rule of the day.

Disagreeing rigidly... In the Joseph Smith History, part one, paragraph 11, describing the Methodists, the Presbyterians, and the Baptists, this is what Joseph recorded about his youthful observations of how the adult ~~religiousness~~ or religionists were acquitting themselves:

*Notwithstanding the great love which the converts to these different faiths expressed at the time of their conversion, and the great zeal manifested by the respective clergy who were active in getting up and promoting this extraordinary scene of religious feeling in order to have everybody converted, as they were pleased to call it—let them join what sect they pleased; yet when the converts began to file off, some [of them] to one party...some to another, it was seen that the seemingly good feelings of both the priests **and** the converts were more pretended than real. For a scene of great confusion and **bad feeling** ensued, priests contending against priest and convert against convert, so that all their good feelings for one another (if they ever had any) were entirely lost in a strife of words and a contest about opinions. (JSH 1:11 RE, emphasis added)*

That description of the Methodists, the Presbyterians, and the Baptists should not become a description of **us**. It should **not** be how **we** conduct ourselves toward one another, **even if we have strong disagreements** over something. And it **certainly** shouldn't provoke us to invoke the name of God in order to make Him be on your side, as if He had part in your everyday petty disagreements with one another.

“Take a breath, Nora.” (My wife's gonna be talking about that; that you own that [speaking to Stephanie]. I'm just... I'm giving you attribution.) We have a granddaughter named Harper. What is she now? Two and a half? Three? Two. Yeah, she's two going on 16. And her mom has taught her (and you're gonna hear my wife's podcast), when she's upset and angry and can't deal with it to take a breath. And they were driving about, and Nora was crying in the car. And her two-year-old sister was exasperated at her, and she said, “Take a breath, Nora!!” And so, it's become kind of a internal family cliché: “Take a breath, Nora.”

These folks that Joseph wrote about were no less zealous in their faith than we are in ours.

So, some of you feel an inordinate anxiety at the events we can all see taking place throughout the world. You've allowed the **politics of everything** to make you **desperate** to flee. Well, it doesn't matter if you flee; the circumstances aren't going to change. And if you

bring with you the conviction that “everything is political,” you're not going to escape the anxiety that you feel.

One of the reasons why political leaders find it **very** useful to make people frightened is because when they are frightened and they get to the “fight or flight” part of their mind, they cease to be rational—and they find themselves willing to adopt **irrational** choices to try and solve the problem that is making them afraid, even if the problem that they fear is of very little or even no consequence.

You're being played. You're being played, America. You're being played, the world. And you are allowing yourselves to be played as disciples of the Lord. You ought—of all people—to have an extraordinary amount of confidence that the Lord knows exactly what He's doing, and He's making provisions to accomplish the fulfillment of the covenants that He said He intends to vindicate. *As well might man [put] forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri River [from running] in its...course* (T&C 138:22) than man interrupt the purposes of God. It's just not gonna happen.

Patience is very hard to summon when you're stirred up to anxiety—“Oh, my God, my God, my God!!”—over something that your **God** has control over. He defeated an invading Assyrian army using **fleas**. He fed the Israelites who were tired of manna with quail that flew in to be feasted upon. The God of Nature is **not troubled** by what troubles you. And the God of Nature is probably nothing more than bemused at how you're acting in this moment of confusion and dread. Our Lord is unflappable and affable. And He's not dancing around, doing a pee-pee dance because He's afraid of what's happening today. He has absolute confidence in the ultimate outcome, and it's going to be exactly as **He said it would be**. So, fleeing—particularly at **this** moment—may not be at all what you think it will be.

Well, I also want to fix some perceptions about the coming *idyllic* community that you **hope** to occupy. So, let me tell you what you have to look forward to.

There's two statements that really represent the one view, and one of them is drawn from the Guide and Standard, and the other one is drawn from T&C **64** [61]. This one from the Guide and Standard: *We cannot allow ourselves to be drawn in to inequality when the result of this labor is to make us one body equal with one another. We cannot imitate the failures of the past by establishing a hierarchy, elevating one above another, and forgetting that we must be of one heart, one mind and with no poor among us* (T&C 175:39). And then, the second one: *Nevertheless, in your temporal things you shall be equal in all things, and this not grudgingly; otherwise, the abundance of the manifestations of the spirit shall be withheld* (T&C 61:4).

These two statements give the impression that we will have identical property and identical possessions and be identically situated with one another, **and** they also form the basis for complaints when your theory of what that means is the one thing and the reality is something different—and you're not getting “yours.” So, now we've got a scriptural basis with which to point and to accuse and to judge and to condemn and to divide and to say, “It's not fair—or Zion! ‘Cuz it's not; look at these Scriptures I just read you.”

So, let's ease into what it really means to be equal with one another with a Scripture that is taken from Alma. And this is just describing how the people behaved:

*And when their priests left their labor to impart the word of God unto the people, [and] the people also left their labors to hear the word of God. And when the priest had imparted unto them the word of God, they all returned again diligently unto their labors, and the priest, not esteeming himself above his hearers; for the preacher was no better than the hearer, neither was the teacher any better than the learner. And thus **they were all equal**; and they did...**labor** every man according to his strength. (Alma 1:5 RE, emphasis added)*

They weren't all priests. (Well, that's not equal.) They weren't all teachers. (That's not equal either.) But they were all equal. "And they did **all** labor..." Oh, so they have one thing in common, and the one thing that they have in common is **work**, "...every man according to his strength." You have to give what you have. And one man's strength may not be another man's strength, but he needs to give according to the strength that he has. And one woman's strength may not be what another woman's strength is, but she must give according to the strength that she has.

