

THE PROMISE OF OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

By Jarolyn Ballard Stout

When my husband was diagnosed with cancer, I felt like our world came crashing down. With eight children to care for, how would I ever do it alone?

It was a cloudy Sunday morning as I stood at the kitchen sink finishing the breakfast dishes. My two youngest children were watching a scripture video in the family room by the kitchen. I was lost in thought, and my cheeks were wet from tears. I couldn't get my mind off the cancer that had invaded our home. My husband had been fighting it for several years, but now it had spread. My faith seemed to be wavering. My mind was crowded with "what if?" thoughts.

Suddenly the scripture video interrupted my thoughts with words from a calming voice: "Peace, be still. . . .

"Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" (Mark 4:39–40).

I dropped the dishrag and turned to look at the TV. The video was about the Savior calming the storm. It was as if the words had been spoken to me by the Savior Himself. A feeling of warmth and peace flooded over me. It was a reminder to stick to the faith I had learned so much about through the years of cancer. It was a faith buttressed by words in my patriarchal blessing.

I received my patriarchal blessing when I was 15. One sentence that then seemed just to describe a part of my temple marriage now held great promise for me. It spoke of the righteous priesthood holder I would marry and said that he would "help thee, guide thee and aid thee, not only in thy youth but clear into thy later years."

As I read and reread my patriarchal blessing during the years of battling cancer, that sentence gave me great hope. Each time, I found renewed faith in the promise of our future together. I remembered the great comfort that the Spirit had given me when my husband was first diagnosed. I memorized that part of my patriarchal

blessing, and when cancer tests came back with poor results, I remembered that promise.

I learned to let the Savior carry us, I learned that I must keep my faith constant, and I learned to combat mounting fears with faith. The video that morning reminded me to rely on the Lord.

Having faith gives me the ability to let Jesus Christ carry my burden. Just as the people of Alma who were in bondage did not feel the burden on their backs (see Mosiah 24:14), so it is for our family with fighting cancer. Our family has been able to face cancer without feeling the burdens it could bring.



LEARNING THE PAINFUL LESSONS

"Difficulties come into our lives, problems we do not anticipate and which we would never choose. None of us is immune. The purpose of mortality is to learn and to grow to be more like our Father, and it is often during the difficult times that we learn the most, as painful as the lessons may be."

President Thomas S. Monson, "God Be with You Till We Meet Again," *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 111.



My husband still undergoes tests to track the cancer cells or to find possible tumors. We still have medical bills and the remaining side effects of treatments. And I still pray every day that my husband will have no more cancer. I pray that we will both live to old age. I also say to Heavenly Father, “Thy will be done.”

I do not know when the “later years” spoken of in my blessing will come. I hope the words in my blessing mean that my husband and I will be able to go on a mission when our children are raised. I hope they

mean that my husband will lead our horse while giving rides to our grandchildren and will bounce our grandchildren on his knee. But I know that whenever God takes him from this earth, it will be in His time.

I no longer worry about when those “later years” are. It does not matter. I trust that the Lord will honor that promise made to me in my patriarchal blessing. He has taken care of us through these years, and He will take care of us in the future. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

If you have not received your patriarchal blessing, consider talking to your bishop or branch president about receiving one. If you have a patriarchal blessing, do you read and ponder it often? Do you have faith in the Lord's promises?