



HOPE: The Misunderstood Sister

BY LARRY HILLER Church Magazines

I think of them as three famous sisters whose names are frequently linked, always in the same order: Faith, Hope, and Charity. They are mentioned several times in the New Testament and with remarkable frequency in the Book of Mormon.

Of the three, Faith may be the most well known and popular, the one whose companionship is sought most often. She's active and energetic, definitely the can-do type. Faith can move mountains, if necessary.

I picture Charity as being modest

and refined, beautiful and gracious. In her presence you feel genuinely loved and accepted. She's unfailingly kind and generous, patient, empathetic, aware of every need, and responsive without being asked. How could you not want the companionship of someone like Charity?

Then there's Hope, who seems to have a problem with the way people perceive her. It may be her name and the way it's commonly used: "I hope the car passes inspection." Or, "I hope the weather will be nice for

the wedding." Used this way, the word *hope* is the verbal equivalent of keeping your fingers crossed. Consequently, many seem to think Hope is unsure, even fickle—she may or may not grace you with her companionship. But surely that's not the kind of hope our Father in Heaven commands us to have. Nor would it be the kind of hope our Savior offers.

My desire to know Hope better was sparked when a high councilor speaking in our sacrament meeting quoted Romans 5:3–5:

*Hope is anything but wishful.
It is expectation based on experience.*

“We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

“And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”

As I read and reread those verses and pondered and prayed about them, the one concept I could not seem to wrap my mind around was how experience fits in the equation. I could understand that tribulation “worketh” (or brings about) patience. Often that’s all we can do in tribulation—have faith and wait patiently upon the Lord. But what is the experience that patience brings about? And how does it result in hope? This seemed to be what I call a puzzle piece.

For me, things I don’t understand about the gospel are like pieces of a larger puzzle I’m working on. If I don’t see where they fit, I put them aside and work on other parts of the picture. From time to time I pick them up and look at them. If I still don’t see how they fit, I put them aside again. I have already received a witness that the whole picture—the restored gospel—is true and complete, so I don’t worry about the pieces that haven’t come together for me yet. They will.

And so one day, as I reexamined this particular puzzle piece, I saw a possible connection I hadn’t seen before. When we endure tribulation with faith and patience, what we *experience* is the Savior’s awareness of us and His love for us. We *experience* them through the ministrations of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. We receive this witness after the trial of our faith (see Ether 12:6).

In my own life, when I patiently endure trials, the Savior, who took upon Himself all of our ills and sorrows (see Alma 7:11–12), ministers to me through the Spirit. I *experience* the Savior’s tender mercies. My trials may continue, but having taken upon me the yoke of Christ, I find Him sharing *my* yoke, making *my* burdens bearable, and giving *me* hope. I then have strength to endure. I have assurance that all will be made right, not just *in* eternity but also *for* eternity. Hope is anything but wishful. It is expectation based on experience.

I see Hope more clearly now. She is serene. Her eyes have the deep, knowing look of someone well acquainted with sorrow, the luminosity of recently being wet with tears. Hope has the confidence of one who clearly sees a bright future even when the next hours seem fog shrouded. Hope is steady and strong, a friend I am glad to have beside me during my own trials. ■



WALKING WITH TWO SISTERS

BY LARRY HILLER

*Faith walks before me,
Holding up her lamp
As I try not to stumble in the ink-
dark hours before the dawn.
Her light illuminates
One step and then another.
Beside me, Hope, arm linked
with mine, encourages and
steadies.
Sometimes in the tedium,
Distracted by the pain,
My mind begins to wander, then
my feet. I hesitate.
Unsure, I look to Hope.
Her hand takes mine.
The touch reminds me of another
hand held out to me,
One pierced and scarred
Yet oh so tender
Lifting me and blessing me when
I had fallen and despaired.
Remembering,
I move ahead
Buoyed up by Hope, who sees
the end with perfect clarity.*