

prayer for the quick recovery of Brother James Paramore, who has had surgery.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Russell M. Nelson, also a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

He will be followed by Sister Elaine L. Jack. She and her counselors were released yesterday as the Relief Society general presidency.

## Elder Russell M. Nelson

### Stay "on the boat"

Early in our married life when Sister Nelson and I lived in Minneapolis, we decided to enjoy a free afternoon with our two-year-old daughter. We went to one of Minnesota's many beautiful lakes and rented a small boat. After rowing far from shore, we stopped to relax and enjoy the tranquil scene. Suddenly, our little toddler lifted one leg out of the boat and started to go overboard, exclaiming, "Time to get out, Daddy!"

Quickly we caught her and explained, "No, dear, it's not time to get out; we must stay in the boat until it brings us safely back to land." Only with considerable persuasion did we succeed in convincing her that leaving the boat early would have led to disaster.

Children are prone to do such dangerous things simply because they have not acquired the wisdom their parents have. Similarly, we as children of our Heavenly Father may foolishly want to get "out of the boat" before we arrive at destinations He would like us to reach. The Lord teaches over and over that we are to endure<sup>1</sup> to the end.<sup>2</sup> This is a dominant theme of the scriptures. One example may serve to represent many passages that convey a similar message:

"Blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion . . . , for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; and if they endure unto the end they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb."<sup>3</sup>

Blessings bestowed by God are always predicated upon obedience to law.<sup>4</sup> Applied to my analogy, we are first to get "on the boat" with Him. Then we are to *stay* with Him. And if we don't get "out of the boat" before we should, we shall reach His kingdom, where we will be lifted up to eternal life.

### If we endure, we will be lifted up

The term *lifted up* relates to a physical law that can be illustrated by a simple demonstration.<sup>5</sup> I will use a spool of thread and blow into the axial hole of the spool. The force of my breath will move a piece of tissue paper away from me. Next I will take an ordinary card and a straight pin. I will place the pin through the card. With the pin in the hole of the spool, I will hold the card close to the spool. I will again blow into the hole of the spool. As I blow, I will let go of the card so that it can respond to physical forces. Before I proceed, would you like to predict what will happen? Will I blow the card away from me, or will the card be lifted up toward me? Are you ready? [Elder Nelson demonstrates that blowing down the axial hole of the spool lifts the card up toward the spool.]

Did you notice? As long as I had sufficient breath, the card was lifted up. But when I could endure no longer, the card fell. When my breath gave out, the opposing force of gravity prevailed. If my energy could have endured, the card would have been lifted up indefinitely.<sup>6</sup>

Energy is always required to provide lift over opposing forces. These same laws apply in our personal lives. Whenever an undertaking is begun, both the energy and the will to endure are essential. The winner of a five-kilometer race is declared at the end of *five* kilometers, not at one or two. If you board a bus to Boston, you don't get off at Burlington. If you want to gain an education, you don't drop out along the way—just as you don't pay to dine at an elegant restaurant only to walk away after sampling the salad.

Whatever your work may be, endure at the beginning, endure through opposing forces along the way, and endure to the end. Any job must be completed before you can enjoy the result for which you are working. So wrote the poet:

Stick to your task till it sticks to you;  
Beginners are many, but enders are few.

Honor, power, place, and praise  
Will [always] come . . . to the one  
who stays.

Stick to your task till it sticks to you;  
Bend at it, sweat at it, smile at it too;  
For out of the bend and the sweat  
and the smile

Will come life's victories, after  
awhile.<sup>7</sup>

Sometimes the need to endure comes when facing a physical challenge. Anyone afflicted with a serious illness or with the infirmities of age hopes to be able to endure to the end of such trials.<sup>8</sup> Most often, intense physical challenges are accompanied by spiritual challenges as well.

### **To endure, we must be surely converted**

Think of the early pioneers. What if they had not endured the hardships of their westward migration? There would be no sesquicentennial celebration this year. Steadfastly they endured—through

persecution,<sup>9</sup> expulsion,<sup>10</sup> a governmental order of extermination,<sup>11</sup> expropriation of property,<sup>12</sup> and much more. Their enduring faith in the Lord provided lift for them as it will for you and for me.

