

Mortality Works!

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Jordelivet virker!

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De Halvfjerds

October 2024 general conference

Despite the challenges we all face, our loving Heavenly Father has designed the plan of happiness such that we are not destined to fail.

For several years I was assigned to home teach an older sister in my ward. She did not have an easy life. She had various health problems and experienced a lifetime of pain due to a childhood accident on the playground. Divorced at age 32 with four young children to raise and provide for, she remarried at age 50. Her second husband passed away when she was 66, and this sister lived an additional 26 years as a widow.

Despite her lifelong challenges, she was faithful to her covenants to the end. This sister was an avid genealogist, a temple attendee, and a collector and writer of family histories. Though she had many difficult trials, and without question she felt at times sadness and loneliness, she had a cheerful countenance and a gracious and pleasant personality.

Nine months after her passing, one of her sons had a remarkable experience in the temple. He learned by the power of the Holy Ghost that his mother had a message for him. She communicated with him, but not by vision or audible words. The following unmistakable message came into the son's mind from his mother: "I want you to know that mortality works, and I want you to know that I now understand why everything happened [in my life] the way it did—and it is all OK."

This message is all the more remarkable when one considers her situation and the difficulties this sister endured and overcame.

Trods de udfordringer, vi alle oplever, har vor kærlige himmelske Fader udformet planen for lykke således, at vi ikke er forudbestemt til at fejle.

I flere år havde jeg til opgave at være hjemmelærer for en ældre søster i min menighed. Hun havde ikke et nemt liv. Hun havde forskellige helbredsproblemer og havde haft smerter igennem hele livet på grund af en ulykke, der var sket på en legeplads, da hun var barn. Hun blev skilt som 32-årig og havde fire små børn at opdrage og forsørge. Hun giftede sig igen som 50-årig. Hendes anden ægtemand døde, da hun var 66 og denne søster levede 26 år mere som enke.

Trods sine livslange udfordringer, var hun trofast mod sine pagter helt til enden. Denne søster var en ivrig slægtsforsker, tempelbesøgende og indsamler og skribent af sin slægts historie. Selvom hun havde mange svære prøvelser, og hun uden tvivl til tider følte sorg og ensomhed, havde hun en munter udstråling og en elskværdig og behagelig personlighed.

Ni måneder efter hendes død havde en af hendes sønner en bemærkelsesværdig oplevelse i templet. Han fandt ud af, ved Helligåndens kraft, at hans mor havde et budskab til ham. Hun kommunikerede med ham, men ikke gennem syn eller talte ord. Følgende umiskendelige budskab kom til sønnens sind fra hans mor: »Jeg ønsker, at du skal vide, at jordelivet virker, og jeg ønsker, at du skal vide, at jeg nu forstår, hvorfor alt [i mit liv] skete, som det gjorde – og det hele er okay.«

Dette budskab er så meget mere bemærkelsesværdigt, når man tænker på hendes situation og de vanskeligheder, som denne søster udholdt og overvandt.

Brothers and sisters, mortality works! It is designed to work! Despite the challenges, heartaches, and difficulties we all face, our loving, wise, and perfect Heavenly Father has designed the plan of happiness such that we are not destined to fail. His plan provides a way for us to rise above our mortal failures. The Lord has said, "This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."

Nonetheless, if we are to be the beneficiaries of the Lord's "work and ... glory," even "immortality and eternal life," we must expect to be schooled and taught and to pass through the refiner's fire—sometimes to our utter limits. To completely avoid the problems, challenges, and difficulties of this world would be to sidestep the process that is truly necessary for mortality to work.

And so we should not be surprised when hard times come upon us. We will encounter situations that try us and people who enable us to practice true charity and patience. But we need to bear up under our difficulties and remember, as the Lord said:

"And whoso layeth down his life in my cause, for my name's sake, shall find it again, even life eternal.

"Therefore, be not afraid of your enemies [or your problems, challenges, or the tests of this life], for I have decreed ... , saith the Lord, that I will prove you in all things, whether you will abide in my covenant ... that you may be found worthy."

When we feel distraught or anxious about our problems or feel that we might be receiving more than our fair share of life's difficulties, we can remember what the Lord said to the children of Israel:

"And thou shalt remember all the way[s] which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what [is] in thine heart, whether thou [would] keep his commandments, or no."

As Lehi taught his son Jacob:

"Thou hast suffered afflictions and much sorrow. ... Nevertheless, ... [God] shall consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain. ... Wherefore, I know that thou art redeemed, because of the righteousness of thy Redeemer."

