

When Holding Fast Gets Painful

One sweltering July day, I helped my brother-in-law build a retaining wall. This project eventually pitted me against the roots of a blossoming cherry tree that was in the way.

“Easy,” I thought.

I gathered the appropriate tools and dug around the roots to make room to work. Then I grabbed a saw and, without a second thought, went to work cutting the roots. The smaller roots cut easily, but when I moved to the larger roots, I quickly realized that they weren’t going to be as easy. One root in particular was difficult.

Gritting my teeth, I was determined to cut through that root. Sweat rolled down my neck from the glaring sun overhead as I squeezed the saw tighter. The saw vibrated until my entire body

shook. I could feel my right hand—the one squeezing the saw trigger—start to burn with pain. I ignored the pain and kept holding on.

Finally, the saw cut through the root. I released the trigger and felt the sweet pleasure of victory. As I removed my glove, however, I noticed a small piece of skin had been torn from my hand.

As I thought about this experience, I realized that holding on to the saw was, in a way, like holding fast to the iron rod. We are told to hold fast to the iron rod as we move through life. But just because we hold fast to it doesn’t mean we won’t experience moments of pain. I injured my hand as I clung to the saw. In a similar way, we will pass through trials and tribulations as we continually hold fast to the iron rod.

Heavenly Father knew that the journey back to Him would be fraught with peril. That’s why He has given us the scriptures and words of the prophets to help us. As we hold on to these things through our trials and tribulations in mortality, we will one day return to His presence.

When we return to Him, we will be able to look down at our hands, which held fast to the iron rod, sometimes in spite of pain or difficulty. And we will know that with the help of Heavenly Father and through the atoning power of Jesus Christ, we held on tightly, no matter what obstacles we encountered. ■

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