

The consummate reward of integrity is the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost (see D&C 121:46). The Holy Ghost does not attend us when we do evil. But when we do what is right, he can dwell with us and guide us in all we do.

My brothers and sisters, let us live true to the trust the Lord has placed in us. Let us strive for personal, practical integrity in every endeavor, regardless of how mundane or inconsequential it may seem. The small matters accumulate to shape the direction of our lives.

I bear my witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and is our Lord

and Savior. This is his church. Joseph Smith is a true prophet of God, as is President Ezra Taft Benson. I bear this testimony humbly, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell, also of the Council of the Twelve, will be our concluding speaker for this session.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

May I add my personal welcome to those brethren and sisters newly sustained today. What has happened today would not have occurred had you not married so well spiritually so many years ago.

We must endure our mortal tests

On one of those rare occasions when His very voice was heard, the Father testified, "Yea, the words of my Beloved are true and faithful. He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved" (2 Nephi 31:15). Of all that the Father might have said, He stressed endurance. Why?

First, because God has repeatedly said He would structure mortality to be a proving and testing experience (see Abraham 3:25; Mosiah 23:21). Brothers and sisters, he has certainly kept His promise. He has carried out His divine intent, hasn't He? Thus, even our fiery trials, said Peter, should not be thought of as "some strange thing" (1 Peter 4:12). Hence, enduring is vital, and those who so last will be first spiritually!

By taking Jesus' yoke upon us and enduring, we learn most deeply of Him and especially how to be like Him (see Matthew 11:29). Even though our experiences are micro compared to His, the process is the same.

There are so many things to be endured: illness, injustice, insensitivity, poverty, aloneness, unresponsiveness,

being misrepresented and misunderstood, and, sometimes, even enemies. Paul reminds us that meek and lowly Jesus, though the Lord of the universe, "endured . . . contradiction of sinners against himself" (Hebrews 12:3). Smaller variations of these contradictions or hostilities will be felt by His disciples.

God is long-suffering with us

We tend to think only in terms of our endurance, but it is God's patient long-suffering which provides us with our chances to improve, affording us urgently needed developmental space or time (see Alma 42:4-5).

Paul observed, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness" (Hebrews 12:11). Such "peaceable fruit" comes only in the appointed season thereof, after the blossoms and the buds.

Otherwise, if certain mortal experiences were cut short, it would be like pulling up a flower to see how the roots are doing. Put another way, too many anxious openings of the oven door, and the cake falls instead of rising. Moreover, enforced change usually does not last, while productive enduring can ingrain permanent change (see Alma 32:13-16).

As we endure, we act for ourselves

Patient endurance is to be distinguished from merely being "acted upon." Endurance is more than pacing up and down within the cell of our circumstance; it is not only to accept the things allotted to us, it is to "act for ourselves" by magnifying what is allotted to us (see Alma 29:3, 6).

If, for instance, we are always taking our temperature to see if we are happy, we will not be. If we are constantly comparing to see if things are fair, we are not only being unrealistic, we are being unfair to ourselves.

Therefore, true enduring represents not merely the passage of time, but the passage of the soul—and not merely from A to B, but sometimes all the way from A to Z. To endure in faith and do God's will (see D&C 63:20; 101:35) therefore involves much more than putting up with a circumstance.

Endurance requires many things

Rather than shoulder-shrugging, true enduring is soul-trembling. Jesus bled not at a few but "at every pore" (D&C 19:18).

Sometimes spiritual obedience requires us to "hold on" lovingly, such as to a rebellious child, while others cry, "Let go!" Enduring may likewise mean, however, "letting go," when everything within us wants to "hold on," such as to a loved one "appointed unto death" (D&C 42:48).

Patient endurance permits us to cling to our faith in the Lord and our faith in His timing when we are being tossed about by the surf of circumstance. Even when a seeming undertow grasps us, somehow, in the tumbling, we are being carried forward, though battered and bruised.

Enduring temptation is one of the greatest challenges. Jesus endured temptation and yielded not (see Mosiah 15:5). Christ withstood because He "gave no heed" to temptations (D&C 20:22). You and I tend to dally over and dabble in

temptations, entertaining them for a while, even if we later evict them. However, to give temptations any heed can set the stage for later succumbing.

Our love for others who endure

The customized challenges are often the toughest and the most ironical. For instance, King Mosiah was venerated of his people, yet, ironically, his sons became damaging enemies of the Church for a season. Nevertheless, his discerning people still esteemed Mosiah.

