



Be of Good Cheer

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Our unshakable faith in the doctrine of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ guides our steps and gives us joy.

In the final days of His mortal life, Jesus Christ told His Apostles of the persecutions and hardships they would suffer.¹ He concluded with this great assurance: “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). That is the Savior’s message to all of our Heavenly Father’s children. That is the ultimate good news for each of us in our mortal lives.

“Be of good cheer” was also a needed assurance in the world into which the resurrected Christ sent His Apostles. “We are troubled on every side,” the Apostle Paul later told the Corinthians, “yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed” (2 Corinthians 4:8–9).

Two thousand years later we are also “troubled on every side,” and we also need that same message not to despair but to be of good cheer. The Lord has special love

and concern for His precious daughters. He knows of your wants, your needs, and your fears. The Lord is all powerful. Trust Him.

The Prophet Joseph Smith was taught that “the works, and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught” (Doctrine and Covenants 3:1). To His struggling children, the Lord gave these great assurances:

“Behold, this is the promise of the Lord unto you, O ye my servants.

“Wherefore, be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ, that I am the Son of the living God” (Doctrine and Covenants 68:5–6).

The Lord stands near us, and He has said:

“What I say unto one I say unto all, be of good cheer, little children; for I am in your midst, and I have not forsaken you” (Doctrine and Covenants 61:36).

“For after much tribulation come the blessings” (Doctrine and Covenants 58:4).

Sisters, I testify that these promises, given in the midst of persecutions and personal tragedies, apply to each of you in your troubling circumstances today. They are precious and remind each of us to be of good cheer and to have joy in the fulness of the gospel as we press forward through the challenges of mortality.

Tribulation and challenges are the common experiences of mortality. Opposition is an essential part of the divine plan for helping us grow,² and in the midst of that process, we have God’s assurance that, in the long view of eternity, opposition will not be allowed to overcome us. With His help and our faithfulness and endurance, we will prevail. Like the mortal life of which they are a part, all tribulations are temporary. In the controversies that preceded a disastrous war, United States president Abraham Lincoln wisely reminded his audience of the ancient wisdom that “this, too, shall pass away.”³

As you know, the mortal adversities of which I speak—which make it difficult to be of good cheer—sometimes come to us in common with many others, like the millions now struggling through some of the many devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, in the United States millions are suffering through a season of enmity and contention that always seems to accompany presidential elections but this time is the most severe many of the oldest of us can ever remember.

On a personal basis, each of us struggles individually with some of the many adversities of mortality, such as poverty, racism, ill health, job losses or disappointments, wayward children, bad marriages or no marriages, and the effects of sin—our own or others’.

Yet, in the midst of all of this, we have that heavenly counsel to be of good cheer and to find joy in the principles and promises of the gospel and the fruits of our

labors.⁴ That counsel has always been so, for prophets and for all of us. We know this from the experiences of our predecessors and what the Lord said to them.

Remember the circumstances of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Looked at through the lens of adversities, his life was one of poverty, persecution, frustration, family sorrows, and ultimate martyrdom. As he suffered imprisonment, his wife and children and the other Saints suffered incredible hardships as they were driven out of Missouri.

When Joseph pleaded for relief, the Lord answered:

“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; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes” (Doctrine and Covenants 121:7–8).

This was the personal, eternal counsel that helped the Prophet Joseph to maintain his native cheery temperament and the love and loyalty of his people. These same qualities strengthened the leaders and pioneers who followed and can strengthen you as well.

Think of those early members! Again and again, they were driven from place to place. Finally they faced the challenges of establishing their homes and the Church in a wilderness.⁵ Two years after the initial band of pioneers arrived in the valley of the Great Salt Lake, the pioneers’ grip on survival in that hostile area was still precarious. Most members were still on the trail across the plains or struggling to get resources to do so. Yet leaders and members were still of hope and good cheer.

Even though the Saints were not settled in their new homes, at October 1849 general conference a new wave of missionaries was sent out to Scandinavia, France, Germany, Italy, and the South Pacific.⁶ At what could have been thought their lowest level, the pioneers rose to new heights. And just three years later, another 98 were also called to begin to gather scattered Israel. One of the Church leaders explained that these missions “are generally, not to be very long ones; probably from 3 to 7 years will be as long as any man will be absent from his family.”⁷

Sisters, the First Presidency is concerned about your challenges. We love you and pray for you. At the same time, we often give thanks that our physical challenges—apart from earthquakes, fires, floods, and hurricanes—are usually less than our predecessors faced.

In the midst of hardships, the divine assurance is always “be of good cheer, for I will lead you along. The kingdom is yours and the blessings thereof are yours, and the riches of eternity are yours” (Doctrine and Covenants 78:18). How does this happen? How did it happen for the pioneers? How will it happen to women of God today? By our following prophetic guidance, “the gates of hell shall not prevail against [us],” the Lord said by revelation in April 1830. “Yea,” He said, “... the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name’s glory” (Doctrine and

Covenants 21:6). “Fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail” (Doctrine and Covenants 6:34).

With the Lord’s promises, we “lift up [our] heart[s] and rejoice” (Doctrine and Covenants 25:13), and “with a glad heart and a cheerful countenance” (Doctrine and Covenants 59:15), we go forward on the covenant path. Most of us do not face decisions of giant proportions, like leaving our homes to pioneer an unknown land. Our decisions are mostly in the daily routines of life, but as the Lord has told us, “Be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great” (Doctrine and Covenants 64:33).

There is boundless power in the doctrine of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Our unshakable faith in that doctrine guides our steps and gives us joy. It enlightens our minds and gives strength and confidence to our actions. This guidance and enlightenment and power are promised gifts we have received from our Heavenly Father. By understanding and conforming our lives to that doctrine, including the divine gift of repentance, we can be of good cheer as we keep ourselves on the path toward our eternal destiny—reunion and exaltation with our loving heavenly parents.

“You may be facing overwhelming challenges,” Elder Richard G. Scott taught. “Sometimes they are so concentrated, so unrelenting, that you may feel they are beyond your capacity to control. Don’t face the world alone. ‘Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding’ [Proverbs 3:5]. ... It was intended that life be a challenge, not so that you would fail, but that you might succeed through overcoming.”⁸

It is all part of the plan of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, of which I testify, as I pray that we will all persist to our heavenly destination, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.