Because this life is a testing ground and "dark

Brødre og søstre, jordelivet virker! Det er designet til at virke! Trods de udfordringer, hjertesorger og vanskeligheder, vi alle oplever, har vor kærlige, vise og fuldkomne himmelske Fader udformet planen for lykke således, at vi ikke er forudbestemt til at fejle. Hans plan giver os mulighed for at rejse os over vores jordiske fiaskoer. Herren har sagt: »Dette er min gerning og herlighed: At tilvejebringe udødelighed og evigt liv for mennesket.«

Ikke desto mindre må vi, hvis vi skal nyde godt af Herrens »gerning og herlighed«, endda »udødelighed og evigt liv«, forvente at blive undervist og belært, og at gå igennem den lutrende ild – nogle gange til det yderste af vores grænser. Helt at undgå denne verdens problemer, udfordringer og vanskeligheder ville være at gå uden om den proces, der i sandhed er nødvendig for, at jordelivet virker.

Derfor bør det ikke komme bag på os, når vi møder svære tider. Vi vil komme i situationer, der prøver os, og møde mennesker, der gør det muligt for os at udøve sand næstekærlighed og tålmodighed. Men vi er nødt til at holde ud i vores vanskeligheder og huske det, som Herren sagde:

»Og den, der nedlægger sit liv for min sag, for mit navns skyld, skal finde det igen, nemlig evigt liv.

Vær derfor ikke bange for jeres fjender [eller jeres problemer, udfordringer eller dette livs prøvelser], for jeg har besluttet ... siger Herren, at jeg vil afprøve jer i alt, om I vil forblive i min pagt ... så I kan findes værdige.«

Når vi føler skuffelse eller ængstelse over vores problemer eller føler, at vi måske modtager flere af livets vanskeligheder, end hvad føles rimeligt, kan vi huske på, hvad Herren sagde til Israels børn:

»Husk, hvordan Herren din Gud nu i fyrre år har ladet dig vandre i ørkenen, for at ydmyge dig og sætte dig på prøve, så han kunne få at vide, om du har i sinde at holde hans befalinger eller ej.«

Som Lehi underviste sin søn, Jakob, om:

»Du [har] lidt trængsler og megen sorg ... Alligevel ... vil [Gud] hellige dine trængsler til gavn for dig ... Derfor ved jeg, at du er forløst på grund af din forlørsers retfærdighed.«

Eftersom dette liv er en prøvestand, og

clouds of trouble hang o'er us and threaten our peace to destroy," it is helpful to remember this counsel and promise found in Mosiah 23 relating to life's challenges: "Nevertheless—whosoever putteth his trust in [the Lord] the same shall be lifted up at the last day."

As a youth, I personally experienced great emotional pain and shame that came as the result of the unrighteous actions of another, which for many years affected my self-worth and my sense of worthiness before the Lord. Nevertheless, I bear personal witness that the Lord can strengthen us and bear us up in whatever difficulties we are called upon to experience during our sojourn in this vale of tears.

We are familiar with Paul's experience:

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations [I have received], there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

"For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

We don't know what Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was. He chose not to describe whether it was a physical ailment, a mental or emotional infirmity, or a temptation. But we don't need to know that detail to know that he struggled and pleaded with the Lord for help and that, ultimately, the Lord's strength and power are what helped him through it.

Like it was for Paul, it was through the Lord's help that I was eventually strengthened emotionally and spiritually and finally recognized after many years that I have always been a person of worth and worthy of the blessings of the gospel. The Savior helped me to overcome my feelings of unworthiness and to extend sincere forgiveness to the offender. I finally understood that the Savior's Atonement was a personal gift for me and that my Heavenly Father and His Son love me perfectly. Because of the Savior's Atonement, mortality works.

While I was eventually blessed to recognize how the Savior rescued me and stood by me through those experiences, I clearly understand that the unfortunate situation of my teenage

»trængslernes uvejrs os true med ufred [og] forfølgelse« er det nyttigt at huske på de råd og løfter, der findes i Mosija 23 angående livets udfordringer: »Men hver den, der sætter sin lid til ham, han skal blive løftet op på den yderste dag.«

Personligt oplevede jeg som ung stor følelsesmæssig smerte og skam, der kom som resultat af en andens uretfærdige handlinger, hvilket i mange år påvirkede mit selvværd og min følelse af værdighed over for Herren. Ikke desto mindre bærer jeg personligt vidnesbyrd om, at Herren kan styrke og opløfte os i alle de vanskeligheder, vi måtte møde under vores ophold i denne tåredal.