The Lord's ultimate concern is for the salvation and exaltation of each individual soul. What if the Apostle Paul's conversion had not been enduring? He never would have testified as he did at the end of his ministry: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."<sup>13</sup>

What if Jesus had wavered in His commitment to do His Father's will?<sup>14</sup> His Atonement would not have been accomplished. The dead would not be resurrected. The blessings of immortality and eternal life would not be.<sup>15</sup> But Jesus did endure. During His final hour, Jesus prayed to His Father, saying, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have *finished* the work which thou gavest me to do."<sup>16</sup>

Early in His mortal ministry, Jesus became concerned about the commitment of His followers. He had just fed the 5,000,<sup>17</sup> then had taught them the doctrines of the kingdom. But some had murmured, "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?"<sup>18</sup> Even after He had fed them, many lacked the faith to endure with Him. He turned to the Twelve and said, "Will ye also go away?"

"Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, . . . thou hast the words of eternal life.

"And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."<sup>19</sup>

Peter's answer defines the real core of commitment. When we know without a doubt that Jesus is the Christ, we will want to stay with Him. When we are surely converted, the power to endure is ours.

### **Enduring in the covenant of marriage**

This power to endure is critical in those two most important relationships

we enter into in life. One is marriage; the other is membership in the Lord's Church. These are also unique in that they are both covenant—not contractual—relationships.

Marriage, especially temple marriage, and family ties involve covenant relationships. They cannot be regarded casually. With divorce rates escalating throughout the world today, it is apparent that many spouses are failing to endure to the end of their commitments to each other. And some temple marriages fail because a husband forgets that his highest and most important priesthood duty is to honor and sustain his wife.<sup>20</sup> The best thing that a father can do for his children is to "love their mother."<sup>21</sup>

President Gordon B. Hinckley made a statement recently that each Latter-day Saint husband should heed: "Magnify your [wife]," he said, "and in so doing you will magnify your priesthood."<sup>22</sup> To his profound advice we might couple the timeless counsel of Paul, who said, "Let every one of you . . . love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."<sup>23</sup> Enduring love provides enduring lift through life's trials. An enduring marriage results when both husband and wife regard their union as one of the two most important commitments they will ever make.

### **Enduring in our covenants with God**

The other commitment of everlasting consequence is to the Lord.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, some souls make a covenant with God—signified by the sacred ordinance of baptism—without a heartfelt commitment to endure with Him. Baptism is an extremely important ordinance. But it is only initiatory. The supreme benefits of membership in the Church can be realized only through the exalting ordinances of the temple. These blessings qualify us for "thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers"<sup>25</sup> in the celestial kingdom.

The Lord can readily discern between those with superficial signs of activity and those who are deeply rooted in His Church. This Jesus taught in the parable of the sower. He observed that some "have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended."<sup>26</sup>

Loyalty to the Lord carries an obligation of loyalty to those called by the Lord to lead His Church. He has empowered that men be ordained to speak in His holy name.<sup>27</sup> As they guide His unsinkable boat safely toward the shore of salvation, we would do well to stay on board with them.<sup>28</sup> "No waters can swallow the ship where lies / The Master of ocean and earth and skies."<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, some individuals want to jump "out of the boat" before reaching land. And others, sadly, are persuaded out by companions who insist that they know more about life's perilous journey than do prophets of the Lord. Problems often arise that are not of your own making. Some of you may innocently find yourselves abandoned by one you trusted. But you will never be forsaken by your Redeemer, who said, "I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say."<sup>30</sup>

Without a strong commitment to the Lord, an individual is more prone to have a low level of commitment to a spouse. Weak commitments to eternal covenants lead to losses of eternal consequence. Laments later in life are laced with remorse, as expressed in these lines:

For of all sad words of tongue or pen,  
The saddest are these: "It might have been!"<sup>31</sup>

We are speaking of the most important of all blessings. The Lord said, "If you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal

life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God."<sup>32</sup>

### Proper priorities help us endure

Each of you who really wants to endure to the glorious end that our Heavenly Father has foreseen should firmly establish some personal priorities. With many interests competing for your loyalty, you need to be careful first to stay safely "on the boat." No one can serve two masters.<sup>33</sup> If Satan can get you to love anything—fun, flirtation, fame, or fortune—more than a spouse or the Lord with whom you have made sacred covenants to endure, the adversary begins to triumph. When faced with such temptations, you will find that strength comes from commitments made well in advance. The Lord said, "Settle this in your hearts, that ye will do the things which I shall teach, and command you."<sup>34</sup> He declared through His prophet Jeremiah, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."<sup>35</sup>

When priorities are proper, the power to endure is increased. And when internalized, those priorities will help keep you from "going overboard." They will protect you from cheating—in marriage, in the Church, and in life.

