

Finding Refuge from the Storms of Life

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Jesus Christ and His Atonement are the refuge that we all need, regardless of the storms that are battering our lives.

Back in the mid-90s, during my college years, I was part of the Fourth Company of the Santiago Fire Department in Chile. While serving there, I lived at the fire station as part of the night guard. Toward the end of the year, I was told that I had to be at the fire station on New Year's Eve because on that day there was almost always some emergency. Surprised, I replied, "Really?"

Well, I remember waiting with my associates when, at midnight, fireworks began shooting off in downtown Santiago. We started hugging each other with well wishes for the new year. Suddenly the bells at the fire station began ringing, indicating that there was an emergency. We got our equipment and jumped on the fire engine. On our way to the emergency, as we passed crowds of people celebrating the new year, I noticed that they were largely unconcerned and carefree. They were relaxed and enjoying the warm summer night. Yet somewhere nearby, the people we were hurrying to help were in serious trouble.

This experience helped me realize that although our lives may at times be relatively smooth, the time will come for each of us when we will face unexpected challenges and storms that will push the limits of our ability to endure. Physical, mental, family, and employment challenges; natural disasters; and other matters of life or death are but some of the examples of the storms that we will face in this life.

When faced with these storms, we often experience feelings of despair or fear. President Russell M. Nelson said, "Faith is the antidote for fear"—*faith in our Lord Jesus Christ* ("Let Your Faith Show," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 29). As I have seen the storms that affect people's lives, I have concluded that no matter what kind of storm is battering us—regardless of whether there is a solution to it or whether there is an end in sight—there is only one refuge, and it is the same for all types of storms. This single refuge provided by our Heavenly Father is our Lord Jesus Christ and His Atonement.

None of us are exempt from facing these storms. Helaman, a Book of Mormon prophet, taught us as follows: "Remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall" (Helaman 5:12).

Elder Robert D. Hales, who had his own experiences with enduring storms, said: “Suffering is universal; how we react to suffering is individual. Suffering can take us one of two ways. It can be a strengthening and purifying experience combined with faith, or it can be a destructive force in our lives if we do not have the faith in the Lord’s atoning sacrifice” (“Your Sorrow Shall Be Turned to Joy,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, 66).

In order to enjoy the refuge that Jesus Christ and His Atonement offer, we must have faith in Him—a faith that will allow us to rise above all the pains of a limited, earthly perspective. He has promised that He will make our burdens light if we come unto Him in all that we do.

“Come unto me,” He said, “all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30; see also Mosiah 24:14–15).

It is said that “to one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible.” (This statement has been attributed to Thomas Aquinas but is most likely a loose paraphrase of things he taught.) However, we have limited understanding of the things that happen here on earth, and often we do not have answers to the question of *why*. Why is this happening? Why is this happening to *me*? What am I supposed to learn? When answers evade us, that is when the words expressed by our Savior to the Prophet Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail are completely applicable:

“My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

“And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high” (Doctrine and Covenants 121:7–8).

Although many people indeed believe *in* Jesus Christ, the key question is whether we *believe* Him and whether we *believe* the things that He teaches us and asks us to do. Perhaps someone might think, “What does Jesus Christ know about what is happening to me? How does He know what I need to be happy?” Truly, it was our Redeemer and Intercessor to whom the prophet Isaiah was referring when he said:

“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. ...

“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. ...

“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:3–5).

The Apostle Peter also taught us about the Savior, saying, “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Peter 2:24).

Although the time of Peter’s own martyrdom was approaching, his words are not filled with fear or pessimism; rather, he taught the Saints to “rejoice,” even though they were “in heaviness through manifold temptations.” Peter counseled us to remember that “the trial of [our] faith, ... though it be tried with fire,” would lead to “praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” and to “the salvation of [our] souls” (1 Peter 1:6–7, 9).

Peter continued:

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

“But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (1 Peter 4:12–13).

President Russell M. Nelson taught that “Saints can be happy under every circumstance. ... When the focus of our lives is on God’s plan of salvation ... and Jesus Christ and His gospel, we can feel joy regardless of what is happening—or not happening—in our lives. Joy comes from and because of Him. He is the source of all joy” (“Joy and Spiritual Survival,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 82).

Of course, it is easier to say these things when we are not in the midst of a storm than to live and apply them during the storm. But as your brother, I hope you can feel that I sincerely want to share with you how valuable it is to know that Jesus Christ and His Atonement are the refuge that we all need, regardless of the storms that are battering our lives.

I know that we are all children of God, that He loves us, and that we are not alone. I invite you to come and see that He can lighten your burdens and be the refuge you are seeking. Come and help others find the refuge that they so yearn for. Come and stay with us in this refuge, which will help you resist the storms of life. There is no doubt in my heart that if you come, you will see, you will help, and you will stay.

The prophet Alma testified the following to his son Helaman: “I do know that whosoever shall put their trust in God shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions, and shall be lifted up at the last day” (Alma 36:3).

The Savior Himself said:

“Let your hearts be comforted ... ; for all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God. ...

“Wherefore, fear not even unto death; for in this world your joy is not full, but in me your joy is full” (Doctrine and Covenants 101:16, 36).

The hymn “Be Still, My Soul,” which has touched my heart on many occasions, has a message of comfort for our souls. The lyrics read as follows:

Be still, my soul: The hour is hast'ning on
When we shall be forever with the Lord,
When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,
Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul: When change and tears are past,
All safe and blessed we shall meet at last. (*Hymns*, no. 124)

As we face the storms of life, I know that if we make our best effort and rely upon Jesus Christ and His Atonement as our refuge, we will be blessed with the relief, comfort, strength, temperance, and peace that we are seeking, with certainty in our hearts that at the end of our time here on earth, we will hear the words of the Master: “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: ... enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Matthew 25:21). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.