

Jesus Christ Is Relief

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We can partner with the Savior to help provide temporal and spiritual relief for those in need—and in the process find our own relief.

With faith in Jesus Christ and hope in what they had heard of His miracles, the caregivers of a man with palsy brought him to Jesus. They were innovative in getting him there—uncovering the roof and lowering the man, on his bed, to the place where Jesus was teaching. When Jesus “saw their faith, he said [to the man with palsy], thy sins are forgiven thee.”¹ And then, “Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.”² And immediately the man with palsy arose and took his bed and departed for home, “glorifying God.”³

What more do we know of the friends who provided care for the man with palsy? We know that the Savior recognized *their* faith. And having seen and heard the Savior and being a witness to His miracles, they were “amazed” and “glorified God.”⁴

Jesus Christ had provided the hoped-for healing—physical *relief* from pain and the crippling consequences of chronic disease. Significantly, the Savior also provided spiritual *relief* in cleansing the man from sin.

And the friends—in their efforts to care for one in need, they found the source of relief; they found Jesus Christ.

I testify that Jesus Christ *is* relief. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we may be relieved of the burden and consequences of sin and be succored in our infirmities.

And because we love God and have covenanted to serve Him, we can partner with the Savior to help provide temporal and spiritual relief for those in need—and in the process find our own relief in Jesus Christ.⁵

Our beloved prophet, President Russell M. Nelson, invited us to overcome the world and find rest.⁶ He defined “true rest” as “relief and peace.” President Nelson said, “Because the Savior, through His infinite Atonement, redeemed each of us from weakness, mistakes, and sin, and because He experienced every pain, worry, and burden you have ever

had, then as you truly repent and seek His help, you can rise above this present precarious world.”⁷ That is the relief Jesus Christ offers us!

Each of us is carrying a metaphorical backpack. It may be a basket balanced on your head or a satchel or a bundle of things wrapped in cloth and thrown over your shoulder. But for our thinking, let’s call it a backpack.

This metaphorical backpack is where we carry the burdens of living in a fallen world. Our burdens are like rocks in the backpack. Generally, there are three kinds:

- Rocks there of our own doing because of sin.
- Rocks in our backpack because of the poor decisions, misconduct, and unkindness of others.
- And rocks we carry because we are living in a fallen condition. These include the rocks of disease, pain, chronic illness, grief, disappointment, loneliness, and the effects of natural disasters.

I joyfully declare that our mortal burdens, these rocks in our figurative backpack, need not feel heavy.

Jesus Christ can lighten our load.

Jesus Christ can lift our burdens.

Jesus Christ provides a way for us to be relieved of the weight of sin.

Jesus Christ is our relief.

He said:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest [that is, relief and peace].

“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.”⁸

That the yoke is easy and the burden is light presumes we get in the yoke with the Savior, that we share our burdens with Him, that we let Him lift our load. That means entering into a covenant relationship with God and keeping that covenant, which, as President Nelson has explained, “makes *everything* about life easier.” He said, “Yoking yourself with the Savior means you have access to *His* strength and redeeming power.”⁹

So why are we stingy with our rocks? Why would a weary baseball pitcher refuse to leave the mound when a reliever is there ready to

complete the game? Why would I insist on maintaining my post alone when the Reliever stands ready to keep it with me?

President Nelson has taught, “Jesus Christ ... stands with open arms, hoping and willing to heal, forgive, cleanse, strengthen, purify, and sanctify us.”¹⁰

So why do we insist on carrying our rocks alone?

It is intended as a personal question for each of you to consider.

For me, it is the age-old vice of pride. “I’ve got this,” I say. “No worries; I’ll get it done.” It’s the great deceiver who wants me to hide from God, to turn away from Him, to go at it alone.

Brothers and sisters, I can’t go at it alone, and I don’t need to, and I won’t. Choosing to be bound to my Savior, Jesus Christ, through the covenants I have made with God, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”¹¹

Covenant keepers are blessed with the Savior’s relief.

Consider this example in the Book of Mormon: The people of Alma were persecuted with “tasks upon them, and ... task-masters over them.”¹² Forbidden to pray vocally, they “did pour out their hearts to [God]; and he did know the thoughts of their hearts.”¹³

And “the voice of the Lord came to them in their afflictions, saying: Lift up your heads and be of good comfort, for I know of the *covenant* which ye have made unto me; and I will *covenant* with my people and deliver them out of bondage.

“And I will also ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot feel them upon your backs.”¹⁴

And their burdens “were made light,” and “the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord.”¹⁵

Those covenant keepers received relief in the form of comfort, increased patience and cheerfulness, an ease in their burdens so that they felt light, and ultimately deliverance.¹⁶

Now let’s return to our own metaphorical backpack.

