

renewing covenants through the sacrament and temple attendance. Doing so is an expression of love and shows a willingness to be a true follower of Christ. It will qualify you to receive all the promised blessings.

To those who are not members of our church, I invite you to exercise faith, repent, and qualify to receive the covenant of baptism in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. By doing so, you will show your love to our Heavenly Father and your willingness to follow Christ.

I testify that we are happier when we follow the teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. As we strive to follow Him, the blessings of heaven will come unto us. I know His promises will be fulfilled as we make and keep covenants and become true followers of Christ. I testify of His great love for each one of us, and I do so in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Moses 7:62.
2. John 8:12.
3. Isaiah 53:5.
4. 2 Corinthians 12:7.
5. See 1 Nephi 1:20.
6. See Ruth 1:16.
7. See Genesis 39:7–9.
8. See John 21:15–19.
9. See John 13:35.
10. Alma 27:27.
11. Moroni 10:33.
12. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 42; see also Spencer W. Kimball, “Be Ye Therefore Perfect” (devotional address, Salt Lake Institute of Religion, Jan. 10, 1975): “We made vows, solemn vows, in the heavens before we came to this mortal life. . . . We have made covenants. We made them before we accepted our position here on the earth.”
13. See 2 Nephi 31:5–7.
14. Abraham 2:11. See also John A. Widtsoe, “Temple Worship” (lecture, Assembly Hall, Salt Lake City, Oct. 12, 1920), 10: “The covenant gives life to truth; and makes possible the blessings that reward all those who use knowledge properly.”
15. See Doctrine and Covenants 90:24.
16. See, for example, 3 Nephi 18:7–11.



By Elder Kent F. Richards
Of the Seventy

The Atonement Covers All Pain

Our great personal challenge in mortality is to become “a saint through the atonement of Christ.”

As a surgeon, I found that a significant portion of my professional time was taken up with the subject of pain. Of necessity I surgically inflicted it almost daily—and much of my effort was then spent trying to control and alleviate pain.

I have pondered about the purpose of pain. None of us is immune from experiencing pain. I have seen people cope with it very differently. Some turn away from God in anger, and others allow their suffering to bring them closer to God.

Like you, I have experienced pain myself. Pain is a gauge of the healing process. It often teaches us patience. Perhaps that is why we use the term *patient* in referring to the sick.

Elder Orson F. Whitney wrote: “No pain that we suffer, no trial that we experience is wasted. It ministers to our education, to the development of such qualities as patience, faith, fortitude, and humility. . . . It is through sorrow and suffering, toil and tribulation, that we gain the education that we come here to acquire.”¹

Similarly, Elder Robert D. Hales has said:

“Pain brings you to a humility

that allows you to ponder. It is an experience I am grateful to have endured. . . .

“I learned that the physical pain and the healing of the body after major surgery are remarkably similar to the spiritual pain and the healing of the soul in the process of repentance.”²

Much of our suffering is not necessarily our fault. Unexpected events, contradicting or disappointing circumstances, interrupting illness, and even death surround us and penetrate our mortal experience. Additionally, we may suffer afflictions because of the actions of others.³ Lehi noted that Jacob had “suffered . . . much sorrow, because of the rudeness of [his] brethren.”⁴ Opposition is part of Heavenly Father’s plan of happiness. We all encounter enough to bring us to an awareness of our Father’s love and of our need for the Savior’s help.

The Savior is not a silent observer. He Himself knows personally and infinitely the pain we face.

“He suffereth the pains of all men, yea, the pains of every living creature, both men, women, and children.”⁵

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may

obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”⁶

Sometimes in the depth of pain, we are tempted to ask, “Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?”⁷ I testify the answer is yes, there is a physician. The Atonement of Jesus Christ covers all these conditions and purposes of mortality.

There is another kind of pain for which we *are* responsible. Spiritual pain lies deep within our souls and can feel unquenchable, even as being racked with an “inexpressible horror,” as Alma described.⁸ It comes from our sinful actions and lack of repentance. For this pain too there is a cure that is universal and absolute. It is from the Father, through the Son, and it is for each of us who is willing to do all that is necessary to repent. Christ said, “Will ye not now return unto me . . . and be converted, that I may heal you?”⁹

Christ Himself taught:

“And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and *after* that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me. . . .

“Therefore, according to the *power* of the Father I will draw all men unto me.”¹⁰

Perhaps His most significant work is in the ongoing labor with each of us individually to lift, to bless, to strengthen, to sustain, to guide, and to forgive us.

As Nephi saw in vision, much of Christ’s mortal ministry was devoted to blessing and healing the sick with all kinds of maladies—physical, emotional, and spiritual. “And I beheld multitudes of people who were sick, and who were afflicted with all manner of diseases. . . . And they were healed by the power of the Lamb of God.”¹¹

Alma also prophesied that “he shall

go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and . . . he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people. . . .

