

Elder Richard G. Scott

The Savior can free us of heavy burdens

Many of you suffer needlessly from carrying heavy burdens because you do not open your hearts to the healing power of the Lord. May this message encourage you to feel the prompting of the Holy Ghost to make those changes that will lead you to be free of oppressive burdens. The Savior has promised, "I will . . . ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that . . . you cannot feel them . . . ; and this will I do . . . that ye may know of a surety that I, the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions."¹

I will first speak to you who suffer because of your own wrong choices; then I will give suggestions for you who anguish for what others have done to you.

A man burdened by sin

Seated across from me was a despondent man, head buried in hands, sobbing from the inevitable consequences of repeated violations of the commandments of God. He anguished, "I don't know what to do. Everything is pressing in on me. I'm tired of running. There is no peace, no happiness. When I pray, no one is listening. What's the use?"

I have known him for a long time. His parents and others have tried to give him guidance—with little success. Because of his choices, he has become separated from the truths that would help him. He has not cultivated faith in the Master nor in the power of prayer. His decisions are centered on what will quickly satisfy his cravings. He either ignores problems or lies about them. He has manipulated the generosity of parents and friends to attempt a quick fix to challenges. He does not evaluate the consequences of today's decisions on tomorrow's life.

As my heart sorrowed for him, I realized he does not see the world as it really

is—a place of joy and happiness, of true friendships, where faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to His teachings invite the Holy Ghost to prompt correct decisions. He lives in an environment dominated by the influence of Satan. He has not followed sound counsel, because in his world he cannot see how it would possibly work for him. This distorted view of life is reality to him. It was forged as he succumbed to the subtle temptations of "Go ahead. Try it. Nobody will ever know. It's your life. Live it the way you want to. They can't force you. You have your moral agency."

These promptings and the allure of the forbidden led him down a path that seemed fascinatingly attractive. He was carried on the crest of the wave of appetite and passion, oblivious to the consequences until the inevitable crushing encounter with the laws of God occurred. That produced pain, remorse, and regret. Then Satan provided other direction: "There is no way back. You might as well keep doing what you've been doing. It's hopeless to try to change." Because of his sins, he cannot see a way out of his failures. He will not see the tools needed for a new life in his current environment. His tragic, confining world has been created by the violation of eternal law, motivated by desire for a quick response.

Breaking the chains of sin

Do you find yourself in a similar circumstance? Have you done things that you wish you had not done? Is it difficult for you to see any way to solve your problems? Does there seem to be an oppressive, crushing weight that's always there no matter how you seek to shake it? Under the influence of powerful emotions or stimulants, you may have periods where there seems to be relief. Yet in the quiet moments of reflection that inevitably will come, you realize that your life is not what

you want it to be. You may publicly complain that your friends and even the Lord have abandoned you, but in times of sober reflection you realize it is you who have abandoned them. Oh, please decide now to find the way back to the refreshing peace and joy that can replace the fleeting pleasures of sin and the subsequent agony and emptiness. You have confirmed what the scriptures teach: "Wickedness never was happiness."² Earn enduring joy now from a clean and purposeful life.³

I know that you can escape the controlling influence of the evil one and the repressive chains that bind your life. That relief will require you to accept a solution that is likely foreign to your current personal experience. It will require you to exercise faith in Father in Heaven, who loves you. While you may not understand why now, you must trust that the Savior has given His life so that you can make the required changes in your life—changes that will bring peace and the elusive success that always seem beyond your reach. Believe that you can overcome the depressing environment in which you live by trusting that there is a better way. You must seek the help of others who understand and live that better way, even though you cannot see it now. This will require you to learn and obey the teachings of the Lord. Once you have fully committed yourself to that change, you will find that it is not as difficult as it now may seem.

The painful consequences of sin were purposely put in His plan of happiness by a compassionate Father in Heaven so that you need not follow that tragic path in life. A sinner will not only suffer in this life, but sins that have not been forgiven through true repentance will cause anguish beyond the veil.⁴

The cleansing process of repentance

Satan strives to convince one that sins can be hidden from others, yet it is he who causes them to be revealed in the most

compromising circumstances. His objective is the enslavement of God's children. All of his enticing, alluring temptations have as their root the destruction of the individual. In fact, each of us needs consistently to repent and obey so that the gift of the Savior will satisfy the demands of justice for even our small errors of commission or omission.

The Savior will take upon Himself the consequences of your sins as you repent now. If that is not done, in time you will have to suffer for them yourself.

Seek out your bishop. He will show you how to repent and will help you do it. As you pray and act, you will be led to others who will support you.⁵ Repentance is a process of cleansing. It is difficult, but it has an end—a glorious end with peace and refreshing forgiveness and the miracle of a new beginning. Confession of improper acts is an important step, but that is not full repentance. Your bishop will carefully explain what you must do. I will mention two aspects of repentance that bring great healing power. One is found in this declaration of the Master:

"For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance;

"Nevertheless, he that repents and *does the commandments of the Lord* shall be forgiven."⁶

That scripture emphasizes that the Lord cannot abide sin, but He will forgive the repentant sinner because of His perfect love. It also teaches that not only is it important to keep a commandment you have broken, but by obeying *all* of the commandments you will obtain additional power and support in the process of repentance.