Vi genkender Paulus' erfaring:

»Og for at jeg ikke skulle blive hovmodig af de overmåde store åbenbaringer, blev der givet mig en torn i kødet, en engel fra Satan, som skulle slå mig, for at jeg ikke skulle blive hovmodig.

Tre gange bad jeg Herren om, at den måtte blive taget fra mig,

men han svarede: »Min nåde er dig nok, for min magt udøves i magtesløshed.« Jeg vil altså helst være stolt af min magtesløshed, for at Kristi magt kan være over mig.«

Vi ved ikke, hvad Paulus' »torn i kødet« var. Han valgte ikke at beskrive, om det var en fysisk lidelse, en mental eller følelsesmæssig skavank, eller en fristelse. Men vi behøver ikke at kende til den detalje for at vide, at han kæmpede og bønnfaldt Herren om hjælp, og at det i sidste ende var Herrens styrke og kraft, der hjalp ham gennem det.

Ligesom det var for Paulus, var det gennem Herrens hjælp, at jeg til sidst blev styrket følelsesmæssigt og åndeligt, og at jeg efter mange år endelig indså, at jeg altid har været en person af værdi, og værdig til evangeliets velsignelser. Frelseren hjalp mig med at overvinde min følelse af uværdighed og med oprigtigt at tilgive personen, der havde gjort mig fortræd. Jeg forstod endelig, at Frelserens forsoning var en personlig gave til mig, og at min himmelske Fader og hans Søn elsker mig fuldkomment. På grund af Frelserens forsoning, virker jordelivet.

Selvom jeg til sidst blev velsignet med at indse, hvordan Frelseren reddede mig og var med mig gennem disse oplevelser, forstår jeg tydeligt, at den ulykkelige situation i mine teenageår

years was my personal journey and experience, the resolution of which and eventual outcome cannot be projected onto those who have suffered and continue to suffer from the unrighteous behavior of others.

I recognize that life's experiences—good and bad—can teach us important lessons. I now know and bear testimony that mortality works! I hope that as a result of the sum of my life's experiences—good and bad—I have compassion for innocent victims of another's actions and empathy for the downtrodden.

I sincerely hope that as a result of my life's experiences—good and bad—I am kinder to others, treat others as the Savior would, and have greater understanding for the sinner and that I have complete integrity. As we come to rely on the Savior's grace and keep our covenants, we can serve as examples of the far-reaching effects of the Savior's Atonement.

I share a final example that mortality works.

Elder Hales's aunt, Lois VandenBosch, and his mother, Klea VandenBosch.

My mother did not have an easy journey through mortality. She received no accolades or worldly honors and did not have educational opportunities beyond high school. She contracted polio as a child, resulting in a lifetime of pain and discomfort in her left leg. As an adult, she experienced many difficult and challenging physical and financial circumstances but was faithful to her covenants and loved the Lord.

When my mother was 55, my next older sister passed away, leaving an eight-month-old baby daughter, my niece, motherless. For various reasons, Mom ended up largely raising my niece for the next 17 years, often under very trying circumstances. Yet, notwithstanding these experiences, she happily and willingly served her family, neighbors, and ward members and served as an ordinance worker in the temple for many years. During the last several years of her life, Mom suffered from a form of dementia, was often confused, and was confined to a nursing facility. Regrettably, she was alone when she passed away unexpectedly.

Several months after her passing, I had a dream I have never forgotten. In my dream, I was sitting in my office at the Church Administration Building. Mom entered the office. I knew she had

var min personlige rejse og erfaring, hvis løsning og endelige resultat ikke kan projiceres over på dem, der har lidt, og fortsat lider, under andres uretfærdige adfærd.

Jeg anerkender, at livets erfaringer – gode som dårlige – kan lære os vigtige lektier. Nu ved og bærer jeg vidnesbyrd om, at jordelivet virker! Jeg håber, at jeg som resultat af summen af mit livs erfaringer – gode som dårlige – har medfølelse med uskyldige ofre for andres handlinger, og medfølelse med de undertrykte.

Jeg håber inderligt, at jeg som følge af mine oplevelser i livet – gode som dårlige – er venligere mod andre, behandler andre, som Frelseren ville have gjort, og har større forståelse for synderen, og at jeg har fuldstændig integritet. Når vi sætter vores lid til Frelserens nåde og holder vores pagter, kan vi være eksempler på de vidtrækkende virkninger, som Frelserens forsoning har.

