

By Elder
Tad R. Callister
Of the Seventy



FEAR NOT

From Mary and Joseph we learn that we need not fear; for every problem, there is a solution.

Mary and Joseph learned early in life that for every problem God has a solution. To Mary, the angel said: “Fear not. . . . For with God nothing shall be impossible” (Luke 1:30, 37).

Sometimes young adults are confronted with a problem that seems like Mount Everest. They believe it is just too high and too tough to climb. Because they see no solution, they become discouraged—perhaps even negative and pessimistic—about their futures. But, like Mary and Joseph, you can learn that however unsolvable the problems of life may seem, God *always* has a solution.

When Mary learned of her divine calling to bear the Son of God, undoubtedly a flood of issues and concerns raced through her mind. After all, she was betrothed to Joseph—what would he think? The angel from heaven then counseled, “Fear not” (Luke 1:30). When Joseph learned of Mary’s pregnancy, he saw

no satisfactory solution other than to break the engagement. But again the angel counseled, “Fear not” (Matthew 1:20). It was the same heavenly direction that had previously been given to Zacharias (see Luke 1:13) and that would later be given to the shepherds: “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy” (Luke 2:10).

There is much fear in the world today—of getting married, having children, making commitments, standing for the right, confronting peer pressure. There are fears of economic conditions and natural disasters. But the Lord’s counsel for us today is similar to that given to Mary and Joseph: “Be of good cheer, and *do not fear*, for I the Lord am with you” (D&C 68:6; emphasis added).

The angel’s counsel for Mary and Joseph to “fear not” was more than customized instruction for their individual problems. It was a universal salutation for all people because

Mary and Joseph would play a unique role in the Savior’s ministry, which ministry would make it possible to eliminate *all* fears of *all* people of *all* ages.

Because of the Savior’s birth, life, and Atonement, there are no unsolvable problems. There are temporary tragedies and difficulties, of course, but they need not be permanent or unconquerable. Can you imagine anyone having a problem God cannot solve? He always has a solution that will advance our eternal progress. That is both the reason for and essence of the Atonement. That is why Mormon said, “Ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ” (Moroni 7:41).

There is no question about the Atonement’s capacity to provide solutions for our problems. The scriptures are abundantly clear on this point. The real issues are these: Will we embrace those solutions? Will we choose the world’s answer or God’s answer? Will we repent or rationalize, seek God’s grace to overcome our weaknesses or “go it alone,” acknowledge God’s love in times of tragedy or spurn Him at every downturn in life?

The Atonement is the vehicle to solve life’s major problems. With the Atonement, God puts us in the driver’s seat of our divine destiny, provided we follow His will. Mary was a sterling



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example of this obedience. To the angel she said, "Be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38). There was no rationalization, no delay, no grumbling—simply a humble submission to God's will. Joseph was of the same obedient mold. Even though the powers of reason may have indicated that Mary might have been unfaithful, he "did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife" (Matthew 1:24).

Mary and Joseph learned one of the most powerful lessons of life: if you believe in the Atonement and do God's will, you need not fear because there will *always*

be a solution to your problems.

The critics in the world have never learned this lesson. Admittedly, they are often bright and observant. They see the multitude and complexity of problems confronting us, but they frequently throw up their hands in despair because they see no solution. This is because they do not understand the Atonement. They can see the towering problem before them, but their vision is stunted. It is as though a wall blocks their view of the horizon; all they can see is the problem. As a result, they become skeptical and cynical and pessimistic. Their perspective is illustrated in diagram 1.

On the other hand, there are many others who are spiritually analytical without being critical. They too are bright and observant. They too see the complex and difficult problems of life, but they have a completely different vision. There is no wall blocking their sight. Rather, they have a telescopic lens to help them see not only the problems but beyond as well. In other words, they also see the solutions offered by the Atonement. Their perspective in life is shown in diagram 2.

Consequently, these people have few, if any, fears. They are positive and optimistic and upbeat about life because they absolutely know that for every problem there is a spiritual remedy. The Savior so declared, "Be

DIAGRAM 1: Critics

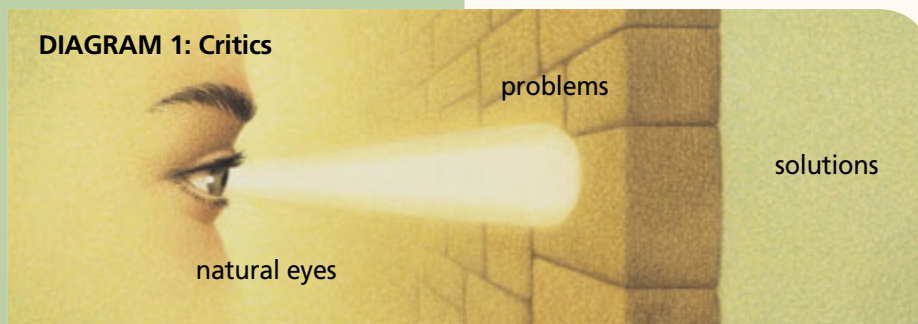
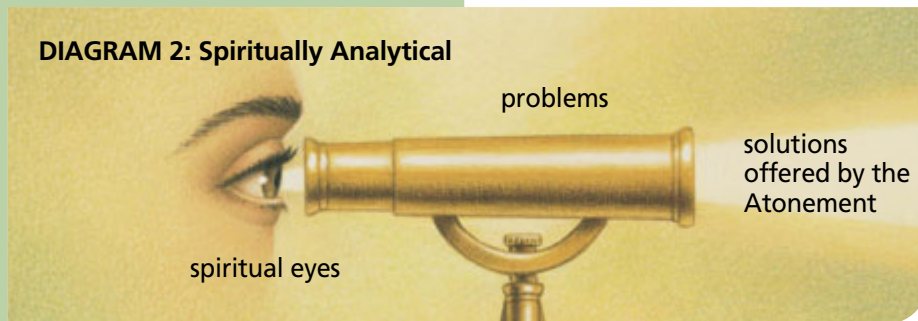


DIAGRAM 2: Spiritually Analytical



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He is the Savior because He really can save us from death and sin and weakness and the ordinary ailments of life.



of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Accordingly, there is no room for negativism in Christ’s Church. Negativism and cynicism stem from Satan. Cheerfulness and optimism stem from Christ.

All of the problems of the world seem to fall into four principal categories, each of which the Savior descended beneath and overcame, hence His mandate to “be of good cheer.”

- First, **death**. The scriptures declare, “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22).
- Second, **sin**. The angel told Joseph that Jesus would “save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).
- Third, **weakness**. The Savior taught Moroni that His “grace [the

enabling power of the Atonement] is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them” (Ether 12:27).

- Fourth, **common ailments of life that may be unrelated to sin** (such as sickness, rejection, depression, loss of employment, and so forth). Isaiah prophesied that the Savior would “bind up the brokenhearted,” “comfort all that mourn,” and “give unto them beauty for ashes” (Isaiah 61:1–3; see also Alma 7:9–13).

For every affliction the world throws at us, the Savior has a remedy of superior healing power. No wonder Mary exclaimed, “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour” (Luke 1:46–47). He is the Savior because He really can save us from death and sin and weakness and the ordinary ailments of life.

Our Heavenly Father wanted Mary and Joseph to commence the uncertain path of life *without fear*, knowing His Son was there with all His saving powers. He wants us to likewise learn this lesson early in life: “Fear not. . . . For with God nothing shall be impossible” (Luke 1:30, 37). ■