

a period—by name and in *his* name and by *his* inspiration and revelation. May we all have a deeper insight into the divine nature and meaning of the call, this great eternal miracle, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have listened to Elders H. Verlan Andersen and Gardner H. Russell.

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

Elder Richard G. Scott

Asking the Lord for help

Life in today's world can be at times so complicated and the challenges so overwhelming as to be beyond our individual capacity to resolve them. We all need help from the Lord. Yet there are many individuals who don't know how to receive that help. They feel their urgent pleas for help have often gone unattended. How can that be when He Himself has said, "Ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (D&C 4:7)?

Such difficulty results either from not following His spiritual law for providing help or from not recognizing help when it comes. Well did James observe, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss" (James 4:3).

True, the Lord has said, "Ask, and ye shall receive" (D&C 4:7). But He also declared, "Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me" (D&C 9:7).

It is evident that He intends that we do our part. But what specifically are we to do? No one would expect to receive a result from physical law without obeying it. Spiritual law is the same. As much as we want help, we must expect to follow the spiritual law that controls that help. Spiritual law is not mysterious. It is something that we can understand. The scriptures define it in significant detail. I will cite key

scriptures that teach how to ask for help, then summarize the spiritual law they clarify.

Scriptural teachings

The Savior declared, "I, the Lord, am bound *when ye do what I say*; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise" (D&C 82:10; italics added).

John taught, "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, *because we keep his commandments*, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:22; italics added).

Nephi counseled, "Do ye not remember the things which the Lord hath said?—If ye will *not harden your hearts*, and *ask me in faith*, believing that ye shall receive, *with diligence in keeping my commandments*, surely these things shall be made known unto you" (1 Nephi 15:11; italics added).

The Lord has the power to bless us at any time. Yet we see that to count on His help, we must consistently obey His commandments.

Enos recorded, "I cried unto him continually, for he had said unto me: Whatsoever thing ye shall *ask in faith*, believing that ye shall receive *in the name of Christ*, ye shall receive it" (Enos 1:15; italics added).

Mormon wrote, "Behold, I say unto you that *whoso believeth in Christ, doubting nothing*, whatsoever he shall ask the Father in the name of Christ it shall be granted him; and *this promise* is

unto all, even unto the ends of the earth" (Mormon 9:21; italics added).

The Savior taught:

"Remember that without faith you can do nothing; therefore *ask in faith*. *Trifle not* with these things; do not ask for that which you ought not" (D&C 8:10; italics added).

"And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, *which is right*, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you" (3 Nephi 18:20; italics added).

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

"If ye are purified and cleansed from all sin, ye shall ask whatsoever you will in the name of Jesus and it shall be done. But know this, *it shall be given you what you shall ask*" (D&C 50:29–30; italics added).

These teachings of Jesus Christ emphasize that it matters very much *what* we ask for and *how* we ask for it. I testify that when we seek His will and do it, we will obtain the greatest blessings in life.

Sincere gratitude is fundamental, for "in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments" (D&C 59:21).

Now, to summarize, blessings come when we—

- Ask the Father in the name of Christ.
- Diligently keep His commandments.
- Ask with faith in Christ.
- Ask for that which is right.
- Harden not our hearts.
- Express gratitude.

Help through priesthood blessings

One way the Lord helps us is through priesthood blessings. When a worthy priesthood bearer is led to pronounce specific blessings, we can be

greatly comforted. Yet there is no guarantee of outcome without effort on our part. Appropriate use of priesthood authority opens a channel of help where the outcome is consistent with the will of the Lord. The blessing resolves those things which are beyond our own capacity to influence either personally or with the help of others. Yet we must do our part for the blessing to be realized. We must strive to be worthy and to exercise the requisite faith to do what we are able. Where it is intended that others help, we must use that help also. It is through the combination of our doing what is within our power to accomplish and the power of the Lord that the blessing is realized.

Once I was awakened by a call from an anxious mother. Her premature child was not expected to survive the night. She asked for a priesthood blessing. As I approached the suffering child, the mother stopped me, looked into my eyes, and asked, "Are you worthy to bless my child?" That was an appropriate question. One never feels completely worthy, but we must do our best to be so. There came a strong prompting to bless the child to recover. The worthy mother continued professional treatment and exercised her faith. The Lord responded with the additional blessing needed. And the child recovered.

