

There Is Always Hope

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I want to visit with you this evening on a level that is both mutually understandable and mutually profitable. In order for that to happen I ask for your faith and prayers on behalf of all of us, that what is said and what is heard will be influenced and touched by the Spirit of God. I appreciate that. (It's good to pray for one another; it helps everyone.)

The subject I wish to speak on is one that I hope you will appreciate. I know I do. It is simply this: there is always hope.

I have read and heard from different psychologists and teachers that we must hear something at least twenty times before we really hear it. My experience with my own children is that twenty times is far too few. But, in any event, to make sure we all hear, I will use the phrase "There is always hope" not just twenty, but at least thirty times this evening. I hope that you don't get tired, but that you understand.

Do We Listen to the Words?

There is always hope. No matter how dismal things appear, no matter how problem-prone we seem to be, no matter what reversals and setbacks we suffer, there is always hope. Hope is the thing that keeps us going. We sing the hymn "We Thank Thee, O God, for

a Prophet" all the time, but do we listen to the words? What do you feel when you sing "When dark clouds of trouble hang o'er us And threaten our peace to destroy, There is hope smiling brightly before us, And we know that deliverance is nigh" (*Hymns*, no. 196)? Do we really believe that?

Part of the thirteenth article of faith reads, "We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things." Do we really believe that? Are we literally supposed to hope all things?

What do we mean by hope? What is hope? Why should we have hope? What do we hope for? What are some of the signs of true hope? How do we get more hope? Let's take these questions and discuss them.

Hope Is Light

What is hope? I suppose that it is like trying to define faith or love; it is very difficult, but

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we can use some examples. As near as I can tell, hope is light. It is a light within us that pierces the darkness of doubt and discouragement and taps into the light (hope) of all creation—even the Savior.

I think that in some instances we may be able to substitute the word *hope* for *light* and get some understanding in the scriptures, i.e., we talk about Christ as being the light of the world—he is the hope of the world (see Mosiah 16:9).

The Lord sent the everlasting gospel to be a light unto the Gentiles—to be a hope to the Gentiles (see Acts 13:47). The Spirit giveth light to every man—the Spirit giveth hope to every man (see D&C 84:46). Christ is the true light that is in all men—Christ is the true hope that is in all men (see D&C 88:50).

You will have to think of your own definition, but one other is:

And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light [be filled with hope], and there shall be no darkness in you [no discouragement]; and that body which is filled with light [filled with hope] comprehendeth all things [isn't that what the article of faith says, we hope all things?]. [D&C 88:67]

Hope, in a word, is the Savior. Hope is a part of the deity in us that attaches us to the Savior. Don't let that thread be cut. No matter how tenuous or thin it might be, there is always hope.

A Need for Hope

Where does hope come from? Why should we have hope? Why do we keep on hoping even after we blow our diet or get a bad grade or lose a close game or get turned down in some way or another?

In all ages of time and in all dispensations, people have felt a need for hope. There is a saying—a proverb—in Tongan that goes, “'Ikai ke'i ai ha mamahi hange ha 'amanaki to noa.”

That means, “There is no pain so great as a hope unfulfilled.”

I'm sure if I were familiar with other cultures—French or Russian or Chinese or another—there would be something similar, because it is in all people.

Hope Is Eternal

Why do we keep on hoping? They say, “Hope springs eternal,” and it's good it does, for it gives us something to live for, to strive for, to hope for. But why? Why does hope spring eternal? Why do we keep coming back and back after so many defeats? Simply because God is eternal and God is hope (as well as love—and they may be the same) and we are his children. Therefore, as he is the embodiment of hope and has a fullness of hope, there is planted deep within each of us something we cannot deny, for it is part of the very essence of ourselves and that is what we all, in mortality, hope. A person without hope is like a person without a heart; there is nothing to keep him going. As the heart gives life to the body, so it seems that hope is an enlivening influence to the spirit—which is the real us. It is a fact that there is always hope, for our spirits are eternal. No matter what people try to say, it's always there—that hope is within us. It just depends on how brightly we allow it to shine in our lives. The degree of “shining” (or the strength) of this hope that is in all of us is in direct proportion to our faith in God and particularly to our faith in (belief in, love of, hope in, etc.) Jesus Christ. Specifically then, the basis of all righteous hope is the person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In him all hope has its existence. Without him there is no hope. But because he was and is and ever will be, there is always hope—hope in all areas. He is hope.

