

Overcome the World and Find Rest

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Find rest from the intensity, uncertainty, and anguish of this world by overcoming the world through your covenants with God.

My dear brothers and sisters, I am grateful to greet you on this glorious Sabbath morning. You are constantly on my mind. I marvel at the way you spring into action whenever you see others in need. I stand amazed at the faith and testimony you demonstrate again and again. I weep over your heartaches, disappointments, and worries. I love you. I assure you that our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, love you. They are intimately aware of your circumstances, your goodness, your needs, and your prayers for help. Again and again, I pray for you to feel Their love for you.

Experiencing Their love is vital, as it seems that we are accosted daily by an onslaught of sobering news. You may have had days when you wished you could don your pajamas, curl up in a ball, and ask someone to awaken you when the turmoil is over.

But, my dear brothers and sisters, so many wonderful things are ahead. In coming days, we will see the *greatest* manifestations of the Savior's power that the world has *ever* seen. Between now and the time He returns "with power and great glory,"¹ He will bestow countless privileges, blessings, and miracles upon the faithful.

Nonetheless, we are presently living in what surely is a most complicated time in the history of the world. The complexities and challenges leave many people feeling overwhelmed and exhausted. However, consider a recent experience that might shed light on how you and I can find rest.

During the recent open house of the Washington D.C. Temple, a member of the open house committee witnessed an insightful interchange as he escorted several prominent journalists through the temple. Somehow a young family became attached to this media tour. One reporter kept asking about the "journey" of a temple patron as he or she moves through the temple. He wanted to know if the temple journey is symbolic of the challenges in a person's journey through life.

A young boy in the family picked up on the conversation. When the tour group entered an endowment room, the boy pointed to the altar, where people kneel to make covenants with God, and said, “Oh, that’s nice. Here is a place for people to *rest* on their temple journey.”

I doubt that the boy knew just how profound his observation was. He likely had no idea about the direct connection between making a covenant with God in the temple and the Savior’s stunning promise:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you *rest*.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; ... and ye shall find *rest* unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”²

Dear brothers and sisters, I grieve for those who leave the Church because they feel membership requires too much of them. They have not yet discovered that making and keeping covenants actually makes life easier! Each person who makes covenants in baptismal fonts and in temples—and keeps them—has increased access to the power of Jesus Christ. Please ponder that stunning truth!

The reward for keeping covenants with God is heavenly power—power that strengthens us to withstand our trials, temptations, and heartaches better. This power eases our way. Those who live the higher laws of Jesus Christ have access to His higher power. Thus, covenant keepers are entitled to a special kind of *rest* that comes to them through their covenantal relationship with God.

Before the Savior submitted Himself to the agony of Gethsemane and Calvary, He declared to His Apostles, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have *overcome the world*.”³

Subsequently, Jesus entreated each of us to do the same when He said, “I *will* that ye should *overcome* the world.”⁴

Dear brothers and sisters, my message to you today is that because Jesus Christ overcame this fallen world, and because He atoned for each of us, you too can overcome this sin-saturated, self-centered, and often exhausting world.

Because the Savior, through His infinite Atonement, redeemed each of us from weakness, mistakes, and sin, and because He experienced every pain, worry, and burden you have ever had,⁵ then as you truly repent and seek His help, you can rise above this present precarious world.

You can overcome the spiritually and emotionally exhausting plagues of the world, including arrogance, pride, anger, immorality, hatred, greed, jealousy, and fear. Despite the distractions and distortions that swirl

around us, you can find true *rest*—meaning relief and peace—even amid your most vexing problems.

This important truth prompts three fundamental questions:

First, what does it mean to overcome the world?

Second, how do we do it?

And third, how does overcoming the world bless our lives?

What does it mean to overcome the world? It means overcoming the temptation to care more about the things of this world than the things of God. It means trusting the doctrine of Christ more than the philosophies of men. It means delighting in truth, denouncing deception, and becoming “humble followers of Christ.”⁶ It means choosing to refrain from anything that drives the Spirit away. It means being willing to “give away” even our favorite sins.⁷

Now, overcoming the world certainly does not mean becoming perfect in this life, nor does it mean that your problems will magically evaporate—because they won’t. And it does *not* mean that you won’t still make mistakes. But overcoming the world does mean that your resistance to sin will increase. Your heart will soften as your faith in Jesus Christ increases.⁸ Overcoming the world means growing to love God and His Beloved Son more than you love anyone or anything else.

How, then, do we overcome the world? King Benjamin taught us how. He said that “the natural man is an enemy to God” and remains so forever “*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.”⁹ Each time you seek for and follow the promptings of the Spirit, each time you do anything good—things that “the natural man” would not do—you are overcoming the world.

