



By Elder Jeremy R. Jaggi
Of the Seventy

Let Patience Have Her Perfect Work, and Count It All Joy!

*When we exercise patience, our faith increases.
As our faith increases, so does our joy.*

Two years ago, my youngest brother, Chad, stepped through the veil. His transition to the other side left a hole in the heart of my sister-in-law Stephanie; their two small children, Braden and Bella; as well as the rest of the family. We found comfort in the words of Elder Neil L. Andersen in general conference the week before Chad died: “In the crucible of earthly trials, patiently move forward, and the Savior’s healing power will bring you light, understanding, peace,

and hope” (“Wounded,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 85).

We have faith in Jesus Christ; we know we will join Chad again, but losing his physical presence hurts! Many have lost loved ones. It is hard to be patient and wait for the time we will reunite them.

The year after he died, we felt like a dark cloud overshadowed us. We sought refuge in studying our scriptures, praying with more fervency, and attending the temple more frequently.



Taboão da Serra, São Paulo, Brazil



Villa Alemana, Greater Valparaíso, Chile

The lines from this hymn capture our feelings at the time: “The day dawn is breaking, the world is awaking, the clouds of night’s darkness are fleeing away” (“The Day Dawn Is Breaking,” *Hymns*, no. 52).

Our family determined that 2020 would be a refreshing year! We were studying our *Come, Follow Me* lesson in the New Testament book of James in late November 2019 when a theme revealed itself to us. James, chapter 1, verse 2 reads, “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into many afflictions” (Joseph Smith Translation, James 1:2 [in James 1:2, footnote *a*]). In our desire to open a new year, a new decade, with joy, we decided that in 2020 we would “count it all joy.” We felt so strongly about it that last Christmas we gifted our siblings T-shirts that said in bold letters, “Count It All Joy.” The year 2020 would surely be a year of joy and rejoicing.

Well, here we are—2020 instead brought the global COVID-19 pandemic, civil unrest, more natural disasters, and economic challenges. Our Heavenly Father may be allowing us time to reflect and consider our understanding of patience and our conscious decision to choose joy.

The book of James has since taken on new meaning for us. James, chapter 1, verses 3 and 4 continue:

“Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

“But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

In our efforts to find joy in the midst of our trials, we had forgotten that having patience is the key to letting those trials work for our good.

King Benjamin taught us to put off the natural man and become “a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and [become] as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things” (Mosiah 3:19).

Chapter 6 of *Preach My Gospel* teaches key attributes of Christ that we can emulate: “Patience is the capacity to endure delay, trouble, opposition, or suffering without becoming angry, frustrated, or anxious. It is the ability to do God’s will and accept His timing. When you are patient, you hold up under pressure and are able to face adversity calmly and hopefully” (*Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service*, rev. ed. [2019], 126).

Patience’s perfect work may also be illustrated in the life of one of Christ’s early disciples, Simon the Canaanite. The Zealots were a group of Jewish nationalists who strongly opposed Roman rule. The Zealot movement advocated violence against the Romans, their Jewish

collaborators, and the Sadducees by raiding for provisions and pursuing other activities to aid their cause (see *Encyclopedia Britannica*, “Zealot,” britannica.com). Simon the Canaanite was a Zealot (see Luke 6:15). Imagine Simon trying to coax the Savior into taking up arms, leading a militant group, or creating chaos in Jerusalem. Jesus taught:

“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. . . .

“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. . . .

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God” (Matthew 5:5, 7, 9).

Simon may have embraced and advocated his philosophy with zeal and passion, but the scriptures suggest that through the influence and example of the Savior, his focus changed. His discipleship of Christ became the central focus of his life’s efforts.

As we make and keep covenants with God, the Savior can help us to “be born again; yea, born of God, changed from [a] carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters” (Mosiah 27:25).

Of all the zealous social, religious, and political endeavors of our day, let *disciple of Jesus Christ* be our most pronounced and affirming affiliation. “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:21). Let us also not forget that even after faithful disciples had “done the will of God,” they “[had] need of patience” (Hebrews 10:36).

Just as the trying of our faith works patience within us, when we exercise patience, our faith increases. As our faith increases, so does our joy.