We All Hope for Different Things

What do we hope for? I suppose in your situation you hope for good grades, you hope that a certain boy will ask you out or that

special girl will say yes, or you hope your car won't get ticketed (and I understand that's a pretty vain hope on this campus), or you hope the teacher won't give you too hard an assignment, or you hope you can just make it through another day. Maybe you hope to lose weight, or maybe you hope your children will turn out okay or you will get a good job offer, or you hope you will have good health or better health. We all hope for different things at different times, depending on our maturity level—all the way from infant hoping for a bottle to a student hoping for good grades to an adult hoping for love and understanding. Ultimately, we all hope for the greatest of all gifts—immortality and eternal life. In fact, in order to have a true saving hope, that hope must transcend this mortal sphere.

So what do we hope for? Remember the article of faith? All things. Listen to the words of Moroni in the Book of Mormon:

And again, my beloved brethren, I would speak unto you concerning hope. How is it that ye can attain unto faith, save ye shall have hope?

And what is it that ye shall hope for? Behold I say unto you that ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal, and this because of your faith in him according to the promise.

Wherefore, if a man have faith he must needs have hope; for without faith there cannot be any hope.

And again, behold I say unto you that he cannot have faith and hope, save he shall be meek, and lowly of heart.

If so, his faith and hope is vain, for none is acceptable before God save the meek and lowly in heart; and if a man be meek and lowly in heart, and confesses by the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have charity; for if he have not charity he is nothing; wherefore he must needs have charity. [Moroni 7:40–44]

I am not going to go into the difference between faith, hope, and charity. It might be that faith plus hope equals charity, and charity, as we know, is the pure love of Christ. I will just talk about hope this evening—that is a big enough subject. Let me just say that all three—faith, hope, and charity—are traveling companions. They travel together. They go together.

Signs of True Hope

What are some of the signs of true hope? Calmness, optimism, or all those things that are the opposite of downheartedness or being disturbed. You can almost measure the level of hope you have in the Savior by the depth and frequency of depression and discouragement you allow yourself to sink into.

Just as discouragement and depression feed on themselves (can't you just hear Satan saying, "You can't do it, you are no good, you'll never make it"—sometimes he says that right to your heart, and sometimes he uses others as his agents), so does hope regenerate itself. Can't you likewise hear the Savior saying, "You can do it, you can make it, you are worth something. I laid down my life for you. I love you. I redeemed you. I paid for you because I know you can make it. You can come home. Trust me. Follow me." Again, sometimes he speaks directly to our hearts and sometimes uses others as his agents. But there is always hope in him.

Don't Judge People

Another sign of true hope is that we don't judge other people—including ourselves. I often hear people talk of hope in another sense. They say, "Well, I hope he gets what's coming," or, "I hope justice is done." Don't worry about that. He or she will. The ones we ought to worry about are ourselves.

We spend so much time and effort seeking remedies or justice (on spiritual things especially) "here and now" when, in fact, much, if not most, of justice will be done "there and

then.” We ought to spend time and effort here and now to prepare for there and then. Most “justice” occurs after this life. We ought to be glad it does, for so much went on before and will go on after of which we are not aware—but God is aware.

If we are to have a fullness of hope (and that is our goal—hope in all things), our hope must transcend this mortal existence. It had better, or as Paul indicated, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (1 Corinthians 15:19). One who has true hope in Christ will not judge others.

From a remarkable talk give by President Stephen L. Richards in April of 1956, let me quote:

The Lord has said, “I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men” (D&C 64:10). If we were more liberal in our forgiveness, we would be more encouraging to repentance. Someone has said that the supreme charity of the world is in obedience to the divine injunction, “Judge not.” When the Savior gave that injunction, he was well aware of the limitations of human understanding and sympathy. We can see overt acts but we cannot see inner feelings nor can we read intentions. An all-wise Providence in making judgment sees and knows all the phases of human conduct. We know but few of the phases, and none very well. To be considerate and kind in judgment is a Christlike attribute. [Stephen L. Richards, April Conference, 8 April 1956]

Those with hope, then, do not judge. When I hear of people making judgments (and we all do more than we want to—we do too much—and it is a sign of our having less hope than we should), I think, “Who do we think we are anyway? The very best of us, the most kind or most loving and forgiving among us is only, as it were, in kindergarten—or lower.”

