

Smith Translation the Lord said, “Judge righteous judgment.”⁴

The Savior asks us to forsake and combat evil in all its forms, and although we must forgive a neighbor who injures us, we should still work constructively to prevent that injury from being repeated. A woman who is abused should not seek revenge, but neither should she feel that she cannot take steps to prevent further abuse. A businessperson treated unfairly in a transaction should not hate the person who was dishonest but could take appropriate steps to remedy the wrong. Forgiveness does not require us to accept or tolerate evil. It does not require us to ignore the wrong that we see in the world around us or in our own lives. But as we fight against sin, we must not allow hatred or anger to control our thoughts or actions.

Forgiveness brings freedom, a better future

The Savior said, “Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.”⁵

This is not to say that forgiveness is easy. When someone has hurt us or those we care about, that pain can almost be overwhelming. It can feel as if the pain or the injustice is the most important thing in the world and that we have no choice but to seek vengeance. But Christ, the Prince

of Peace, teaches us a better way. It can be very difficult to forgive someone the harm they’ve done us, but when we do, we open ourselves up to a better future. No longer does someone else’s wrongdoing control our course. When we forgive others, it frees us to choose how we will live our own lives. Forgiveness means that problems of the past no longer dictate our destinies, and we can focus on the future with God’s love in our hearts.

May the seeds of unforgiveness that haunted my neighbors never be allowed to take root in our homes. May we pray to our Heavenly Father to help us overcome foolish pride, resentment, and pettiness. May He help us to forgive and love, so we may be friends with our Savior, others, and ourselves. “Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”⁶ In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Matthew 5:25.
2. As reported by Marion D. Hanks, in Conference Report, Oct. 1973, 16; or *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, 21.
3. Genesis 45:4–5, 7–8.
4. Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 7:1.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 64:9.
6. Colossians 3:13.

The choir and congregation sang
“Now Let Us Rejoice.”

Sister Kathleen H. Hughes

The woman at the well

Early in Christ’s ministry, He traveled from Jerusalem to His boyhood home of Nazareth, in Galilee. He passed through Samaria and, weary from His journey, stopped to rest at Jacob’s ancient well. As

Jesus waited and His disciples sought food in a nearby town, a Samaritan woman approached the well. You know the story. When Jesus asked for a drink, she was surprised that a Jew would make such a request of her. For centuries, Jews and Samaritans had considered themselves

enemies. But Christ told her that if she understood whom it was she was talking to, she would ask *Him* for water—living water, water that would satisfy her thirst forever. She didn't understand, of course, and so He explained:

“Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:13–14).

The Samaritan woman liked the idea of never having to drink again. Certainly she wouldn't miss the daily labor of carrying the heavy water jars from the well to her home. But when Christ testified to her that He was the Messiah and when the Spirit confirmed to her that it was true, she began to comprehend that Jesus was speaking of greater truths. She left the well water behind and hurried away to seek others who might come and listen. I doubt, however, at least at that point, that she fully understood—or whether we fully understand—what it means to have a wellspring of living water within us.

The healing power of living water

Living water heals. It nourishes and sustains. It brings peace and joy.

A woman I know was struggling with anger toward someone who had hurt her and her family. Though she told her children not to become embittered and resentful, she fought those feelings herself. After weeks of entreating her Father in Heaven, she finally felt a change. She related: “One day, in the midst of my nearly constant prayers, the healing came. I felt a physical sensation spread through my body. After, I felt a sense of security and peace. I knew that regardless of what happened, my family and I would be all right. The anger left me and so did my desire for retaliation.”

The living water is the gospel of Jesus Christ; its communicator is the Holy Ghost. My friend knew what was right. She had said the appropriate words to her family. But only when she humbled herself enough to drink of the water—to feel the Holy Spirit—could she begin to heal.

As I have met with many women this last year—and their priesthood leaders—I have heard numerous accounts of Christ's healing power. There is so much suffering in mortality, so many causes for pain. I know people who have sent loved ones into harm's way and who daily pray for their safety in battle. I talk to parents who are frightened for their children, aware of the temptations they face. I have dear friends who are suffering from the ravaging effects of chemotherapy. I know single parents, abandoned by spouses, who are rearing children alone. I have dealt myself with the debilitating effects of depression. But I have learned from my own experience, and I learn from those I meet, that we are never left to our own resources. We are never abandoned. A wellspring of goodness, of strength and confidence is within us, and when we listen with a feeling of trust, we are raised up. We are healed. We not only survive, but we love life. We laugh; we enjoy; we go forward with faith.

The nourishing power of healing water

The living water also nourishes. I testify to you that just as He promises, Christ comes to all who are heavy laden; He gives us rest (see Matthew 11:28). He sustains us when we are weary. A wellspring is a flowing well, offering continual refreshment—if we drink of it. Pride can destroy its effects, as can mere inattention. But those who drink deeply not only become whole themselves, but they become a fountain to others as one spirit nurtures and feeds another.