“That *his* bowels may be filled with mercy, . . . that *he* may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities.”¹²

Late one night lying in a hospital bed, this time as a patient and not as a physician, I read those verses over and over again. I pondered: “How is it done? For whom? What is required to qualify? Is it like forgiveness of sin? Do we have to earn His love and help?” As I pondered, I came to understand that during His mortal life Christ *chose* to experience pains and afflictions in order to understand us. Perhaps we also need to experience the depths of mortality in order to understand Him and our eternal purposes.¹³

President Henry B. Eyring taught: “It will comfort us when we must wait in distress for the Savior’s promised relief that He knows, from experience, how to heal and help us. . . . And faith in that power will give us patience as we pray and work and wait for help. He could have known how to succor us simply

by revelation, but He *chose to learn by His own personal experience.*”¹⁴

I felt the encircling arms of His love that night.¹⁵ Tears watered my pillow in gratitude. Later, as I was reading in Matthew about Christ’s mortal ministry, I made another discovery: “When the even was come, they brought unto him many . . . and he . . . healed *all* that were sick.”¹⁶ He healed *all* that came to Him. None were turned away.

As Elder Dallin H. Oaks has taught: “Healing blessings come in many ways, each suited to our individual needs, as known to Him who loves us best. Sometimes a ‘healing’ cures our illness or lifts our burden. But sometimes we are ‘healed’ by being given strength or understanding or patience to bear the burdens placed upon us.”¹⁷ All that will come may be “clasped in the arms of Jesus.”¹⁸ All souls can be healed by His power. All pain can be soothed. In Him, we can “find rest unto [our] souls.”¹⁹ Our mortal circumstances may not immediately change, but our pain, worry, suffering, and fear can be swallowed up in His peace and healing balm.

I have noted that children are often

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more naturally accepting of pain and suffering. They quietly endure with humility and meekness. I have felt a beautiful, sweet spirit surrounding these little ones.

Thirteen-year-old Sherrie underwent a 14-hour operation for a tumor on her spinal cord. As she regained consciousness in the intensive care unit, she said: “Daddy, Aunt Cheryl is here, . . . and . . . Grandpa Norman . . . and Grandma Brown . . . are here. And Daddy, who is that standing beside you? . . . He looks like you, only taller. . . . He says he’s your brother, Jimmy.” Her uncle Jimmy had died at age 13 of cystic fibrosis.

“For nearly an hour, Sherrie . . . described her visitors, all deceased family members. Exhausted, she then fell asleep.”

Later she told her father, “Daddy, all of the children here in the intensive care unit have angels helping them.”²⁰

To all of us the Savior said:

“Behold, ye are little children and ye cannot bear all things now; ye must grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth.

“Fear not, little children, for you are mine. . . .

“Wherefore, I am in your midst, and I am the good shepherd.”²¹

Our great personal challenge in mortality is to become “a saint through the atonement of Christ.”²² The pain you and I experience may be where this process is most measured. In extremity, we can become as children in our hearts, humble ourselves, and “pray and work and wait”²³ patiently for the healing of our bodies and our souls. As Job, after being refined through our trials, we “shall come forth as gold.”²⁴

I bear testimony that He is our Redeemer, our Friend, our Advocate, the Great Physician, the Great Healer.



In Him we can find peace and solace in and from our pain and our sins if we will but come unto Him with humble hearts. His “grace is sufficient.”²⁵ In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Orson F. Whitney, in Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle* (1972), 98.
2. Robert D. Hales, “Healing Soul and Body,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 14.
3. See Alma 31:31, 33.
4. 2 Nephi 2:1.
5. 2 Nephi 9:21.
6. Hebrews 4:16. Paul taught us to look to the Savior as an example in dealing with the “contradictions of sinners against [us], lest [we] be wearied and faint in [our] minds” (Hebrews 12:3).
7. Jeremiah 8:22.
8. Alma 36:14.
9. 3 Nephi 9:13.
10. 3 Nephi 27:14–15; emphasis added.
11. 1 Nephi 11:31.
12. Alma 7:11–12; emphasis added.

13. See John Taylor, *The Mediation and Atonement* (1882), 97. President Taylor writes of a “covenant” being entered into between the Father and the Son in the premortal councils for the accomplishment of the atoning redemption of mankind. Christ’s voluntary suffering during life was in addition to the suffering in the garden and on the cross (see Mosiah 3:5–8).
14. Henry B. Eyring, “Adversity,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2009, 24; emphasis added.
15. See Doctrine and Covenants 6:20.
16. Matthew 8:16; emphasis added.
17. Dallin H. Oaks, “He Heals the Heavy Laden,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 7–8.
18. Mormon 5:11.
19. Matthew 11:29.
20. See Michael R. Morris, “Sherrie’s Shield of Faith,” *Ensign*, June 1995, 46.
21. Doctrine and Covenants 50:40–41, 44.
22. Mosiah 3:19.
23. Henry B. Eyring, *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2009, 24.
24. Job 23:10.
25. 2 Corinthians 12:9; see also Ether 12:26–27; Doctrine and Covenants 18:31.