If you really want to *be* like the Lord—more than *anything* or *anyone* else—you will remember that your adoration of Jesus is best shown by your emulation of Him. Then you will not allow any other love to become more important than love for your companion, your family, and your Creator. You will govern yourself not by someone else's set of rules but by revealed principles of truth.

### The Lord will help us endure

Your responsibility to endure is uniquely yours. But you are never alone.

I testify that the lifting power of the Lord can be yours if you will "come unto Christ" and "be perfected in him." You will "deny yourselves of all ungodliness." And you will "love God with all your might, mind and strength."<sup>36</sup>

The living prophet of the Lord has issued a clarion call: "I invite every one of you," said President Hinckley, "to stand on your feet and with a song in your heart move forward, living the gospel, loving the Lord, and building the kingdom. Together we shall *stay* the course and *keep* the faith."<sup>37</sup>

I pray that each of us may so endure and be lifted up at the last day, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### NOTES

1. The word *endure* comes from two Latin roots. The prefix *en* means "within." The remainder comes from the verb *durare*, which means "to be firm or solid." Thus, to *endure* means "to become firm within yourself." That meaning carries into the original languages of the Bible.

In the Hebrew language of the Old Testament, the root word *'aman* means "to render firm" or "to be faithful, to trust." It was often translated as "faithful," but never as "faith" alone. *'Aman* meant more than faith. It was not a passive term; it meant "a firm resolve to be faithful." *'Aman* was also the Hebrew root for words that were translated into related terms, such as "verified," "believe," "long continuance," "assurance," "establish(ed)," "sure," "trust," "steadfast," "stand fast," and others.

In the Greek language of the New Testament, the verb *hupoméno* was used. It means "to remain," "stay," or "continue." *Hupo* (or *hypo*) means "under," as in *hypodermic* ("under the skin") or *hypothermia* ("low temperature"). To *endure* connotes a commitment *within* one's soul.

2. See Matthew 24:13; Mark 13:13; 2 Nephi 33:4; Omni 1:26; 3 Nephi 15:9; D&C 14:7; 18:22; 20:29. This promise has been confirmed by both our Father in Heaven and by the Lord Jesus Christ. From the great Elohim, we have this pronouncement: "The words of my Beloved are true and faithful. He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved" (2 Nephi 31:15). And from the Savior, we have this promise: "Whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, . . . him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world" (3 Nephi 27:16).
3. 1 Nephi 13:37; see also Mosiah 23:22; Alma 13:29; 36:3; 37:37; 38:5; 3 Nephi 27:21–22; Ether 4:19; D&C 5:35; 9:14; 17:8; 75:16. For additional emphasis, scriptures teach the negative consequences of disobedience to this commandment. For example, "If they will not repent and believe in his name, and be baptized in his name, and endure to the end, they must be damned; for the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, has spoken it" (2 Nephi 9:24; see also 2 Nephi 31:16; Mormon 9:29).
4. See Doctrine and Covenants 130:20–21.
5. This demonstration of Bernoulli's principle in physics was first shown to the author on 17 August 1996 by Elder Norman C. Boehm, then an Area Authority of the Church residing in Sacramento, California.
6. The law of lift is at work whenever airplanes fly. It is a "component of the total aerodynamic force acting on an airfoil or on an entire aircraft or winged missile perpendicular to the relative wind and normally exerted in an upward direction, opposing the pull of gravity" (*American Heritage Dictionary* 3rd ed. [1992], "lift," 1040).
7. "Stick to Your Task," in Jack M. Lyon and others, eds., *Best-Loved Poems of the LDS People* (1996), 255–56.
8. In his 95th year, President Joseph Fielding Smith publicly expressed the hope that he would be able "to endure to the end in this life" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 92; or *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1970, 27). He who served so faithfully and well all of his days provided a model for all of us to follow.
9. See Joseph Smith—History 1:20, 22–24, 27, 58, 60–61, 74.
10. The pioneers were driven from Ohio to Missouri to Illinois and finally to the valley of the Great Salt Lake.
11. The early pioneers were forced out of Missouri under threat of an order signed by Missouri's governor directing that the "Mormons must be treated as enemies and *must be exterminated* or driven from the state" (*History of the Church*, 3:175).
12. In 1887, the Congress of the USA took the unprecedented step of eliminating the Church's legal existence by revoking its corporate charter and authorizing federal receivers to assume ownership of virtually all of the Church's property and other assets, including its most sacred houses of worship—temples—in Logan, Manti, St. George, and Salt Lake City (see *The Late Corporation of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints v. United States*, 136 U.S. 1 [1890]).
13. 2 Timothy 4:7.
14. See 3 Nephi 27:13.
15. See Moses 1:39.
16. John 17:4; italics added. See also John 4:34.
17. See Matthew 14:21; 16:9; Mark 6:44; 8:19; Luke 9:14; John 6:10.
18. John 6:60.
19. John 6:67–69.
20. See Doctrine and Covenants 42:22.
21. This statement has been made by many leaders of the Church. For example, see Howard W. Hunter, in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 68; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 50; David O. McKay, as quoted by Gordon B. Hinckley, in Conference

