

Steady in the Storms

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When the storms in life come, you can be steady because you are standing on the rock of your faith in Jesus Christ.

My dear brothers and sisters, we have been blessed today to hear inspired servants of God give counsel and encouragement. Each of us, wherever we are, knows that we live in increasingly perilous times. My prayer is that I might help you stand steady in the storms we face, with a peaceful heart.¹

The place to begin is to remember that we are each a beloved child of God and that He has inspired servants. Those servants of God have foreseen the times in which we live. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.”²

Anyone with eyes to see the signs of the times and ears to hear the words of prophets knows that is true. The perils of greatest danger come to us from the forces of wickedness. Those forces are increasing. And so it will become more difficult, not easier, to honor the covenants we must make and keep to live the gospel of Jesus Christ.

For those of us who are concerned for ourselves and for those we love, there is hope in the promise God has made of a place of safety in the storms ahead.

Here is a word picture of that place. It has been repeatedly described by living prophets. For example, as recorded in the Book of Mormon, an inspired and loving father told his sons how to strengthen themselves to stand steady in the storms ahead of them: “And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, ... whereon if men build they cannot fall.”³

The misery and endless woe of which he spoke are the terrible effects of sins should we not fully repent of them. The growing storms are the temptations and the increasing attacks of Satan. It has never been more important than it is now to

understand how to build on that sure foundation. For me, there is no better place to look than in the last sermon of King Benjamin, also recorded in the Book of Mormon.

King Benjamin's prophetic words are applicable to us in our day. He knew from his own experience the terrors of war. He had defended his people in combat, relying on the power of God. He saw clearly the terrible powers of Lucifer to tempt, to try to overcome, and to discourage God's children.

He invited his people and us to build on the only sure rock of safety, who is the Savior. He made clear that we are free to choose between right and wrong and that we cannot avoid the consequences of our choices. He spoke directly and sharply because he knew what sorrow would come to those who might not hear and heed his warnings.

Here is how he described the consequences that follow our choice either to follow the prompting of the Spirit or to follow the evil messages that come from Satan, whose intent is to tempt and destroy us:

“For behold, there is a wo pronounced upon him who listeth to obey that [evil] spirit; for if he listeth to obey him, and remaineth and dieth in his sins, the same drinketh damnation to his own soul; for he receiveth for his wages an everlasting punishment, having transgressed the law of God contrary to his own knowledge. ...

“Therefore if that man repenteth not, and remaineth and dieth an enemy to God, the demands of divine justice do awaken his immortal soul to a lively sense of his own guilt, which doth cause him to shrink from the presence of the Lord, and doth fill his breast with guilt, and pain, and anguish, which is like an unquenchable fire, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever.”

King Benjamin went on to say, “O, all ye old men, and also ye young men, and you little children who can understand my words, for I have spoken plainly unto you that ye might understand, I pray that ye should awake to a remembrance of the awful situation of those that have fallen into transgression.”⁴

For me, the power of that warning to repent forms in my mind a picture of the sure time when you and I will stand before the Savior after this life. We want with all our hearts not to shrink but rather to look up at Him, see Him smile, and hear Him say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: ... enter [in].”⁵

King Benjamin makes it clear how we can receive the hope to hear those words if we find the way in this life to have our natures changed through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. That is the only way we can build on the sure foundation and so stand firm during the storms of temptations and trials ahead. King Benjamin describes that change in our natures with a beautiful metaphor that has always touched my heart. It was used by prophets for millennia and by the Lord Himself. It is this: we must become as a child—a little child.

For some, that will not be easy to accept. Most of us want to be strong. We may well see being like a child as being weak. Most parents look for the day when their children act less childish. But King Benjamin, who understood as well as any mortal what it meant to be a man of strength and courage, makes it clear that to be like a child is not to be childish. It is to be like the Savior, who prayed to His Father for strength to be able to do His Father's will and atone for the sins of all of His Father's children and then did it. Our natures must be changed to become as a child to gain the strength we must have to stand steady and at peace in times of peril.

Here is King Benjamin's stirring description of how that change comes: "For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father."⁶

We receive that change as we make and renew covenants with God. That brings the power of Christ's Atonement to allow a transformation in our hearts. We can feel it every time we partake of the sacrament, perform a temple ordinance for a departed ancestor, testify as a witness of the Savior, or care for someone in need as Christ's disciple.

In those experiences, we become over time like a child in our capacity to love and obey. We come to stand on the sure foundation. Our faith in Jesus Christ brings us to repentance and to keeping His commandments. We obey, and we gain power to resist temptation, and we gain the promised companionship of the Holy Ghost.

Our natures change to become as a little child, obedient to God and more loving. That change will qualify us to enjoy the gifts that come through the Holy Ghost. Having the Spirit's companionship will comfort, guide, and strengthen us.

I have come to know some of what King Benjamin meant when he said that we could become like a little child before God. I have learned from many experiences that the Holy Ghost speaks most often in a quiet voice, heard most easily when one's heart is meek and submissive, like that of a child. In fact, the prayer that works is "I want only what You want. Just tell me what that is. I'll do it."

When the storms in life come, you can be steady because you are standing on the rock of your faith in Jesus Christ. That faith will lead you to daily repentance and consistent covenant keeping. Then you will always remember Him. And through the storms of hatred and wickedness, you will feel steady and hopeful.

More than that, you will find yourself reaching out to lift others to safety on the rock with you. Faith in Jesus Christ always leads to greater hope and to feelings of charity toward others, which is the true love of Christ.

I bear you my solemn witness that the Lord Jesus Christ has given you the invitation “Come unto me.”⁷ He invites you, out of love for you and for those you love, to come to Him for peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come. He knows perfectly the storms you will face in your test as part of the plan of happiness.

I plead with you to accept the Savior’s invitation. Like a meek and loving child, accept His help. Make and keep the covenants He offers in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They will strengthen you. The Savior knows the storms and the places of safety on the way home to Him and to our Heavenly Father. He knows the way. He is the Way. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. I have felt prompted to revisit a talk that I gave several years ago. For reference, see “As a Child,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2006, 14–17.
2. 2 Timothy 3:1.
3. Helaman 5:12.
4. Mosiah 2:33, 38, 40.
5. Matthew 25:21.
6. Mosiah 3:19.
7. Matthew 11:28.