If I could point to one of this morning's examples (or mid-day examples, I guess): Connie Waterman is physically frail. But she has the strength to compose and the strength to sing a song of worship that means something to us all. It certainly means something to me; it certainly had an effect upon me. Everyone has to labor.

Then there's the Lord just confronting Israel directly:

*Yet you say, the way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel, is not my way equal? Are not **your** ways unequal? When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, and commits iniquity and dies in them, for his iniquity that he has done shall he die. Again, when the wicked man turns...from his wickedness that he has committed, and does that which is lawful and right, he [will] **save** his soul alive. Because he considers and turns away from all his transgressions that he has committed, he shall surely live — he shall not die. Yet says the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? Are not your ways unequal? (Ezekiel 8:7 RE, emphasis added)*

Equal (as the Lord is explaining here) means "accountable, responsible." **Every one of us** is equal in the eyes of God, meaning you're going to pay a price or you're going to receive a reward, all of this talking about after they die. The righteous (after they die) shall live. The wicked (after they die) shall be dead. Everyone is equal. That's it from Ezekiel, and he poses the question again another eight chapters later:

*Yet the children of your people say, The way of the Lord is not equal. But as for them, **their way** is not equal. When the righteous [man] turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall even die thereby. But if the wicked turn from his wickedness and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby. Yet you say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, **I will judge you, everyone after his ways.** (Ezekiel 16:6 RE, emphasis added)*

We are all equally accountable before God. And no one gets away with disobedience, period. No one does.

So, let's take this to another level and look at something that the apostle Paul wrote, talking about marriage—in two passages, written to the same audience in two different letters: one in First Corinthians; the other in Second Corinthians. The one in First Corinthians says:

If any brother has a wife that believes not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not divorce her. And the woman who has a husband that believes not, if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy. (1 Corinthians 1:26 RE)

Keep that in mind while we read from Second Corinthians:

Be not [equally] yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what concord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has he that believes with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? (2 Corinthians 1:21 RE)

I would suggest that the correct way to read the second one is in light of the first one—that the first one was the foundation; the second one is the next part. And I would say that being “unequally yoked” is not talking about the problems; it's talking about the commitment to marriage. If a man is committed to his marriage and the wife is committed to the marriage, **then it doesn't matter if there are religious differences between them.** They're equally yoked so long as they both are committed to their marriage. And there's no reason why you can't be happy with the **spouse you chose** if that spouse is committed to the marriage, and you are as well.

The things that Christ talked about that were gifts from God were simple things: birds of the air, flowers in the field, the sunrise, the rain, the sunset, the cloud cover. These are simple things that can be enjoyed by everyone and appreciated by everyone as gifts that come from God—without getting into whether or not you ought to bless the sacrament and pass the bread **before** you bless the wine and pass the wine because “our fellowship does it different than that.”

Really?

Really!

Okay, here's another way in which equality really is meant by the Lord in a context: *Women have claim on their husbands until they are taken. And if they are not found transgressors, they remain upon their inheritances. All children have claim upon their parents until they are of age...* (T&C 79:1), meaning, if you're the man in the house, your wife has claim on you for her support. That's an obligation that's imposed upon you. Among other things, one of the things that occurs naturally in the course of husband- and wife-dom is that the wife will, on occasion, conceive a child, bear the child, give birth to the child, and be indisposed. Even if

she's doing light office work, the commitment to the furthering of the family is going to interrupt her ability. The husband has no such interruptions. Therefore, the wife has claim on the husband. And the two of them, together as parents, the children have claim on them. **That's your responsibility.** That's your parental responsibility. It's ordained by God. And we all share equally these duties before God for the support within our own family.

Then there is this: *But if any provide not for his own, and especially...those of his own house, he has denied the faith and is [worth] worse than an unbeliever* (1 Timothy 1:13 RE). Everyone—equally—is responsible to provide for their own. My family has claim on me for support. But your family has claim on **you** for support. Your family doesn't have claim on me for their support. And my family doesn't have claim on you for their support.

Alma mentions that there was no inequality among them. This was because of the preaching that was given: *Those priests who did go forth among the people did preach against all lyings, and deceivings, and envyings, and strifes, and malice, and revilings, and stealing, robbing, plundering, murdering, committing adultery, and all manner of lasciviousness, crying that these things ought not so to be* (Alma 11:8 RE). These are the things that are required to be removed from among us:

- Lying—that has to end.
- Deceiving, which can be a bit more subtle than outright lying. But deceiving can't be among us.
- Envyings—we should never be caught up in the envy of one another or of anyone else.
- Strifes
- Malice
- Revilings
- Stealing
- Robbing
- Plundering
- Murdering
- Committing adultery, and
- Lasciviousness

I find it interesting that murdering and committing adultery are right together in this list of improprieties. I had a client ~~who got~~ who pled guilty. I didn't think he should have; I recommended that he not. But he pled guilty to a white-collar crime because he didn't want to take the risk of the trial. And because the prosecutor had suggested that he would recommend 90 days of suspended jail time and that he could—if he did get jail time—he could serve it at home. So, the client took the deal against my advice and entered the plea on a white-collar crime that I didn't think he committed. I didn't think what they were charging with actually fit the statutory requirement. And I told him not to do it; he did it anyway. And the judge rejected the 90-day recommendation of the prosecutor and sent him away for 14 years to 24 months in the state penitentiary. Well, this fellow was never ill-disposed to begin with. He didn't belong in prison to begin with. The whole thing was just nonsense. And he went out, and it didn't take the state penitentiary long to figure out that he was a good guy. He helped bring a literacy program into the prison. He helped some

guys get through their GED. And as luck would have it, murderers are a problem at the state penitentiary, so he was made the jailmate with murderers in order to calm them down and reduce the threat and make it easier for the guards.

