

# *The Lord's Plan for Peace*

BEN B. BANKS

**M**y young brothers and sisters, I am delighted to have this opportunity to speak with you. I am thrilled and humbled to know that you are watching from around the world. We live in times of incredible technological advances. I stand here in Provo, Utah, and through modern communication satellites you can listen to and watch my every comment. I had better do a good job tonight and communicate effectively!

As I mention communication, I am reminded of a story about a hiker who ate a condor, a protected species of wild bird. It seems that the hiker was apprehended and taken before a judge, who sentenced him to life at hard labor. Before leaving the courtroom, however, the defendant asked the judge to listen to his side of the story because he felt there were extenuating circumstances. The hiker explained that he had been lost in the wilderness and had been hiking for three days and three nights without food or water and just by chance had spotted this condor sitting on a rock, had thrown a rock at it, killed it, and ate it, and then walked for three more days and three more nights before getting to civilization. The hiker said, "If I hadn't eaten that bird, I wouldn't be alive today." The judge responded by saying that those certainly were unusual circumstances,

and in view of the fact that the hiker's life had been in danger, he, the judge, would suspend the sentence. The defendant thanked him and began to leave the courtroom, but as he did, the judge asked, "Oh, by the way, what did the condor taste like?" The hiker paused for a moment and then responded, "Well, it was kind of between a bald eagle and a spotted owl."

I might say I hope that this evening I am able to communicate better than the hiker did.

## **Challenges to Our Personal Peace**

You see, I do have a very important and serious message that I want to communicate to you. I have learned that some young people are vulnerable when life's situations do not conform to their desires. Before I address how we can make ourselves less vulnerable, let's look together at some of the challenges faced by Latter-day Saint young people. I do this to illustrate that what you may consider challenging today may turn out to be a mere bump in the road compared with the mountains you may have to climb later in life.

---

*Ben B. Banks was a member of the Presidency of the Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this fireside address was given at Brigham Young University on 4 November 2001.*

One young person recently described her main challenge in life this way: “If I don’t look perfect, there’s not much chance to date and marry.” Another said, “It’s hard to avoid loneliness when things are always changing. My friends are getting married, moving away, and going on missions.”

When it came to maintaining spirituality, one young person said: “I want to stay as spiritual as when I was a missionary but live a normal life, too. It’s disheartening when I can’t keep the same level of spirituality.”

Another expressed this thought: “Dating is a challenge. I feel like my biggest weaknesses are moral temptations.”

When considering what to do and who he is, one young person described it this way: “My biggest challenge is figuring out what I should do and how I should spend the rest of my life.”

Finally, another added: “I’m trying to decide what to do for a career, where to study, and when to get married.”

I’m sure many have perhaps faced questions and challenges similar to these at some time in their youth. What I would like you to understand is that there is a plan that can help you face these challenges and even greater ones. That plan will help you to have peace in your life.

As my wife, Sue, and I have traveled throughout the world on assignment for the Church, we have come to know and love the great global Latter-day Saint family that this Church has become. We have laughed and cried with the Saints as we have watched their lives and, on occasion, witnessed their acts of courage.

During our time in the Philippines we saw firsthand the adversity people were confronted with by the Mount Pinatubo volcanic eruption. We felt the earthquakes; we saw the floods and typhoons; we watched as homes were destroyed and families uprooted. We even witnessed the death that came to many. Yet during these times of great difficulty, we also

witnessed Latter-day Saint families who, in spite of their personal hardships, were at peace, optimistic for the future, and full of faith.

Recently I received a letter from Jeremy Chatelain. I first met Jeremy some years ago in the Philippines as he served a full-time mission for the Church. Following his honorable release, he married and about three years ago was appointed to a teaching post in the Church Educational System. Jeremy and his wife, Connie, looked forward to their new life together and his working full-time with seminary students in Idaho. Just before he started his new career, Jeremy, Connie, and their families went swimming at a favorite location. Everyone was enjoying a wonderful time swimming and having fun together. When Jeremy dived into the water for the last time that day, little did he realize it would change his life on earth forever.

