

Talk: Joyfully Enduring to the End M1/M6 May 2015

“And as many as repent and are baptized in my name, which is Jesus Christ, and **endure to the end**, the same shall be saved.” ([D&C 18:22](#)) “Be patient in afflictions, for thou shalt have many; but **endure** them, for, lo, I am with thee, even unto the end of thy days.” ([D&C 24:8](#)) “And, if you keep my commandments and **endure to the end** you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God.” ([D&C 14:7](#))

Many of us here have already met these first requirements on the path of happiness, having repented and been baptized and having received the ordinance and commandment to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. All that is left to do is to simply continue to keep the commandments and endure to the end.

I would speak today of this concept of 'enduring to the end'. Why is it when we hear the word 'endure' or the phrase 'endure to the end' we automatically associate all those other 'less happy words' that seem to go along with it: pain, suffering, trials, hardship, and work? Why does this word and this phrase seem to connote such negative associations in our minds, when in the church we know that enduring is the only way to back to our heavenly home and the only path to true and lasting happiness and joy?

God’s plan for us is beautiful and simple. He wants us to have joy and to become more like Him. “Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have **joy**.” ([2 Nephi 2:25](#)) “And in that day Adam blessed God and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth, saying: Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have **joy**, and again in the flesh I shall see God.” ([Moses 5:10](#)) “And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the **joy** of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient.” ([Moses 5:11](#))

*Christ's doctrine: Have faith in him, repent of all your sins, be baptized, receive the Holy Ghost, and then .. [joyfully] endure to the end.*

As Elder Ballard taught in his most recent talk ([Apr 2015 'Where Justice, Love, and Mercy Meet'](#)) “.. from the moment [our] first parents stepped out of the Garden of Eden, the God and Father of us all, anticipating Adam and Eve’s decision, dispatched the very angels of heaven to declare to *them*—and down through time to *us*—that this entire sequence was *designed* for our eternal **happiness**.”

1. Elder Bednar (in a [Jan 2004 BYU Devotional 'In a State of Happiness'](#)) said this: “All that our Father gives to us and all that He requires of us is *designed* to promote the very happiness that is the object of the plan and of our existence. [Enduring, otherwise known as] Obedience is neither a chore nor a burden; rather, it is the *source* of true happiness in both mortality and eternity. We do not yield or give up our happiness when we obey. Obeying causes happiness. Obedience frequently is referred to as the first law of heaven; it is also the key which opens the door to the happiness intended for God’s children in the great plan of happiness. [...] [Mosiah 2:41](#): [reads] 'And moreover, I would desire that ye should consider on the **blessed** and **happy** state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of *never-ending happiness*. O remember, remember that these things are true; for the Lord God hath spoken it (emphasis added).”

Would anyone be better off if Adam or Eve had remained in the Garden? Do you suppose they were experiencing joy there or mere contentment? Thankfully, “Adam [and Eve did fall] that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy [..] and because [we] are redeemed from the fall [through Christ] [we] have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon [..]” ([2 Nephi 2:25-26](#)). Each time we make a poor choice, with painful consequences, that decision unfailingly leads to unhappiness—sometimes immediately, sometimes much later. As Alma teaches: “Behold, I say unto you, wickedness never was happiness.” ([Alma 41:10](#)). Likewise, choosing correctly and doing good always leads to happiness—sometimes immediately, sometimes much later. We decide by what we choose to do if we are to become more like Heavenly Father and his Son .. or not.

We are commanded to be happy: “But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.” ([Psalms 68:3](#)) “Therefore, verily, thus saith the Lord, let Zion rejoice, for this is Zion—the pure in heart; therefore, let Zion rejoice, while all the wicked shall mourn.” ([D&C 97:21](#))

As with Adam and Eve, there are consequences to each of our choices, good or bad. Lasting happiness and progression comes from freely choosing to do what God wants us to do. He generally does not step in and prevent us from making the poor choices Satan tempts us to make. He will, however, offer his love, divine guidance, and warnings as we open our heart to Him. What is the secret of true happiness? Regardless of what we do or have, or don't do or don't have, in this life, our deepest, most lasting happiness will come from knowing God's plan and following it.

So, will *things* make us happy? No! We often fall into the trap of thinking a new car, a job promotion, a change in physical appearance, or some level of fame will make us happy. Perhaps they will—for a time. But wealth, power, beauty and fame only bring fleeting happiness. True lasting joy and happiness come from following Christ's example and in developing Godlike attributes such as goodness, love, justice and mercy. It comes from serving others and helping them to follow the example and teachings of Jesus Christ. It comes from overcoming the appetites of our human bodies and, instead, following the promptings of the Spirit. It comes from working hard and having a healthy lifestyle, friends, family, and personal achievements, in keeping the commandments and .. enduring to the end.

Perhaps this enduring is necessary because sometimes *bad* things happen—even when we are trying to make good choices. We could get sick. Loved ones may die. We may lose a job or our home. Others around us make their own bad decisions. Perhaps a family member is unfaithful. Perhaps beloved children chose another way. It's hard not to ask why God allows us to suffer so much. Know that while God takes no pleasure in your suffering, your difficulties, regardless of their cause, can bring you closer to Him and even make you stronger if you endure faithfully ([2 Nephi 2:2](#), [Revelation 3:19](#)).

