

PEACE BE UNTO THY SOUL

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from **TEACHINGS OF THE PRESIDENTS OF THE CHURCH: Harold B. Lee, Chapter 22**

"The path to exaltation is rugged and steep. Many stumble and fall, and through discouragement never pick themselves up to start again. The forces of evil cloud the path with many foggy deterrents, often trying to detour us in misleading trails. **But through all this journey, there is the calming assurance that IF we choose the right, success will be ours.**

ADVERSITY HELPS US BECOME MORE LIKE GOD.

There is a refining process that comes through suffering that we can't experience any other way. . . **To the extent that we have suffered seems to draw us closer to the divine, helps to purify our souls, and helps to purge out the things that are not pleasing in the sight of the Lord.**

We have to be tried and tested by poverty, by sickness, by the death of loved ones, by temptation, sometimes by the betrayal of supposed friends, by affluence and riches, by ease and luxury, by false educational ideas, and by the flattery of the world. . . We must be refined and tested to prove the strength and power that are in us. . . We view life as a great process of soul-training. We learn by "the things which we suffer." We gain strength by overcoming obstacles, and we conquer fear by triumphant victory in places where danger lurks.

Rarely, if ever, is there a truly great soul except he has been tried and tested through tears, and adversity. . . **Every one of you must endure trials, and hardships, heartaches and discouragements.** When in sorrow and in despair if you will remember, you will be comforted if you learn this lesson: "For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb:12:6).

What may seem for the moment to be a tragedy may, as we see the whole picture from the beginning to the end, in the wisdom of our Father, be for one of the great blessings instead of a tragic ending as we have supposed.

WE CAN FIND INNER STRENGTH AND PEACE IN TIMES OF TROUBLE.

Every soul that walks the earth—whether rich or poor, good or bad, young or old-- is going to be tested and tried by storms of adversity. The only ones who won't fail will be those whose houses have been built upon the rock of obedience to the principles and teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So, humble yourselves. . . The all-important thing in life isn't what happens to you, but the important thing is how you take it. . . What can we say to those who are yearning for an inward peace to quiet their fears, to ease the aching heart, to bring understanding, to look beyond the sordid trials of today and see a fruition of hopes and dreams in a world beyond mortality?

The Apostle Paul said of the Master, "Though he were a Son {the Son of God} yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered. . ." (Heb. 5:8) Through the refining processes of separation, of loneliness, of devastation, there comes something that has to be before we are ready to meet some of the other tests in life. . . We have been called to difficult tasks in a difficult age, but this could be for each of us a time of high adventure, of great learning, of great inner satisfaction. For the converging challenges posed by war, urbanization, dilution of doctrine, and domestic decay surely provide for us the modern equivalent of crossing the plains, enduring misunderstanding, establishing a kingdom throughout the world in the midst of adversity.

from **PEACE: Essays of Hope and Encouragement, Desert Book Company, 1998**

Certainly peace is the opposite of fear. Peace is a blessing that comes to those who trust in God. No man can have lasting peace who is untrue to his better self or who is living a lie. Peace can never come to the transgressor of the law. Commitment to God's laws is the basis for peace.

True peace must not be dependent upon conditions or happenings. Peace must stem from an inward contentment built upon trust, faith, and goodwill toward God, fellowmen, and self. It must be constantly nurtured by the individual who is soundly anchored to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

---Elder Marvin J. Ashton

There are times when deep sorrow or suffering or fear or loneliness make us cry out for the peace which only God Himself can bring. These are times of piercing spiritual hunger when even the dearest friends cannot fully come to our aid. **Life has its moments when uninterrupted peace may seem to elude us for a season.** We may wonder why there are such times in life, particularly when we may be trying harder than we have ever tried to live worthy of God's blessings and His help. Such problems in life do come for a purpose, if only to allow the one who faces such despair to be convinced that he really does need divine strength beyond himself, that he really does need the offer of heaven's hand.

---Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

from “The LDS Theology of Suffering” by Francine Bennion

We tend to like simplicity and clarity, even if it means ignoring some things. Can't we just be kind and patient, without worrying about various points of theology? Does it matter whether or not we think God causes suffering, as long as we trust him and his reasons for it. It matters.

God has invited us to make suffering worth the trouble and to meet it as well as we can. We can be in the process of learning to do that whatever our current limitations and circumstances. ...The better we understand what is at the core of LDS doctrine, the better we can distinguish what is not.

- **We chose to come to this earth.** The decision to be born was our own. Our birth is evidence of our courage and obedience.
- **Lucifer offered a way so different from God's that it would have destroyed this universe.** It was not success he would prevent; it was failure he would not allow. In his universe, no one would hurt or be afraid.
- **God offered a different possibility.** With his help, we would meet realities in a universe of law and agency, and choose who we want to be. We wanted life, however high the cost. We suffer because we are willing to pay the costs of living with laws of nature, whether or not we understand or manage them.
 - We live with natural law.
 - Nobody is manipulating every human decision that would affect every human experience. We are not preparing to meet reality someday; we are in it here and how.

The history of religion is the history of problems and understanding our Father in Heaven. The way to know Him is to become like Him. Often, in order to know Him, we need the kind of experiences which allow us to know Him.

- **Suffering in this earth is an indication of God's trust and love.** God does not want us to be simply obedient children playing forever under his hand. He wants us to become more like himself. In order to do that, **we have to know reality.**
 - We cannot live in fear that we may meet something that will scare or hurt us.
 - We have to be able, as He does, to meet what difficulties come and accept them as reality.
 - We also have to have some sense that when we fall, it's not going to be permanent. Ignorance, inexperience, things we don't understand, unknown things we are hampered by distort reality.
- **God's intent is not for us to suffer.** His intent is that we meet reality actively, with courage.
 - If we fear it, we are going to feel like passive victims of it. Say, "I am able with God's help to be myself and to hurt and survive."

To understand the personal suffering we go through, without having anger towards God, is to work hard at reading the scriptures, thinking about them, examining the assumptions we are making.

ARE WE WILLING TO HURT, TO LEARN? CAN WE BECOME LIKE CHRIST, ABLE TO FORGIVE THOSE WHO HURT US AND DEAL DIRECTLY AND OPENLY WITH WHAT CAN BE DEALT WITH?

I do not want you to believe for one minute that if you keep all the commandments and live as close to the Lord as you can and do everything right and wait chastely for your missionary to return and pay your tithing and attend your meetings, accept calls from the bishop, and have a temple marriage, I do not want you to believe that bad things will not happen to you.. . Sad things—sick children, husbands who are not faithful, illnesses that cripple, or violence, deaths—when those things happen, do not say, " God is not keeping his promises to me." **The gospel of Jesus Christ is not insurance against pain. It is resource in event of pain, and when that pain comes, and it will because we came here on earth to have pain, rejoice that you have resource to deal with your pain.**

I think we do not understand the nature of ourselves. The mysteries of the kingdom are who we are and who God is and what our relationship to Him is. God lives and is in His heaven. His Son died for us. **We chose to come to an unjust world and suffer.** --Carlfred Broderick, *MY PARENTS MARRIED ON A DARE*, Ch 12:"The Uses of Adversity"

Everyone will go through a trial of faith. The real trial of our faith is not necessarily at that moment when tragedy strikes; the trial is anything which would divert us from doing the Lord's will. There will always be away to escape a trial, **but the escape will not be out of the trial, but rather, through it.** --Elder Henry B. Eyring.

Hardships can deprive mortals of the power to act. But at the same time, hardships can be the means of eternal growth in attitude and desire. If endured with the right attitude and accompanied by righteous desires, **suffering and deprivation can be the agency of great growth in our spirits.** --Elder Dallin H. Oaks