He writes:

*It’s hard for me to believe that it has been a little more than three years since my accident. . . . We have been greatly blessed in our lives. I left the hospital in October of 1998 and returned to Ogden to acclimate to life as a quadriplegic outside of the hospital. . . . We have now been living in a home in Blackfoot, Idaho, for nearly three years. The Lord must surely see the future and can mercifully guide us accordingly. We found the house before the accident and curiously noted, among other things, that many of the doors were extra wide, thus wheelchair friendly. We have had to make very few changes to accommodate my needs, which has spared our finances for other necessities and wants.*

He continues:

*Another tremendous blessing in our lives is the Church Educational System. When many other employers would have counted my disabilities too great to continue employment, CES has maintained a very warm, caring, and accommodating relationship with us. . . . We have been included in all of*

*the functions as if my accident had not happened. Our seminary building has been set up so that with near complete independence I can access my office and the classroom well enough to volunteer teach one period daily each trimester.*

Despite the many challenges he faces as a quadriplegic, Jeremy writes about his future plans this way: "I am currently pursuing my master of education and hope to complete it within another year or so. My next goal is then to try to come back and teach full-time."

I am pleased to report that Jeremy, his wife, and students are watching this broadcast in Blackfoot, Idaho, tonight.

Speaking of Connie, his bride of just a few years, he says:

*My wife has been unfailingly supportive in all I've done and has made great personal sacrifices to maintain our marriage. We even returned to the Philippines, wheelchair and all, last fall at the conclusion of my brother's mission in Baguio. It brought me great joy to introduce my wife to the Filipinos, for whom I have tremendous love.*

He concluded his letter by telling me of yet another challenge they faced:

*Nearly a year ago Connie was involved in a serious car accident on the Malad pass. Her car lost traction on a snowy overpass and rolled down into the median. It crushed the car and broke seven of her ribs, as well as a number of bones in her back. I nearly lost her that day. She spent about a week in the hospital and a few more months before the pain somewhat subsided. She is doing well now and is working as a medical assistant at a clinic here in town.*

When many others would have wallowed in self-pity and doubt, Jeremy described his setbacks this way: "Life yet continues to provide us with learning experiences. We have been truly blessed."

I share part of that humbling letter with you to illustrate that regardless of the challenges, the Lord can bring peace into the lives of those who are distressed.

In a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord said:

*For verily I say unto you, blessed is he that keepeth my commandments, whether in life or in death; and he that is faithful in tribulation, the reward of the same is greater in the kingdom of heaven.*

*Ye cannot behold with your natural eyes, for the present time, the design of your God concerning those things which shall come hereafter, and the glory which shall follow after much tribulation.*

*For after much tribulation come the blessings. Wherefore the day cometh that ye shall be crowned with much glory; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand. [D&C 58:2-4]*

Later, to the pioneers embarking on the trek west, the Lord declared: "My people must be tried in all things, that they may be prepared to receive the glory that I have for them, even the glory of Zion; and he that will not bear chastisement is not worthy of my kingdom" (D&C 136:31).

Further, President Spencer W. Kimball once taught:

*Being human, we would expel from our lives physical pain and mental anguish and assure ourselves of continual ease and comfort, but if we were to close the doors upon sorrow and distress, we might be excluding our greatest friends and benefactors. Suffering can make saints of people as they learn patience, long-suffering, and self-mastery. [Faith Precedes the Miracle (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 98]*

You recall that the Prophet Joseph Smith taught: "Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it" (HC 5:134).

As we walk the path the Prophet speaks of, sometimes we are accompanied by trial, adversity, disappointments, heartache, and discouragement. As Latter-day Saints, we are taught that we came to earth to experience life in mortality. It is part of the plan for our eternal progress. As we deal with our challenges, temptations, pain, and sorrows, we learn to appreciate goodness, virtue, and happiness.

Problems, challenges, and heartaches come to all—young and old, male and female, married or single. Sometimes when that pain comes, it can be almost unbearable, and it is then that we find ourselves in need of help.

### Peace in Times of Trouble

Recent events have illustrated once again the reason we need a source of comfort and hope in our lives.

