

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?”<sup>1</sup> His answer was characteristically calm: “Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?”<sup>2</sup> “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.”<sup>3</sup>

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

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.”<sup>6</sup>

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.”<sup>7</sup> “If ye are prepared ye shall not fear.”<sup>8</sup>

### **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.”<sup>9</sup> 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-

ster of the sea could break them, neither whale that could mar them.”<sup>10</sup>

However, these vessels had no light. This concerned the brother of Jared. He did not want his family to make their journey in darkness; and so, rather than waiting to be commanded, he took his concern to the Lord. “And the Lord said unto the brother of Jared: What will ye that I should do that ye may have light in your vessels?”<sup>11</sup>

The brother of Jared’s answer to this question required diligent effort on his part. He climbed Mount Shelem “and did molten out of a rock sixteen small stones.”<sup>12</sup> He then asked the Lord to touch those stones so that they would bring forth light.

As parents and leaders, we must remember that “it is not meet that [the Lord] should command in all things.”<sup>13</sup> Like the brother of Jared, we must carefully consider the needs of our family members, make a plan to meet those needs, and then take our plan to the Lord in prayer. This will require faith and effort on our part, but He will help us as we seek His assistance and do His will.

After his experience with the Lord, the brother of Jared continued to diligently prepare himself for the journey ahead.<sup>14</sup> So too must we hearken to the teachings of our prophets. The living prophets have counseled us time and again to put our lives in order—to eliminate debt, to store food and other essential items, to pay our tithing, to obtain appropriate education, and to live the commandments. Have we obeyed these essential instructions?

### **Children need to see us being faithful**

As we look into the eyes of our children and grandchildren, we see the doubt and fear of our times. Wherever these precious ones go in the world, they hear about unemployment, poverty, war, immorality, and crime. They wonder, “How can we cope with these problems?”

To find answers, they look back into our eyes and listen to our words. Do they

hear us speaking faithfully and hopefully, despite the tribulations of our times?

They need to see us continuing to pray and study the scriptures together, to hold family home evening and family councils, to serve faithfully in our Church callings, to attend the temple regularly, and to be obedient to our covenants. When they see our steadfastness in keeping the commandments, their fears will subside and their confidence in the Lord will increase.

By showing our faith through tribulation, we assure them that the fury of the adversary is not fatal. Jesus prayed to His Father on our behalf: “Not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.”<sup>15</sup> That prayer will be answered in Heavenly Father’s time and season, according to our faith.

### **Being faithful in times of trial**

In the meantime there is meaning and purpose in our earthly challenges. Consider the Prophet Joseph Smith: throughout his life he faced daunting opposition—illness, accident, poverty, misunderstanding, false accusation, and even persecution. One might be tempted to ask, “Why didn’t the Lord protect His prophet from such obstacles, provide him with unlimited resources, and stop up the mouths of his accusers?” The answer is that each of us must go through certain experiences to become more like our Savior. In the school of mortality, the tutor is often pain and tribulation, but the lessons are meant to refine and bless us and strengthen us, not to destroy us. Said the Lord to faithful Joseph:

“My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment.”<sup>16</sup>

“If thou be cast into the deep; if the billowing surge conspire against thee; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; . . .

know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.”<sup>17</sup>

Despite the many tribulations in the Prophet Joseph’s life, great things were brought to pass for the Restoration of the gospel in these latter days. Joseph came to understand and has taught us that when he was struggling with a challenge, the Lord did not let him perish. Similarly, tests of our faith are priceless opportunities to discover how deeply the Master cares about the welfare of our souls to help us endure to the end.

### **Temple ordinances help us endure**

In our day, the steadying arm of the Lord reaches us through the ordinances of His holy temples. Said the Prophet Joseph to the early Saints in Nauvoo, “You need an endowment, brethren, in order that you may be prepared and able to overcome all things.”<sup>18</sup> How right he was! Being blessed with the temple covenants and endowed with power made it possible for the Latter-day Saints to endure tribulation with faith. At the end of her own pioneer journey, Sarah Rich recorded, “If it had not been for the faith and knowledge that was bestowed upon us in that temple . . . our journey would have been like . . . taking a leap in the dark.”<sup>19</sup>

### **The Savior’s example in affliction**

I am moved by the extent of the tribulation in the Savior’s experience. Even though He was the Only Begotten of the Father, cunning men sought to take His life from the very beginning. Throughout His ministry, a storm of rumors, lies, and persecutions followed Him wherever He went.

I am especially impressed as I consider the week leading to His death. The chief priests challenged His authority, tried to trap Him, and twice conspired to kill Him. In Gethsemane, while His dis-

ciples slept, He suffered the sins of all mankind and bled from every pore. He was betrayed, arrested, questioned, struck, spat upon, and beaten. After interrogation by the ruling council, He was mocked by Herod and finally taken to Pilate, where He was made to stand before an angry mob. Whipped and crowned with thorns, He was forced to carry His cross to Golgotha. Nails were driven into His hands and feet. His body was raised up between common thieves. Soldiers cast lots for His earthly possessions, and vinegar was given to quench His thirst. After six hours,<sup>20</sup> He commended His spirit into the hands of His Father, gave up the ghost, and died.

### **Seeing Jesus’ trials with an eye of faith**

When we observe the last week of the Savior’s life from our earthly perspective, our first impression may be one of suffering and destruction. We may see only the Savior’s mother and others weeping at the cross, soldiers afraid, the earth in great commotion, rocks broken up, the veil of the temple rent in twain, and three hours of darkness covering the land. A similar scene of storms and destruction unfolded in the New World. In short, we see the terrible tempest raging.

But look again—this time through the eye of faith.