Repentance, through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, is what relieves us of the weight of the rocks of sin. And by this exquisite gift, God’s mercy relieves us from the heavy and otherwise insurmountable demands of justice.¹⁷

The Atonement of Jesus Christ also makes it possible for us to receive strength to forgive, which allows us to unload the weight we carry

because of mistreatment by others.¹⁸

So how does the Savior relieve us of the burdens of living in a fallen world with mortal bodies subject to grief and pain?

Often, He performs that kind of relief through us! As covenant members of His Church, we promise “to mourn with those that mourn” and “comfort those that stand in need of comfort.”¹⁹ Because we are “come into the fold of God” and are “called his people,” we “are willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light.”²⁰

Our covenantal blessing is to partner with Jesus Christ in providing relief, both temporal and spiritual, to all of God’s children. We are a conduit through which He provides relief.²¹

And so, like the friends of the man with palsy, we “succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees.”²² We “bear ... one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”²³ As we do, we come to know Him, become like Him, and find His relief.²⁴

What is relief?

It is the removal or lightening of something painful, troubling, or burdensome, or the strength to endure it. It refers to a person who takes the place of another. It is the legal correction of a wrong.²⁵ The Anglo-French word comes from Old French, the word *relever*, or “to raise up,” and from the Latin *relevare*, or “raise again.”²⁶

Brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ is relief. I testify that He did rise again on the third day and, having fulfilled the loving and infinite Atonement, stands with open arms, offering to us the opportunity to rise again, be saved, *and* be exalted and become like Him. The relief He offers us is everlasting.

Like the women visited by the angel on that first Easter morning, I wish to “go quickly” and with “great joy” to bring the word that He is risen.²⁷ In the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. Luke 5:20.
2. Mark 2:11.
3. Luke 5:25.
4. Luke 5:26.

5. See D. Todd Christofferson, “The First Commandment First” (Brigham Young University devotional, Mar. 22, 2022), 2, speeches.byu.edu: “Our love of God elevates our ability to love others more fully and perfectly because we in essence *partner* with God in the care of His children” (emphasis added).
6. See Russell M. Nelson, “Overcome the World and Find Rest,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2022, 95–98.
7. Russell M. Nelson, “Overcome the World and Find Rest,” 96.
8. Matthew 11:28–30.
9. Russell M. Nelson, “Overcome the World and Find Rest,” 97.
10. Russell M. Nelson, “We Can Do Better and Be Better,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 67.
11. Philippians 4:13.
12. Mosiah 24:9.
13. Mosiah 24:12.
14. Mosiah 24:13–14; emphasis added.
15. Mosiah 24:15.
16. See Mosiah 24:13–14.
17. See Alma 34:14–16; see also Mosiah 15:8–9.
18. See Russell M. Nelson, “Four Gifts That Jesus Christ Offers to You” (First Presidency Christmas devotional, Dec. 2, 2018), broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org: “A second gift the Savior offers you is the ability to *forgive*. Through His infinite Atonement, you can forgive those who have hurt you and who may never accept responsibility for their cruelty to you.

“It is usually easy to forgive one who sincerely and humbly seeks your forgiveness. But the Savior will grant you the ability to forgive anyone who has mistreated you in any way. Then their hurtful acts can no longer canker your soul.”
19. Mosiah 18:9.
20. Mosiah 18:8.

21. Relief Society, the women’s organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, was organized by the Prophet Joseph Smith on March 17, 1842, as “a divinely established appendage to the priesthood” (Dallin H. Oaks, “The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 51). In selecting a name for the new organization, the word *benevolent* was considered, but *relief* was favored by the women. Emma Smith, the organization’s first president, and Eliza R. Snow, its secretary who later served as the second president of the Relief Society, explained that *benevolent* was a popular word—popular with the institutions of the day—but that popular “should not be our guide.” Emma expounded that the word *relief* better described their mission. “We are going to do something extraordinary ... we expect extraordinary occasions and pressing calls” (Emma Smith, in Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book, Mar. 17, 1842, 12, josephsmithpapers.org). Indeed, the mandate of Relief Society has always been to provide temporal and spiritual relief. Joseph Smith taught, “The Society is not only to relieve the poor, but to save souls” (in Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book, June 9, 1842, 63, josephsmithpapers.org). And so the Relief Society continues to provide relief: “Relief of poverty, relief of illness; relief of doubt, relief of ignorance—relief of all that hinders the joy and progress of woman” (John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, arr. G. Homer Durham, 3 vols. in 1 [1960], 308).
22. Doctrine and Covenants 81:5; see also Hebrews 12:12.
23. Galatians 6:2.
24. In one of the early meetings of the newly organized Relief Society, Lucy Mack Smith, the mother of the Prophet Joseph Smith, said, “We must cherish one another, watch over one another, comfort one another and gain instruction, that we may all sit down in heaven together.” Historian Jennifer Reeder wrote of this, “In a united cause to provide relief, the women partnered with Christ, and in so doing, they found His relief” (*First: The Life and Faith of Emma Smith* [2021], 130).
25. See *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, “relief.”
26. See *Dictionary.com*, “relief.”
27. See Matthew 28:1–8.

