

LARRY

We're happy to share an Easter message with our brothers and sisters of the Las Brisas ward. The Easter story is the greatest event ever recorded in the history of the world. It begins with our Savior, Jesus Christ, testifying to the apostles of His death and resurrection, and ends with the risen Christ, showing His apostles the prints of the nails in His hands and feet.

We are all a part of the Easter story, we are participants, silent observers, and benefactors of the infinite atonement of Jesus Christ. He was lifted up upon the cross, that He might lift us up unto the Father. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."

SUZANN

Behold the great Redeemer die,
A broken law to satisfy.
He dies a sacrifice for sin,
That man may live and glory win.

While guilty men his pains deride,
They pierce his hands and feet and side;
And with insulting scoffs and scorns,
They crown his head with plaited thorns.

Although in agony he hung,
No murm'ring word escaped his tongue.
His high commission to fulfill,
He magnified his Father's will.

"Father, from me remove this cup.
Yet, if thou wilt, I'll drink it up.
I've done the work thou gavest me,
Receive my spirit unto thee."

He died, and at the awful sight

The sun in shame withdrew its light!
Earth trembled, and all nature sighed,
In dread response, “A God has died!”

He rose, the stone was rolled away,
An empty tomb on the third day.
Behold my hands, and feet, and side,
It is He, they testified!

He lives—he lives. We humbly now
Around these sacred symbols bow
And seek, as Saints of latter days,
To do his will and live his praise.

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Our Savior and all the prophets have warned of turbulent times in the last days, when the adversary would stir up anger in the hearts of men. These times were foretold and great prophecies given, but our Heavenly Father never intended for us to deal with these issues on our own. He sent His Son so we could have access to godly power. How can we draw into our lives the power of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ?

“And this is the gospel, the glad tidings, which the voice out of the heavens bore record unto us—
That he came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness;
That through him all might be saved whom the Father had put into his power and made by him;
Who glorifies the Father, and saves all the works of his hands.”

He has power to cleanse us, heal us, and redeem and restore us. He has power to instruct and inspire us, strengthen and lift us, and transform and change us.

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All of these gifts and blessing we need daily in our lives. The Biblical story of the women who suffered for 12 years with a debilitating disease teaches us about the faith we need to access the power of Jesus Christ. She knew if she were able to simply touch the hem of the Savior's garment, she would be healed. And so she reached through the throng with all her might. Her physical stretching was symbolic of her spiritual stretching.

Many times we cry out from the suffering and trials we are experiencing. Like the woman, we must spiritually stretch to draw the Savior's power into our lives. When we reach for the Lord's power with the same fervency that this woman showed, or with the intensity a drowning person has when gasping for air, power from Jesus Christ will come. When He can feel that the greatest desire of our heart is to draw His power into our life, when we spiritually stretch beyond anything we have ever done before, then His power will flow into us to **Cleanse and Heal and Restore and Inspire and Strengthen and Transform** us.

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This spiritual stretching requires that we keep ourselves unspotted from the world so there will be nothing blocking access to the Savior's power. For example, we can turn away from the world and turn toward the Savior by turning off our favorite music playlist and listening to a General Conference talk. We can choose to read the word of God rather than scroll through social media. We can plan time to go to the temple or do family history work when the temple is closed rather than watch a movie. Spiritual stretching doesn't mean we can never enjoy good music or entertain ourselves with social media or spend time watching movies, it means we give priority to reaching to the Savior and accessing His power.

In Romans we read, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove...the perfect will of God."

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President Russell M. Nelson said, “Our commitment to follow the Savior by making covenants with Him and then keeping those covenants will open the door to every spiritual blessing and privilege available to men, women, and children everywhere.”

One of the greatest spiritual blessings we can receive is the covenant we make at baptism. He paid the price for our sins and failings, and brought about the law of mercy so we can repent. Jesus Christ has power to wash away our sins and stains.

Enos the son of Jacob went into the woods to hunt. It seems his priority turned from hunting to reaching to the Savior. His soul hungered and he knelt down before his Maker and cried unto Him in mighty prayer and supplication for his soul. All day long and into the night, he raised his voice high that it reached the heavens. “And there came a voice saying, Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed. I, Enos, knew God could not lie, and my guilt was swept away.” Enos’ earnest reaching to God in prayer brought the cleansing power of the atonement of Jesus Christ.

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Many have experienced the power of the atonement of Jesus Christ through inspiration that comes to us, giving us knowledge that we otherwise would not have. Some have experienced the miracle of finding something that was lost, or meeting someone pivotal in their lives, or feeling peace amid trying circumstances.

This past conference, Neil L. Anderson shared a story about inspiration President Russell M Nelson received while performing open heart surgery:

After relieving the obstruction of the first valve, we exposed the second valve. We found it to be intact, but so badly dilated that it could no longer function as it should. While examining this valve, a message was distinctly impressed upon my mind: Reduce the circumference of the ring.

I announced that message to my assistant.

Then a picture came vividly to my mind, showing how stitches could be placed—to make a pleat here and a tuck there. I still remember that mental image—complete with dotted lines where sutures should be placed. The repair was completed as

diagrammed in my mind. We tested the valve and found the leak to be reduced remarkably. My assistant said, 'It's a miracle.'" The patient, a patriarch, lived for many years.

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President Nelson this past conference said, "We have front-row seats to witness live what the prophet Nephi saw only in vision, that "the power of the Lamb of God" would descend "upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory."

The Easter message we have felt impressed to share is President Nelson's plea for us to "Hear Him", and to be armed with righteousness and the power of God in great glory:

We can use the name Christ as an acronym to remember and ask for the wonderful gifts of the atonement of Jesus Christ:

C - stands for He can Cleanse us

H - stands for He will Heal us

R - stands for His power to Redeem us

I - stands for Inspiration and guidance He gives us

S - stands for His power to Strengthen and lift us with His grace

T - stands for His power to Transform and change our hearts

This acronym can help us to always remember the gifts Jesus Christ can bring into our lives and can help us reach to Him and access His power.

We bear testimony that God lives, that His Son, Jesus Christ, is our Savior, that Joseph Smith restored the Gospel, and President Nelson is God's prophet today. We wish everyone a very glorious Easter Sunday. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.