Will we have that same perceptive tolerance for those being wrenched by a cruel irony? When, for the moment, we ourselves are not being stretched on a particular cross, we ought to be at the foot of someone else's—full of empathy and proffering spiritual refreshment. On the straight, narrow path, which leads to our little Calvarys, one does not hear a serious traveler exclaiming, "Look, no hands!" (see 1 Corinthians 10:13).

With enduring comes a willingness, therefore, to "press forward" even when we are bone weary and would much rather pull off to the side of the road (see 2 Nephi 31:20). Hence, one prophet was especially commended by the Lord for his unwearyingness (see Helaman 10:4; see also 15:6).

Patience shows submission to God

Paul wrote of how, even after faithful disciples had "done the will of God," they "[had] need of patience" (Hebrews 10:36). How many times have good individuals done the right thing initially only to break under subsequent stress? Sustaining correct conduct for a difficult moment under extraordinary stress is very commendable, but so is coping with sustained stress subtly present in seeming routineness. Either way, however, we are to "run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1), and it is a marathon, not a dash.

When you and I are unduly impatient, we are suggesting that we like our timetable better than God's. And thus,

while the scriptural phrase "in process of time" means "eventually," it also denotes an entire spiritual process:

"The Lord showed unto Enoch all the inhabitants of the earth; and he beheld, and lo, Zion, in process of time, was taken up into heaven" (Moses 7:21; see also D&C 38:13; Genesis 4:3; 38:12; Exodus 2:23; Judges 11:4; 2 Chronicles 21:19).

Experience brings spirituality

By itself, of course, the passage of time does not bring an automatic advance. Yet, like the prodigal son, we often need the "process of time" in order to come to our spiritual senses (Luke 15:17). The touching reunion of Jacob and Esau in the desert, so many years after their sibling rivalry, is a classic example. Generosity can replace animosity. Reflection can bring perception. But reflection and introspection require time. So many spiritual outcomes require saving truths to be mixed with time, forming the elixir of experience, that sovereign remedy for so many things.

We find that experience can produce a high spiritual yield (see D&C 122:7). Laban, for instance, was reluctant for Jacob to leave his employ, "for I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake" (Genesis 30:27). The modern Church even today is instructed to "wait for a little season" to build up central Zion. Why? So that we "may be prepared . . . and have experience" (D&C 105:9-10). We gain knowledge through particular experiences, but only incrementally, "in that thing" (Alma 32:34). Hence the ongoingness of it all, and perhaps we can be forgiven for wondering, "Is there no other way?" Personal, spiritual symmetry emerges only from the shaping of prolonged obedience. Twigs are bent, not snapped, into shape.

The benefits of endurance

Without patient and meek endurance we will learn less, see less, feel less, and

hear less. We who are egocentric and impatient shut down so much of our receiving capacity.

In any case, brothers and sisters, how could there be refining fires without enduring some heat? Or greater patience without enduring some instructive waiting? Or more empathy without bearing one another's burdens—not only that others' burdens may be lightened, but that we may be enlightened through greater empathy? How can there be later magnification without enduring some present deprivation?

The enlarging of the soul requires not only some remodeling, but some excavating. Hypocrisy, guile, and other imbedded traits do not go gladly or easily, but if we "endure it well" (D&C 121:8), we will not grow testy while being tested.

Moreover, we find that sorrow can actually enlarge the mind and heart in order to "give place," expanded space for later joy.

Develop qualities through endurance

Thus, enduring is one of the cardinal attributes; it simply cannot be developed without the laboratory time in this second estate. Even the best lectures about the theory of enduring are not enough. All the other cardinal virtues—love, patience, humility, mercy, purity, submissiveness, justice—require endurance for their full development.

Puzzlement, for instance, is often the knob on the door of insight. The knob must be firmly grasped and deliberately turned with faith. The harrowing of the soul can be like the harrowing of the soil to increase the yield with things being turned upside down. Moses experienced such topsy-turvy change. A lesser individual couldn't have forsaken Egypt's treasures and privileged status only to be hunted and later resented as a prophetic presence in the royal courts which he had doubtless known earlier, but as an insider. Yet we are told Moses endured by faith (see Hebrews 11:24-29).

George Macdonald has said that God is easily pleased but hard to satisfy. As a Father, God is delighted with our first and further steps, but He knows how straight, how narrow, and how long the ensuing path is. Again, how vital endurance!

The blessings of eternal life

Happily, while the Lord has promised us a tutoring mortality, He has also promised us glorious things as well!

"And all they who . . . endure in faith . . . shall . . . partake of all this glory" (D&C 101:35).