Let me read something on this point written by Elder Orson F. Whitney, one of the Twelve Apostles some years ago:

You parents of the wilful and the wayward: Don’t give them up. Don’t cast them off. They are not utterly lost. The Shepherd will find his sheep. They were his before they were yours—long before he entrusted them to your care; and you cannot begin to love them as he loves them. Our Heavenly Father is far more merciful, infinitely more charitable, than even the best of his servants, and the Everlasting Gospel is mightier in power to save than our narrow finite minds can comprehend.

See how important it is to follow the admonition given by King Benjamin in Mosiah 4:9:

Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; [most of us will go along with that, but the last part] believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend [sometimes we, by our actions, think we are smarter than he is].

Let’s not spend our time hoping or worrying about justice being done to others. It will be done. Let’s spend our time being just ourselves.

One of Satan’s ultimate weapons (if not the ultimate) is to remove hope from your life. He tries to convince you that you can’t do it, that there is no hope. Thus, by removing hope, he removes Christ from your life, for Christ is hope. Satan can never quite accomplish that fully—at least not here—because it is a lie. There is hope built within all of us. There is always hope.

On the other hand, the thing Satan cannot fight is one who is full of hope—for he is then full of the Spirit of Christ—and when that hope is perfected or full, Satan has lost completely.

Encourage Others

Another sign of having hope is the encouragement we give to others. Let me assure you that if by our words or our actions or by our

very being we tell people (or even give the impression), “You can’t do it, you are no good, you’ll never measure up, you’ll never make it,” or (maybe worst of all) “I won’t forgive you” (and all of these things apply doubly to our reaction to ourselves and to our own faults), if that be the case, then we are moving away from God and not toward him, for he gives hope and says, “There is always hope.” Don’t ever say there isn’t.

If we, to others or to ourselves, fail to give full measure of hope (remember the scripture, full measure, pressed down and overflowing [see Luke 6:38]), we do less than Jesus would do and less than he would have us do.

Now, as in all things, to receive anything good we must give it away. Maybe the reason we don’t have more hope is because we don’t give enough hope to others. If we want more hope, let’s give more hope to others—be more encouraging.

The spirit of hope is the Spirit of the Savior. He is always encouraging.

Now you might say, “Okay, I believe that. Doctrinally it’s correct, but what does it mean to me? I want more hope. How do I get more? If it’s there, if it is within me (and it is), how do I allow it to shine forth and fill my life and move me forward in this light of hope?”

Let me read two verses from the Book of Mormon:

And the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God. [Moroni 8:26]

Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ [which are the scriptures, of course], and

endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life. [Isn’t that what we are hoping for?] [2 Nephi 31:20]

Those two key verses lay out so clearly what we need to do. The key elements are repentance, remission of sins, meekness, lowliness of heart, love of God and of all men, feasting on the words of Christ, studying the scriptures, praying, enduring to the end—quite opposite from some of the success formulas in the world.

As near as I can tell, if you don’t have hope, you either don’t have the Holy Ghost or you aren’t listening to him, for it states clearly, “which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love.”

Press Forward

The scriptures talk about a “perfect brightness of hope.” Think about that. Wouldn’t you like to have that—to never be down, never be discouraged? That would be great, wouldn’t it? I think all of us would agree. But will it ever happen here? Like a lot of things, it is difficult, but it can happen, else why the injunction from the Lord to Nephi to “press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men” (2 Nephi 31:20)?

But like anything else good, it is not easy, it does not come without effort. Satan will try to diminish your hope or keep it away from you altogether if he can. The Savior will help you increase in hope.

So you see, the battle lines are clearly drawn. Satan and his forces (the world) will do everything in their power to have you lose hope—to be constantly down on yourself, always discouraged, despondent, etc. We know people like that because we have been like that sometimes. Satan wants to discourage you, for he knows discouragement and hope cannot exist together. So if he gets you discouraged enough, out goes hope.

On the other hand, the Savior will do just the opposite. He will do all in his power to encourage you, lift you up, give you hope, help you in every way possible, so that with a “steadfastness in Christ” we may attain to that “perfect brightness of hope” and then discouragement and despair are gone. Can you see how clear that is?

