



By Elder S. Mark Palmer
Of the Seventy

Our Sorrow Shall Be Turned into Joy

I invite all who feel sorrow, all who wonder what happens after we die, to place your faith in Christ.

Several years ago, while attending meetings in Salt Lake City, I was greeted by our dear prophet, Russell M. Nelson. In his typically warm and personal way, he asked, “Mark, how is your mum doing?”

I told him I had been with her earlier that week at her home in New Zealand and that she was getting old but was full of faith and an inspiration to all who knew her.

He then said, “Please give her my love . . . and tell her I look forward to seeing her again.”

I was rather surprised and asked, “Do you have a trip planned to New Zealand soon?”

With thoughtful sincerity he replied, “Oh no, I will see her in the next life.”

There was nothing frivolous in his response. It was a perfectly natural expression of fact. In that private, unguarded moment, I heard and felt pure testimony from a living prophet that life continues after death.

This conference weekend you will hear living apostles and prophets testify of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. “The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning

Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day[;] . . . all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to [this truth].”¹ I promise that as you listen with real intent, the Spirit will confirm in your mind and your heart the truth of these testimonies.²

Jesus’s ancient Apostles were forever changed after He appeared to them following His death. Ten of them saw for themselves that He had been resurrected. Thomas, being initially absent, declared, “Except I shall see . . . , I will not believe.”³ Later Jesus admonished Thomas, “Be not faithless, but believing.”⁴ Then the Lord taught the vital role of faith:

“Blessed are they that have *not* seen, and yet have believed.”⁵

The resurrected Lord gave His Apostles the charge to testify of Him. As with our living Apostles today, they left behind worldly occupations and spent the rest of their lives boldly declaring that God had raised up this Jesus. Their powerful testimonies led to thousands accepting the invitation to be baptized.⁶

The glorious message of Easter morning is central to all Christianity. Jesus Christ has risen from the dead, and because of this, we too will live again after we die. This knowledge gives meaning and purpose to our lives. If we go forward in faith, we will be forever changed, as were the Apostles of old. We, like them, will be able to endure any hardship with faith in Jesus Christ. This faith also gives us hope for a time when our “sorrow shall be turned into joy.”⁷

My own faith had its beginnings following a time of sorrow.

My father and mother were sheep farmers in New Zealand.⁸ They enjoyed their life. As a young married couple, they were blessed with three little girls. The youngest of these was named Ann. One day while they were on holiday together at a lake,



Philippines

17-month-old Ann toddled off. After minutes of desperate searching, she was found lifeless in the water.

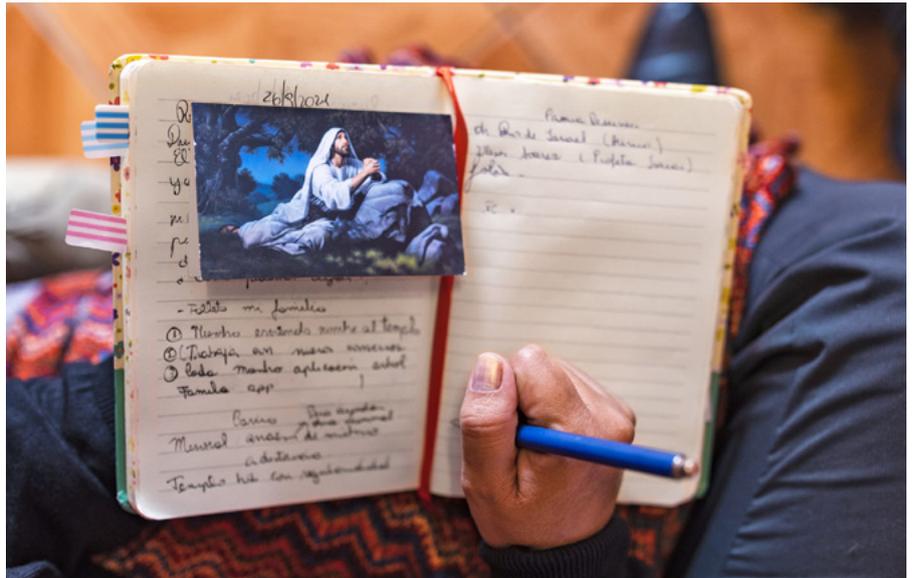
This nightmare caused unspeakable sorrow. Dad wrote years later that some of the laughter went out of their lives forever. It also caused a yearning for answers to life's most important questions: What will become of our precious Ann? Will we ever see her again? How can our family ever be happy again?

Some years after this tragedy, two young missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints came to our farm. They began teaching the truths found in the Book of Mormon and the Bible. These truths include the assurance that Ann now lives in the spirit world. Because of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, she too will be resurrected. They taught that the Church of Jesus Christ has once again been restored on earth with a living prophet and twelve Apostles. And they taught the unique and remarkable doctrine that families can be bound together forever by the same priesthood authority Jesus Christ gave His chief Apostle, Peter.⁹

Mum instantly recognized truth and received a witness of the Spirit. Dad, however, wrestled for the next year between doubts and spiritual nudges. Also, he was reluctant to change his way of life. One morning following a sleepless night, while pacing the floor, he turned to Mum and said, "I will be baptized today or never."

Mum told the missionaries what had happened, and they immediately recognized the flicker of faith in my father that would now be either lit or extinguished.

That very morning our family traveled to the nearest beach. Unaware of what was happening, we children



Chile

had a picnic on the sand dunes while Elders Boyd Green and Gary Sheffield led my parents into the ocean and baptized them. In a further act of faith, Dad privately committed to the Lord that come what may, he would be true all his life to the promises he was making.

One year later a temple was dedicated in Hamilton, New Zealand. Shortly thereafter our family, with someone representing Ann, knelt around the altar in that sacred house of the Lord. There, by the authority of the priesthood, we were united as an eternal family in a simple and beautiful ordinance. This brought great peace and joy.

Many years later Dad told me that if not for Ann's tragic death, he would never have been humble enough to accept the restored gospel. Yet the Spirit of the Lord instilled hope that what the missionaries taught was true. My parents' faith continued to grow until they each burned with the fire of testimony that quietly and humbly guided their every decision in life.

I will always be thankful for my parents' example to future generations. It is impossible to measure the number of lives forever changed because of their acts of faith in response to profound sorrow.

I invite all who feel sorrow, all who

wrestle with doubt, all who wonder what happens after we die, to place your faith in Christ. I promise that if you *desire* to believe, then *act* in faith and *follow* the whisperings of the Spirit, you will find joy in this life and in the world to come.

How I look forward to the day I will meet my sister Ann. I look forward to a joyful reunion with my father, who died over 30 years ago. I testify of the joy to be found in living by faith, *believing without seeing*, but knowing by the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus Christ lives. With all my heart and soul, I choose to follow Jesus Christ and His restored gospel. This blesses every aspect of my life. I know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, our Savior and our Redeemer. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 49.
2. See Doctrine and Covenants 8:2.
3. John 20:25. "It is common in our secular world to say that 'seeing is believing.' The way of the Lord is best defined by a different maxim: 'Believing is seeing.' Faith in the Lord is the premise, not the conclusion" (Lance B. Wickman, "But If Not," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2002, 31).
4. John 20:27.
5. John 20:29; emphasis added.
6. See Acts 2.
7. John 16:20.
8. Kenneth Molony Palmer and Jill Garlick Palmer.
9. See Matthew 16:19.