Eternal life brings to us, brothers and sisters, the full bestowal of all the specific promises made in connection with all the temple's holy ordinances. John declared that the "called, and chosen, and faithful" (Revelation 17:14) shall "inherit all things" (21:7). Modern scriptures confirm that these special souls will eventually receive "all that [the] Father hath" (D&C 84:38). "All"! You and I cannot even imagine such bounteous blessings.

Meanwhile, with spiritual endurance there can be felicity amid poverty, gratitude without plentitude. There can even be meekness amid injustice. One never sees the "root of bitterness springing up" in the enduring meek (Hebrews 12:15).

While in the midst of all these things, if we are wise like Job, we will avoid charging God foolishly (see Job 1:22).

Jesus shows us the way

As with every virtue, Jesus is the Exemplar. While shouldering Jesus' yoke, we, too, can better come to "know according to the flesh how to succor [each other]" (Alma 7:12).

Likewise, by seeing life's experiences through to the end, on our small scale, we can finally say, as Jesus did on the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30). We, too, can then have "finished [our] preparations," having done the particular work God has given each of us to do

(D&C 19:19; see also John 17:4). However, our tiny cup cannot be taken from us either. For this reason have we come unto the world (see John 12:26-27).

In a small but nevertheless sufficient way, we will experience what it is to suffer "both body and spirit" (see D&C 19:18). Some afflictions are physical, others mental, or so begin. Often, however, they are interactive, forming a special pain.

Therefore, one of the most powerful and searching questions ever asked of all of us in our sufferings hangs in time and space before us: "The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?" (D&C 122:8). Jesus plumbed the depths and scaled the heights in order to comprehend all things (see D&C 88:6). Jesus, therefore, is not only a fully atoning but also a fully comprehending Savior!

Endurance brings peace

Jesus' few dozen words describing the agonies of the Atonement reveal that He was determined that He "not drink the bitter cup, and shrink" (D&C 19:18) or pull back. Instead, submissive Christ reminded us that He both "partook" and "finished" (see D&C 19:19). Each act was so essential! No wonder Paul called Jesus the "finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2).

After describing the agonies of the Atonement, Jesus urged us to "walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me" (D&C 19:23). This is the only way, brothers and sisters, that you and I can avoid shrinking while achieving that peace which "passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

You and I see in those who "endure it well" a quiet, peaceful majesty, an unspoken, inner awareness that, like Paul, they have "kept the faith." And they know it, though they do not speak of it.

Now, as this lovely Primary chorus will sing, our task is "trying to be like Jesus" and remembering the "lessons he taught" ("I'm Trying to Be like Jesus," *Children's Songbook* [1989], p. 78).

For the eloquence and for the exquisite-ness and the elegance of Christ's ever-lasting example of enduring, I express again my public gratitude, my undying gratitude to the Father for the gift of His Son, and I so express it in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Neal A. Maxwell has just spoken to us.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M. mountain standard time.

The nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast and the Sunday morning session which immediately follows must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

We bring to the attention of all of you the fact that at 2:00 A.M. in the morning (tomorrow morning, that is), we change to daylight saving time. You should move your clocks ahead one hour before you retire so you will be here at the right time tomorrow.

We express gratitude to this Primary children's choir from the Granger Utah Region. They have given us beautiful music which we so much have appreciated. They will sing in closing "I'm Trying to Be like Jesus."

Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder George R. Hill III of the Seventy, and this session will be adjourned.

The choir sang "I'm Trying to Be like Jesus."

Elder George R. Hill III offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD SESSION

The general priesthood session, the third session of the 160th Annual General Conference, convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, March 31, 1990. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a combined men's choir from the Ephraim, Orem, Salt Lake, Salt Lake Community College, Ogden, and Logan institutes under the direction of Brother Douglas Brenchley, with Brother Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Monson opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

Brethren, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked that I conduct this general priesthood session. We extend our love

and best wishes to all of the brethren participating in this session.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit and satellite transmission to holders of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall, the BYU Marriott Center, and locations in many countries throughout the world. We note that Elders M. Russell Ballard, Hugh W. Pinnock, and Ted E. Brewerton are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders John H. Groberg and Yoshihiko Kikuchi are seated on the stand in the BYU Marriott Center.

For the information of the brethren in outlying areas, we announce that at the session this afternoon the following brethren were called as members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy: Eduardo Ayala, LeGrand R. Curtis, Clinton L. Cutler, Robert K. Dellenbach, Harold G. Hillam, Kenneth Johnson, Helvécio Martins, Lynn A. Mickelsen, J Ballard Washburn, and Durrell A. Woolsey.

The singing during this session will be furnished by a combined men's choir