



“My Burden Is Light”



ELDER PAUL V. JOHNSON

Of the Seventy

One of the Savior’s most comforting promises is found in Matthew 11:28–30:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“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.”

The Thatcher family felt the comfort of that promise during a particularly difficult time.

During October 2003, Aaron and Lorraine Thatcher’s two little daughters, 17-month-old Kaitlin and 6-month-old Madelyn, were diagnosed with cystic fibrosis. Shortly before the unexpected diagnosis, Aaron had to be hospitalized with kidney stones. Lorraine, meanwhile, was expecting their third child and was battling morning sickness. It was a heavy, dark time for the little family. Lorraine commented, “It was as if all our hopes and dreams for our children had been stolen away.”

Because of Aaron’s and Lorraine’s poor

health, Aaron’s mother spent nights in the hospital with the little girls. Lorraine would make her way to the hospital whenever her intense nausea abated. It all seemed impossible to handle. The little girls needed the comfort of their mother, and she was unable to be there at all times. The sorrow and guilt she felt only added to the heavy burden of coping with the new changes in her family’s lives.

Around noon one day she dragged herself to her car, sick, exhausted, and full of anxiety. As she headed toward the hospital, she turned on some soothing music and listened to the words of her favorite hymn—a hymn that had comforted her in the past when her mother had died. As the music surrounded her, it was as if the Lord were speaking the penetrating words directly to her mind and heart:

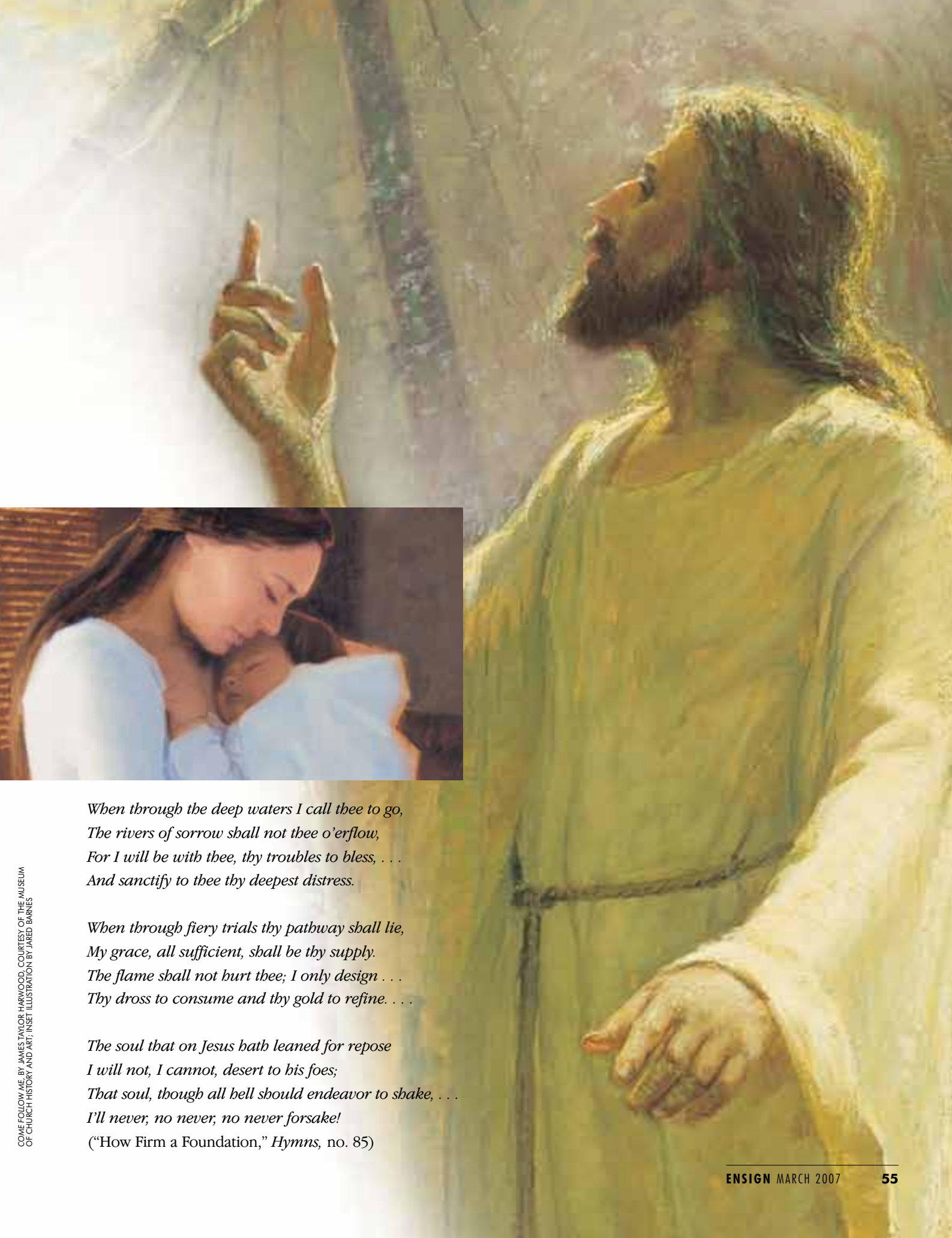
*Fear not, I am with thee; oh, be not
dismayed,*

