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THE BOND OF CHARITY

A Relief Society Program

By Katherine Padilla

This script was adapted from a program that was originally presented at a visiting teaching convention on May 15, 1994 in the Mount Airy Ward, Frederick Maryland Stake.

Song: "Our Savior's Love," Hymn 113. (All sisters.)

Narrator

. . . charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever;

. . . charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Wherefore . . . if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, for charity never faileth.

Charity "is the highest pinnacle the human soul can reach and the deepest expression of the human heart." Jesus, "out of the abundance of his heart, . . . spoke to the poor, the downtrodden, the widows, the little children; to farmers and fishermen, and those who tended goats and sheep; to strangers and foreigners, the rich, the politically powerful, as well as the unfriendly Pharisees and the hungry, the deprived, the sick. He blessed the lame, the blind, the deaf, and other people with physical disabilities. He drove out the demons and evil spirits that had caused mental or emotional illness. He purified those who were burdened with sin. He taught lessons of love and repeatedly demonstrated unselfish service to others."

Song: "He Sent His Son," Children's Song Book, p. 34. (Special arrangement.)

Narrator

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Reader 1

And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon [Jesus] to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.

And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And [Jesus] saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

And it came to pass . . . that [Jesus] went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;

Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,

Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes,

And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

And [Jesus] ordained [them], that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,

And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils:

Song: "Come, Follow Me," Hymn 116. (All sisters or special arrangement.)

Narrator

And [Jesus] spake unto the multitude, and said unto them: Behold your little ones.

Reader 2

And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them.

But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

Song: "Be Thou Humble," Hymn 130. (All sisters or special arrangement.)

Narrator

. . . the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle

of clay, and shall go forth amongst men, working mighty miracles, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, causing the lame to walk, the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and curing all manner of diseases.

And he shall cast out devils, or the evil spirits which dwell in the hearts of the children of men.

Reader 3

And [Jesus] came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days.

And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,

Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.

And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.

And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her.

And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.

And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him.

And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the

multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.

And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?

But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?

Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.

And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.

Reader 4

Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.

Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which

should come into the world.

Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

Jesus wept.

Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.

Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

Song: "I Believe in Christ," Hymn 134. (All sisters.)

Narrator

John said, "We love him, because he first loved us."

Reader 5

Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. . . .

Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

Peter saith unto him, Thou needest not to wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

Jesus saith to him, He that has washed his hands and his head, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. Now this was the custom of the Jews under their law; wherefore, Jesus did this that the law might be fulfilled.

For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. . . .

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. . . .

Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the

Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Song: "Love One Another," Luacine Fox. There is an expanded version of this song that is perfect for this part of the program. Use it if possible as a special arrangement. If this sheet music is not available to you, all sisters should sing the version in the hymnbook.

Narrator

. . . he shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people.

And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; . . .

. . . he cometh unto his own, that salvation might come unto the children of men even through faith on his name;

Reader 6

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

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.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

. . . he was slain by the Jews, and by the power of the Father he hath risen again, whereby he hath gained the victory over the grave; and also in him is the sting of death swallowed up.

And he bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead, whereby man must be raised to stand before his judgment-seat.

And he hath brought to pass the redemption of the world, whereby he that is found guiltless before him at the judgment day hath it given unto him to dwell in the presence of God in his kingdom, to sing ceaseless praises with the choirs above, unto the Father, and unto the Son, and unto the Holy Ghost, which are one God, in a state of happiness which hath no end.

Song: "I Stand All Amazed," Hymn 193. (All sisters.)

Narrator

Following the crucifixion and resurrection of the Savior, His church gradually surrendered to corruptness, and spiritual darkness submerged the earth until 1820, when God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith for the first time, thus beginning the great and marvelous work of the Restoration. Joseph Smith later proclaimed, after receiving still another vision of the Father and Son:

“And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

“For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

“That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God.”

Jesus Christ does live. This is His church, and Relief Society is His organization. Through participation in its programs, we receive opportunities to teach each other, develop friendships, and extend compassionate service, thereby enabling us to live the kind of life Christ lived and become like Him. May we all respond wholeheartedly to the instruction He has given to us in our own time: “And above all things, clothe yourselves with the bond of charity, as with a mantle, which is the bond of perfectness and peace.”

Song: “I Know That My Redeemer Lives,” Hymn 136. (All sisters.)

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REFERENCES

(Should be printed in program.)

Introduction: Moroni 7: 45-47; quote from President Howard W. Hunter from “A More Excellent Way,” *Ensign*, May 1992, p. 61.

Story 1: (Ephesians 4:11-13); Luke 5:1-10; 6:12-16; Matt. 4:19

Story 2: (3 Nephi 17:23); Luke 18:15-17

Story 3: (Mosiah 3: 5-6); Luke 4:31-40; 5:17-26

Story 4: John 11: 1, 4, 17, 20-27, 32-45

Story 5: (1 John 4:19); John 13:1, 3-7, (8-10 JST), 11-17, 20, 33-35

Story 6: (Mosiah 3: 7-9); Isaiah 53: 3-12; Mormon 7: 5-7

Conclusion: D&C 76:22-24; 88:125