Darkness, discouragement, pessimism, depression, anger, lack of hope—all come from Satan and his forces, whereas optimism, light encouragement, hope, even to a perfect brightness of hope—all come from the Savior.

Now some may say, “Well, you are bordering on calling discouragement a sin, and we know that we all get discouraged sometimes. It’s just human nature.”

True enough, it’s human nature. All humans get discouraged sometime. All humans die sometime, too. But through the Savior we will overcome death and through him we must overcome discouragement as well, and we can.

I am not saying that discouragement or pessimism is necessarily a sin (for it may be a test, or a growing experience). But what I am saying is that Satan is here (on the left) with discouragement and darkness, and we want to get out of there as soon as we can. And the Savior is here (on the right) with hope and light (and maybe hope and light are synonymous) and encouragement. We have to move from the left to the right. When we find ourselves on the left, we must go to the right.

Rely on the Savior

Those of the world are betting that this life is it. You have heard the statement “Better red than dead.” That is all based on the assumption that there is nothing after this life. To them there is no hope for the future. To them it’s eat, drink, and be merry, and get what you can, when you can, how you can. That is not true. Hope is available. Hope is here. Hope (and this is really hope in Christ) is the essence of life.

To say “There is no hope for me” is to say there is no Savior, for he is hope and he does exist, so there is hope for you. He is forever, so there is always hope!

Basically, those without hope are those who rely only on themselves, who have not tapped into that power beyond themselves, even the Savior himself—and there are far too many in the world that way today. They rely totally on themselves. While it is good to be self-reliant, you have to rely on yourself and on the Savior.

As you know, the Savior came to the earth to do several things—fulfill the plan made in heaven before the earth was, do the will of the Father, work out the infinite atonement, break the bands of death and become the first fruits of the resurrection, fulfill all prophesy, and on and on and on. I’m not sure but that much, if not all, of this that he came to do could be summed up in the phrase, “He came to give us hope. He came to show us that indeed there is always hope,” for he is always and he is hope.

Is there anything more universal than a need for hope? We all do things wrong; we need hope to have them taken from us. We all have problems; we need hope that they will go away. If there were not hope, we would be lost forever.

Think of the hope that genealogy and temple work give us and millions of others. Think of the total depth and breadth the hope of the Savior gives us in the gospel plan. You just can’t comprehend it. Remember, we hope all things. Do we? The gospel is hope-giving.

I hear some people say, “The gospel is too restrictive,” but we must look at the other side. It is really not restrictive at all. It is hope-giving. It gives us a pattern to follow whereby we can gain hope. There is hope, and that is what the Church is about. That is what the Savior is about. He came to give us hope.

Sure we must change, and we can. When we say we can’t change—that this is just us—we are on the left and we need to get on the right where there is light and hope. “I can

change; there is always hope” is the message of the true gospel of Jesus Christ. There is always hope for all of us. We can choose and improve and become as he is.

Remember the quotation from 1 John 3:2–3:

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Hope is a purifying, refining process.

The Atonement Is for Everyone

How do I know there is hope for all? Because it was a universal atonement. As the scriptures tell us, “For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent” (D&C 19:16). That is, there was no holding back on the Savior’s part. He paid the full price for all—full measure, pressed down, overflowing.

President Spencer W. Kimball said at an area conference:

I want to be sure that I am well understood. The Lord said, “Wherefore all manner of sins shall be forgiven unto men, except the sinning against the Holy Ghost and the committing of murder.” (See Matthew 12:31.) None of us will commit sin against the Holy Ghost (generally we do not know enough), and few of us will ever be involved in a murder. Therefore, the sins of mankind can be forgiven. But not by ignoring them; one must go to the proper ecclesiastical officials and clear his problems. [Spencer W. Kimball, Amsterdam Area Conference, August 1976, p. 4]

Well then, if there is always hope, and I, or we, or any of us don’t have much hope, how do we go about getting more hope? That is what we really want to know. You pray for it, you ask for it, you listen to your leaders, you

follow them, you repent, and according to the scriptures you become meek and lowly in heart, you serve others, you read the scriptures. It is interesting, this feasting upon the words of Christ and reading the scriptures. I want to testify to you that there is not a single situation you or I or anyone can become involved in for which the principle for resolving is not contained in the scriptures.