Speaking at general conference a month ago, President Hinckley said:

*Now we are at war. Great forces have been mobilized and will continue to be. Political alliances are being forged. We do not know how long this conflict will last. We do not know what it will cost in lives and treasure. We do not know the manner in which it will be carried out. It could impact the work of the Church in various ways.*

He added:

*We are people of peace. We are followers of the Christ who was and is the Prince of Peace. But there are times when we must stand up for right and decency, for freedom and civilization, just as Moroni rallied his people in his day to the defense of their wives, their children, and the cause of liberty. [“The Times in Which We Live,” Ensign, November 2001, 72]*

After John Clifford in Cork, Ireland, heard the terrible news of the terrorist attacks in New York on September 11, his first thoughts were of his brother, Ronnie, who worked in the

World Trade Center. John frantically tried to discover news of his brother and whether or not he had survived the disaster. Just hours after finding out that his brother had indeed survived, John then learned that his sister, Ruth, and her four-year-old daughter, Juliana, had been on board one of the aircraft that crashed into the World Trade Center towers. Another brother, Mark, said, “No words could describe what we feel about this” (“Corkman Tells of Brother’s Escape,” *The Irish Times on the Web*, 13 September 2001 <<http://www.ireland.com/newspaper/world/2001/0913/amer23.htm>>).

Regardless of whether it be an individual, family, or nation that is suffering, what message of comfort can we as Latter-day Saints offer those who mourn? How do we answer people who ask, “How will I ever get over this?”

Do we now or have we ever faced trials in our lives that can cause us to doubt the love our Heavenly Father has for His children? How do we deal with tragedy or adversity in our own lives? What is the solution to the ills that torment mankind?

The Savior Himself provided an answer to this question when He met with His Apostles on the night before His Crucifixion. He said: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

Here the Lord notes a distinction between His peace and man’s peace. Man’s peace is usually identified as the absence of war. The Lord’s peace cannot be disturbed even in the midst of war. You will remember the peace the Savior enjoyed. Even during His trial before Pilate, with the shouting multitude on one side and the doubting governor on the other, He was at peace. The Savior introduced this peace and showed us how to live with it.

Through our own personal experiences we can discover that the great source for peace in this world comes from one source, our Savior,

even Jesus Christ. Of that I bear testimony. Never forget it. No matter how great the trial, no matter how much the suffering, the Master can always bring the needed peace. His gospel stands as a beacon of light in a world darkened by the influence of evil. Millions of people today are looking for answers. They thirst for peace, they want comfort in their lives, and they seek to know if they are safe. Those that mourn ask, "Will I see my loved one beyond the grave?"

In my own life there have been times when I have had to exercise great faith in my Heavenly Father and wait for peace and reassurance to come to me.

While serving in the Philippines in 1996, my wife and I received a phone call advising us that our daughter-in-law Tamara had been taken to the hospital in very serious condition. It was not known if she would survive. This happened just as we were preparing to come for general conference. Upon learning of her illness, we returned a few days early.

We learned that one evening Tamara felt like she was coming down with the flu. The next morning she didn't feel any better, so our son suggested she stay in bed and he would get the children off to school and would check back with her later.

Fortunately, later that morning our daughter, Nanette, went to Tamara and Ben's home to borrow their van. When she arrived she asked their five-year-old son if his mother was there. He said she was in bed but that she would not talk to him. Nanette called the paramedics, who came to the home and rushed her to the hospital.

The doctor said, "We don't know what she has, but if it is what we think it is, we need to treat it now or she won't be alive tomorrow." The diagnosis was correct. Tamara had a serious brain infection, a type of meningitis. The disease spread very quickly. She was put on a ventilator and our sons administered to her. She developed a fever, had gall bladder prob-

lems, and her lungs collapsed. She was given medication to keep the blood around the vital organs so they would not fail.

Consequently her fingers and her toes went black and amputation became a possibility. They were able to save her fingers, one half of one foot, and two-thirds of the other. The doctor said, "I have no idea why your wife is still alive. I am a scientist, and, by all the books, she should be dead. All I can say is that it wasn't her time."

