



By Elder
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Saving Laura's Lamb

Our daughter's example of faith and effort taught me about opening the heavens through prayer.

My wife, Shawna, and I had the great blessing of raising our children in a farming community that provided our family with a variety of opportunities. One such opportunity came when our three daughters, Michelle, Laura, and Lindsay, acquired newborn lambs from a neighbor.

We named one of the lambs Dianna Louise. That's a big name for a little lamb. Dianna was smaller and gentler than the other lambs. She required special hand-feeding because her mother had rejected her. The experience of providing such care endeared this little lamb to our entire family and especially to Laura. With Laura's extra attention, Dianna was soon just as active and rambunctious as the other lambs.

Shawna and I sometimes worried that we knew too little about raising livestock, but we comforted ourselves with the thought that we were raising children, not sheep. And, for a while, it seemed that our attempt at raising lambs would have a happy outcome.

A Lost Lamb

Then one fateful morning everything changed. About 7:00 a.m., Laura came running into the house, crying, "Dad,

Dianna is lost!" Tears streamed down her face as she frantically led me outside to the feeding area.

Just as Laura had said, Dianna was missing. I immediately jumped the fence and started searching. It took only a few minutes to find Dianna in some thick grass. She started bleating when she saw me. It was then that I noticed she was unable to stand. As I inspected further, I saw that she had broken her right foreleg. I carefully picked her up, carried her back to the house, and placed her under a shade tree where Laura was anxiously waiting.

I sat next to Laura and shared the sad news. I explained that this type of injury usually proves fatal. She, of course, began to cry. We discussed how all of God's creatures will be resurrected. I reassured her that lambs go to heaven, and she quietly nodded. She then asked if she could go with me to take Dianna to the veterinarian.

How Could I Explain?

I carefully loaded Dianna in the pickup, and we made our way to the clinic. The drive was silent, with the exception of Laura's audible sobs. She loved that lamb! As we arrived, Laura looked into my eyes and said, "Dad, I prayed on the way over, and I know Dianna's leg is going to be



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OK.” I was at a loss for words. How could I explain the inevitable outcome without shaking the pure, childlike faith of our daughter?

When it was our turn to see the vet, he took a quick glance at Dianna and confirmed what I had feared. She had fractured her leg. He then recommended that he provide our lamb with a peaceful end. I looked at Laura, and she looked back at me with her perfect faith. She had prayed and had received an answer that Dianna would be OK!

Another Option

Laura’s perfect faith and pure intent inspired me to quietly ask if there was an option to set and cast the leg. The vet was more than a little surprised by my question. He explained that there were no guarantees that it would work, and even if it did work, our lamb would most likely walk with a limp for the rest of her life. We discussed payment—\$50 to euthanize the lamb or \$100 to cast the leg. We decided to give Dianna a chance. With a cast on the lamb’s leg, we headed home—Laura, Dianna Louise, and me.

When we arrived, Shawna was ready to provide loving support for Laura, thinking her lamb was no longer with us. However, she quickly saw that Dianna was back, sporting a cast on her leg! Shawna looked at me in amazement, saving her questions for later.

Loving Care and Duct Tape

What happened next was nothing short of a miracle. Each morning at dawn, we found Laura in the middle of the pen, holding and hand-feeding her little lamb. Soon Dianna gained strength and started to walk, bearing partial weight on her broken leg.

About three weeks following her injury, I noticed that the swelling had gone down substantially and that Dianna’s cast was much too big for her leg. I was afraid that she might rebreak her leg by stepping awkwardly in the cast. Immediate intervention was needed. Therefore, I did what I thought any reasonable father would do: I found a pair of heavy pruning shears and a roll of silver duct tape and

went to work. I cut the cast off Dianna’s leg, reformed it to fit, then wrapped it with tape. To hold the cast in place, I created a sling using several strips of duct tape and placed it over Dianna’s front shoulders to lend support. Our little lamb was now literally covered in duct tape.

Notwithstanding Dianna’s unusual appearance, to our amazement this intervention worked! Before long, Dianna’s limp was hardly noticeable.

Faith, Prayer, and Effort

At the end of the summer, our daughters showed their lambs at the county fair. Prior to the judging, I assured Laura that her mother and I were proud of her no matter the outcome. She had prayed as if everything depended on the Lord and then had worked as if everything depended on her. A miracle had occurred because of her faith.

A moment of truth ensued. The judge lined up the lambs according to grade. My heart sank as I noticed that Laura and Dianna were in what I thought was the last-place slot. Then the impossible happened; the judge approached Laura with a smile and pinned a blue ribbon on her lamb. She had won first place in her group! It was yet another miracle—and another lesson for me. Our young daughter had taught me what pure faith, sincere prayer, and consistent effort can do.

The Savior said, “Suffer little children . . . to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:14). A sincere child’s prayer truly can and will open the heavens.

We are taught that “prayer is the act by which the will of the Father and the will of the child are brought into correspondence with each other. The object of prayer is not to change the will of God but to secure for ourselves and for others blessings that God is already willing to grant but that are made conditional on our asking for them.”¹

No Problem Too Small or Too Large

President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) said, “No problem is too small for His attention nor so large that He cannot answer the prayer of faith.”² Similarly, President Russell M. Nelson has taught: “If we pray with an eternal



perspective, we need not wonder if our most tearful and heartfelt pleadings are heard. . . . God will heed your sincere and heartfelt prayers, and your faith will be strengthened.”³ President Nelson has also taught that prayer leads to spiritual strength: “Just as physical strength requires exercise, so spiritual strength requires effort. Among the most important of spiritual exercises is prayer. It engenders harmony with God and a desire to keep His commandments.”⁴

During the Savior’s visit to the Americas, He taught the power of prayer by word and deed. In 3 Nephi 18, He referenced prayer 10 times! Then in 3 Nephi 19, He referenced prayer (to my count) another 34 times! Is it any wonder that when He returned, as recorded in 3 Nephi 27, He found His disciples “gathered together and . . . united in mighty prayer and fasting”? (verse 1).

The account then reads:

“And Jesus again showed himself unto them, for they were praying unto the Father in his name; and Jesus came and stood in the midst of them, and said unto them: What will ye that I shall give unto you? . . .

“Verily I say unto you, that ye are built upon my gospel; therefore ye shall call whatsoever things ye do call, in my name; *therefore if ye call upon the Father, for the church, if it be in my name the Father will hear you*” (verses 2, 9; emphasis added).

His Promises Are Sure

We have the same promise in our lives. The Savior said, “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you” (3 Nephi 18:20).

As a 14-year-old boy, the Prophet Joseph Smith found the same promise expressed this way: “If any of you lack wisdom, *let him ask of God*, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; *and it shall be given him*” (James 1:5, emphasis added).

Through Joseph’s simple and sincere prayer, the heavens were opened. He learned that we have a loving Heavenly Father, who knows us by name, and that His Son, Jesus Christ, lives! He learned that our Heavenly Father and His Son are two separate and distinct individuals who are one in purpose and that They are glorified, resurrected beings! He learned how to access the powers of heaven.

In this complex world with so many distractions, the gospel is simple, pure, and true. Let us pray with great energy of heart as individuals and families. As we do, Heavenly Father will bless us with an increased portion of His Spirit, and we will feel His loving influence and a reassurance that He is always there. Let us have faith that His answers come and His promises are sure.⁵ ■

NOTES

1. Bible Dictionary, “Prayer.”
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Your Celestial Journey,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 96.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “Face the Future with Faith,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 35.
4. Russell M. Nelson, “We Are Children of God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 87.
5. “Prayer is the passport to spiritual power” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* [2006], 49).