The healing power of the Atonement

Another vital aspect of repentance is to recognize the role of the Savior through His Atonement. Indeed, it is that very Atonement that makes repentance even possible. As you pray and ponder the role

of Jesus Christ as your Savior and Redeemer, you will acquire great motivation and encouragement to help you repent. Follow this example of Alma:

"I was . . . in the most bitter pain and anguish of soul; and never, until I did cry out unto the Lord Jesus Christ for mercy, did I receive a remission of my sins. But behold, I did cry unto him and I did find peace to my soul.

". . . I have told you this that ye may learn wisdom, that ye may learn . . . that there is no other way or means whereby man can be saved, only in and through Christ. Behold, he is the life and the light of the world."⁷

You will be helped by studying the magnificent explanation of the need for repentance and how it can be obtained, as Alma counseled his wayward son, Corianton, in the Book of Mormon.⁸ Through trust in the plan of happiness and the capacity of the Savior to realize His promises, the darkness of sin can be swept away and the joy of a worthy life returned with the trust of loved ones, when earned the Lord's way. Do not blame others for your mistakes. Humbly repent, for it is written, "He offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered."⁹ Please, decide to repent—now.

Forgiving others brings peace

You may be carrying a heavy burden of feeling injured by another who has seriously offended you. Your response to that offense may have distorted your understanding so that you feel justified in waiting for that individual to ask forgiveness so that the pain can leave. The Savior dispelled any such thought when He commanded:

"Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses

standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.

"I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men."¹⁰

Don't carry the burden of offense any longer. Genuinely ask forgiveness of one that has offended you, even when you consider you have done no wrong. That effort will assuredly bring you peace and will likely begin the healing of serious misunderstandings.

Do not suffer needlessly for others' sins

If you are free of serious sin yourself, don't suffer needlessly the consequences of another's sins. As a wife, husband, parent, or loved one, you can feel compassion for one who is in the gall of bitterness from sin. Yet you should not take upon yourself a feeling of responsibility for those acts. When you have done what is reasonable to help one you love, lay the burden at the feet of the Savior. He has invited you to do that so that you can be free from pointless worry and depression.¹¹ As you so act, not only will you find peace, but you will demonstrate your faith in the power of the Savior to lift the burden of sin from a loved one through his repentance and obedience.

Healing the wounds of abuse

Now to you who have been scarred by the ugly sin of abuse. Mental, physical, or sexual abuse can cause serious, enduring consequences unless healed by the Lord. They may include fear, depression, guilt, self-hatred, and a deepening lack of trust in others that becomes a barrier to healing. Your abuse results from another's unrighteous attack on your moral agency against your will. In justice, the Lord has provided a way for you to overcome the destructive consequences of abuse. That relief can begin with the counsel of parents, priesthood leaders, and, when necessary, the help of competent professionals.

Yet you need not experience a lifetime of counseling. Complete healing will come through your faith in Jesus Christ and His power and capacity, through His Atonement, to heal the scars of that which is unjust and undeserved. You may find that hard to believe with your current feelings. I have witnessed how the Savior has healed aggravated cases of abuse in that way. Ponder the power of the Atonement.¹² Pray to understand how it can heal you.¹³ Seek the aid of your bishop so that the Lord can free you of a burden you did not originate.

In closing, if you have felt impressions to be free of burdens caused by yourself or others, those promptings are an invitation from the Redeemer. Act upon them now. He loves you. He gave His life that you may be free of needless burdens. He will help you do it. I know that He has the power to heal you. Begin now. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Mosiah 24:14.
2. Alma 41:10.
3. See Doctrine and Covenants 82:10.
4. See Doctrine and Covenants 19:4, 15–24.
5. See Harold B. Lee, *Stand Ye in Holy Places* (1974), 220–21; see also Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (1969), 177–90, 201–12, 339–60.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 1:31–32; italics added.
7. Alma 38:8–9.
8. See Alma 39–42.
9. 2 Nephi 2:7; see also Psalm 34:18.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 64:9–10; see also Mark 11:25–26; Luke 6:37; Mosiah 26:29–32; 3 Nephi 13:14–15.
11. See Matthew 11:28–30.
12. See John Taylor, *The Mediation and Atonement* (1882).
13. See Richard G. Scott, in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, 43–46; or *Ensign*, May 1992, 31–33.

Elder Kenneth Johnson

Lessons from a childhood experience

I was raised by caring parents in a home where the values taught and practiced prepared the way for my introduction to the Church and an acceptance of gospel principles. I was baptized in the month of August 1959, shortly after my 19th birthday. As I ponder the events that preceded my conversion, my thoughts go back to a childhood experience.

The home of Mr. and Mrs. Lyons

Close to the home where I lived as a child was a large house. It was located on beautiful grounds, enclosed by what was to me a towering fence made of wood paneling, probably six feet in height. I recall peeping through holes in the panels where knots of wood had dropped out. It was like looking through a telescope into a different world. The beautifully manicured

lawns, the well-kept flower gardens, and a small orchard provided an idyllic setting for the distinctive dwelling. Unfortunately the opportunity to enjoy the view was always brief due to the vigilant British bulldog that patrolled the gardens and was immediately attracted to anyone standing close to the exterior of the fencing. Even though the fierce dog was confined in the garden, the sound of his sniffing as he approached the fence caused me to retreat in fear as my vivid imagination conjured up a variety of possibilities.

Mr. and Mrs. Lyons, who lived in the home, were schoolteachers. They had a dignified demeanor and seemed to enjoy the privacy that the house setting afforded them. To add to the intrigue, Mr. Lyons had no right hand, using instead a steel hook that protruded below the cuff of his jacket. In my boyish mind, I could imagine Mr. Lyons pursuing me, catching me by