Overcoming the world is not an event that happens in a day or two. It happens over a lifetime as we repeatedly embrace the doctrine of Christ. We cultivate faith in Jesus Christ by repenting daily and keeping covenants that endow us with power. We stay on the covenant path and are blessed with spiritual strength, personal revelation, increasing faith, and the ministering of angels. Living the doctrine of Christ can produce the most powerful virtuous cycle, creating spiritual momentum in our lives.¹⁰

As we strive to live the higher laws of Jesus Christ, our hearts and our very natures begin to change. The Savior *lifts* us above the pull of this fallen world by blessing us with greater charity, humility, generosity, kindness, self-discipline, peace, and *rest*.

Now, you may be thinking this sounds more like hard spiritual work than *rest*. But here is the grand truth: while the world insists that power, possessions, popularity, and pleasures of the flesh bring happiness, they do not! They cannot! What they do produce is nothing but a hollow substitute for “the blessed and happy state of those [who] keep the commandments of God.”¹¹

The truth is that it is much *more exhausting* to seek happiness where you can *never* find it! However, when you yoke yourself to Jesus Christ and do the spiritual work required to overcome the world, He, and He alone, does have the power to lift you above the pull of this world.

Now, how does overcoming the world bless our lives? The answer is clear: entering into a covenant relationship with God binds us to Him in a way that makes *everything* about life easier. Please do not misunderstand me: I did *not* say that making covenants makes life *easy*. In fact, expect opposition, because the adversary does not want you to discover the power of Jesus Christ. But yoking yourself with the Savior means you have access to *His* strength and redeeming power.

I reaffirm a profound teaching of President Ezra Taft Benson: “Men and women who turn their lives over to God will discover that He can make a lot more out of their lives than they can. He will deepen their joys, expand their vision, quicken their minds, ... lift their spirits, multiply their blessings, increase their opportunities, comfort their souls, raise up friends, and pour out peace.”¹²

These incomparable privileges follow those who seek the support of heaven to help them overcome this world. To this end, I extend to members of the entire Church the same charge I gave to our young adults last May. I urged them then—and I *plead* with you now—to take charge of your own testimony of Jesus Christ and His gospel. Work for it. Nurture it so that it will grow. Feed it truth. Don’t pollute it with false philosophies of unbelieving men and women. As you make the continual strengthening of your testimony of Jesus Christ your highest priority, watch for miracles to happen in your life.¹³

My plea to you this morning is to find *rest* from the intensity, uncertainty, and anguish of this world by *overcoming* the world through your covenants with God. Let Him know through your prayers and your actions that you are serious about overcoming the world. Ask Him to enlighten your mind and send the help you need. Each day, record the thoughts that come to you as you pray; then follow through diligently. Spend more time in the temple, and seek to understand how the temple teaches you to rise above this fallen world.¹⁴

As I have stated before, the gathering of Israel is the *most* important work taking place on earth today. One crucial element of this gathering

is preparing a people who are able, ready, and worthy to receive the Lord when He comes again, a people who have already chosen Jesus Christ over this fallen world, a people who rejoice in their agency to live the higher, holier laws of Jesus Christ.

I call upon you, my dear brothers and sisters, to become this righteous people. Cherish and honor your covenants above all other commitments. As you let God prevail in your life, I promise you greater peace, confidence, joy, and yes, *rest*.

With the power of the holy apostleship vested in me, I bless you in your quest to overcome this world. I bless you to increase your faith in Jesus Christ and learn better how to draw upon His power. I bless you to be able to discern truth from error. I bless you to care more about the things of God than the things of this world. I bless you to see the needs of those around you and strengthen those you love. Because Jesus Christ overcame this world, you can too. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:36: “Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.”
2. Matthew 11:28–30; emphasis added.
3. John 16:33; emphasis added.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 64:2; emphasis added.
5. See Alma 7:11–13.
6. 2 Nephi 28:14.
7. See the account of King Lamoni’s father in Alma 22, especially Alma 22:18.
8. See Mosiah 5:7.
9. Mosiah 3:19; emphasis added.
10. See 2 Nephi 31; 3 Nephi 27:16–20.
11. Mosiah 2:41.
12. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (2014), 42–43.
13. See Russell M. Nelson, “Choices for Eternity” (worldwide devotional for young adults, May 15, 2022), broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
14. President David O. McKay said that in the temple we take a “step-by-step ascent into the Eternal Presence” (in Truman G. Madsen, *The Temple: Where Heaven Meets Earth* [2008], 11).