



Community of Christ
Historic Sites Foundation

We Share... The Peace of Jesus Christ

Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit and you shall have peace in me.

- Doctrine and Covenants 18:2n

The home that Joseph Smith III grew up in also served as a hotel. Joseph's mother, Emma, ran the hotel and in that role she once evicted one of the boarders. He became angry and returned with a gun, threatening Emma. Both Joseph and his step-father, Lewis Bidamon, were away from the home and unable to come to her aid. As a result of this encounter, Joseph developed a deep hatred for the man who had threatened his mother. He describes what happened next in his memoirs:

I may say that when I began to preach the gospel I soon found I could not conscientiously use the words of the Lord's prayer – 'and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us' without a twinge of conscience. Whenever I repeated them or even read them or thought of them, this hatred, which I had nursed for so long in my heart against the man who had abused my mother, would come to mind and accuse me.

I finally saw that I must set myself to the task of overcoming this feeling, which I did humbly and earnestly. I am glad to say that, after a lapse of time, I was rewarded by the knowledge that the last vestige of my hate had disappeared and ill will was entirely banished.

The experience taught me a lesson. It forced upon my mind the necessity for many of the teachings of the Savior. I had a clearer understanding of what men were prone to feel of any unworthy nature . . . than I could have obtained had I not had this experience and learned to know what it was to hate a fellow-being. The knowledge helped to make me humble, and to exercise sympathy and charity for others struggling under like feelings . . . Hatred is a cruel, destructive, and unlovely thing, and wholly unbecoming a Christian.

Forgiveness leads us one step closer to the Peace of Jesus Christ.