Tamara was in a coma for six weeks, in special care for two weeks, and in a rehabilitation hospital for three weeks, after which she had to go through years of rehabilitation. Following conference, my wife remained in Salt Lake to help with our family.

While touring the Micronesia Guam Mission on the island of Majuro, I received a message that my wife needed to talk to me as soon as possible. My first thought was that something had happened to Tamara. When I called my wife, she reported that Tamara was holding her own but that our son, Brad, was in the hospital undergoing surgery.

Brad was in the process of taking down a large garage door at work. He had pushed down the old door with a forklift and knew he had to make sure that the old springs that operated the door were unwound. I now quote Brad:

*Upon inspecting the springs, I could see that they were still fully loaded. I proceeded to the springs and hit them both with the sledgehammer, and the springs appeared to unwind. All appeared safe now to dismantle the door.*

*With gloved hands I reached down to pull the torsion bar assembly away from the rubble heap. The instant I pulled on the torsion bar I must have released some unseen pressure as the rod twisted around, grabbing my glove and pulling my hand and arm into the springs. The next thing I knew I was twisted around the torsion bar three times up to my elbow, with my glove partially pulled*



*off my hand. There was a trickle of blood dripping from my glove.*

*I couldn't see what was damaged, as I was having a hard time keeping my balance as the pressure from the springs was twisting me off my feet in an attempt to wrap me further around the torsion bar. I was grateful my teenage son, Josh, was there. He got some additional help, and they were able to release enough pressure so I could start to untangle myself and get out of the grasp of the twisting torsion bar.*

*As I freed my blood-soaked glove, it fell to the ground, and I then noticed my hand was missing the thumb, which had been torn off. I told Josh to get some clean towels to wrap my hand in. As I attempted to retrieve my thumb from inside the glove, I got the bleeding stopped and held my thumb in the palm of my hand and asked Josh to drive me to the hospital.*

*Shortly after we arrived, I found myself in the operating room. Four surgeons and five hours later, they had reattached my thumb to my hand.*

*Following the surgery I received a blessing from my father-in-law and brother-in-law. The next day each of the doctors looked at my hand. They appeared surprised the surgery appeared to be so successful. By the end of the week they all put their doubts aside and said it looked like a keeper and told me I could finally go home. How appreciative I am for the blessing I received, for the words of healing and restoration in my behalf, and even more for a loving Father in Heaven, who knows what is best for me.*

My mission tour continued. A few days later, while on the island of Palau, I received another phone call from my wife. Tamara was still holding her own, and Brad's hand was okay. What is it this time? She then advised me that she had been diagnosed by the doctor as having cancer on her nose and that it was deep enough they felt she should have a plastic surgeon perform the surgery, which would take place in the next couple of days.

Fortunately the surgery was successful, and today she is just as beautiful as ever.

As I now reflect on that time of family crisis, I recall the peace and hope that the gospel of Jesus Christ brought into my life and the quiet calm that came to me through the Holy Ghost. We had received promises in His holy house that our family could be eternal, and that knowledge brought me great peace and comfort. I did not know at that time how it was going to turn out, but I did know that whatever happened, my family and I were loved by our Savior.

Book of Mormon prophets remind us that the Savior is our hope for future justice and peace.

The great prophet Abinadi fearlessly testified that we "shall be brought to stand before the bar of God, to be judged of him" (Mosiah 16:10). We know from Mosiah that "the judgments of God are always just" (Mosiah 29:12). We also know that He "gave the law" (3 Nephi 15:5).

Nephi taught that the Lord is loving: "He loveth the world, even that he layeth down his own life" (2 Nephi 26:24). Nephi's father, Lehi, taught that Christ is "the great Mediator of all men" (2 Nephi 2:27).

We are also reminded that He is our Savior: "There is none other name given under heaven save it be this Jesus Christ . . . , whereby man can be saved" (2 Nephi 25:20).

