

gotten in this world or in the eternities to come. So again we issue the clarion call and pray that the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers in increased numbers, for the field is white, all ready for a bounteous harvest (see D&C 4:4).

That this is His work in which we are engaged is my solemn witness to you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder Angel Abrea

### Prepare for afflictions

At a time when persecution intensified toward the newly organized Church, the Lord said to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, "Be patient in afflictions, for thou shalt have many; but endure them, for, lo, I am with thee, even unto the end of thy days" (D&C 24:8).

Tribulation, afflictions, and trials will constantly be with us in our sojourn here in this segment of eternity, just as the Savior said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33). Therefore, the great challenge in this earthly life is not to determine how to escape the afflictions and problems, but rather to carefully prepare ourselves to meet them.

I say prepare ourselves because it demands persistent effort to develop patience as a personal attribute. In practicing patience, one comes to understand it and to acquire it.

### Have patience in affliction

From Liberty Jail, in a time of anguish and deep suffering for the gospel's sake, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote the following message to the Saints:

"Dear brethren, do not think that our hearts faint, as though some

### President Hinckley

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just addressed us.

We will now be pleased to hear from Elder Angel Abrea of the Seventy, who will be followed by Elder William R. Bradford of the Seventy.

strange thing had happened unto us, for we have seen and been assured of all these things beforehand, and have an assurance of a better hope than that of our persecutors. Therefore God hath made broad our shoulders for the burden. We glory in our tribulation, because we know that God is with us, that He is our friend, and that He will save our souls" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 123).

We must have patience in order to withstand pain and grief without complaint or discouragement, which detract from the Spirit. It's necessary to have patience in the face of tribulation and persecution for the cause of truth, which sets an example because the manner in which we bear our cross will be an influence to others to help lighten their load.

Our patience must be in the same manner and in the same spirit as was that of the sons of Mosiah when they were entrusted with the task to "go forth among the Lamanites, thy brethren, and establish my word; yet ye shall be patient in long-suffering and afflictions, that ye may show forth good examples unto them in me, and I will make an instrument of thee in my hands unto the salvation of many souls" (Alma 17:11).

Patience must be our constant companion during the journey which carries us toward that great goal: "Continue in patience until ye are perfected"—the counsel the Lord gave to the elders of the Church (D&C 67:13).

It should be made clear that we are not talking here about a passive patience which waits only for the passing of time to heal or resolve things which *happen to us*, but rather a patience that is active, which *makes things happen*. Such was the patience Paul described in his epistle to the Romans when he used the words "by patient continuance in well doing" (Romans 2:7).

Perhaps one of the best examples of patience which gives us an eternal perspective of its application in our lives is found in the words of Peter: "For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God" (1 Peter 2:20).

#### **Have faith in God's wisdom**

Patience in affliction and adversity means to persist firmly and never forsake that which we know to be true, standing firm with the hope that in the Lord's due time we will gain an understanding of that which we do not understand now and which causes us suffering.

Then the promise in Malachi will become a reality: "Then shall ye return, and discern . . . between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" (Malachi 3:18).

Into the life of the faithful sister whose son was killed while on a mission came many questions which raced through her mind and those asked by disbelievers, creating doubts such as, "Why was my son killed if he was a good missionary and an excellent son?

My son was serving the Lord and was a great example to his brothers who are preparing to go into the mission field. Why?"

Patience in affliction and suffering means answering as she did to all those questions: "I don't know, nor do I have all the answers, but one thing I do know is that someday, in the Lord's divine timetable, I shall see my son again and be reunited with him."

Wasn't the reply of this sister prompted by the same spirit which gave place to the words of Nephi: "I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things"? (1 Nephi 11:17). What a beautiful example of faith which brings a feeling of assurance while facing the unknown!

#### **Endure with faith in Christ**

In the face of persecution and threats to which the early Christians were subjected, patience filled with testimony was manifest in their faith and hope in Christ as recorded in the words of Paul:

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

"Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. . . .

"Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. . . .

"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:8-10, 14, 16-17).

### **“Not as I will, but as thou wilt”**

Patience in affliction and suffering describes the life of Christ, the great exemplar. In the moments of great suffering and pain which transpired in Gethsemane, He was able to express in fervent prayer, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39), giving us the example and a frame of reference for a life of obedience and perseverance despite circumstances or external conditions in which we could find ourselves.

How many times do we conclude our prayers with, “Let this cup pass from me”?

Under circumstances when the symbolic cup might represent sickness, pain, anxiety, unemployment, or the suffering of a loved one, are we able to continue our prayer with, “Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt”? This very word, this key word *nevertheless*, conveys the firm conviction that we are placing everything in the hands of the Lord.