You gain hope (or uncover it) a little at a time. If the scriptures do have the answers, then read them. One of the best ways is to read about the life and acts of the Savior—the things he did. If he is hope, then certainly what he did should give hope to us or help us discover the hope within ourselves.

Situations from the Savior’s Life

Let me give a few examples from the Savior’s life (and what beautiful examples they are) that cover many, if not all, of the situations in which we need hope.

You are familiar with the incident of the people bringing the man who was sick with palsy to Christ. But they couldn’t get to the Savior, so they let him down through the roof. The Savior healed him because of the great faith—the great hope—that those around him had (see Luke 5:18–26).

There is a lesson to learn here. It wasn’t easy. They had to put forth some effort when they let him down through the ceiling. If we want a blessing from hope that is based on having strong faith and strong hope, then we had better be prepared to overcome some obstacles, because our hope isn’t sufficient to receive the blessing that we hope for.

Let me read a story from Matthew 9:18–26:

While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples.

And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment:

For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

[And Jesus proceeded on.] *And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise,*

He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.

But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

In Christ there is always hope. Here is another story, from Mark 10:46–52:

And they came to Jericho [that is, Jesus and his disciples]: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway-side begging.

And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

And many charged him that he should hold his peace [in other words, “Be quiet, you are making a fuss”]: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. [You see what he is trying to get across, “Don’t get discouraged just because people tell you ‘Don’t go see the bishop; he is this, that, and the other’; or ‘Don’t go to conference; it’s boring,’ etc. Cry out louder, ‘Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.’”]:

And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called, And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.

And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. [Oh, how often do we need to receive sight. “I have difficult problems, Lord; if I could just understand what I am to do, I might see more clearly.”]

And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

Isn’t that the point? Don’t let people talk you out of these things. Hang in there, as it is. In Christ there is always hope.

Another illustration is from Luke 7:36–47:

And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but his woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many [that is important to note], are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

She hoped. Her hope was rewarded. In Christ there is always hope. I am sure she did more than hope. She changed, and we must also.

One final example from the New Testament, from Luke 22:54–62. You all remember Peter, the great stalwart apostle, and the problems he had to begin with.

Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house [this was when they took the Savior to Caiaphas]. And Peter followed afar off.

And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.

But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.

And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaeen.

And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

Think about it. How could you feel worse—denying the Savior? How could you be more down on yourself, and how could you be more discouraged? Why then did Peter come back and become the strength that he was? Some people think that there was a look of anguish or distrust on the Savior's face as he looked at Peter at that critical moment; but I testify to you that while there can be sternness in the Savior, the Savior I know is a kind, smiling, helpful Savior—one who constantly encourages—and he did thus with Peter. His look to Peter said, "Come to me. Come home to hope. You know better. You can do better, you will do better. There is always hope. There is always hope in me."

We Must Not Let Discouragement Overwhelm Us

That feeling of hope that emanated from the Savior was constantly with Peter. The recurring vision and feeling of his loving eyes and beckoning face came back and back again to Peter—and they will to us—and Peter came back and was strong—what a strength he was. And we must come back and be strong. He didn't allow discouragement to overwhelm him. He grasped that hope in the Savior and held onto it till it became a "perfect brightness of hope." And so must we!

We could go on and on and give example after example, and some may say, "Sure, but that is the Savior and that is 2000 years ago. I am me and my problems are mine. I live now in 1984 and he isn't around. I can't touch the

hem of his robe, etc., and no one understands my problems, and my problems are different.”

To all of those comments I just say, “He isn’t around—oh, isn’t he? No one understands—oh, doesn’t he? My problems are different—oh, are they?”

Our Day Is No Different

Oh, my young friends, if you think that way—that they are different—I want to assure you nothing could be further from the truth. Time is measured only to man, not to God. Life is all one great “now” to him. Nineteen eighty-four is no different than 31 A.D. You have essentially the same problems and feelings as those living in Palestine two millenia ago. You might worry about an atomic holocaust rather than the Roman legions, but it is the same thing. His Spirit is just as present, he understands just as much, he is just as loving and kind and anxious to help as he ever has been, and miracles (if you want to call them that—they are really just his power manifested among men) today are just as real and just as evident as they have ever been, for faith is among the children of men. Hope is among the children of men. Some of you may question that. Don’t. It’s true.

