

All Things Shall Work Together for Your Good

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As we search, pray, and believe, we will recognize miracles in our lives and become miracle workers in the lives of others.

I love to read. But I can hardly stand it if a novel gets too intense—if the hero’s life is too dangerous or sad or complicated. So I have to read ahead to the end just to make sure that everything will turn out all right for the main character.

In a sense all of us are in the middle of our own novels, our own life stories. Sometimes our stories feel very intense, and we would like to read ahead to know our own end, to make sure that everything is going to turn out all right. While we don’t know the particular details of our life’s experiences, fortunately we do know something about our futures, if we live worthily.

We are given this insight in Doctrine and Covenants 90:24 [D&C 90:24]: “Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together for your good, if ye walk uprightly.” This stunning promise from the Lord that all things shall work together for our good is repeated many times in the scriptures, particularly to people or prophets who are suffering through the trials of their own life stories.

I sense that this promise comes from a tender, caring Father who desires to bless us and give us reason to hope through our earthly journey. Knowing that eventually all things will work together for our good will help us endure affliction like the faithful people from the scriptures who knew of His promises and trusted in them, “having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them” (Heb. 11:13). We too can embrace this promise.

Sometimes we see immediate fulfillment of the promise. Other times we plead for years before we see the desired promises fulfilled. Sometimes, as with faithful Abraham, we may embrace the promises but die “in faith, not having received the promises” (Heb. 11:13) while on earth. While it may be true in some instances that our promised blessings will be fulfilled only in the eternities, it is also true that as we search, pray, and believe, we will often recognize things working together for our good in this life.

As I read the stories of Jesus’ Apostles after His death, I see that they were frequently and brutally persecuted, stoned, and imprisoned. But they lived with courage and faith. They knew that ultimately all things would work together for their good. They also knew that through interim blessings and miracles, things were working out. They were sustained, tutored, and protected. They embraced the promises not only afar off but here and now as well.

A wonderful miracle happened in Peter's life when he was imprisoned by King Herod. His fellow Apostle James had just been killed, and now Peter was thrown into jail, carefully guarded by 16 men. I wonder if he felt like the Prophet Joseph Smith felt as he suffered in Liberty Jail. It was while Joseph was there that the Lord promised him that "all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good" (D&C 122:7). It might be hard to believe in this promise in the midst of such trials, but Peter, like Joseph, was blessed by the Lord.

The people of the Church were gathered together praying "without ceasing" in Peter's behalf. Then something wonderful happened. During the night when Peter was sleeping between two soldiers and was bound with two chains, an angel of the Lord "came upon him" and "raised him up," and "his chains fell off from his hands." Peter wondered if he were in a dream. He followed the angel past the guards through an iron gate and out to a city street, "and forthwith the angel departed from him." Peter then realized it was not a dream. He had been miraculously delivered. The Lord was blessing him right then.

He went to the home where members of the Church were gathered together praying for him. When Peter knocked, a young woman (just like you young women) named Rhoda came to the gate. She heard and recognized Peter's voice. The scriptures say she was glad. But in her excitement she forgot to let him in. Instead, she ran back to share with the others the great news that Peter stood at the gate. They didn't believe her and argued with her, saying she didn't know what she was talking about. Meanwhile Peter still knocked and waited. When they finally came to him, "they were astonished" (see Acts 12:4-17).

These people had been continually praying for a miracle to occur, but when the Lord answered their prayers, they were amazed. They were surprised at the Lord's goodness in His miraculous response. Do we recognize the fulfilling of promises in our lives? As the Savior asked, "Having eyes, see ye not?" (Mark 8:18). Do we have eyes to see?

Everywhere there are young women who are in the middle of their own stories, facing dangers and hardships. As with Peter there will be "angels round about you, to bear you up" (D&C 84:88). They will sustain us as we carry our earthly burdens. Often in our lives, those angels are the people around us, the people who love us, those who allow themselves to be instruments in the Lord's hands. President Spencer W. Kimball said: "God does notice us, and he watches over us. But it is usually through another person that he meets our needs. Therefore, it is vital that we serve each other in the kingdom" ("There Is Purpose in Life," *New Era*, Sept. 1974, 5).

I appreciate wonderful young women and Young Women leaders, mothers and fathers, and good friends who strengthen one another. You are the angels that help Heavenly Father's promises to be fulfilled in the lives of His beloved children.