In 1839 the Prophet Joseph Smith and five colleagues were confined illegally in filthy conditions in Liberty Jail during four long, cold winter months. In March, news came to them that the Saints were being driven out of Missouri. After considering the many wrongs and atrocities Church members had endured, Joseph pled with the Lord:

*O God, where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place?*

*How long shall thy hand be stayed, and thine eye, yea thy pure eye, behold from the eternal*

*heavens the wrongs of thy people and of thy servants, and thine ear be penetrated with their cries?* [D&C 121:1–2]

The Lord responded to the Prophet:

*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.*

[D&C 121:7–8]

During the times leading up to the wrongful arrest and imprisonment of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Saints had endured much. They had been driven from their homes at least five times in less than 10 years; they saw some members abused or murdered; they had endured terrible sufferings—and all because of their religious beliefs.

Yet, despite this, the Lord told the Prophet:

*If fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.*

*The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?* [D&C 122:7–8]

As I think of the words of the hymn “There Is a Green Hill Far Away,” I think this verse is particularly appropriate:

*Oh, dearly, dearly has he loved!  
And we must love him too,  
And trust in his redeeming blood,  
And try his works to do.*

[Hymns, 1985, no. 194]

Generally speaking, the persecutions faced by the early Saints are no longer with us. Yet we all have trials and tribulations to face in our lives. It is vital, therefore, that we be well

prepared and filled with a spiritual reservoir that we can carry with us and that will be available to help us.

### Elements of a Spiritual Parachute

As a pilot during World War II, President Boyd K. Packer was taught by his instructors to always wear his parachute when flying. At that time parachute packs were large and uncomfortable to wear. The rule was frequently seen by most pilots as a nuisance. Yet as President Packer learned of colleagues escaping from their damaged or burning aircraft only to be saved by their parachutes, he realized what wise counsel he had been given.

We are all in need of a spiritual parachute in this world today—one that we can carry with us at all times, one that will protect us when we face personal trial and adversity, and one that will bring us peace when all about us are confounded.

Our spiritual parachute has many elements that make up a wonderful protective canopy we can use in times of great difficulty. Today I will mention seven of those elements:

1. *Follow the prophets.* We know that we live in challenging and difficult times with the world in commotion. We are in constant need of spiritual direction from trusted sources. Several times a year we sustain fifteen Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. We listen to them at general conference and read their words in Church magazines. They are a trusted source of wise counsel and direction. We would do well to heed their words.

I want to remind you that words of safety come from the prophets. We must make sure that we follow them. I bear testimony to you that they are inspired men who care for you and want you to have peace and happiness in your life.

2. *Be ye clean.* To the early Saints the Lord declared: “Go ye out from among the wicked. Save yourselves. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord” (D&C 38:42).

President Hinckley has been very specific in his comments on this subject. He said: “Stay away from pornography as you would avoid a serious disease. It is as destructive. It can become habitual, and those who indulge in it get so they cannot leave it alone. It is addictive” (in *CR*, April 1998, 67; or “Living Worthy of the Girl You Will Someday Marry,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 49).

Have you followed the prophet’s counsel in this regard? If you have, then I commend you for your wisdom. If you have not, then now is the time to act. You cannot have peace in your life if you have allowed the insidious influence of pornography to envelop your life. Get help. Get out of the “mist of darkness” (1 Nephi 8:23) and back onto that right path that will lead to eternal life.

3. *Honesty is the best policy.* The older I get, the more I realize that being honest in our dealings with others is a principle we must live by (see Articles of Faith 1:13). Throughout my life I have witnessed acts of honesty that have required courage. Sometimes in business there can be a temptation to be dishonest to close a sale. Some say that it is all right to be less than honest. It is not. Once the reputation for dishonesty is generally known, it is very hard for the individual to be trusted again. Honesty is a character trait that should be at the very foundation of our lives.

You will recall how the people of Ammon—Lamanite converts in the Book of Mormon—“were . . . distinguished for their zeal towards God, and also towards men; for they were perfectly honest and upright in all things; and they were firm in the faith of Christ, even unto the end” (Alma 27:27). These Saints transmitted their righteousness to their children. These children later became the stripling young warriors who saved the Nephite nation.

4. *Keep the Sabbath day holy.* When we fail to keep the Sabbath day holy, we fail the test set by the Lord. To some it may seem like a little thing. What we are talking about is one

of the Ten Commandments (see Exodus 20:8). It is very important. We will be blessed by the Lord if we live exactly in this regard.