In the last, most agonizing weeks of His life, consider that Jesus taught, testified, lifted, blessed, and strengthened those around Him. He raised Lazarus from the dead, taught about His Father, set the temple in order, gave several parables, witnessed the widow offering her mite, instructed His disciples about the signs of His Second Coming, visited the house of Simon the leper, instituted the sacrament, washed the feet of the Apostles, and taught His disciples to love one another. He testified of His divinity as the Son of God and taught of the Comforter—the Holy Ghost. In His great Intercessory Prayer, He prayed to His Father for His Apostles

and all who believe on their words, “that they might have [His] joy fulfilled in themselves.”<sup>21</sup>

In His darkest hour, the light of peace and joy did not fade. It grew brighter! After His death, He appeared to Mary Magdalene. What joy must have been felt that morning as the news spread: “He is risen!”<sup>22</sup> In time He came to the women on the road; to Cleopas and a disciple who were traveling to Emmaus; to the Apostles and disciples in the upper room; to Thomas, who doubted; and to others. Again, there was joy and rejoicing in the Atonement and the Resurrection.<sup>23</sup>

### The Savior’s visit to the spirit world

But this was not all. In vision, President Joseph F. Smith—a prophet, seer, and revelator—saw the Savior’s visit to the spirit world:

“There were gathered together in one place an innumerable company of the spirits of the just, who had been faithful in the testimony of Jesus while they lived in mortality. . . .

“All these had departed the mortal life, firm in the hope of a glorious resurrection, . . .

“. . . [And] they were filled with joy and gladness, and were rejoicing together because the day of their deliverance was at hand.

“They were assembled awaiting the advent of the Son of God into the spirit world, to declare their redemption from the bands of death.”

These faithful spirits knew that shortly “their sleeping dust was to be restored unto its perfect frame, bone to his bone, and the sinews and the flesh upon them, the spirit and the body to be united never again to be divided, that they might receive a *fulness* of joy.

“[And] while this vast multitude waited and conversed, rejoicing in the hour of their deliverance from the chains of death,

the Son of God appeared, declaring liberty to the captives who had been faithful.”<sup>24</sup>

### Jesus can bring joy in turbulent times

My brothers and sisters, however dark conditions may seem in this world today, whatever the storms we are facing personally, in our homes, and in our families, this joy can be ours now. Sometimes we don’t understand death, illness, mental and physical disabilities, personal tragedies, war, and other conflict. Some of these are a necessary part of our mortal probation. Others, as Enoch foresaw, are part of the preparation for the Savior’s Second Coming, when “the heavens shall be darkened, and a veil of darkness shall cover the earth; and the heavens shall shake, and also the earth; and great tribulations shall be among the children of men, but,” said the Lord, “my people will I preserve.” And when Enoch saw all these things, he “received a fulness of joy.”<sup>25</sup>

On this morning, during this season of the Savior’s birth and Resurrection, I bear special witness with joy and rejoicing that He did come into this world, suffered for our sins, and will return again. Our faith in Him and obedience to His commandments will bring “a perfect brightness of hope”<sup>26</sup> and dispel the darkness and gloom of despair in these troubled times. The One who had power to calm the elements of earth has power to calm our souls, to give us refuge from the storm: “Peace, be still.”<sup>27</sup>

I so testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### NOTES

1. Mark 4:37–38.
2. Matthew 8:26.
3. Mark 4:39.
4. See James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. (1916), 309.
5. Mark 4:41.
6. 2 Timothy 3:1–2, 5.
7. Mark 13:7.

8. Doctrine and Covenants 38:30.
9. See 1 Kings 19:11–15.
10. Ether 6:7, 10.
11. Ether 2:23.
12. Ether 3:1.
13. Doctrine and Covenants 58:26.
14. See Ether 6:4.
15. John 17:15.
16. Doctrine and Covenants 121:7.
17. Doctrine and Covenants 122:7.
18. *History of the Church*, 2:309.
19. Sarah DeArmon Pea Rich, “Autobiography, 1885–1893,” Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 66.
20. See *Jesus the Christ*, 660.
21. John 17:13.
22. Matthew 28:6.
23. See “New Testament Times at a Glance: The Savior’s Final Week,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2003, 26–29.
24. Doctrine and Covenants 138:12, 14–18; italics added.
25. Moses 7:61, 67.
26. 2 Nephi 31:20.
27. Mark 4:39.

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The choir sang “Come unto Him.”

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### President Faust

As you leave the conference, we ask you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in driving.

We express our appreciation to the Tabernacle Choir for the beautiful music they have provided this morning.

President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our concluding speaker at this session. Following President Monson’s remarks, the choir will sing “Arise, O God, and Shine.” The benediction will then be offered by Elder Gerald N. Lund of the Seventy, and this conference will be adjourned until 2:00 this afternoon.

## President Thomas S. Monson

### In search of treasure

When I was a boy I enjoyed reading *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson. I also saw adventure movies where several individuals had separate pieces of a well-worn map which led the way to buried treasure if only the pieces could be found and put together.

I recall listening to a 15-minute radio program each weekday afternoon. The program of which I speak was *Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy*. It began with the jingle, “Have you tried Wheaties, the best breakfast food in the land?” Then, in a voice filled with mystery, there emanated from the radio the message, “We now join Jack and Betty as they approach the fabulous secret entry to the elephants’ burial ground, where a treasure is concealed. But wait; danger lurks on the path ahead.”

Nothing could tear me away from this program. It was as though I were leading

the search for the hidden treasure of precious ivory.

At another time and in a different setting, the Savior of the world spoke of treasure. In His Sermon on the Mount He declared:

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

“But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”<sup>1</sup>

The promised reward was not a treasure of ivory, gold, or silver. Neither did it consist of acres of land or a portfolio of stocks and bonds. The Master spoke of riches within the grasp of all—even joy unspeakable here and eternal happiness hereafter.