

Joy to the World

One night in Italy Mother, Annie, the Italian Sorella and I were kneeling down for prayer. It was my night for sharing a scripture. I read from Alma, chapter 29 where Alma says, "O that I were an angel..." As you may recall, he wanted to preach as if with the sound of a trumpet repentance unto every people. I was struck by his reason why. At the end of verse 2 he says, "...that there might not be more *sorrow* upon all the face of the earth." He goes on to use the word "joy" six times in that short chapter.

Alma's joy was full when he saw the fruits of the gospel in the lives of the penitent. As he said, "...then is my soul filled with joy." When Nephi saw the same vision that his father Lehi saw, he was given an interpretation of the dream. He was told that the "tree" was the "love of God" and, "the most joyous to the soul." Later and shortly before his death, Lehi explained to his children that, "...men are, that they might have joy."

The happiest and most joyous people on the face of the earth are those that have the gospel and live by its principles and teachings. The gospel is the greatest way to irradicate sorrow from our lives. When we have a testimony of the gospel and we are striving to live the commandments, we can withstand the tragedies and trials that can confront us in this life. There is joy in the journey! Even when it is bad, it's good!

I am reminded of an old church film, "Man's Search for Happiness". It emphasized that when the lights go out, the people go home and the music is over, many people are left alone and sad. There is more to life than the superficial sugarcoating the world has to offer. Real happiness and joy comes when we discover whom we are, why we are on earth and where we are going. As the "Plan of Salvation", or as Alma calls it, "The Great Plan of Happiness" unveils itself to our minds we find long-lasting comfort and true joy.

Consequently, one of the great reasons for the spreading of the gospel is for man to have joy. Just like Father Lehi who immediately looked for his family when he partook of the fruit of the tree that was "most sweet", so our Heavenly Father wants each of His children to have the gospel and the wonderful joy it can bring into their lives.