One Young Women group in Oklahoma sought Heavenly Father in prayer to determine how to best include a new Beehive who was deaf. They worked hard to be His instruments and His hands (quite literally) in helping this young woman. A miracle swept over their entire ward as they became the angels that would bear up Alexis, the new Beehive.

Alexis said: "I was nervous and excited to start Young Women. Mom always comes with me to sign for me because I am deaf. After the opening prayer and song, Sister Hoskin, my Young Women president, said, 'Alexis, we have a gift for you.' Then all the girls stood up and started signing something. I knew it was special. Later I learned it was the Young Women theme. All the girls in our ward had learned it to surprise me.

“I know Heavenly Father loves me because of wonderful people here on earth that show me love, especially the girls in my Young Women [class] and my Young Women leaders who sign for me and help me learn the gospel” (letter to Young Women general presidency).

Sister Hoskin, the Young Women president, had prayed diligently to know how to help Alexis. She wrote:

“I had been the Young Women president in my ward for only one week when I began to worry about one of my upcoming Beehives. Alexis is hearing impaired, and I worried about how I could help her fit in and show her that she was one of us. After being troubled for many days and after many prayers, I woke in the middle of the night from a dream where I saw my group of young women standing together, doing the Young Women theme in sign language. I knew the answer to my prayers.

“It was a big challenge. It took hours—one entire night of Mutual, then weekly practices before we were ready. When Alexis’s birthday came, everyone was excited and nervous about our surprise. I pulled Alexis and her mom in front of the girls and said (signing to Alexis), ‘We have a gift for you. Now you are one of us.’ Then we stood and repeated the theme and did it in sign language. The Spirit was so strong, and there weren’t many voices because we were all crying, but the girls did a beautiful job. Alexis was beaming. She knew she was one of us.

“We learned that Heavenly Father loves all of us and that there are times we will be His voice and His hands to help others feel that love. We learned that serving brings the greatest joy. I learned the importance of following promptings, even when it involves a lot of work and seems improbable” (letter to Young Women general presidency).

Imagine how through the years Alexis’s mother has prayed for her daughter, having all the same hopes and dreams for her that each mother has for her daughter. She said:

“As the mother of a handicapped daughter, I am used to doing a little extra to help things work out for her. Because she is deaf, I am often at her side interpreting for her. You can imagine the feelings that flooded through me as the young women all began to sign the Young Women theme for her. As I stood there watching with tears in my eyes, the verse that ran through my mind was from Matthew 25:40 [Matt. 25:40]: ‘Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.’

“The remarkable love and service these young women have shown just began on that day. Many of them have given of their time and effort to learn sign language and now help with interpreting at church for Alexis. My prayers for Alexis have always been that she would be happy, be progressing, and know that she is loved.

“As a parent, my testimony of the Savior has been strengthened as I have seen the service and love of these girls and their leaders. At times, our concern for our daughter has been a heavy burden, but it has been made lighter by the actions of these faithful young women and their wise leaders.”

This mother had prayed for the Lord’s help, and now through the help of others, angels on earth, she saw all things working together for the good of her daughter.

Other young women in this ward told how they grew in giving this service. The Laurel class president related that learning the theme in sign language was hard work, but they felt the Spirit helping them in this effort. She said, “We did not rush through the theme just to say it like usual. We thought about the words and signed it for

someone else so that [she] could know the words too, and that made me happy to know that she could understand our theme and know that she was a daughter of God too.”

Even the young men got involved. They learned how to sign “Will you dance with me?” in preparation for an upcoming dance at a ward Mutual activity. Consequently, Alexis danced every dance. The priests learned to sign the sacrament prayers for her. The spirit of love enveloped the entire ward.

In every ward or branch, in every home or family, there is an Alexis with a special need, physical, emotional, or spiritual, who is praying and trusting that somehow through her challenges, eventually “all things shall work together for [her] good.” Each of us can be an instrument in the Lord’s hands, an earthly angel who can help the miracles happen.

I testify that Heavenly Father is a tender, loving parent who desires to bless us with all that He has. As we search, pray, and believe, we will recognize miracles in our lives and become miracle workers in the lives of others. We will be persuaded of His promise that all things shall work together for our good. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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