Let me give you just one example in our day. I am going to use this as a sort of composite so that no one will identify it with one particular person. All the incidents that I’ll mention are true, but there were three different people involved.

The Power of Hope

Shortly after I was called to be a General Authority, I was asked to interview a young girl who wanted to go on a mission. She had had some problems. I had been a mission president, but I wasn’t all that experienced. When she came in and we went over all the problems that she had, I thought, “What is she doing here? No way can a girl like that go on a mission with all those problems.” But there was

something radiant about her honesty. She wasn’t holding anything back. She was completely honest, and I suppose, as I look back now, that I could sense that she had a real hope. She really wanted to go on a mission.

I wanted to just say no, because, as I say, I had been a mission president and I wouldn’t have wanted someone with that kind of record in my mission. But there was something that said, “Wait a while.” So I didn’t say no. I said, “Why don’t you come back next week? Let’s pray about it and think about it.” I was planning to tell her no.

I got a call shortly after that, and the place I was supposed to go for a stake conference assignment was, for some unknown reason, changed. I was to go someplace else.

I went to this other place. The stake president picked me up. The plane got there a little before we needed to be in meetings. He said, “We’re having a family reunion, and that is where we are going to have lunch.”

I said, “Fine.”

We went out to the family reunion. Now, this is hundreds of miles away from where I was before. As we were eating, some of the older members of the family were getting up and giving reports about their families.

The president said, “Well, it is time to go. We had better leave.”

Just as he said that, a lady stood up. I said, “Well, I hate to walk out when someone is talking. Let’s just wait until she is through.”

He said, “Okay, but that is Aunt Cloe and she might talk for a long time.”

I said, “Well, let’s see.”

She started, and she gave a report of her family and then she said, “And as all of you know, we have had a lot of heartache and trouble with my granddaughter, so-and-so.” The name rang a bell. It was the same as that of the girl I had interviewed. She said, “But we are so hopeful. We have heard that she is actually thinking of going on a mission, and, oh, we hope she will be able to go.”

As the tears came down this grandmother's face and I realized as I was sitting there that I was the one who had to make that decision, I thought, "Wow, the power of hope—the hope of a young girl, the hope of a grandmother, and I am sure the hope of her mother as well—some way got those schedules switched around and got me sent up here to sit down and listen to that grandmother."

When we left I talked to the stake president. I said, "Now, who is that, and who is her granddaughter?"

He explained, and it was exactly the same person.

Of course, you know what happened. She came back the next week and I said, "Well, we will give it a try. You have a lot of hope. You have a lot going for you." What she had going for her was that she wanted to go.

So, she went. I kept in close touch with her stake president. She served a wonderful mission—a tremendous mission. I would call regularly, or he would call me and say, "I got a letter and things are going fine." Then I realized that the time was just about up. She was to be coming home.

About a month before she was to come home, I got a call from the stake president.

"Elder Groberg?"

"Yes."

"I have some bad news."

"Oh, no, what?"

"Our friend is home—excommunicated."

One month before her mission was up.

Well, she was a determined and repentant girl and came in and wanted to apologize to me. "I blew it. I am sorry."

As I recall, it was a busy time and there could have been a feeling, "Well, I guess we shouldn't have tried," but that wasn't the feeling. The feeling I had when I talked to her was, "Don't forget, there is always hope. Keep trying."

There were so many problems, you can't imagine—a change of mission president, a

change of stake president, papers getting lost. Years went by, but I kept in touch. Little by little, things came together. She married a fine young man. And not very long ago I had the opportunity of sealing her and her husband and two little children. It took years, and there was a lot of pain, but as I looked down upon that beautiful tearstained face so full of joy and love and especially of hope, I softly breathed those beautiful words that had meant so much to us for so long. "You see, there is always hope."

Miracles in All Ages

My dear young friends, could there be a greater miracle in any age? Are not all the essential ingredients basically the same? You think you are so different. You think your problems evade solution. You think the Savior and his works and love belong to a different time and place? No, they are here now. They have been and ever will be available to all men and women everywhere, regardless of the complexity, the severity, the terribleness, the duration, or the supposed deepness of the problem. There is always hope. In Christ who lives and loves and works miracles now, there is always hope. Listen again and again and again. There is always hope—now, today—there is always hope. There is always hope. He lives. He loves. He saves. In him there is always hope.