While he was there, he became friends with three murderers in the Utah State Penitentiary. **All three murderers** had committed murder as a consequence of adultery. So, linking murder and adultery together in the list that Alma provides is not just happenstance. Preaching against adultery and guarding yourself against that may keep you also distant from the kind of anger and violence that results in the shedding of blood and the misery of many souls, just like the Answer to the Prayer for Covenant mentions.

Then there is this statement—it's a rather lengthy passage, but it's really worth hearing:

Therefore, say unto the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: I do not do this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for my holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the heathen where you went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which you have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, says the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.

*For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean from all your filthiness; and from all your idols [I will] cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to **walk in my statutes**, and you shall **keep my judgments and do them**.*

*And you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people and I will be your God. I will also save you from...your uncleanness, and I will call for the grain and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field, that you shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall you remember your...evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall **loathe yourself in your own sight** for your iniquities and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I do this, says the Lord God, be it known unto you; be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.*

Thus says the Lord God: In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities, I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be built. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. ...they shall say, This land that was desolate has become like the Garden of Eden, and the waste and desolate and ruined cities have become fortified and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places and plant that which was desolate. I the Lord have spoken it, ...I will do it. (Ezekiel 18:8-10 RE, emphasis added)

So, **the land is going to produce**—you have to walk in His statutes, you have to keep His judgments. And if you do, eventually you will come to the point that you recognize, in your

own eyes, the loathsomeness of the things that you have done that were ungodly, that were unclean, that were inappropriate, selfish, unkind, unholy. **You'll** do that. Because as you become more clean, you look back with abhorrence upon your past failures.

Then, you get to go to harsh lands, bad places, desolate wastes, desolate, desolate. Okay, that's the list. That's what He's talking about. Here's what these people that He's going to gather are going to get to do: They get to go to desolate land; wastes shall be built; it's gonna lay desolate in the sight of all that pass by. And the people that pass by that looked at this place are going to say, "This land that was desolate has become like the Garden of Eden!" Well, **how** did that happen? It's because, apparently, idiots went and tilled this crappy, desolate, waste place and invested their **labor**. By the sweat of your brow shall you eat your bread (see Genesis 3:1 RE). What He's saying is, "Okay—finally, finally I've got people who are willing to invest the sweat of their brow. I told Adam that was the deal. You didn't like paradise. So here, go take this, and turn it back into paradise. I made you a husbandman to the ground. You didn't like that; you're malcontent. So here, go out, and work this stuff." This whole passage ~~in Isaiah~~ in Ezekiel is accounting for the **surprise**. "Oh, my word. Look at that!"—the surprise of the passersby who see tilling going on in pretty unfavorable conditions. Well, why would that be?

It's because the Lord agrees to prosper what you do. But it is the **doing** that is incumbent upon **you**. The Three Nephites aren't gonna come plow the field (folklore from early Mormon history notwithstanding). John the Beloved isn't gonna come out and say, "Hey, I've been saving these magic beans for, you know, generations. And if you plant 'em..." Actually, now that I think about it, if you plant 'em you might inherit a giant in the land. So, why don't you do without the magic beans?

There's work to be done. Our covenant with the Lord says,

Teach your children to honor me. Seek to recover the lost sheep remnant of this land and of Israel and no longer forsake them. Bring them unto me and teach them of my ways, to walk in them. And I, the Lord your God, will be with you and will never forsake you, and I will lead you in the path which will bring peace to you in the troubling season now fast approaching. I will raise you up and protect you, abide with you, and gather you in due time... (T&C 158:11-13)

Notice that there's a sequence here within the covenant itself. He's saying He's gonna lead us and bring us to peace. But there's a troubling season that is **fast** approaching. That's gonna happen with some rapidity; it's gonna be upon you. "I will raise you up and protect you, abide with you, and gather you **in due time**." That doesn't sound like we oughta be assembling ourselves in haste. That sounds like the troubling times fast approaching are going to **precede** the time in which He will gather us in due time.

*...and this shall be a land of promise to you as your inheritance from me. The earth will **yield** its increase... (Ibid. 13-14, emphasis added)*

Yield requires effort. It requires something be pursued. It requires that there be effort.

- “We got our army together, and we got our battering ram, and we beat against the door of the castle, and a lot of us took arrows from above—but we just kept beating and beating, and the door to the castle yielded. And then we were able to take the stronghold.”
- “I saw this gorgeous gal when I was a freshman and asked her out 30 times my freshman year and 60 times my sophomore year and 90 times my junior year. And my senior year, her returned missionary came back and abandoned her, and she went out with me! She finally yielded!”

Okay, think of that word “yield” in the context of the covenant. It doesn't mean, “There! I went out. I prayed. Jesus, I'd like wheat; oh, and barley; oh, oh, and oats—I like oatmeal. Oh, oh, oh, oh, grapes, too. Grapes. I want some grapes. And how 'bout some peach trees? Love peaches!” [Denver singing] “Millions of peaches; peaches for me” (lyrics of the song “Peaches”).