Do you suppose that Satan want us to be happy? No! His plan for us is the opposite of our Fathers, ending with us being as miserable and stuck as he is. On the other hand, it is comforting to know that our other brother, God's Son, Jesus Christ, suffered all things for us. He understands our pain and can help us through our trials. We can return and repent. If we have faith in God and in His plan for us, we can be assured that there's a purpose to all that happens to us here on earth. Whether we are but in our teens or closing in on a century or so, our time here is short compared to life eternal. As the Lord told Joseph Smith during a period of intense suffering:

"Know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good. The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?" ([D&C 122:7-8](#)). Coping with calamities will strengthen and make us more compassionate. It is designed to help us learn, grow and

want to serve others. Dealing with adversity is one of the chief ways we are tested and tutored in our life here on Earth. Our loving Heavenly Father has the ability to compensate us for any injustices we may be called upon to endure in this mortal life. If we endure faithfully He will reward us beyond our ability to comprehend in the life to come ([1 Corinthians 2:9](#)).

Amazingly, with God's help we can experience joy even in times of trial, and face life's challenges with a spirit of peace. When I was 10 years old, my father, while traveling home from a LDS mens choir performance was killed in a head-on car accident on a dark mountain road by a drunk driver. My Mom, who had been sitting next to my Dad in the car at the time, survived with only minor dental work required. Passengers in the back seat also survived with minor injuries as well as the driver of the other vehicle. I recall the visit from the Bishopric to our home to tell us of the accident. My Grandpa and Grandma Spencer had come from Magrath to Calgary to watch us for the week. Later, at the funeral there were many tears and sad faces on others around us, but I only remember a peaceful calming spirit. Yes, it was sad, but we were comforted and knew we would continue on and see him again one day, if we but 'endure to the end'.

For me it was relatively simple. I had been taught and I understood .. He was gone for a while. He would be back later. However, I don't think I appreciated then what it probably meant to my suddenly widowed mother with five young and very active children to raise and feed. She dusted off her mostly unused drivers license to that point and learned to drive a blue station wagon very similar in make and model and color to the one that she had been in the accident with. I remember one day soon after the funeral at the intersection near the church. After stopping at a red light the car engine somehow stopped and Mom was unable to get it to restart. Many cars were impatiently lined up behind us honking. Eventually a kind soul came and asked what might be wrong. After putting the car into 'Park' as he suggested, we were able to restart the engine and continue on home. I remember later learning to drive myself with her in the passenger seat again – she holding her breath at the corners and holding on with white knuckles. She found employment teaching, first at a Christian playschool and later as an elementary school teacher, taking many additional night courses to turn her own initial one year teaching certificate into a full four year teaching degree. She took us to church and sent us to our weekday meetings. I remember often walking to the Bow Valley Chapel on my own and later with siblings (a 5 km round trip – 2.5km up hill each way – yes I [Googled](#) it) while she cared for my younger siblings at home. Now she continues her example to us by serving her fifth mission or so [it's hard to count as she kept extending her time in SLC, and is] currently in Nauvoo, IL, due back home later this summer at age 82. In return she has been blessed with all five children still active and serving in the gospel and many great and grand-children also all in the church. Because my mother was widowed, we ended up moving to Magrath where I met my own eternal companion. Looking back now, I don't believe I would have changed much.

One additional element of 'enduring' that I would like to now address is our commitment to attend this sacrament meeting every seven days, here in your own ward, and to partake worthily of the sacrament. "When the priest offers the scriptural prayer on the bread at the sacrament table, he prays that all who partake may 'witness' unto God, the Eternal Father, 'that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son.' ([D&C 20:77](#); [Moro. 4:3](#))." This witness has several different meanings, one of which, according to Elder Dallin H. Oaks ([Apr 1985 'Taking upon Us the Name of Jesus Christ'](#)), includes equating the 'name' of the Lord with the 'work' of his kingdom in many scriptures. "Thus, when Peter and the other Apostles were beaten, they rejoiced 'that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.' ([Acts 5:41](#)). Paul wrote certain members who had ministered to the Saints that the Lord would not forget the labor of love they had 'shewed toward his name.' ([Heb. 6:10](#)). According to this meaning, by witnessing our willingness to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ, we signify our willingness to

do the work of his kingdom.” The concept of taking the name and hence the work of Christ on us means that we demonstrate that we are true Christians as we act as and do the work He would. By willingly and joyfully performing callings we receive from Him, via his authorized servants, we are doing 'our share' of the work and taking our share of His name on us. When we are out home or visit teaching we are doing his work in his name. When we accept and fulfill callings in our ward and stake, we are doing the same. Taking his name means doing his work. As he said, “For my yoke [my work, my name] is easy, and my burden is light.” ([Matthew 11:30](#)).

The things we are asked to do are simple and when we do them the right way and time, each of these things bring peace, comfort, happiness and joy. Have faith, pray, study, gather your family together, keep the commandments, attend your meetings and fulfill your callings, love and serve each other, make and keep covenants, attend the temple and endure to the end. As Nephi wrote: “And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins.” ([2 Nephi 25:26](#)) .. in other words, just do what He would do .. As the primary song ([Children's Songbook 78](#)) goes:

I'm trying to be like Jesus;  
I'm following in his ways.  
I'm trying to love as he did, in all that I do and say.  
At times I am tempted to make a wrong choice,  
But I try to listen as the still small voice whispers,

I'm trying to love my neighbor;  
I'm learning to serve my friends.  
I watch for the day of gladness when Jesus will come again.  
I try to remember the lessons he taught.  
Then the Holy Spirit enters into my thoughts, saying:

Love one another as Jesus loves you.  
Try to show kindness in all that you do.  
Be gentle and loving in deed and in thought,  
For these are the things Jesus taught."

I pray that we will be able to endure joyfully to the end of our time here on earth no matter how short or long that time may be. May we **joyfully** partake of the sacrament weekly and take his name and his work on us and **joyfully** continue on and endure to the end. May we be glad, saying to ourselves as mother Eve did: “Were it not for [these our trials and experiences] we never should have had [family and love and the spirit], and never should have known good and evil, and the **joy** of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient.” ([Moses 5:11](#)) This I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.