When at times on life’s journey it becomes our lot to travel with the criticism of skeptics, the hate of some, the rejection of others, the impatience of many, or the betrayal of a friend, we must be able to pray in such a manner that an abiding faith and a strong testimony that the Lord will be with us to the end will compel us to say, “Nevertheless, Father, Thy will be done, and with Thy help, in patience I will follow firmly on the path that takes me back to Thee.”

### **The Lord’s assurance**

In the year 1833, through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord consoled the Saints, who had been “afflicted, and persecuted, and cast out from the land of their inheritance” (D&C 101:1), with words of comfort and hope, saying, “Let your hearts be

comforted . . . ; all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God” (D&C 101:16).

To Enoch, who was slow of speech and in a time of great tribulation, the Lord said, “Open thy mouth, and it shall be filled, and I will give thee utterance, for all flesh is in my hands, and I will do as seemeth me good” (Moses 6:32).

To Joseph Smith in moments of trial, and referring to his enemies, the Lord said, “Hold on thy way, . . . for their bounds are set, they cannot pass” (D&C 122:9).

These key words of counsel were given when those receiving them were passing through adverse circumstances: “all flesh is in my hands”; “know that I am God”; “I will do as seemeth me good”; “their bounds are set, they cannot pass.” In moments of trial these words appeal to patience and perseverance, founded in principles which are a testimony in and of themselves.

### **Knowing God helps us endure**

In the words of the Savior, life eternal is to know God (see John 17:3), and that implies a knowledge of His attributes and a testimony of them. To know God consists of knowing even ourselves, for as the Prophet Joseph Smith said, “If men do not comprehend the character of God, they do not comprehend themselves” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 343). To know God is much more than to talk about God. Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained that it is “to think what he thinks, to feel what he feels” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1973], 1:762).

How can we do otherwise than patiently endure the trials of life if we know God and understand that He is omnipotent? With Nephi we can say that “he is mightier than all the earth”

(1 Nephi 4:1). We know and can testify of His omniscience, and with Lehi we can say, "All things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things" (2 Nephi 2:24).

Based on that knowledge, cemented in a strong testimony of the attributes of our Heavenly Father, the faithful Latter-day Saint—instead of despairing because a goal on his or her agenda was not realized, because his or her timetable does not bring a solution to the problems, or because comfort does not come to calm the troubles of today—waits patiently for fulfillment of promises, according to the Lord's timetable, the Lord who "knoweth all the times which are appointed unto man" (Alma 40:10). The faithful Latter-day Saint waits patiently because, certainly, faith, "the assurance of things hoped for" (JST, Hebrews 11:1), is exercised with the conviction that the promises will be fulfilled "in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will" (D&C 88:68).

### "Stand fast, ye Saints of God"

God does live and He does fulfill His promises, and to the many testimonies given, I wish to add mine. I know that even in times of affliction and tribulation, if we patiently endure in faith, blessings of comfort and hope will come into our lives, and we will be able to partake of that "incomprehensible joy" of which Ammon and his brothers received (see Alma 27:17-18; 28:8).

Therefore, in the words of Joseph Smith, "Stand fast, ye Saints of God, hold on a little while longer, and the storm of life will be past, and you will be rewarded by that God whose servants you are, and who will duly appreciate all your toils and afflictions for Christ's sake and the Gospel's" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 185).

These things I say in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## William R. Bradford

### "I want my life back!"

On our present assignment, my wife and I live a long way away from our children. This means the letters go back and forth. I would like to read a paragraph from a letter one of our daughters recently sent:

"I've become a nurse. Four of the six kids have the flu. I'm changing my ambitions from psychiatrist to nurse. Anyway, nobody in this family is sick in the head; we are just all sick. I hate it when the kids are sick." Then in capital letters, "I WANT MY LIFE BACK!"

When we read the letter, we gave each other a knowing smile. All of our children are caught up in a very busy life. It is what they call "the fast lane."

But those last words, "I WANT MY LIFE BACK," have stuck in my

mind, and the more I have thought about them the more concerned I've become. This concern has persuaded me to say something about uncluttering our lives and getting back to basics.

### Problems of a cluttered life

The story is told of a boy who arrived home from school and found his father standing at the open door looking into a very cluttered house. "Is Mother home?" asked the boy. His father answered, "I can't see her, but I know she's in there somewhere. I can hear sobbing."

This would be funny if it were not true in so many cases. I believe that a cluttered life can create a great deal of sorrow and sadness and be the cause of