“Why is this a barren wasteland, desolate, no better than it was before my prayer? I don't get it, Lord, wasn't this supposed to be fairy dust that makes it all easy?”

...The earth will yield its increase, and you will flourish upon the mountains and upon the hills, and the wicked will not come against you because the fear of the Lord [shall] be with you. I will visit my house, which the remnant of my people shall build, and I will dwell therein, to be among you, and no one will need to say, Know ye the Lord, for you [shall all] know me, from the least to the greatest. (Ibid. 14-15)

That's at the end of the process that He's describing in the ~~Answer to the Prayer~~ or this is the Covenant itself that we're reading from. This is the process that He says is going to unfold. We expect a house of God with no labor, land that will yield without effort, a desolate wasteland to become the Garden of Eden when we do nothing more than to ask.

And then we have these statements: *But the laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion, for if they labor for money, they shall perish* (2 Nephi 11:17 RE). Okay, we now have a reference to Zion. And in the reference to Zion, there is **one singular, solitary role** identified: laborer, labor, labor. Oh, there's only one job; it's to **labor**! Hey, we all get to be equal.

This is **all** that He promises to us; once you start working, this is the **only** thing He promises to you:

*And they shall build houses and inhabit them, ...they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build and **another** inhabit, they shall not plant and **another** eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, in my elect shall **long enjoy the work of their hands**. They shall not **labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble**... (Isaiah 24:9 RE, emphasis added)*

That's what you're promised. Anything you want, if you'll work, He will help the ground to **yield** to your **labor**. And if you build yourself a house, someone is not going to come and take it away from you. If you plant yourself food, the yield that comes from that no one is gonna come and remove it from you by force. You get to enjoy that.

And again, that was a prophecy by Isaiah. There's another prophecy to the similar effect—fewer words—but in the Psalms: *Blessed is everyone that fears the Lord, that walks in his ways, for you shall eat the labor of your hands* (Psalms 128:1 RE). See, you get to be blessed. Why are you blessed? Because the stuff that you work for you get as the produce or the product of your labor.

And then there's this:

Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband does safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil...

He doesn't have to go take from someone else. She's productive.

*She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She seeks wool and flax, and works willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants' ships, she brings her food from afar. She rises also while it is yet night, and gives food to her household and a portion to her maidens. She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. She girds her loins with strength, and strengthens her arms. She perceives that her merchandise is good, her candle goes not out by night. She lays her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the rod. She stretches out her hand to the poor, yea, she reaches forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She makes herself coverings of tapestry, her clothing is silk and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders... She makes fine linen and sells it, and delivers girdles unto the merchant. Strength and honor are her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looks well to the ways of her household and **eats not the bread of idleness**...*

Okay, I'm gonna insert an editorial parenthetical at this point: **That's because there is no "bread of idleness."**

Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but you excel them all. Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain; but a woman that fears the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, ...let her own works praise her in the gates. (Psalms 6:3 RE, emphasis added)

You see this is high praise. And it's a proverb that applies to a virtuous woman. It's a proverb that applies to the Mother in Heaven. And it is a proverb that applies to the **people** that are His. This is a description of **all** of them. And so, the people that are His **do these things**.

Now, Isaiah 18:2. This gives you, I think, a pretty good idea of what we're going to start with: *For the Lord shall comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and he will make her wildernesses like Eden and her desert like the garden of the Lord*. Okay, you see the juxtaposition: wilderness/Eden, desert/garden of the Lord. It's got to be "made into." And how does He make it "into"? He takes a group of people who are not quarrelsome, bickering, and accusing of one another—who can dwell in peace and unite in their effort with one another—to peaceably pursue the objective of the labor. *The desire of the slothful kills him,*

for his hands refuse to labor. He covets greedily all the day long, but the righteous gives and spares not (Proverbs 2:353 RE). Then there is T&C 43:

Behold, thus says the Lord unto my people: You have many things to do and to repent of, for behold, your sins have come up unto me and are not pardoned, because you seek to counsel in your own ways, and your hearts are not satisfied, and you obey not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness.

Woe unto you rich men that will not give your substance to the poor, for your riches will canker your souls. And this shall be your lamentation in the day of visitation and of judgment and of indignation: The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved!

Woe unto you poor men whose hearts are not broken, whose spirits are not contrite, and whose bellies are not satisfied, and whose hands are not stayed from laying hold upon other men's goods, whose eyes are full of greediness, who will not labor with their own hands. (T&C 43:4-6)

God cannot produce Zion for—or with—people who refuse to labor, because His promise is **for the results of the labor** and nothing else. Then we have this from Alma:

*He also commanded them that the priests whom he had ordained should labor with their own hands for their support. And there was one day in every week that was set apart that they should gather themselves together to ~~[keep]~~ teach the people, and to worship the Lord their God, and also as often as it was in their power to assemble themselves together. And the **priests were not** to depend upon the people for their support, but for their labor they were to receive the grace of God, that they might wax strong in the spirit, having the knowledge of God, that they might teach with power and authority from God. (Mosiah 9:10 RE, emphasis added)*

Churches today are broken, in disrepair, and have nothing to offer that will save people—because they refuse to follow this instruction. Preachers who preach for the monetary reward that they seek cannot have the grace of God or wax strong in the spirit, having the knowledge of God, so that they can teach with power and authority from God. One of the worst offenders is probably the church out of which most of you came, in which they fare sumptuously and have bodyguards and fly first class.