A relative asked Elder Spencer W. Kimball for a blessing to combat a crippling disease. For some time Elder Kimball prepared himself spiritually; then, fasting, he was prompted to bless her to be healed. Some weeks later she returned, angry and complaining that she was "fed up" with waiting for the Lord to give the promised relief.

He responded: "Now I understand why you have not been blessed. You must be patient, do your part, and express gratitude for the smallest improvement noted."

She repented, followed scrupulously his counsel, and eventually was made well.

It is a sobering responsibility for those who bear the priesthood to act as agents of the Lord to help those in need. That trust requires faith, worthiness, and a sensitivity to the promptings of the Spirit to communicate the will of the Lord. Also, it is a sobering responsibility for those who receive a blessing to exercise faith, to express gratitude for every degree of improvement observed, and to do all within their power to resolve the need.

Three years ago I met a young man who had been severely injured in an accident. The medical forecast was grim. If he survived, he could spend the rest of his life completely paralyzed. Recently I met him again. Through the priesthood, he had been blessed to gain the mobility needed to do all the Lord intended he do in life. He moved his electric cart near, shook my hand, sat upright, and broke into a broad grin. The room was charged with his invincible spirit. His faith—and incredibly hard, painful effort, sustained and magnified by the blessing of the Lord—has begun a miracle. With periodic help from loving friends, he is succeeding in a university and striving to progress to qualify to be a missionary. I know his continued effort will yield far greater improvement.

In striking contrast, consider another man. His first comment to me was, "Why doesn't the Lord give me a wife?" as though an eternal companion were a teddy bear to be acquired with no thought of her agency. As we spoke, it was obvious he was not doing the most fundamental things to qualify to find a wife. He admitted that maybe he should do something about his excessive weight, but that was hard. His clothes were slovenly and his body so neglected that it was difficult to stand near him. Clearly, he is not doing his part.

How the Lord's help comes

Help from the Lord generally comes in increments. He can immediately cure serious illnesses or disabilities or even allow the dead to be raised. But the general pattern is that improvement comes in sequential steps. That plan gives us an opportunity to discover what the Lord expects us to learn. It requires our patience to recognize His timetable. It provides growth from our efforts and trust in Him and the opportunity to express gratitude for the help given.

Often we have difficulty mastering lessons the Lord wants us to learn when things are going too well in our lives. When there is suffering or pain, we ask ourselves a lot of questions. Some of them ought to be: "What does the Lord want me to learn from this experience? What do I need to do? What do I need to change? Whom do I need to serve? Or what characteristic must I improve?" Pondering and prayer will help us understand what we are to learn from the challenges we are asked to overcome.

Not all our prayers will be answered as we wish. It is not always easy to know the will of the Lord, yet there are some things we can be certain of. He will never ask us to do anything that is not completely in harmony with His teachings. We cannot count on help if we are immoral or otherwise deliberately disobedient unless we sincerely repent. One who prays to know if another is to be the eternal companion while violating in any degree the law of chastity has little hope of receiving confirmation without repentance.

"For behold, the Lord hath said: I will not succor my people in the day of their transgression; but I will hedge up their ways that they prosper not; and their doings shall be as a stumbling block before them" (Mosiah 7:29).

"But if ye will turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart, and put your

trust in him, and serve him with all diligence of mind, . . . he will . . . deliver you out of bondage" (Mosiah 7:33).

The Lord's will is our best choice

Our earnest prayers are answered when they conform to the will of the Lord. Since we cannot perfectly understand His will, we must walk with faith. He is all-knowing, and His decisions are perfect. The fact that our finite capacity does not let us understand all of His dealings with man does not limit Him from blessing us. His will is our best choice in life, whether or not we fully understand it. When we act using our moral agency wisely, the Lord will act according to His will.

