

Walking on the Water

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There is a story of a minister showing a painting of Christ to a child. Anxious to reassure him, the minister softly explained, “Of course, it’s not really Jesus. It’s just an artist’s conception of him.”

The child looked for a moment and then said, “Well, it sure looks like him to me.”

Learning as Remembering

We who are no longer children have forgotten some of the glorious things we once knew. According to Jung’s concept of racial memory, when we allow ourselves that fleeting glimpse into our subconscious self, we remember more than we know. Plato talks of all learning as remembering.

Madeleine L’Engle has said: “Peter was able to walk on the water until he remembered he didn’t know how” (*Walking on Water* [New York: Bantam Books 1982], p. 19).

Peter’s success hinged on his remembering it was through spiritual laws and not his own that he had power. In the frequently painful path from childhood to godhood, what temptations do we encounter that so divert our direction and cast clouds over our memory?

I have often heard, “When I was a child I believed everything was possible. I believed I could grow up to become anything I imagined.

But then I grew up! There was anxiety in my home. I had self-defeating experiences in high school. My mission was more difficult than I expected. Now I’m often confused, depressed, and afraid.” Perhaps you’ve heard those kinds of comments yourselves.

Not only have we forgotten the glorious things we once knew, but we have also forgotten we were asked to endure some trying things—we who are children of Christ through adoption and the crucifixion. We too are to learn obedience by the things which we suffer.

I recently read the experience of a physician of another faith who was discharged from military service. He reported an alarming change in his civilian patients after being away from them for some time. He said:

Upon my return from the Army, I noticed a change in my previous patients’ troubles. I found that a high percentage do not need medicine but better [minds]. They are not sick in their bodies so much as they are sick in their [thinking] and emotions. They are all mixed up with fear, . . . inferior

Patricia T. Holland, wife of Jeffrey R. Holland, gave this devotional address at Brigham Young University on 31 January 1984.

feelings, guilt, and resentment. I found that in treating them I needed to be about as much a psychiatrist as [an internist] and then I discovered that not even those therapies helped me fully to do my job. I became aware that in many cases the basic trouble with people was spiritual. [Norman Vincent Peale, *The Power of Positive Thinking* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1965), p. 148]

No one was more aware than this physician that medical science is needful, but as he pointed out, fear controls us when faith is not exercised.

Hope Leads to Faith

May I share a quote with you from one I admire, who, by exercising hopefulness amidst adversity, developed a remarkable faith. Eleanor Roosevelt said, “I have won the attention of posterity not because I had new theories about the world, but because [I] never reflected the mood of pessimism and disillusionment. Faith gathers up life, pulls it together and gives it direction. And so I walk by faith and not by sight” (Eleanor Roosevelt, *Family Circle*, January 1984, pp. 31, 34). Despite the pain and sorrow and disappointments of her life, she succeeded through optimism which led to hope which led to faith.

We all want this hopeful view for ourselves, and yet we continue to embark on rather hopeless journeys.

In Alma 22:16, Aaron said, “If thou wilt bow down before God, . . . and call on his name in faith, believing that ye shall receive, then shalt thou receive the *hope* thou desirest.” “*Faith* is things which are hoped for and not seen” (Ether 12:6; emphasis added).

Spiritual powers are based on spiritual laws. The Savior told us that this power, the power that allows Him to show unto us great miracles, greater things than have ever been seen or heard, comes as a direct gift from God. And we can show Him that we do desire it. Jesus said:

Father, thou hast given them the Holy Ghost [including its great power] because they believe in me; and thou seest that they believe in me because thou hearest them, and they pray unto me. [3 Nephi 19:22; emphasis added]

He knows we believe in Him because He hears us. Prayer is proof of our faith.

Miracles of Faith

I have prayed for guidance regarding a personal experience I might share with you, and again and again I have felt impressed to share with you the following. I pray you will hear the message that is intended.

A few years ago I was having some serious medical problems. I scheduled myself into a hospital for some routine presurgery testing. I’m not sure I even told Jeff I was going in for the tests. To begin, they injected an iodine dye into my vein prior to taking X-rays, and I had a severe allergic reaction. I went into anaphylactic shock. All my bodily functions stopped. Three doctors and two nurses worked frantically to revive me. At one point during this struggle I came to enough to hear one of the nurses read my pulse which was slower than my father-in-law’s had been when he went into a coma and died.

I knew I was dying, and I knew I needed someone with absolute faith. I called out for my husband and fell unconscious again.

It dawned on them that they should have called him anyway, but they simply had been preoccupied with my condition. A nurse ran to a phone to call him. All she said to him was, “We are doing all we can for your wife, and now she wants you.”

In less time than it takes to get to the hospital, he arrived and bolted into the emergency room rather than wait outside as someone had suggested. With his usual confidence (which I have silently watched develop as his relationship with the Lord has deepened), he sort of shoved three doctors and two nurses aside and announced, “I don’t know whether any of you

are LDS, but I am going to give my wife a blessing." Midway through that blessing I opened my eyes, saw his face, and thought I had never seen anything so beautiful. And I told him so. (Later he told me this was the only evidence he had found of any brain damage.)

I add my personal witness that prayer, including priesthood prayer, is the proof of our faith. And the proof is rewarded by the Holy Ghost (and holy power) which Nephi said

"will show unto you *all* things what ye should do" (2 Nephi 32:5). There are miracles of faith, and we should have faith in the miraculous.

When Jesus called Peter to come to Him across the water, Peter, for one brief, glorious moment, forgot he did not know how and strode with ease across the sea. This is how we are meant to be. May we be so I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.