Some of you feel such inordinate anxiety that you want to flee right now in haste. Okay, here's the good news. Assuming that you cannot control your anxiety—and assuming that nothing I have said or can say will calm you down enough to allow the words that the Lord spoke to us in the Covenant itself to inform how you allow things to proceed—and you need to charge off right now, then here's the good news: Joseph Smith said **all** of North America was Zion. So, go to Philadelphia or Houston or Green Bay or Cape Cod; go anywhere you want, and call it Zion. And let them know you've gone through a **flight** to this place because of your anxiety because, today, everything is political, and you're here looking for a place of peace. And I can tell you, if you don't get rid of your anxieties before you flee, they'll accompany you there. And you'll find yourself just as miserable in Green Bay or Cape Cod or Philadelphia or Houston—because the problem is **in you**; it's not wherever you are.

We **haven't** been told to gather. And we **haven't** got a command to build a temple. And I'm assuming part of the reason why we've not yet gotten a commandment is because the people—the **hearts** of the people—that He wants to build His temple are apparently not the hearts that we presently possess. Therefore, **we** have to do something to prepare **ourselves** in order to be worthy of getting the commandment to do something on His errand.

As far as I know, none of us... And certainly **I cannot** provide for everyone. But I can provide for my own family. And each of you should labor to do the same. There are fantastic opportunities to build net worth, based upon what's going on right now in the housing market if you proceed cautiously and carefully and prudently and to prepare for yourself and your family.

I've heard it said that there are people who think that the Lord expects them to spend their time studying the Scriptures. And that that's the labor to which they've been called. I think that's absolutely fantastic. And when you get through gnawing on your leather-bound Scriptures (which may have some limited nutritional value), then I hope that the ink on the cotton (which certainly has fiber) won't kill you when your Scripture study leads you to **eating** your Scriptures to fill your growling belly. Because it doesn't matter what God gives you, you're not gonna be able to feed yourself. And if the labor of your hand consists in turning a page... Well, I would suggest we build a glass booth and put the person in the booth and put a hat out front for the entertainment value. And we can all drop our spare change in as we go by, watching the man who turns the page produce the labor necessary for Zion.

Because Zion is **hard** work; it's taking what is **desolate** and making it become something that it's not. It may be that right now we need to see more economic upheaval in order for the place where God intends that we acquire to go on the market—may not even be available for us at present. But I can tell you, if you run off in haste at this moment, you are doing something that the Lord has counseled against.

Now, one other point that **has** to be made as part of this talk.

Section 173 of the Teachings and Commandments says that:

*[Tithing] was never to establish a wealthy general fund nor to invite the wrongful accumulation of wealth that has resulted from the long **abuse** of this law. The law was to be a light thing, easily borne by the faithful. Tithing was always to be taken from **surplus** (meaning unnecessary excess property) and **increase** (meaning what remains after all costs of the household have been paid). It was to be drawn out of the **abundance** in the possession of the giver so that there may be enough and to spare ["enough" in the hands of the giver so that they can provide for themselves and their household, "and to spare," meaning 1/10 of what is leftover goes as tithe], **not** from property required for their necessities. The tithes of this people are to be used for the poor among this people, if they want to become Mine. (T&C 173:1, emphasis added)*

Tithing money should be used to help the poor. If you have enough and to spare, and you have given 10% to be used for the poor, and you **still feel** that you have surplus that is not

needed, that's where money for a temple ought to come from. **That's** the money—not the tithing money. That's that surplus money—or the money that you have in excess of tithe, and you still want to give. **That's** to go to the temple.

Now, I'm saying that, and I've read a number of Scriptures. And I know that there are Scriptures that have been read today that can be used to justify one position in an argument or another position in an argument. *In your temporal things you shall be equal in all things, and this not grudgingly; otherwise, the abundance of the manifestations of the spirit shall be withheld* (T&C 62:4). That's a great Scripture to use to go attack someone because they're not giving the way you think they ought to give, and you think that they have more to give. So, now I've got a Scripture, and I can use it like a club to justify my criticism of someone else.

Okay. Let's find another Scripture we can use to do the other thing. How 'bout this one back here? *The desire of the slothful kills him, for his hands refuse to labor. He covets greedily all the day long, but the righteous gives and spares not* (Proverbs 2:353 RE). “You see? You're just coveting. When you expect me to help you with anything, that's covetous. Covetousness is ugliness itself, condemned frequently in Scripture, and that ought not be.”

These Scriptures can be read as a cacophony of contradictions if that's what you want to do to argue with one another. But that's **not** the purpose of the Scriptures. The purpose is to make you **wise**. If you “have,” and you feel the impulse by the conviction of what these Scriptures say **to you** (that you can and you should give more), then make sure that tithes are used for the benefit of the poor. And **then**, your excess can go to accomplish other things.

I know that there has been some criticism repeated to me that there is a general temple fund, and that that temple fund (which, by the way, has not been touched—not one cent)... They don't like that accumulating when there's need for the poor. When Christ was in the house of Simon the leper, who had been cured of his leprosy (which, as it turns out, was Judas' father—Judas Iscariot), a woman anointed Christ with a fragrant anointing oil that in today's money would be a \$20,000 gesture. Okay? And there was a complaint voiced that this was an extravagant waste. The anointing of our Lord, preliminary to His death and burial—and He said it was done for that purpose—in order to secure for mankind, generally, the Resurrection as He came forth out of the grave; an anointing oil that had been kept for that very purpose. It wouldn't have mattered if it had been sold. Because as Christ pointed out, the poor you have with you **always**. It's part of the condition that we find in this world. It's not gonna go away.