By keeping the Sabbath day holy we build for ourselves spiritual character. It is not always easy to avoid the temptations of the world, but there is peace and safety in doing so. Sometimes those we call close friends will encourage us to ignore this very important commandment. However, by observing it we will have power over evil, we will be more spiritual, and we will keep ourselves unspotted from the sins of the world (see D&C 59:9).

The Sabbath day provides us an opportunity to step away from the world for one day to restore our spirituality so that we can get through the other six days.

5. *Read and ponder the scriptures, and pray often.* Elder Henry B. Eyring taught us at October conference:

*If you ponder the scriptures and begin to do what you covenanted with God to do, I can promise you that you will feel more love for God and more of His love for you. And with that, your prayers will come from the heart, full of thanks and of pleading. You will feel a greater dependence on God. You will find the courage and the determination to act in His service, without fear and with peace in your heart.* [“Prayer,” *Ensign*, November 2001, 17]

There is great power in pondering the scriptures. Those who do this have the right to inspiration and revelation to guide them.

6. *Serve others.* As true followers of Jesus Christ, we should practice what we preach. The scriptures teach, “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22).

We know that actions speak louder than words and we understand that the true measure for our service is found in the Savior’s words: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these . . . , ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40).



Let us strive to give of ourselves through service to others. We cannot remain aloof from the needs and sufferings of others. No matter what circumstances we find ourselves in, there is always an opportunity for us to serve. A wise man once said, "The man who lives by himself and for himself is apt to be corrupted by the company he keeps" (Charles Henry Parkhurst, quoted in *The International Dictionary of Thoughts* [Chicago: J. G. Ferguson Publishing Company, 1969], 659).

7. *Keep the commandments.* Elder Dallin H. Oaks has counseled:

*The blessings of the gospel are universal, and so is the formula for peace: keep the commandments of God. War and conflict are the result of wickedness; peace is the product of righteousness. . . .*

*. . . Each citizen furthers the cause of world peace when he or she keeps the commandments of God and lives at peace with family and neighbors. . . .*

*What can one person do to promote world peace? The answer is simple: keep God's commandments, and serve his children. [In CR, March–April 1990, 92–93; or "World Peace," *Ensign*, May 1990, 72–73]*

Why do you suppose the Brethren spend so much of their time helping you with guidance and direction? I hope you recognize that they care for your spiritual welfare.

### **All Suffer Trials and Tribulations**

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ are not free from trial and tribulation. When the pioneers crossed the plains in the early days of the Church, Eliza R. Snow wrote the hymn "Think Not, When You Gather to Zion." I find the words very appropriate:

*Think not when you gather to Zion,  
Your troubles and trials are through,  
That nothing but comfort and pleasure  
Are waiting in Zion for you:  
No, no, 'tis designed as a furnace,*

*All substance, all textures to try,  
To burn all the "wood, hay, and stubble,"  
The gold from the dross purify.*

*Think not when you gather to Zion,  
That all will be holy and pure;  
That fraud and deception are banished,  
And confidence wholly secure:  
No, no, for the Lord our Redeemer  
Has said that the tares with the wheat  
Must grow till the great day of burning  
Shall render the harvest complete.*

*Think not when you gather to Zion,  
The Saints here have nothing to do  
But to look to your personal welfare,  
And always be comforting you.  
No; those who are faithful are doing  
What they find to do with their might;  
To gather the scattered of Israel  
They labor by day and by night.  
[Hymns, 1948, no. 21]*

In her book *Adversity*, author Elaine Cannon recalls a moment from the life of Sister Freda Joan Lee, who was mourning the death of her husband, President Harold B. Lee. Sister Cannon writes:

*Sister Lee sobbed and said, "The world is mourning a prophet, but I have lost my husband. And I have had him such a short time."*

*Sister Lee, since then deceased herself, was in her sixties when she married President Lee, following the death of his first wife, and she comforted countless numbers of single girls with this hope. Thinking of separation now, plus a stretch of loneliness ahead proved a consuming trial for her. She who had comforted so many now stood on the uncomfortable threshold of despair herself.*