Last year a dear family friend passed away. Lucile was 89 years old and had

been a widow for more than 20 years. She was not a rich woman, she was not famous, and most of the world knew nothing of her passing. But her family knew. Her neighbors knew. The members of her ward knew. For all who had experienced her love, her death had left the world a diminished place. During her years as a widow, Lucile had endured difficult challenges, including the death of a beloved grandson and infirmities brought on by age. But Lucile continued to nourish everyone she knew with her spirit, with her baked goods, with her quilts and afghans, with her humor and goodwill. And she loved to work in the temple. One spring day in 1981, she wrote in her journal:

“This morning at 3:30 A.M., as I was walking up the path to the temple, I watched the flag gently blowing in the breeze and looked at the beautiful sky and thought how happy I was to be there. I felt sad for all the people who [were] sleeping and missing the awakening of a beautiful day.”

Most of us don’t think the world is “awakening” at 3:30 in the morning, and we’re perfectly happy to roll over in bed about then and allow Lucile to feel sorry for us. But what an attitude! Only a flow of goodness from within could explain it. Did she possess this purity of spirit at 15, at 25, or even 55? I don’t know. In most cases, it probably takes a lifetime of listening to the Holy Ghost before we know God’s voice so well and before we trust in the living waters enough to taste them throughout the entire day—especially a day that begins at 3:30 A.M. But I believe the living waters sustained Lucile during those long years when she might have given way to self-pity, and her life, her spirit, became nourishment to everyone she knew.

Living water brings peace and joy

The living waters can bring peace and joy even when the wellspring within us

seems to have dried. Recently I heard of a woman whose son, suffering from emotional illness, died unexpectedly. The family was devastated. The mother couldn’t imagine that she could ever know happiness again. But she was blessed by the service of a young woman, one of her former Laurel girls—now a young Relief Society sister and her visiting teacher—who said, “You helped me; now I’ll help you—and we’ll get through this together.” Peace, even joy, began to return to her life.

It may take a lifetime—and longer—to refine our spirits fully, but the living water is available to all, including the young. I’m inspired when I watch young women of the Church, after receiving spiritual training from childhood, enter the Relief Society and immediately bring added strength to more experienced women. I’m overjoyed when I watch those same young women realize how much they can learn from women older than themselves. Peace comes to us from the Lord, but we can help each other feel that peace as we share our burdens and our happiness.

Christ’s promise is simple and sublime: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

Brothers and sisters, turmoil is raging all about us. Economies are in distress; families are struggling; we are living in, as President Hinckley has said, “perilous times” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2001, 87; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 72). But the living waters still offer peace and joy. When we live righteously, when we have done all we can do, one of the gifts we receive is confidence. The Lord tells us, “Be still and know that I am God” (D&C 101:16). In the midst of chaos, we must pause. We must listen for the Spirit that tells us, “All is well!” (“Come, Come, Ye Saints,” *Hymns*, no. 30) just as the early Saints had to do. There is cause to be concerned, but there is greater reason to be at peace.

The Samaritan woman looked into the face of Christ, listened to His voice, and recognized Him at a time when most others rejected all He taught. We know Him too, or we can, if we allow His heal-

ing power, His nourishing strength, His peace and joy, to flow through us like “a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14). That we may do so is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Robert D. Hales

The Savior’s peace in troubled times

After teaching the multitude, Jesus, with His disciples, set sail for the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was night, and the Savior rested comfortably near the stern, asleep on a pillow. In time “there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship.” Terrified, the disciples awakened Him: “Master, carest thou not that we perish?”¹ His answer was characteristically calm: “Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?”² “And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.”³

He who had created the earth was again commanding the elements.⁴ In wonderment, His disciples asked, “What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”⁵

We are living through turbulent times. A great storm of evil has come upon the earth. The winds of wickedness howl about us; the waves of war beat against our ship. As Paul wrote to Timothy:

“In the last days perilous times shall come.

“For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, . . .

“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.”⁶

It is true that ominous clouds gather around us, but just as the Savior’s words brought peace to the Apostles in the boat, they bring peace to us today: “And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars,

be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet.”⁷ “If ye are prepared ye shall not fear.”⁸

Help from the still, small voice

To Elijah, Jehovah said, “Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord.” Elijah obeyed, and after a storm of wind and earthquakes and fire, he was finally visited with “a still small voice.” To Elijah, who had hid himself inside a cave, the Lord asked, “What doest thou here, Elijah?” And Elijah answered, “Because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.” But the Lord had important work for Elijah to do, and therefore “said unto him, Go, return on thy way.”⁹ So Elijah went.

We too must come forth from our *secure* caves, for we have important work to do. Through the still, small voice of His Spirit, the Lord will protect us, help us, and guide us.

The Lord’s lessons to the brother of Jared

Remember that He taught the brother of Jared how to construct vessels for his family to help them safely traverse the vast ocean waters, to preserve them against winds and waves, and to bring them to the promised land. These vessels were unusual in their design but very safe:

“And it came to pass that when they were buried in the deep there was no water that could hurt them, . . . and no mon-