If we had to make sure that there were no poor still around before we were able to do anything to raise money for a temple, we would never fulfill the coming command that He has **told** us is going to be given. And He's given us a season in which to prepare. If we don't prepare—and if the command comes and we cannot fulfill it—we may as well go back to Nauvoo and divert the shipment of lumber that comes down from the Wisconsin Timber Mission and use it to build Brigham Young's house and Heber C. Kimball's house and neglect the construction of the Nauvoo temple, **just like they did before**. But if we want to be prepared because we've been forewarned that there **will** come a command—and the

expectation is that when the command comes, we're to obey it—then we need to do what we're reading in Scripture.

The tithes of this people are to be used for the poor among this people, if they want to become Mine (T&C 173:1). If all of the tithes gathered cannot take care of all of the poor, we fulfilled our command. And we can ask for others to help, as well. But we have an obligation, also, to prepare when the command comes so that we're not caught—like the saints in Nauvoo—unable, incapable, and without the ability to afford to do what's been asked of us.

Now, there's a... This is given in another context. It's section 105 of the Teachings and Commandments where they're actually trying to live a kind of United Order. It was an incorporation that they had various people that owned a part of. And in connection with that, against that background, the Lord said:

*For it is expedient that I, the Lord, should make every man accountable as stewards over earthly blessings, which I have made and prepared for my creatures. [For] I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens and built the earth as a very handy work, and all things therein are mine. And it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine, but it must needs be done in **my own way**. And behold, this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints: that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low, for the earth is full and there is enough and to spare. ...I...prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves. [So] therefore, if any man shall take of the **abundance** which I have made and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall with Dives lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment.* (T&C 105:4-5, emphasis added)

See, those words **mean** what those words say:

“The earth is full and there is enough...” That's **one** thing; that's when the labor of your hands has finally fed you. And then after you've made the ground sufficiently productive, there is not just enough, but there's also “and to spare.” It is that “and to spare” that enough hard labor will eventually yield that can be used to help others. And not just the one who produces.

“If any man shall take of the **abundance** which I have made and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel...” Okay—of the **abundance**. That's not the “enough.” That's the “to spare.” You have to produce “enough”—and that in and of itself may be a **mighty challenge** in a **desolate wilderness**—before you get to the point that you are producing both “enough” **and** “to spare.” And when you have enough **to spare**, that **abundance** needs to be imparted in order to allow others to come and labor alongside you.

So, that leads us then to this final thought. This was the definition of “mutual agreement” that was given that's in T&C section 174: *As between one another, you choose to not dispute* (T&C 174:1). When the definition was given, it was accompanied by the realization the Lord could have disputed every day of His life with someone. He deliberately chose to not contend. He was not an argumentative personality. He wouldn't have argued from a position of ignorance or from a position of being wrong. Had He chosen to argue, He would have been right in every argument. In other words, every day presented the Lord with an

opportunity to go around correcting someone. “You're wrong. You need to do it this way. Oh, you're wrong, too! And you need to fix that and do it that... Oh, wait a minute. He's wrong. I got... Just fix that! Now you, man, you're **really** wrong.” Can you imagine what our Scriptures would read like if our Lord **chose** to dispute? It would be **much like some of our fellowship meetings**.

Well, I understand there is a schedule, and I understand that I have just a little bit of time that is supposed to be left. But we have some folks here who came a long distance. I don't know if you both... They're brother and sister. I don't know if they want to both come up at the same time or come up... But Holida—yeah?—and her brother, ~~Maksat~~ [Maksad], are going to talk to you for a few minutes and tell you an interesting story about how it is that folk from Turkmenistan happen to be here with us today.

Let me end by commending to you that however you approach these issues, be prayerful, be generous with one another, be kind in your judgment, be patient with one another. We're being asked to accomplish something that has only been accomplished twice before in the history of mankind. And it was accomplished in those days, in the first instance, with 365 years of opportunity to work through their problems and, in the second instance, among a homogeneous group of people. We are **very** different from one another. Sometimes diversity is not a strength. But diversity should not matter if you can come together with precept and reason, with kindness, and with patience.

I'd suggest that you probably can't get someone more diverse than the two folks, brother and sister, that we're gonna hear from here in a few moments. And yet, we can be one heart with them. And we can welcome them and learn from their experience. They come from an entirely different world than the one we live in. And we have so much we ought to be grateful for that **they** are **genuinely** grateful for; just the ability to talk freely is a great gift to them. We get to talk freely, and we use that freedom to say ugly things to one another. And that ought not be so.

God is working; things are progressing. Not everything that the Lord is up to among **us** is necessary to be talked about publicly at this point. But God's hand is **not idle**, and things **are** moving, and sacrifices are being made, and work is being done to fulfill the words of the covenant.

Of that I bear testimony and witness in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

The following transcript has been edited and expanded by Holida and Max to help make their comments more easily understood.

HOLIDA ANNAMURADOVA: Hello. Hi, everyone.

MAKSAD ANNAMURADOV: Can you guys hear us?