Jeg vil dele et sidste eksempel på, at jordelivet virker.

Ældste Hales' moster, Lois VandenBosch, og hans mor, Klea VandenBosch.

Min mor havde ikke en let rejse gennem jordelivet. Hun modtog hverken anerkendelse eller verdslig hæder og hun fik ingen muligheder for at uddanne sig udover gymnasialt niveau. Hun fik polio som barn, hvilket resulterede i et helt liv med smerter og ubehag i hendes venstre ben. Som voksen oplevede hun mange vanskeligheder og udfordrende fysiske og økonomiske vilkår, men hun var trofast mod sine pagter og hun elskede Herren.

Da min mor var 55 år, døde min næstældste storesøster og efterlod en otte måneder gammel datter, min niece, moderløs. Af forskellige årsager endte det med, at det var min mor, der tog sig af min niece de næste 17 år, ofte under meget svære omstændigheder. Men på trods af disse omstændigheder tjente hun glad og villigt sin familie, naboer og medlemmer af menigheden og tjente som tempeltjener i mange år. I de sidste mange år af sit liv led min mor af en form for demens, hun var ofte forvirret og kunne ikke forlade det plejehjem, hun boede på. Desværre var hun alene, da hun døde pludseligt.

Flere måneder efter hendes død havde jeg en drøm, som jeg aldrig har glemt. I min drøm sad jeg på mit kontor i Kirkens administrationsbygning. Min mor kom ind på kontoret. Jeg vidste,

come from the spirit world. I will always remember the feelings I had. She did not say anything, but she radiated a spiritual beauty that I had never before experienced and which I have difficulty describing.

Her countenance and being were truly stunning! I remember saying to her, “Mother, you are so beautiful!” referencing her spiritual power and beauty. She acknowledged me—again without speaking. I felt her love for me, and I knew then that she is happy and healed from her worldly cares and challenges and eagerly awaits “a glorious resurrection.” I know that for Mom, mortality worked—and that it works for us too.

God’s work and glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. The experiences of mortality are part of the journey that allows us to grow and progress toward that immortality and eternal life. We were not sent here to fail but to succeed in God’s plan for us.

As King Benjamin taught: “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.” In other words, mortality works!

I testify that as we receive the ordinances of the gospel, enter into covenants with God and then keep those covenants, repent, serve others, and endure to the end, we too can have the assurance and complete trust in the Lord that mortality works! I testify of Jesus Christ and that our glorious future with our Heavenly Father is made possible by the grace and Atonement of the Savior. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

at hun var kommet fra åndeverden. Jeg vil altid huske de følelser, jeg havde. Hun sagde ikke noget, men hun udstråede en åndelig skønhed, jeg aldrig tidligere havde set, og som jeg har svært ved at beskrive.

Hendes udstråling og væsen var virkelig fantastisk! Jeg kan huske, at jeg sagde til hende: »Mor, du er så smuk!« om hendes åndelige kraft og skønhed. Hun anerkendte mig – igen uden at tale. Jeg fornemmede hendes kærlighed til mig, og jeg vidste da, at hun er lykkelig og helet fra sine verdslige bekymringer og udfordringer, og at hun venter spændt på »en herlig opstandelse«. Jeg ved, at for min mor virkede jordelivet – og at det også virker for os.

Guds gerning og herlighed er at tilvejebringe udødelighed og evigt liv for mennesket. Livets erfaringer er en del af den rejse, der gør os i stand til at vokse og udvikle os henimod udødelighed og evigt liv. Vi blev ikke sendt hertil for at fejle, men for at følge Guds plan for os.

Som Kong Benjamin sagde: »Og endvidere ønsker jeg af jer, at I skal tænke på den velsignede og lykkelige tilstand for dem, der holder Guds befalinger. For se, de er velsignede i alt, både ti meligt og åndeligt; og hvis de holder trofast ud til enden, bliver de modtaget i himlen, så de derved kan bo hos Gud i en tilstand af aldrig ophørende lykke.« Med andre ord, jordelivet virker!

Jeg vidner om, at når vi modtager evangeliets ordnancer, indgår pagter med Gud og derefter holder disse pagter, omvender os, tjener andre og holder ud til enden, kan vi også få vished og fuldstændig tillid til Herren om, at jordelivet virker! Jeg vidner om Jesus Kristus og om, at vores herlige fremtid med vor himmelske Fader er gjort mulig ved Frelserens nåde og forsoning. I Jesu Kristi navn. Amen.