

The Master Healer

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You don't have to experience the sorrow caused by sin, the pain caused by others' actions, or the painful realities of mortality—alone.

One of my most rewarding opportunities is to travel—to learn from my sisters throughout the world. There's nothing like being arm in arm, face to face, and heart to heart with you.

During one such experience, a Relief Society leader asked, "Is there something specific that women should focus on?"

I answered, "Yes!" as President Russell M. Nelson's talk "A Plea to My Sisters" entered my mind. President Nelson taught, "We need women who have a bedrock understanding of the doctrine of Christ."¹

Nephi described the doctrine of Christ this way:

"For the gate by which ye should enter is *repentance* and *baptism* by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the *Holy Ghost*. ...

"And now ... I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken *faith* in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save.

"Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and *endure to the end*, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.

"... This is the way; and there is none other way nor name given under heaven whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God. And now, behold, *this is the doctrine of Christ*."²

Why do we need a bedrock understanding of these principles?

I often meet Latter-day Saint women who are desperate for help, yet they do not turn to the One who can provide everlasting help. Too often they seek for understanding by searching "the great and spacious building."³

As we increase our understanding of the doctrine of Christ, we soon discover that we are developing a deeper understanding of “the great plan of happiness.”⁴ We also recognize that our Savior, Jesus Christ, is at the very heart of the plan.

When we learn how to apply the doctrine of Christ to our individual circumstances, our love for our Savior grows. And we recognize “that regardless of perceived differences, all of us are in need of the same infinite Atonement.”⁵ We realize that He is our foundation—“the rock of our Redeemer, ... a sure foundation ... whereon if [we] build [we] cannot fall.”⁶

How can this doctrine bless us as we seek peace and understanding and strive to endure joyfully in our unique mortal journeys?

May I suggest that we begin, as Nephi says, “with unshaken faith in [Christ], relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save.”⁷ Our faith in Jesus Christ enables us to meet any challenge.

We, in fact, often find our faith deepened and our relationship with Heavenly Father and His Son refined in adversity. Let me share three examples.

First, the Savior, the Master Healer, has the power to change our hearts and give us permanent relief from the sorrow caused by our own sin. When the Savior taught the Samaritan woman at the well, He knew about her serious sins. However, “the Lord looketh on the heart,”⁸ and He knew she had a teachable heart.

When the woman came to the well, Jesus—the embodiment of living water—said simply, “Give me to drink.” Our Savior will likewise speak to us in a voice we recognize when we come to Him—for He knows us. He meets us where we are. And because of who He is and what He has done for us, He understands. Because He has experienced our pain, He can give us living water when we seek it. He taught this to the Samaritan woman when He said, “If thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” Finally understanding, the woman responded in faith and asked, “Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not.”

After the Samaritan woman had this experience with the Savior, she “left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

“Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?”

She had received a witness—she had begun to partake of the living water—and she desired to witness of His divinity to others.⁹

When we come to Him with humble and teachable hearts—even if our hearts are heavy with mistakes, sins, and transgressions—He can change us, “for he is mighty to save.”¹⁰ And with hearts changed, we can, like the Samaritan woman, go into our own cities—our homes, schools, and workplaces—to witness of Him.

Second, the Master Healer can comfort and strengthen us when we experience pain because of the unrighteous actions of others. I have had many conversations with women weighed down under heavy burdens. Their covenant path from the temple has become a difficult journey of healing. They suffer from broken covenants, broken hearts, and lost confidence. Many are victims of adultery and verbal, sexual, and emotional abuse, often as the result of other people's addictions.

These experiences, though no fault of their own, have left many feeling guilty and ashamed. Not understanding how to manage the powerful emotions they experience, many try to bury them, pushing them deeper into themselves.

Hope and healing are not found in the dark abyss of secrecy but in the light and love of our Savior, Jesus Christ.¹¹ Elder Richard G. Scott counseled: "If you are free [from] serious sin yourself, don't suffer needlessly the consequences of another's sins. ... You can feel compassion. ... Yet you should not take upon yourself a feeling of responsibility. ... When you have done what is reasonable to help one you love, lay the burden at the feet of the Savior. ... As you so act, not only will you find peace but will demonstrate your faith in the power of the Savior to lift the burden of sin from a loved one through his repentance and obedience."

He continued: "Complete healing will come through your faith in Jesus Christ and His power and capacity, through His Atonement, to heal the scars of that which is unjust and undeserved."¹²

If you find yourself in this situation, sisters, healing may be a long process. It will require that you prayerfully seek guidance and appropriate help, including counseling with properly ordained priesthood holders. As you learn to communicate openly, set appropriate boundaries and perhaps seek professional counseling. Maintaining spiritual health throughout the process is vital! Remember your divine identity: you are a beloved daughter of Heavenly Parents. Trust your Father's eternal plan for you. Continue daily to increase your understanding of the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Exercise faith each day to drink deeply from the Savior's well of living water. Rely on the endowment of power made available to each of us through ordinances and covenants. And allow the healing power of the Savior and His Atonement into your life.

Third, the Master Healer can comfort and sustain us as we experience painful "realities of mortality,"¹³ such as disaster, mental illness, disease, chronic pain, and death. I have recently become acquainted with a remarkable young woman named Josie who suffers from bipolar disorder. Here is just a little of her journey toward healing as she shared it with me:

"The worst of the darkness occurs on what my family and I have deemed 'floor days.' It begins with sensory overload and acute sensitivity and resistance to any type of sound, touch, or light. It is the apex of mental anguish. There is one day in particular that I will never forget.

"It was early in the journey, making the experience especially frightening. I can remember sobbing, tears racing down my face as I gasped for air. But even such intense suffering paled in comparison to the pain that followed as I observed panic overwhelm my mother, so desperate to help me.

"With my broken mind came her broken heart. But little did we know that despite the deepening darkness, we were just moments away from experiencing a mighty miracle.

"As a long hour continued, my mom whispered over and over and over again, 'I would do anything to take this from you.'

"Meanwhile, the darkness intensified, and when I was convinced I could take no more, just then something marvelous occurred.

"A transcendent and wonderful power suddenly overtook my body. Then, with a 'strength beyond my own,'¹⁴ I declared to my mom with great conviction seven life-changing words in response to her repeated desire to bear my pain. I said, 'You don't have to; Someone already has.'"

From the dark abyss of debilitating mental illness, Josie summoned the strength to testify of Jesus Christ and of His Atonement.

She was not healed completely that day, but she received the light of hope in a time of intense darkness. And today, supported by a bedrock understanding of the doctrine of Christ and refreshed daily by the Savior's living water, Josie continues on her journey toward healing and exercises unshakable faith in the Master Healer. She helps others along the way. And she says, "When the darkness feels unremitting, I rely on the memory of His tender mercies. They serve as a guiding light as I navigate through hard times."¹⁵

Sisters, I testify that—

You don't have to continue to carry the burden of sorrow caused by sin—alone.

You don't have to carry the pain caused by the unrighteous actions of others—alone.

You don't have to experience the painful realities of mortality—alone.

The Savior pleads:

"Will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?

"... If ye will come unto me ye shall have eternal life. Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come ... will I receive."¹⁶

"[He] would do anything to take this from you." In fact, "[He] already has." In the name of Jesus Christ, the Master Healer, amen.

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