HOLIDA: Okay, so my name is Holida. It's like “holiday” without the “y.” So, you know...

MAX: And my name is Maksad, but because Denver mentioned “Maksalt,” and it sounds like a different version of it, I go for just Max so that it's easier for everyone. And, yeah.

HOLIDA: And we are from Turkmenistan. This is in Central Asia; it's by Afghanistan. And we came here... He came here three years ago, and I came here to U.S. two years ago. We came to Utah—it's Snow College in Ephraim—don't ask why ~~did he~~ [we] choose [it], because we don't know the reason. It's God's hand, probably. He had a great plan for us. And now we know why we chose Ephraim, Utah, like exactly that place.

So, it's ~~Muslim~~ [Islam] in my ~~religion~~ [country]. In my country, the religion is ~~Muslim~~ [Islam]. But we were not active Muslims (in my country) as a family. And we... We had a lot of hardship. We, as a child... I remember, we grow up in labor all the time—laboring ~~as~~ [with] our parents, together, to help them. So, we did not have easy... We did not have [an] easy life. And suddenly, we had a hard time in our family with my brother—that he got [a] really bad sickness, Hepatitis C—and then my mother got that, too. So, my mom was, like, hopeless. We were all, as a family, [we] lost our hope. We didn't see any door to go out of that darkness.

And then they went to Iran [to get treatment]. And the Iranians, they taught them to start practicing the Muslim religion five times prayer. And then we started [practicing Islam religion]. It's like four or five months, and we seek for God, even [if] we didn't have anyone to teach us. At home, we prayed to God, even [though] we did not [know] how to pray; we tried our best. We did not know that we can talk to God, because they [the priests] did not teach us like that. No one around you talks to God. They don't know how to talk to God. So, we just did it [our best to find the true God].

Suddenly, on the TV, [the] Ukraine Channel opens up, and there one man [an apostle] is talking/teaching about Christ. 10,000s of people are sitting and giving testimonies of Christ, that they're getting healed—the same Hepatitis C that ~~my parents got~~ my brother and my mom got. And my mom is like, no way. This is my only hope. I will try this. Whoever says what I don't trust, but I will try believing in Christ, because they are not crazy—10,000's [of] people believing in Christ? Why would they believe if they don't see any benefit [result] by believing?

So, we started, we tried; we tried to believe. And as soon as we started praying and calling Jesus' name, the change started in our life. Miracles started happening. He [Max] started being healed, and my mom started being healed [from the sickness].

And ~~suddenly~~ [one day], we found the U.S. program that's going to help us, teach us, and prepare to U.S. college. Because five years ago, we did not even imagine or dream [of] coming to U.S. because it was totally impossible for us. We did not have any financial availability for that or any imagination. We did not have [it].

MAX: And I was looking for... First, I studied in that program, and I was looking for [a] college to choose. And then I noticed Snow College in the middle of Utah. And it's out in the middle of [the] desert. And people asked me, like, “Why are you going there?” And “I don't know, I guess it's, you know, God's call to go.” So, I...

Before coming here, actually, when I told them (my people and my country) about “I’m going to Utah,” and that they will, “Oh, don’t go to Utah. They’re all polygamists in there.” And I was like, “Ummm...is that really true?” And I had to do my own research, you know. And it’s so funny that outside of the U.S. (probably maybe inside the U.S., as well), Utah is stereotyped as being Mormons, and yeah...

So, I came to Snow College, and this was my second semester. And I met one of my friends. And her parents were... She and her parents were interested in Denver’s ~~readings~~ [teachings], and they persuaded us. They... So, we were seeking to know the truth. The very first semester I was here, two missionaries came to my apartment. And they... And I had a talk with them. And I told them that I’m seeking for truth, and I’m not feeling like joining the church right now. And that they gave me a Book of Mormon for the first time. I did not open the Book of Mormon beforehand. And I opened it, and I thought I’d start reading it. I read the Bible before—little bit. Then as soon as I started reading it, I said, like, “Man, this must be like a Scripture because it’s boring,” like Denver mentioned that. It’s... But then I never opened that after that. Then after I met this people who were interested in the fellowship and the gospel of Jesus Christ, I started with a passion reading the Book of Mormon, and I...

My sister was also planning to come, and I... She was planning to go somewhere else. And I was like, “Oh, come to Snow College...”

HOLIDA: And I was like, “Oh, no, there are so many Turkmen ~~other~~ students. I want to go somewhere else. It’s too small-town for me. It’s so boring over there.” I was saying, “No.” And he [Max] kept saying, “Yes.” And I wasn’t ready to come that year. And I was, like, praying. I had so many tests; it was so competitive to get the scholarship so we can cover our tuition. And I was like, “No.” And something [a voice] in my heart said, “You can do this.” And Christ... I saw Christ’s hand in my life; He started opening the path. He started little by little helping [me with] the exams to pass. And I’m like, “Okay, even [if] I am not ready, He is ready.

So, He helped me to go through all those and to be chosen among the students. So, I got the scholarship and come that year [2019], and after two months, COVID started and [the] country was shut down. I wouldn’t be here at that time if He wouldn’t, like, ~~give me~~ motivate me. Yeah, so...

So I... We came here. And as I said, I was looking for, again, church. And then, it was Mormon[ism]. I never heard Mormonism, anything [about] Book of Mormon. Missionaries—they caught me. And they kept messaging me, and like, “Hey, you are wonderful. Do you want to get baptized? Do you want [us] to come? Do you want us to teach?” And something in my heart was pushing [rejecting]; it was saying, “No.” And I prayed, “God, like, show me the true path. Show me the path that **you want** me to walk on.”