What would life be like without hope? Terrible. We can't conceive of it. Remove the Savior from your life and you remove hope. But we can't, and we won't. He is there and he will always whisper to us and assure us, "There is always hope." We just simply have to have hope.

Listen again to Moroni in the Book of Mormon:

Wherefore, there must be faith; and if there must be faith there must also be hope; and if there must be hope there must also be charity.

And except ye have charity ye can in nowise be saved in the kingdom of God; neither can ye be saved in the kingdom of God if ye have not faith; neither can ye if ye have no hope.

And if ye have no hope ye must needs be in despair; and despair cometh because of iniquity. [Moroni 10:20–22]

No matter what price we have to pay, or how long we must suffer, there is always hope. No matter how deep the wound, how dark the night, keep up hope. It is worth it. There is always hope!

No matter the fasting, the struggling, the praying, the weeping, the searching, the confessing. No matter the so-called embarrassment or loss of face or pride or whatever other terms or feelings Satan uses in his attempt to dissuade us from obtaining that saving hope and from securing that glorious hope in the Savior. It is worth it.

From Ether 12:4, 32:

Wherefore, whoso believeth in God might with surety hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, which hope cometh of faith, maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast, always abounding in good works, being led to glorify God.

And I also remember that thou hast said that thou hast prepared a house for man, yea, even among the mansions of thy Father, in which man might have a more excellent hope; wherefore man must hope, or he cannot receive an inheritance in the place which thou hast prepared.

Oh, to search, to seek, to struggle, and then to see the smiling face of the Savior as over and over again he says, “Come, come to me. I will heal you. In me there is always hope.”

There Is Always Hope

Oh, my beloved young friends, remember there is always hope, for you and for others!

How do I know that? Because the Savior came and paid the price for all.

For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent. [D&C 19:16]

That’s pretty inclusive. The Savior was, in our vernacular today, a great optimist, wasn’t he? Actually, he was full of hope, or had a fullness of hope. As far as I know, there is not a thing you will do (except what President Kimball said), that is not covered by the love and the atoning sacrifice of the Savior—nothing. That ought to give you hope, hadn’t it?

Listen to President Stephen L. Richards, another great leader:

Let no brother or sister in the whole family of God [now that is not only members of the Church but the whole family of God] feel that he or she has gone beyond the point where error and sin may be left behind and true repentance enlighten the soul with hope and faith. [Stephen L. Richards, April Conference, 8 April 1956]

You see, there is always hope.

Well, that is at least twenty-nine times. I hope by now we are all beginning to really hear, and I mean hear and feel deep in our eternal souls, the truth of that marvelous phrase “There is always hope.” I know there is because of the Savior, our Lord and friend, even Jesus Christ.

To all those who ask the plaintive question “Is there any hope for me?” the answer is a resounding “Yes! Yes! Yes! There is always hope.” Reverberating through all eternity, all creation exults: “In Christ there is always hope.” I know whereof I speak.

Oh, seek after him in all ways and at all times until you can sense his smiling countenance saying to you, “Come unto me and I will give you rest. I am the hope of the world. In me there is always hope.”

Let me conclude with my testimony. I know that God lives and loves us. I know that Jesus Christ is his Son. I have hope in Christ—a sure hope. You can have one, too. I know he lives, I know he smiles. I know he always gives hope. I know that the miracles referred to this day not only occurred 2000 years ago, but similar manifestations of faith and hope have and will continue to bring down the blessings of heaven on the heads of those faithful, as needed. There is reason and justification for the hope that is within me and should be within all of us.

I testify of him. I have heard his voice on many occasions in my heart. I have felt his precious presence at various times and in divers places. I have seen his influence over and over

again and I have witnessed his power and majesty as he continues to work his miracles among the children of men in our day—largely through the hope that emanates from him and to him and through him and around him and by him through all eternity.

I know by the sure witness of the Spirit that he lives and loves and forgives and heals and saves and restores and that in him there is always hope.

May our hope in him ever be vibrant and active and sure—“unto a perfect brightness of hope”—I do humbly pray in the name of him in whom there is always hope, even Jesus Christ. Amen.