This past March, our second daughter, Emma, like many

missionaries in the Church, went into mandatory isolation. Many missionaries came home. Many missionaries awaited reassignment. Many did not receive their temple blessings before departing to a field of labor. Thank you, elders and sisters. We love you.

Emma and her companion in the Netherlands were stretched in those first several weeks—stretched to tears in many instances. With only brief opportunities for in-person interaction and limited outdoor exposure, Emma’s reliance on God increased. We prayed with her online and asked how we could help. She asked us to connect with friends she was teaching online!

Our family began to connect online, one by one, with Emma’s friends in the Netherlands. We invited them to join our weekly, online, extended-family *Come, Follow Me* study. Floor, Laura, Renske, Freek, Benjamin, Stal, and Muhammad all have become our friends. Some of our friends from the Netherlands have entered “in at the strait gate” (3 Nephi 14:13). Others are being shown “the straitness of the path, and the narrowness of the gate, by which they should enter” (2 Nephi 31:9). They are our brothers and sisters in Christ. Each week we “count it all joy” as we work together in our progress on the covenant path.

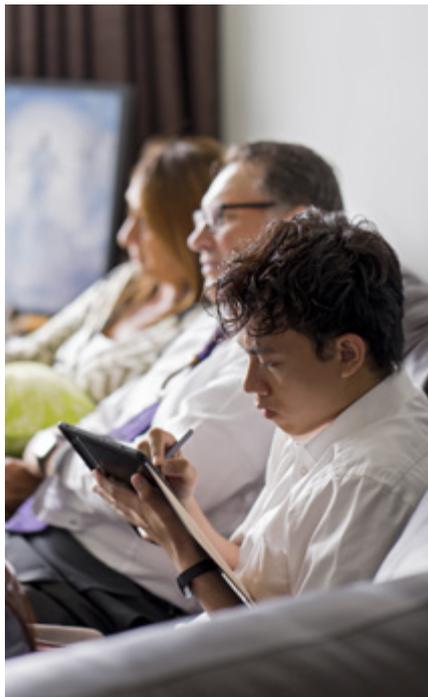
We “let patience have her perfect work” (James 1:4) in our inability to meet in person as ward families for a season. But we count as joy our families’ faith increasing through new technology connections and *Come, Follow Me* study of the Book of Mormon.

President Russell M. Nelson promised, “Your consistent efforts in this endeavor—even during those

moments when you feel that you are not being particularly successful—will change your life, that of your family, and the world” (“Go Forward in Faith,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 114).

Where we make sacred covenants with God—the temple—is temporarily closed. Where we keep covenants with God—the home—is open! We have an opportunity at home to study and ponder on the exceptional beauty of temple covenants. Even in the absence of entry into that sacred physical space, our “hearts . . . shall greatly rejoice in consequence of the blessings which shall be poured out” (Doctrine and Covenants 110:9).

Many have lost jobs; others have lost opportunities. We joy, however, alongside President Nelson, who recently stated: “Voluntary fast offerings from our members have actually increased, as well as voluntary



Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

contributions to our humanitarian funds. . . . Together we will overcome this difficult time. The Lord will bless you as you continue to bless others” (Russell M. Nelson’s Facebook page, post from Aug. 16, 2020, facebook.com/russell.m.nelson).

“Be of good cheer” is the commandment from the Lord, not be of good fear (Matthew 14:27).

Sometimes we get impatient when we think we are “doing everything right” and we still do not receive the blessings we desire. Enoch walked with God for 365 years before he and his people were translated. Three hundred and sixty-five years of striving to do everything right, and then it happened! (See Doctrine and Covenants 107:49.)

My brother Chad’s passing came just a few months after our release from presiding over the Utah Ogden Mission. It was miraculous that while we were living in Southern California, of all the 417 missions we could have been assigned to in the year 2015, we were assigned to northern Utah. The mission home was a 30-minute drive to Chad’s home. Chad’s cancer was diagnosed after we received our mission assignment. Even in the most trying circumstance, we knew that our Heavenly Father was mindful of us and helping us find joy.

I witness of the redeeming, sanctifying, humbling, and joyous power of the Savior Jesus Christ. I witness that when we pray to our Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus, He will answer us. I witness that as we hear, hearken, and heed the voice of the Lord and His living prophet, President Russell M. Nelson, we can “let patience have her perfect work” and “count it all joy.” In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■