- Report, Oct. 1982, 112; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 77.
22. First session of member fireside conference in Lima, Peru, 9 Nov. 1996.
  23. Ephesians 5:33.
  24. In addition, worthy men are privileged to qualify for the oath and covenant of the priesthood, which will bless all men, women, and children whom they serve (see D&C 84:33–48).
  25. Doctrine and Covenants 132:19.
  26. Mark 4:17.
  27. See Doctrine and Covenants 1:38; 21:5; 68:4.
  28. See Acts 27:30–31; 1 Nephi 18:21–23.
  29. “Master, the Tempest Is Raging,” *Hymns*, no. 105.
  30. Doctrine and Covenants 82:10.
  31. John Greenleaf Whittier, “Maud Muller,” *The Complete Poetical Works of Whittier* (1892), 48.
  32. Doctrine and Covenants 14:7. The Prophet Joseph included this concept of endurance in the thirteenth article of faith: “We have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things.”
  33. See Matthew 6:24.
  34. Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 14:28.
  35. Jeremiah 31:33.
  36. Moroni 10:32.
  37. In Conference Report, Oct. 1995, 96; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 72; italics added.

## Sister Elaine L. Jack

### Laying a small stone at the gate of Relief Society

I grew up just a stone’s throw from the Alberta Temple in Cardston, Canada. In this small Mormon community at the foot of the Canadian Rockies, a temple stood as a powerful symbol of the strength and grandeur of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I made my most meaningful covenants within the walls of that temple.

Those walls are very significant to me. My grandfather John F. Anderson, a skilled stonemason from Aberdeen, Scotland, was called to dress the white granite stone for this holy temple. In 1915 at the laying of the cornerstone, he had the honor of acting as the chief mason under the supervision of Elder David O. McKay. In 1923, before the temple was dedicated, my grandfather laid the very last stone. Then, in his journal he recorded, “It was not the capstone, but a small stone at the front gate entrance.”

Today, I lay my small stone at the front gate entrance of Relief Society.

In the book of Omni, itself a small stone in the middle of the Book of Mormon, Amaleki writes: “I would that ye should come unto Christ, who is the Holy One of Israel, and partake of his salvation, and the power of his redemption. Yea, . . . and offer your whole souls as an offering unto him, and continue in fasting and praying, and endure to the end; and as the Lord liveth ye will be saved” (Omni 1:26).

The Prophet Joseph Smith described offering “your whole soul” as serving God with all your “heart, might, mind and strength” (D&C 4:2). It is to put on the altar of God your time, talents, gifts and blessings, your willingness to serve, to do all that He asks. My grandfather offered to the Lord the stone he had placed so carefully. Today, I offer my years of service in the general Relief Society.

In 1991, at the invitation of President Hinckley, I returned to my childhood home in Canada to attend the rededication of the Alberta Temple. I will always remember the power that