

God Loves and Helps All of His Children

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We need Heavenly Father's help. Important sources of this help come through man's service to his fellowman, through prayer, and through focus on Christ.

One of the overarching truths of the Restoration is that God lives and dwells in His heavens, that He is an exalted man with "a body of flesh and bones,"¹ and that He is yesterday, today, and forever the same unchangeable God,² the fountain of all virtue and truth.

Adam and Eve were the first of His mortal children upon this earth. Of their advent, He said: "And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him; male and female created I them."³

This truth elevates the human family. Men and women are wondrous creations endowed with divine attributes. At the time of Creation, God placed in Adam and Eve the supernal capacity to bear children in their likeness. We are all, therefore, in His image.

We do, however, contend with serious mortal frailties and hazards. Sickness, aging, and death are inescapable. Hardships and heartaches are part of life's journey. Personal dispositions, appetites, and passions clamor for gratification.

For all these reasons and more, we need Heavenly Father's help. An important source of this help comes through man's service to his fellowman.⁴ The commandment is to "love thy neighbour as thyself."⁵ Because we are all brothers and sisters, we are all "neighbors," though separated at times by distance, culture, religion, or race. Said the Prophet Joseph, "A man filled with the love of God, is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world, anxious to bless the whole human race."⁶ The Lord sets the example, "for he doeth that which is good among the children of men; ... and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God."⁷

To provide for others in the Lord's way, we strive to care for ourselves and sacrifice to help those in need. The poor labor for what they receive and seek the betterment of others as well.⁸ This pattern has been with us from the beginning.⁹

The Church welfare plan embodies this divine pattern, and faithful Church members follow it. Their offerings provide succor to the widow, care to the orphan, and refuge to the suffering.

A few years ago a high-ranking official from China visited Salt Lake City, toured Church sites, and spoke at Brigham Young University. Learning about the Church welfare program, he said, “If we all loved each other like this, the world would be a more peaceful place.”

Fasting and giving the value of the meals not eaten to help the poor captured his attention. At the conclusion of his visit to Welfare Square, he handed the manager a small red envelope—a “red pocket.” In China a “red pocket” is given as a gesture of love, blessing, and a wish for good fortune. “It does not contain much,” the visitor said, “but it represents the money I have saved from missing breakfast the last two mornings. I would like to give my fast offering to the Welfare program of the Church.”¹⁰

The Church welfare plan is God-inspired. Its tenets are fundamental to the salvation of man.¹¹ It is an ensign for service, a witness to the world that the Church of Jesus Christ has been restored. It is heaven’s help in practical ways. President Thomas S. Monson has said: “Welfare principles ... do not change. They will not change. They are revealed truths.”¹²

Another essential way to receive God’s help is through prayer. We are commanded to pray to God, our Father, in the name of Jesus Christ. The admonition is, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened.”¹³ Heavenly Father answers all sincere prayers.

As the Lord’s prophet, President Monson counsels: “At times there appears to be no light at the tunnel’s end—no dawn to break the night’s darkness. ... We feel abandoned, heartbroken, alone. If you find yourself in such a situation, I plead with you to turn to our Heavenly Father in faith. He will lift you and guide you. He will not always take your afflictions from you, but He will comfort and lead you with love through whatever storm you face.”¹⁴

In the face of some needs, we turn to a form of prayer available only under the hands of those authorized to minister for God. Jesus Christ went forth “healing the sick, raising the dead”¹⁵ and lifting up desperate souls. With the Restoration of the gospel came priesthood power and authority to continue this aspect of God’s work.¹⁶

When one is sick or deeply troubled, “call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.”¹⁷ Faithful elders are commissioned to do what the Lord would do if He were present.¹⁸

If records had been kept of prayers answered, the world could not contain the many volumes. From Elder Glen L. Rudd, an emeritus General Authority and beloved associate, comes this treasured testimonial:

“I received a phone call informing me that a family member, a 12-year-old girl named Janice, was in the hospital with critical injuries. Her mother wanted her to receive a priesthood blessing.

“Elder Cowley and I went to the hospital. There we learned details of the accident. Janice had been hit by a city bus. The double rear wheels had passed over her head and body.

“Elder Cowley and I entered the room where Janice lay. She had a broken pelvis, a badly injured shoulder, multiple broken bones, and severe head injuries that were beyond repair. Nonetheless, it was our feeling that we should administer to her and bless her. I anointed her with oil, and Elder Cowley sealed the anointing. In a strong and resolute manner he blessed her to become well and whole and to live a normal life. He blessed her that she would recover with no lasting effects from her many injuries. It was a great blessing and a truly magnificent moment.”

Elder Rudd goes on to say: “Janice didn’t move a muscle for more than a month. We never lost faith. A blessing had been pronounced that she would get well and have no lasting impairments.”

Elder Rudd concluded: “Many years have now passed since that hospital visit. I spoke with Janice recently. She is now 70 years of age, the mother of 3 children, the grandmother of 11 grandchildren. To this day, she has not suffered a single negative effect from her accident.”¹⁹

Hers is but one of many such healings. But none stands as a greater witness of how Heavenly Father helps His children through prayer than the one that took place in a hospital room, with 12-year-old Janice and two humble servants of God, some 58 years ago.

The ultimate help from Heavenly Father comes to us through His Son, “for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”²⁰

It is with great reverence and awe that I bear witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. In doing so, I am reminded how careful we must be in the use of His name. While His influence, teachings, and deliverance endear Him to us, we would do well not to speak of Him as though He were the friend next door.

He is the Firstborn of our Father’s spirit children. He did all that was ordained for Him to do—hence all things give Him reverence and bear witness of Him.²¹ He told the ancient prophets what to write and reveals His will to His prophets today—and He fulfills their every word.²²

Begotten of God, He was born of the virgin Mary, conquered death, atoned for the sins of the world, and brought salvation to both the living and dead. As our resurrected Lord, He ate fish and honeycomb with the Apostles and invited multitudes on both hemispheres to feel the wounds in His hands, feet, and side that all might know He is the God of Israel—He is the living Christ.

To all He declares:

“I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

“And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”²³

He is our Lawgiver and Judge, the Redeemer of the world. At His Second Coming, “the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counselor, The

Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”²⁴ Of this I bear witness in the most sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.