We see such a limited part of the eternal plan He has fashioned for each one of us. Trust Him, even when in eternal perspective it temporarily hurts very much. Have patience when you are asked to wait when you want immediate action. He may ask you to do things which are powerfully against your will. Exercise faith and say, "Let Thy will be done." Such experiences, honorably met, prepare you and condition you for yet greater blessings. As your Father, His purpose is your eternal happiness, your continuing development, your increasing capacity. His desire is to share with you all that He has. The path you are to walk through life may be very different from others. You may not always know why He does what He does, but you can know that He is perfectly just and perfectly merciful. He would have you suffer no consequence, no challenge, endure no burden that is superfluous to your good.

The Lord will help you

To gain unshakable faith in Jesus Christ is to flood your life with brilliant light. You are no longer alone to

struggle with challenges you know you cannot resolve or control yourself, for He said, "*If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me*" (Moroni 7:33; italics added).

If you are despondent, racked by transgression, are ill, alone, or desperately in need of comfort and support, I solemnly testify that the Lord will help you when you carefully obey the spiritual law upon which that help is predicated. He is your Father. You are His child. He loves you. He will never let you down. I know He will bless you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us. Customarily the President of the Church has spoken words of benediction at the close of the conference. President Benson is not with us this afternoon. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will speak in behalf of our beloved prophet.

Before hearing his remarks, we express appreciation to the Mormon Youth Chorus, Missionary Training Center mixed choir, and Tabernacle Choir and to their conductors and organists for the beautiful and inspiring music during the conference.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference; the doctors, Church Health Unit nurses, and ambulance services who have been on hand to provide service; the ushers and interpreters; and those who are responsible for the beautiful flowers on the stand and on Temple Square. Much consecrated service goes into the preparation for and the presentation of the conference.

We express appreciation to local and national press representatives for the coverage given. We are grateful for

the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations and cable and satellite systems who have given time and made facilities available to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

Following President Monson's remarks, the Tabernacle Choir will sing

"God Be with You Till We Meet Again," which we hope will represent the sentiments of each of us.

The benediction will then be offered by Elder Kenneth Johnson of the Seventy, and this conference will stand adjourned for six months. Thank you for your effort in participating with us.

President Thomas S. Monson

The prophet's love and counsel

Traditionally the President of the Church provides closing remarks at the conclusion of conference. How we would enjoy hearing from President Benson! We are grateful that now, in his ninety-third year, he is free from pain, able to move about, meet on occasion with the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve, and be the recipient of your faith, your prayers, and your expressions of love for him. All of us were gratified that President Benson was able to attend a portion of the opening session on Saturday and on Sunday morning.

Since he is unable to address the conference prior to its adjournment, I have been asked to respond in his behalf. I seek the inspiration of the Lord as I convey to you the prophet's love and counsel.

This has been a glorious conference. The Brethren have been inspired in their utterances, the prayers offered have been spoken from the heart, and the music truly has been "the song of the righteous" and "a prayer unto [the Lord]" (D&C 25:12). Our sincere appreciation and gratitude go to each who has in any way made the conference most memorable.

We miss the association of Elder Derek A. Cuthbert, who was called to his heavenly home on April 7, 1991. We recall his testimony of truth concerning this work and marvel at all he

was able to accomplish, even with limitations of health. In our prayers we remember his dear wife, Muriel, and each member of his family.

The conference speakers have emphasized the troubles of our times and the necessity to make certain our lives are lived in conformity with the principles of the gospel, that all of us may merit the companionship of the Lord to guide us on our earthly journey and qualify through our obedience for the blessings He desires to bestow upon us.

Importance of the family

President Benson has frequently emphasized the importance of the family. He declared: "Remember, the family is one of God's greatest fortresses against the evils of our day. Help keep your family strong and close and worthy of our Father in Heaven's blessings. As you do, you will receive faith and strength which will bless your lives forever" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, p. 56; or *Ensign*, May 1986, p. 43).

"[Our] homes . . . need also the blessings which come from daily communion with God. . . . The differences and irritations of the day melt away as families approach the throne of heaven together. Unity increases. The ties of love and affection are re-enforced and the peace of heaven enters" (. . . *So Shall Ye Reap* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1960], p. 107).