And He said, “No, don’t join; just wait.” And I rejected them. And I didn’t go to church. We were—just [the] two of us—different from everyone because all our other Turkmen friends are Muslims and [the] other[s]—all of them are Mormons. So, we didn’t see anyone like us!

And we met his [Max's] friend; [she] invited us for the Thanksgiving, and we met with their parents, and they listened to us. And then, they noticed that we are looking for truth. Then they accepted/they saw us like their children. They loved us. I could feel so much love, so much care, so much passion in them that they kindly started persuading us, kindly shared this new Restoration, the Book of Mormon, about Joseph, all the history—[and] we were open. Why? Because we did not have any foundation about Christianity. No one taught us [before]; we did not go to church; we did not know anything [about Jesus Christ]. So, anything—everything—was like new, and I could feel in ~~deep~~ [the depth] of my heart, it was something different. These words cannot be told by man. It should be something from God. Because the emptiness in my heart was filled when I learned the truth.

And then, it's like everything started changing. And I told my mom, "Hey, I found a good religion/good truth here." It's like, "I don't know what religion is this, but this is a good thing! They're talking about good stuff!" And I started telling about that, and my mom is like, "Oh, no, that sounds strange," because I was telling about Heavenly Mother, and it was like [a] new idea, right?

And she was like, "Okay, you can continue your way, but I'm going to watch this channel—Ukraine Channel—and listen to him [the apostle on tv]."

And then I said, "Mom, don't listen to me. Just ask Christ. Why don't you pray and ask which path is true, which path you should go?"

And then, she called us ~~tomorrow~~ [the next day]. And she's like, "The channel's disappeared: I can't find it." Just no, no channel. And she's like, "Okay, tell me more about that religion!" Then she got really, like, interested; she's eager to learn. From that time... It was last year—March—that we started moving on this movement/in this journey. And from that time, I teach my mom every day (almost) because she is really eager to learn. And it's so hard to translate [the] Book of Mormon because I barely understand the old language. I couldn't even, like... We read... We opened [the Book of Mormon], and we closed [it] because, "It came to pass..." and we are like, "What's that?" And we barely learned the English! Don't say, "Again learn English, the older version."

MAX: It was a total[ly] new English, actually. It's a different version.

HOLIDA: Yeah. But with Christ's power, I learned that everything is possible. We had passion to learn/gain truth. And then we started reading it. Even [though] it was hard, using a lot of dictionaries, asking people, asking for help. And those people [who accepted the Restoration] started teaching us; it was great help. Because I can't imagine where to get the information, how to learn what is true/what is not. But with Christ, all the time asking [in] my heart [from Him], it was really helpful.

And so, we started our beliefs [of Christ] six years ago, and ~~after five~~ [one] years ago, we came to this movement. And after that, I started... My mom started teaching our other relatives who are in a hard time. So, she was, like, just telling everyone—everyone on the, like, whoever she sees, and the people were, like, "You are on a wrong path; you will go to hell. You are not Muslim. You changed [converted]." We are like, "Oh, okay, whatever." You know? "Whatever! You will see." And after one year/two years, those people who's been

told [about Christ], they are coming and like [asking], “Did you talk about Christ or something? Can you tell more about it?” So, they felt in their heart that they need it, because they saw the miracles in our life, [and one of them was] that our bodies get healed.

We came to the place that no one can imagine ~~in~~ [among] our relatives, we were the only two children, like among our, like, all relatives/ all the village. So, everyone looked at us and like, “They dream, ~~how they did~~ How did they get there?” they ask. And I say, “I don't know. It's God; it's Christ.” I kept giving that testimony of Christ to everyone. And then they started getting interested.

So, there are like around 15 to 20 people who are really interested, like, they're like, “Send me more information [truth about Jesus Christ].” And I try [to] do my best to translate these things and share my understandings and teach them. And we have Sunday class where we teach people, our people, these things—the Restorations—and they don't go to any religion; they don't join any church, but they learn these things [restored gospel/truth].

So, as you can see, as God says, “I... My hand is everywhere.” And He will bring [people from] all four sides of the Earth to the Zion. And I can feel that; I saw that in my life, that [from Christ we could come from] ~~through~~ other side of the world. So, don't ever doubt about God's power. Because if He could bring the people from [the] other side of the world, finding and bringing [them] to this path, then what He can't do? Nothing! He can do everything. Nothing is impossible for Him.

And we ask your prayers for our people so ~~they can~~ we can find a way to send more information [translated books/gospels] for them and help them. But my country is closed right now. So, my parents want to come here—really, like so much—because we are the only children. They want to come and join here in this movement and be here physically [with us].

And also, this is our first conference coming here, and it was so great. Thank you so much for welcoming us. Thank you for smiling at us. It means a lot to us. And great—everyone helped us, everyone is helping [in] some ways, and we are very thankful for each of you/ each of your support, and we are happy to be here. We are happy to walk towards Zion. I can see that everyone is talking about Christ—everyone. I don't have to say, “Know ye the Lord?” because everyone knows the Lord from the least to the greatest. Isn't this the beginning of Zion? We should keep laboring and doing [God's will] and having faith in Christ.

So, this is our impossible story which is possible ~~to~~ [for] Christ.

[Transcription Lori Larsen, v1.1]