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My brothers and sisters, I should like to say something that might be helpful to those among us who are weighed down with trials and difficulties and disappointments and tribulations, and to them I say, "Doubt not, fear not."

**The gospel plan**

The gospel of Jesus Christ embraces every principle, every law, and every ordinance necessary for us to meet any condition in life and for the ultimate success of each of us.

The teachings of Jesus warm the human heart. His doctrines enlighten the mind. They designate the proper course.

Foremost among his teachings is the recognition of God as our Father. Jesus prayed to our Father and asked that all men do likewise, and that we live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt 4:4.) He taught that by conformance to the plan of our Father, given through Jesus Christ, each of us can achieve a divine destiny.

It is the only plan by which genuine peace of mind can be found. Indeed, it is the *only* plan that leads men to salvation and exaltation. This plan was presented to us in our preexistent state, and each of us gladly accepted it. As part of it, we understood that in mortality we would most likely experience sorrow as well as joy, pain as well as comfort, disappointment along with success, sickness as well as health. Because it is necessary for our development, the Lord permits the bitter to be mixed with the sweet. He knows that our individual faith must be tested in adversity as well as in serenity. Otherwise, that faith may not be sufficiently developed when a condition arises that can be met through faith alone.

**Encouragement in adversity**

The Bible says: "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small." (Prov. 24:10.) Even in times of trouble

and tribulation, the gospel of Christ offers encouragement and gives assurance.

I am always lifted in spirit and given greater hope by the words of the great hymn:

"How firm a foundation, ye Saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in his excellent word!  
What more can he say than to you he hath said,  
You who unto Jesus, for refuge have fled?"

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,  
The river of sorrow shall not thee o'er-flow,  
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,  
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

"Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,  
For I am thy God and will still give thee aid;  
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,  
Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand."

(Hymns, No. 66.)

Brothers and sisters, you and I are *never* alone. The Lord will not forsake us. Let us not forsake him!

We are God's children, and he, our Father, has a personal concern for each of us. He has promised that they who are faithful in tribulation and adversities shall be more greatly blessed. (See D&C 58:24.)

**Teachings from Liberty Jail**

Let us consider for a moment the plight of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, who, with their companions, were incarcerated in Liberty Jail through the winter of 1838 and 1839. They were confined in one room with two small windows. No provision had been made

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to heat the room; there was no chimney to draw out the smoke. The brethren slept on piles of straw on the floor. Their food was of the coarsest kind. And yet, from that prison came some of the most beautiful and sublime thoughts and writings ever given to the world. They will endure among sacred literature of the Church for all time. Here are some of the words of the Lord to Joseph Smith at that time as they are recorded in Doctrine and Covenants, Section 122:

"If thou art called to pass through tribulation; if thou art in perils among false brethren; . . .

"If thou art accused with all manner of false accusations; if thine enemies fall upon thee; . . .

". . . know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.

"The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?

"Therefore, hold on thy way, and the priesthood shall remain with thee; for their bounds are set, they cannot pass. Thy days are known, and thy years shall not be numbered less; therefore, fear not what man can do, for God shall be with you forever and ever." (D&C 122:5-9.)

My, what a lesson! What assurance!

Strength comes by courageously adjusting our lives to our trials, and by so doing we are brought closer to God.

Elder James E. Talmage gave this promise: "No pang that is suffered by man or woman upon the earth, will be without its compensating effect . . . if it be met with patience."

### **Trials can bring blessings**

We cannot afford to meet adversities with impatience or bitterness. President Brigham Young taught that "if the Saints could realize things as they are when they are called to pass through trials, and to suffer what they call sacrifices, they would acknowledge them to be the greatest blessings that could be bestowed upon them. . . .

". . . without the opposite and they could not know enjoyment; they could not realize happiness. . . . If they should not taste the bitter, how could

they realize the sweet? They could not!" (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 2, pp. 301-2.)

If our existence terminated with death, adversities might tend to overwhelm us. But with the gospel as a foundation and with faith in a just God who watches over all, each one may receive the comfort and acquire the fortitude to meet the vicissitudes of life.

### **Doubt not fear not**

To you who are discouraged, to you who are sorrowing, to you who doubt, to you who need help, may I say: Doubt not—fear not!

The Lord gives to you and to me assurance in these words:

"Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

"Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name it shall be given unto you, that is expedient for you." (D&C 88:63-64. Italics added.)

But the gospel teaches also that each of us has obligations. Hear also the words of the apostle Paul to the saints in Rome:

"Let love be without dissimulation [pretense]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; . . .

"Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer; . . .

"Bless them which persecute you: . . .

"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." (Rom. 12:9-15.)

### **Build upon the rock**

Yes, indeed, the teachings of the gospel enlighten the mind and warm the heart. They give encouragement to the sorrowing and replace fear with courage. With Helaman, I say:

"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, and 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, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall." (He. 5:12.)

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## ELDER JAMES A. CULLIMORE

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One of our hymns we sing most frequently and with great fervor is:

"We thank thee, O God, for a prophet  
To guide us in these latter days.  
We thank thee for sending the gospel  
To lighten our minds with its rays.

"We thank thee for every blessing  
Bestowed by thy bounteous hand.  
We feel it a pleasure to serve thee,  
And love to obey thy command."

(*Hymns*, No. 196.)

One of the most important features of the last line is, "We love to obey thy command." The members of the Church have listened to the counsel of their leaders and followed it quite implicitly from the very organization of the Church. Those who did not heed the counsel of the brethren and were disobedient to the laws of the gospel usually apostatized and left the Church.

Although there have been periods of great trial among the people in the history of the Church, the revelations of the Lord, through the counsel of his leaders, have guided the people constantly in both their material and spiritual lives.

### Guidance for the Church

The guidance for the Church continues to come through the President, the prophet, seer, and revelator, to the present day. The basic principle of the restored gospel is that God reveals his mind and will to his established Prophet on earth for the guidance of the Church. The Church is founded on revelation. On the day of the organization of the Church, the Lord gave a revelation to the Church:

"Wherefore, meaning the church, thou shalt give heed unto all his [the President of the Church] words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me;

"For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith.

"For by doing these things the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name's glory.

"For thus saith the Lord God: Him have I inspired to move the cause of Zion in mighty power for good, and his diligence I know, and his prayers I have heard." (D&C 21:4-7.)

Today, more than ever before, we have need for implicit faith in God and his appointed leaders and their inspired counsel. In this day, when many doubt the very existence of God and the divinity of Christ, as we learn of the "new morality," see a general breakdown in moral standards, witness common use of drugs and disregard for parents and home, see increase in juvenile delinquency and the tendency to break marriage vows, riots, violence, and great disturbances everywhere, there is justification for great concern.

### Man's free agency

Yet, no matter how sure the dangers and how great the need for counsel and guidance, there can be no coercion in the Church. Man's free agency is held by the Church to be his first right. Every man must be free to act for himself. The Lord has declared: "For the power is in them,