

We Are His Hands

“As we emulate His perfect example, our hands can become His hands; our eyes, His eyes; our heart, His heart.”

From the April 2010 General Conference talk “You Are My Hands” by Dieter F. Uchtdorf

STORY: A story is told that during the bombing of a city in World War II, a large statue of Jesus Christ was severely damaged. When the townspeople found the statue among the rubble, they mourned because it had been a beloved symbol of their faith and of God’s presence in their lives.

Experts were able to repair most of the statue, but its hands had been damaged so severely that they could not be restored. Some suggested that they hire a sculptor to make new hands, but others wanted to leave it as it was—a permanent reminder of the tragedy of war. Ultimately, the statue remained without hands. However, the people of the city added on the base of the statue of Jesus Christ a sign with these words: “You are my hands.”

We Are the Hands of Christ

QUESTION: What does it mean to be “the hands of Christ?”

QUOTE 1: “When I think of the Savior, I often picture Him with hands outstretched, reaching out to comfort, heal, bless, and love. . . . He loved the humble and the meek and walked among them, ministering to them and offering hope and salvation.”

EXPLANATION: That is what He did during His mortal life; it is what He would be doing if He were living among us today; and it is what we should be doing as His disciples.”

QUESTION: What is one of the ways or what is a program we have set in place *specifically for the sisters in our ward* that helps us to better act as the hands of God? (Answer: Visiting Teaching!)

EXPLANATION: Let’s talk a little bit about what our hands should be doing as we accept the call to be visiting teachers.

Our Hands Can Embrace

EXPLANATION: President Uchtdorf goes on to acknowledge the good work we do for others and how it is recognized all over the world, but then he mentions the following: “Unfortunately, from time to time we hear of Church members who become discouraged and subsequently quit coming to and participating in our Church meetings because they think they don’t fit in.”

Isn't this such a sad excuse? I know there are often times more underlying issues when people use this excuse, but to stop coming to church because you feel like you don't fit in makes me sad.

STORY: When I was a young boy, during the aftermath of World War II, Germany was broken and in ruins. Many people were hungry, sick, and dying. I remember well the humanitarian shipments of food and clothing that came from the Church in Salt Lake City. To this day, I can still remember the smell of the clothing, and I can still taste the sweetness of the canned peaches.

There were some who joined the Church because of the goods they received at that time. Some members looked down on these new converts. They even called them an offensive name: *Büchsen Mormonen*, or "Canned-Food Mormons." They resented these new members because they believed that once their temporal needs had been met, they would fall away.

While some did leave, many stayed—they came to church, tasted the sweetness of the gospel, and felt the tender embrace of caring brothers and sisters. They discovered "home." And now, three and four generations later, many families trace their Church membership back to these converts.

QUOTE 2: "I hope that we welcome and love all of God's children, including those who might dress, look, speak, or just do things differently. It is not good to make others feel as though they are deficient. Let us lift those around us. Let us extend a welcoming hand. Let us bestow upon our brothers and sisters in the Church a special measure of humanity, compassion, and charity so that they feel, at long last, they have finally found home."

QUOTE 3: "It seems only right and proper that we extend to others that which we so earnestly desire for ourselves. . . . We cannot gauge the worth of another soul any more than we can measure the span of the universe. Every person we meet is a VIP to our Heavenly Father. Once we understand that, we can begin to understand how we should treat our fellowmen."

EXPLANATION: One woman who had been through years of trial and sorrow said through her tears, "I have come to realize that I am like an old 20-dollar bill—crumpled, torn, dirty, abused, and scarred. But I am still a 20-dollar bill. I am worth something. Even though I may not look like much and even though I have been battered and used, I am still worth the full 20 dollars."

Our Hands Can Comfort

EPLANATION: With this in mind, let our hearts and hands be stretched out in compassion toward others, for everyone is walking his or her own difficult path. As disciples of Jesus Christ, our Master, we are called to support and heal rather than condemn. We are commanded "to mourn with those that mourn" and "comfort those that stand in need of comfort." Mosiah 18:9.

Our Hands Can Serve

STORY: An old Jewish legend tells of two brothers, Abram and Zimri, who owned a field and worked it together. They agreed to divide both the labor and the harvest equally. One night as the harvest came to a close, Zimri could not sleep, for it didn't seem right that Abram, who had a wife and seven sons to feed, should receive only half of the harvest, while he, with only himself to support, had so much.

So Zimri dressed and quietly went into the field, where he took a third of his harvest and put it in his brother's pile. He then returned to his bed, satisfied that he had done the right thing.

Meanwhile, Abram could not sleep either. He thought of his poor brother, Zimri, who was all alone and had no sons to help him with the work. It did not seem right that Zimri, who worked so hard by himself, should get only half of the harvest. Surely this was not pleasing to God. And so Abram quietly went to the fields, where he took a third of his harvest and placed it in the pile of his beloved brother.

The next morning, the brothers went to the field and were both astonished that the piles still looked to be the same size. That night both brothers slipped out of their houses to repeat their efforts of the previous night. But this time they discovered each other, and when they did, they wept and embraced. Neither could speak, for their hearts were overcome with love and gratitude.

QUOTE 4: "This is the spirit of compassion: that we love others as ourselves,⁹ seek their happiness, and do unto them as we hope they would do unto us."

True Love Requires Action

EXPLANATION: As visiting teachers, are we just going through the motions and considering our calling a monthly checklist of things to do? I visited Sister Johnson, check! I saw Sister Smith in the hall at church, she said she was doing fine, CHECK! How much effort are we putting into this to actually *show* and make our sisters *feel* loved? True love requires action. We can speak of love all day long—we can write notes or poems that proclaim it, sing songs that praise it, and preach sermons that encourage it—but until we put that love in action, our words are nothing.

QUOTE 5: "Christ did not just speak about love; He showed it each day of His life. He did not remove Himself from the crowd. Being amidst the people, Jesus reached out to the one. He rescued the lost. He didn't just teach a class about reaching out in love and then delegate the actual work to others. He not only taught but also showed us how to "succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees."

EXPLANATION: Christ knows how to minister to others perfectly. When the Savior stretches out His hands, those He touches are uplifted and become greater, stronger, and better people as a result.

If we are His hands, should we not do the same?

We Can Love as He Does

EXPLANATION: The Savior revealed the perfect priorities for our lives, our homes, our wards, our communities, and our nations when He spoke of love as the great commandment . We can spend our days obsessing about the finest details of life but if we neglect the great commandments to love our Heavenly Father and love our neighbor, we are missing the point. Without this love, we are just existing without substance. What good is our teaching without love? What good is missionary, temple, or welfare work without love?

QUOTE 6: As we extend our hands and hearts toward others in Christlike love, something wonderful happens to us. Our own spirits become healed, more refined, and stronger. We become happier, more peaceful, and more receptive to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit.

CLOSING: As we contemplate with reverence and awe how our Savior embraces us, comforts us, and heals us, let us commit to become His hands, that others through us may feel His loving embrace.