

# How the Savior Ministers

The Savior physically healed every person who asked. He also had perfect empathy as He “hath descended below them all.” He also has a perfect knowledge of our circumstances, sufferings, etc. We lack in these three areas. Therefore, when we minister, we need to be in tune with the Spirit so that we can be appropriately empathic. We need to listen carefully, so we can better understand the circumstances, trials, and struggles others are going through. Finally, we need to encourage and even help arrange for Priesthood blessings and proper medical care, as needed.

In addition to this, when He was ministering to one or a group, most often He would be empathic, comforting, and encouraging.

## Consider Alma’s Suggested Requirements for Baptism

"Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life" (Mosiah 18: 9 (8-10)).

Consider that Alma asked the potential converts if they were willing to minister as the Savior ministered.

**Empathy:** When you mourn with someone who is mourning, you are empathic at the highest level.

**Comfort:** The scripture states this directly.

**Encouragement:** When you boldly stand as a witness of God, you fill believer’s hearts with inspiration and the Holy Ghost. Bearing testimony is encouragement on a spiritual level.

## The Instruction and Example

Emma Smith was instructed by revelation in July 1830 to be "a comfort unto my servant, Joseph Smith, Jun., in his afflictions, with consoling words, in the spirit of meekness" (D&C 25: 5). Providing comfort to her husband when he was afflicted was her specific assignment. A good example of people using consoling words in the spirit of meekness is when they express empathy and encourage others who are suffering or afflicted. It is interesting to note that even a person who communes with God needs human kindness and comfort.

Almost nine years after that revelation, the Lord demonstrated how to do it when He answered the Prophet Joseph Smith’s plea made from Liberty jail. "My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; and then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes (D&C 121: 7-8).

The Lord validated Joseph's position in the *universe* in two words, "My son." A son of deity! Previously, the Lord referred to Joseph as “His servant” (Section 25: 5), then “His friend”

(Section 93: 45) and now, "My son." The Savior expressed empathy to Joseph by acknowledging his adversity and afflictions.

He comforts the Prophet by pronouncing, "Peace be unto thy soul." Remember, this is our Savior, He who changes molecules calms the wind and the waves; even the very dust of the earth obeys His command.

In your mind's eye and your heart, can you see and feel an immediate reduction in blood pressure, respiration, body temperature, muscle contraction - a total calming of the person. Our Savior's power to comfort is amazing.

Encouragement was given by saying "thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; and if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes." The Savior provides more encouragement in passages that follow.

## **In the Bible**

### **Moses**

"Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt: And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3:16-17).

Here the Lord instructs Moses when he first enters Egypt to bring the children of Israel out of bondage to deliver His empathic, comforting, and encouraging message to the elders of Israel.

The key empathic phrase is: "I have surely visited you and seen that which is done to you in Egypt:" and later refers to that as "affliction."

Can you imagine how comforting these words were, as the Spirit testified of their truthfulness, to the elders of Israel? These people had known only slavery and afflictions all of their lives. Now deliverance is promised by a servant of God.

The encouraging phrases include, "I will bring you up out of Egypt unto a land flowing with milk and honey"(Exodus 3:17).

### **Joseph while engaged to Mary**

In Matthew 1:20-21, "But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins."

The angel of the Lord validated Joseph's fear to take Mary as his wife. The angel's explanation provided comfort that Mary was indeed a virtuous woman, and what was happening was a divine plan.

### **The Woman Taken in Adultery**

“They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So, when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again, he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those, thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more” (John 8: 4-11).

The Savior showed empathy to the woman by subtly leading all those who were condemning her to admit that they, too, sin. He normalized sin. Normalizing is a technique used to improve self-acceptance. Normalizing is not to say, that's ok, everybody does it. It is said to acknowledge that we all are weak in different ways, and at times, struggle to do the right things.

It is quite comforting when those who previously wanted to stone you, leave without so much as touching you.

He encouraged her by not condemning her and by commanding her to sin no more.

## **Stephen**

After delivering a terse rebuke to the religious leaders in Jerusalem, Stephen had a vision, “But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God” (Acts 7: 55-56).

This vision fits the description of the Second Comforter in the Bible Dictionary under “comforter.” The Second Comforter is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. “When any man obtains this last Comforter, he will have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend him, or appear unto him from time to time, and even He will manifest the Father unto him” (D&C 88:3–4; 130:3; HC 3:381).

It seems the Savior was either validating Stephen’s performance in rebuking the leaders, or He was showing compassion for the martyrdom that would follow. After seeing a comforting vision of the Father and the Son, a person sentenced to death would be encouraged that they would be well received in the Spirit World.

## **Conclusion**

Every item here does not exactly and specifically contain each element, including empathy, comfort, and encouragement. However, each reference clearly shows the pattern. And when taken as a whole, it is convincing to the reader that the Lord blesses many this way. The Lord ministers to those who love Him and seek His support. In the scriptures, we have many examples.

If we accept and follow the Savior's instruction, we will know *how* to minister to our spouse, family, ward family, and our neighbors in their times of need.

## **A Few More Examples**

Matthew 3: 13-17 (at the end)

Matthew 5: 11-12 (in advance of trial)

Matthew 8: 6-10      Luke 8: 43-48

John 11: 32-45      1 Nephi 5: 1-7 (Lehi)

Alma 8: 14-15      3 Nephi 17: 5-10

3 Nephi 28: 4-10      Abraham 1: 16-19