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# Sources of Peace and Power



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One of the most touching experiences I have had as a General Authority was to serve among our dear Saints in Venezuela. People there, including Church members, live in difficult circumstances. However, although this reality exists, I could also see, in my frequent visits to the country, that there was a difference between the general population and the Latter-day Saints.

## The Venezuela Experience

The Saints in Venezuela are doing their best. It is true that many are suffering and struggling, and the Church has been active in supporting those in need through fast-offering funds, welfare programs, and self-reliance initiatives. But while the Saints could easily find reasons to be sad, even with all the challenges they face, they are a happy people—at peace with themselves, often smiling, and hoping for better days ahead.

This is true for youth of the Church in Venezuela. Their personal and family challenges are making them stronger and preparing them for the future. And this is also true for our Venezuelan missionaries. They need to be strong

for themselves, for their investigators, and for their families. And they are. They remind us of the 2,000 stripling warriors of Helaman. Though small in numbers, they are “exceedingly valiant for courage” (see Alma 53:20–21). In Venezuela the Lord is preparing a strong generation of mothers, fathers, and leaders. Whenever we are among the Saints there, we find ourselves filled with faith in the gospel and in the future.

## Peace in Times of Troubles

How can these members, who face such challenges, still be cheerful, strong, and at peace? I believe what is happening with many of them is that they are becoming more dependent on God. As a consequence, they are receiving strength from the source of all strength. They recognize the blessings they receive from Heavenly Father, they rely on the power of Jesus Christ and His Atonement, and they are comforted, supported, and strengthened by the Holy Ghost. As a result, their burdens become lighter, their sorrow is relieved, and they find peace in the midst of their trials.

The Venezuelan members are experiencing a modern example of what took place among Alma and his people in the Book of Mormon:

“And now it came to pass that the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brethren were made light; yea, the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord” (Mosiah 24:15).

### The Atoning Power of Jesus Christ

My testimony of God’s desire to bless us has become stronger by spending time among our members in Venezuela. As in the experience of Alma and his followers, the Saints in Venezuela

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What has happened to them is the same process that should happen to each of us. We will all have challenges and trials in our lives. When we do, we should ask ourselves:

- Are we looking to God to help us overcome those difficult times?
- Are we willing to pay the price to become a better person and to develop Christlike attributes so necessary to our progress?
- Do we understand that through the power of the Savior’s Atonement, we can find strength and hope?



*One way they stay strong is by listening to the counsel of prophets and apostles, as these Saints did when Elder Quentin L. Cook spoke in Caracas, Venezuela, in 2013.*

have been strengthened, and their increased capacity has lightened the burdens they bear. The Savior invites us to come unto Him if we have heavy burdens, and we will find rest (see Matthew 11:28–30). These good members have been empowered to carry their burdens in the strength of the Lord.

As a consequence of their trials, and as a blessing for putting their trust in the Savior and His grace, they have experienced a change of heart and they each have become “as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon [them], even as a child doth submit to his father” (Mosiah 3:19).

In summary, through trials they have developed Christlike attributes all disciples of Christ hope to attain.

How and why is the Savior able to provide such comfort and power? The scriptures tell us: “And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people.

“And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities” (Alma 7:11–12).

### The Lord Knows

As Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “The Savior has suffered





*A yoke enables animals to pull together with power, just as the yoke of Jesus Christ connects us to His redeeming and enabling power.*

not just for our iniquities but also for the inequality, the unfairness, the pain, the anguish, and the emotional distress that so frequently beset us. . . . You and I in a moment of weakness may cry out, ‘No one understands. No one knows.’ No human being, perhaps, knows. But the Son of God perfectly knows and understands, for He felt and bore our burdens before we ever did. And because He paid the ultimate price and bore that burden, He has perfect empathy and can extend to us His arm of mercy in so many phases of our life” (“The Atonement and the Journey of Mortality,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2012, 47; *Liahona*, Apr. 2012, 19).

Elder Bednar then quotes this scripture, which helps us understand that because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, each of us can find peace:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30).

I want to add my testimony to Elder Bednar’s words. I also know through personal experience that we can find strength and peace in the loving arms of our Savior. The Savior’s redeeming and enabling power is not just the source of the forgiveness of our sins but also a powerful source of hope, peace, strength, comfort, talents, inspiration, and all that is necessary to help us go

through our journey in this life and succeed. We can truly rely upon “the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah” (2 Nephi 2:8).

### **Our Own Life Application**

How can we access this source of strength? What do we have to do to get the help we need?

First, we should have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His Atonement. We need to understand that He and His Father are the sources of peace and power. They make everything possible.

Then, we must act and do our best with whatever we are going through. We may be working to overcome a weakness, seeking relief from sorrow, or striving to develop a talent. Even if our best seems insufficient sometimes, if we really give our best, the Lord through His grace will bless us with what we need.

“As you and I come to understand and employ the enabling power of the Atonement in our personal lives,” Elder Bednar said, “we will pray and seek for strength to change our circumstances rather than praying for our circumstances to be changed. We will become agents who act rather than objects that are acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:14)” (“The Atonement and the Journey of Mortality,” *Ensign*, 44; *Liahona*, 16).

We should also remember that when we are doing our part, the Lord is by our side. Our part of the battle doesn’t need to be fought alone. He will be with us, from the very beginning to the very end. I testify that the words of Isaiah are true: “For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee” (Isaiah 41:13). That is true for the Saints in Venezuela, and it is true for Saints everywhere in the world. ■

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