

The
Lord
Can
Ease

OUR BURDENS



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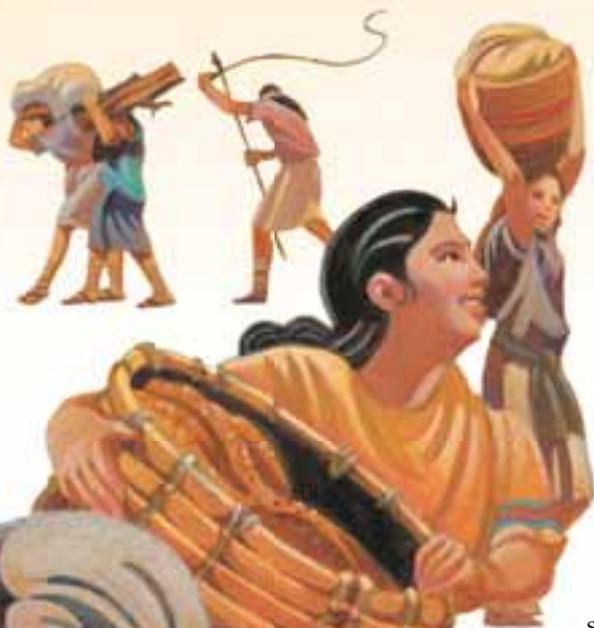
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Yes, President, I will accept the calling.” As I left the stake president’s office that evening and slowly drove home, I began to wonder how I could handle the burden of a young family, a new military career, and now a calling as a counselor in a bishopric. My military leaders had counseled my associates and me to do nothing for the next two years but focus on successful completion of the intensive graduate program we were starting. While I accepted their counsel for the most part, I knew I could still make time for family and some Church service. But serving in a bishopric?

Others have felt similar concerns about burdens that seemed too great to bear. For example, in chapters 23 and 24 of Mosiah we read about Alma and his people, who believed the words of the prophet Abinadi. They had known the oppression of a wicked king, so they fled into the wilderness and established the land of Helam. As they followed Alma's teachings, they began to "multiply and prosper exceedingly" (Mosiah 23:20).

The Lord kept His promise, strengthening the people so "that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord."



After some time had passed, the people saw that an army of Lamanites was in the borders of Helam. The people were alarmed, but Alma "exhorted them that they should not be frightened, but that they should remember the Lord their God and he would deliver them" (Mosiah 23:27). They heeded Alma's words and cried unto the Lord that the hearts of the Lamanites would be softened.

The Lamanites had been lost in the wilderness, and they agreed that if Alma would show them the way back to their land, they would give his people their lives and their liberty. Alma fulfilled his part of the agreement, but the Lamanites did not keep their promise and put guards around Helam. The Lamanite king gave authority to Amulon to be the king and ruler over these people. Remember that Amulon was one of King Noah's wicked priests who put Abinadi to death and who took captive some Lamanite daughters for their wives. So those who followed Alma had reason to be afraid of Amulon.

As Amulon ruled, he began to persecute Alma and his brethren and "cause that his children should persecute their children" (Mosiah 24:8). He put guards over them and decreed "that whosoever should be found calling upon God should be put to death.

"And Alma and his people did not raise their voices to the Lord their God, but did pour out their hearts to him; and he did know the thoughts of their hearts.

"And it came to pass that the voice of the Lord came to them in their afflictions, saying: Lift up your heads and be of good comfort, for I know of the covenant which ye have made unto me; and I will covenant with my people and deliver them out of bondage.

"And I will also ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot



feel them upon your backs, even while you are in bondage; and this will I do that ye may stand as witnesses for me hereafter, and that ye may know of a surety that I, the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions” (Mosiah 24:11–14).

The Lord kept His promise, strengthening the people so “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).

When they were released from their bondage, “they poured out their thanks to God because he had been merciful unto them. . . . And they gave thanks to God, . . . [lifting] their voices in the praises of their God” (Mosiah 24:21–22).

Several lessons can be learned from this story. Among them are the following:

The Lord tests the faith and patience of His people. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said this about trials: “[The Lord] gives you experiences that stimulate growth, understanding, and compassion which polish you for your everlasting benefit. To get you from where you are to where He wants you to be requires a lot of stretching, and that generally entails discomfort and pain.”¹

We need to trust the Lord. The Lord’s view is much broader than ours, and He has promised that He will not try us beyond our ability to withstand (see 1 Corinthians 10:13). Elder Scott said, “To exercise faith is to trust that the Lord knows what He is doing with you and that He can accomplish it for your eternal good even though you cannot understand how He can possibly do it.”²

We should not murmur. Alma’s people did not complain about their afflictions. How easy it is for us to murmur when things do not go our way! Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “Murmuring can . . . be noisy enough that it drowns out the various spiritual signals to us, signals which tell us in some cases to quit soaking ourselves indulgently in the hot tubs of self-pity! Murmuring over the weight of our crosses not only takes energy otherwise needed to carry them but might cause another to put down his cross altogether.” Elder Maxwell offered this alternative to murmuring: “Being of good cheer is what is needed, and being of good [cheer] is

equally contagious. We have clear obligations to so strengthen each other by doing things ‘with cheerful hearts and countenances’ (D&C 59:15; see also 81:5).”³

We can look to our leaders for comfort and encouragement.

The people of Helam listened to and heeded their leader, and he quieted their fears. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) also quieted the fears of many when he spoke in general conference following the attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. Some of his calming words were: “I am optimistic. I do not believe the time is here when an all-consuming calamity will overtake us. I earnestly pray that it may not. There is so much of the Lord’s work yet to be done. We, and our children after us, must do it.”⁴

Looking back on my graduate school experience, I know the Lord lifted my burden. The stake president promised that things would work out, that the Lord would strengthen me, and that I would receive blessings for serving in this calling. These promises were fulfilled. With planning, and with the Lord’s help, I had adequate time for family activities that our family still remembers fondly to this day. When I had meetings to attend or other calling-related requirements that could have affected my study time, I was blessed to be able to study more efficiently, with fewer outside distractions. The concepts I concentrated on most during my study time turned out to be the concepts that appeared on exams. My memory was quickened, my understanding of patience was enlarged, and my fears were hushed. The Lord truly lightened my burden.

As you face challenges such as a daunting calling, too much to do, family problems, the loss of a loved one, a career reversal, or uncertainty, remember that the Lord will sustain you. Recognize that these experiences can polish you as you place your faith and trust in the Lord, actively practice patience, and listen to the counsel of Church leaders. The Lord has said, “Therefore, let your hearts be comforted concerning Zion; for all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God” (D&C 101:16). ■

NOTES

1. Richard G. Scott, “Trust in the Lord,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 16–17.
 2. Richard G. Scott, “Trust in the Lord,” 17.
 3. Neal A. Maxwell, “Murmur Not,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 85, 84.
 4. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Times in Which We Live,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 74.
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