*For I am thy God and will still give thee
aid.*

*I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause
thee to stand, . . .*

*Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent
hand.*

Each of us has access to the power of the Atonement to help us through difficult times and to bring peace and joy into our lives.



*When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not thee o'erflow,
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless, . . .
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.*

*When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply.
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design . . .
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine. . . .*

*The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
I will not, I cannot, desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, . . .
I'll never, no never, no never forsake!*
("How Firm a Foundation," Hymns, no. 85)

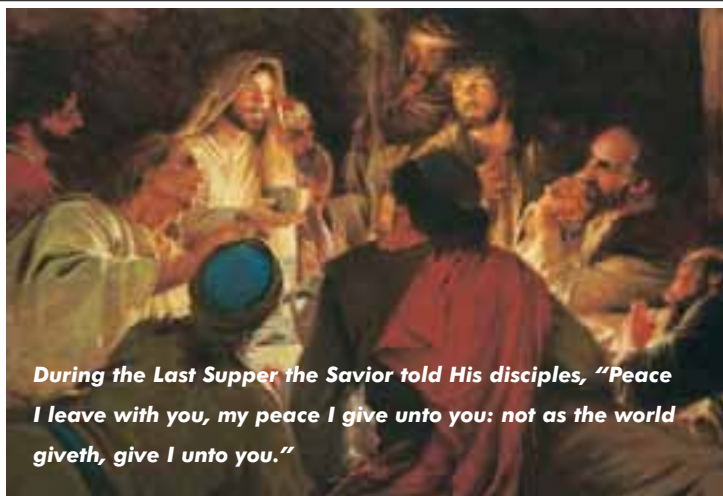
A short time later, Aaron and Lorraine brought their daughters home. Relief Society sisters had cleaned the house, done the wash, and filled the kitchen with food. Aaron and Lorraine felt the peacefulness of the clean home as they entered.

A package had been left on their doorstep. Opening it, they found a beautifully framed picture of the Savior. Typed and mounted with the picture were the words to the hymn that had been such a direct, personal message of peace to Lorraine. A sister in the ward, thinking the message was appropriate for this little family, had thoughtfully made the gift. She had no idea that these

words had special meaning to Lorraine. Lorraine felt the Spirit gently confirm that the Lord loved her, was aware of her, and would help lift her burdens.

Each of us faces challenging trials at times in our lives. Each of us also has access to the power of the Atonement to help us through difficult times and to bring peace and joy into our lives. Sometimes the help comes by removal of the burden. Many times the promised rest and peace come into our lives even though the burden is still present.

At one point in the Book of Mormon, the people of Alma were in bondage and afflicted with heavy burdens. Because of their faith in the Lord, “the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brethren were made light; yea, 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” (Mosiah 24:15).



During the Last Supper the Savior told His disciples, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.”



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

Most *Ensign* articles can be used for family home evening discussions, personal reflection, or teaching the gospel in a variety of settings.

1. To illustrate how others can help lighten burdens, have everyone help fold the clothes in a basket of clean laundry. Point out how quickly the task was accomplished with everyone’s help. Discuss how Sister Thatcher’s burdens were lightened. Challenge the family members to look for opportunities to help others.

2. Read Matthew 11:28–30. Ask, “What is Christ’s yoke?” List some of the burdens we may carry. How can taking Christ’s yoke upon us make these burdens lighter? Memorize the scripture as a family by writing the first letter of each word of the verses. Point to the letters as you repeat each corresponding word until the family can recite the passage without looking.

Many people can testify that the Lord has given them strength to “bear up their burdens with ease.” We all have met people who are happy even though they face tremendous hardships. By coming unto the Savior, they have found His promised peace.

The Apostle Paul suffered with an unnamed problem he described as “a thorn in the flesh” (2 Corinthians 12:7). This infirmity was not taken away even after he petitioned the Lord, but his faith is manifest in his declaration:

“For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

“And he said unto me,

My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Corinthians 12:8–10).

During the Last Supper the Savior told His disciples, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you” (John 14:27). The peace and joy found through the Savior and the Atonement is individual and personal. It can be difficult to describe to others, but it is powerful and life changing. The Apostle Paul describes it as “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Philippians 4:7). This peace is available to each of us, whatever our burdens, if we will make the choice to come unto Him. ■