*Later, lonely and struggling to understand the untimely death of her husband who had been President of the Church for a brief eighteen months, Sister Lee sat in church on the back bench. She had a prayer in her heart for peace. In the midst of her*

*affliction she turned to God for a way back up and out of anguish.*

*Then the closing song was sung. It was "Though Deepening Trials" [Eliza R. Snow's great hymn of hope in the Savior]. The last verse particularly comforted her:*

Lift up your hearts in praise to God;  
Let your rejoicings never cease.  
Though tribulations rage abroad,  
Christ says, "In me ye shall have peace."  
(*Hymns*, 1985, no. 122.)

*"By the time we sang that last verse," said Sister Lee, "a wonderful lifting assurance had welled up within me. I was at peace. The Comforter had come. All would be well." [Elaine Cannon, *Adversity* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987), 117–18]*

There are a number of lessons we can learn from Sister Lee's experience. Note how Sister Lee attended her Church meetings even though she was greatly troubled by the passing of her husband. Note how she had a prayer in her heart. She knew her peace would come from God. She was alert and attentive during the meeting. Note, too, how her answer was found in the words of a simple hymn. In her humility, she recognized the answer when it came to her.

Each week we have the opportunity to renew our covenants when we partake of the sacrament. Because this happens so often, it is easy to overlook the profound promises made there. For our part, we promise our Eternal Father that we are willing to take upon ourselves the name of His Son, always remember Him, and keep His commandments. In return, we are promised that we will always have His Spirit with us (see D&C 20:77, 79). As you face a week out in the world, can you imagine having a more comforting promise?

It is vital to our well-being that we partake of the sacrament worthily. By doing so and by keeping the covenants we make, we are build-

ing our reserves of strength for times of need. We are also becoming a better people. We will stand as beacons to those around us. We will recognize the quiet confidence that comes to those who faithfully live the gospel. We will have confidence in our ability to answer questions and help with the concerns of others. Others will look to us in times of trouble to help them. We will be able to help them find the peace of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

When answering questions from those around us, we should be kind to all with whom we talk, regardless of their race, culture, or beliefs. We should never be smug or self-righteous. We should act with love in our hearts, remembering that it is the gospel of Jesus Christ that provides the peace.

Can you now see that true world peace starts with you and me? We need to take care of the little things, and maybe some big things, too, if changes in life's direction are needed. It may require courage similar to that shown by my young friend Jeremy. It certainly requires a willingness to live the gospel of Jesus Christ in the face of increasing evil and worldliness, and a commitment to fearlessly hold up the beacon for others to follow.

As President Hinckley concluded general conference a few weeks ago, he said:

*Now, brothers and sisters, we must do our duty, whatever that duty might be. Peace may be denied for a season. Some of our liberties may be curtailed. We may be inconvenienced. We may even be called on to suffer in one way or another. But God our Eternal Father will watch over this nation and all of the civilized world who look to Him. He has declared: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Ps. 33:12). Our safety lies in repentance. Our strength comes of obedience to the commandments of God. . . .*

*Are these perilous times? They are. But there is no need to fear. We can have peace in our hearts and peace in our homes. We can be an influence for good in this world, every one of us.*

*May the God of heaven, the Almighty, bless us, help us, as we walk our various ways in the uncertain days that lie ahead. May we look to Him with unfailing faith. May we worthily place our reliance on His Beloved Son who is our great Redeemer, whether it be in life or in death. [“The Times in Which We Live,” Ensign, November 2001, 74]*

**Personal Testimony**

I testify to you, my wonderful young friends, that peace does come as we live the gospel of Jesus Christ and follow the words of our living prophets when those trials, temptations, and worrisome times come in our lives.

I testify that in the essence of President Gordon B. Hinckley, whom I love with all my heart, we have a living prophet today who holds all of the keys of the kingdom. But it is my Savior, Jesus Christ, and my Father in Heaven, even God the Father, that I worship and whom I testify of to you.

I hope and pray that burning within your souls and your spirits is that hungering desire to have that testimony that will sustain you—the testimony that peace comes from Him who gave His life for us that we might live again, even Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, of which I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.