

Mortality Works!

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E Aoga Le Olaga Nei!

Saunia e Elder Brook P. Hales
O Le Fitugafulu

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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 attender, 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.

E ui i luitau e feagai ma i tatou uma, ua mamanuina e lo tatou Tama alofa le fuafuaga o le fiafia e lei faamoemoe tatou te toilalo ai.

Mo le tele o tausaga sa tofia ai au e avea o se faiaoga o aiga i se tuafafine olomatua i la'u uarota. Sa lei faigofie lona olaga. Sa tele ni ona faafitauli tau i le soifua maloloina ma sa feagai ma se olaga o tiga ona o se faalavelave na tupu i lona laitiiti i le malaetaalo. Sa tatala lana faaipoipoga i le 32 o ona tausaga ma se fanau laiti e tausi ma vaaia, sa toefaaipoipo o ia i le 50 o ona tausaga. Sa maliu lana tane lona lua ina ua 66 ona tausaga, ma sa ola lenei tuafafine i nisi tausaga faaopoopo e 26 o se tina ua oti lana tane.

E ui i luitau o lona olaga atoa, ae sa faamaoni o ia i ana feagaiga e oo i le iuga. O lenei tuafafine o se su'egafa tuuto, auai e le aunoa i le malumalu, ma o se āogafa ma o se tusitala o talafaasolopito o aiga. E ui ina sa tele ona tofotofoga faigata, ma e aunoa ma se fesili sa ia lagona le faanoanoa ma le tuuatoatasi i nisi o taimi, ae sa laufofoga fiafia ma e i ai sona uiga patino tausaaia manaia.

E iva masina talu ona maliu o ia, sa maua e se tasi o ona atalii se aafiaga matagofie i le malumalu. Sa ia aoaoina e ala i le mana o le Agaga Paia o loo i ai se feau a lona tina mo ia. Sa la talanoa ma ia, ae e le o se faaaliga vaaia po o ni upu na lagonaina. Na oo mai lenei feau e le mafaaseseina i le mafaufau o le atalii mai lona tina: "Ou te manao ia e iloa e aoga le olaga faitino, ma ou te manao ia e iloa ua ou malamalama nei i le mafuaaga na tutupu ai mea uma [i lo'u olaga] i le ala na tutupu ai—ma e lelei mea uma."

E sili atu ona ofoofogia lenei feau pe a mafau-fau le tagata i lona tulaga ma faigata sa onosa'ia e lenei tuafafine ma manumalo ai.

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.”

Uso e ma tuafafine, e aoga le olaga nei! Na mamanuina ina ia aoga! E ui i luitau, lototiga, ma faigata e feagai ma i tatou uma, na mamanuina e lo tatou Tama alofa, poto, ma atoatoa le fuafuaga o le fiafia e lei faamoemoe tatou te toilalo ai. O Lana fuafuaga ua saunia ai se ala mo i tatou e tula’i a’e ai i luga atu o o tatou toilalo faaletino. Sa fetalai mai le Alii, “O la’u galuega ma lo’u mamalu lenei—ia aumaia le tino ola pea ma le ola faavavau o le tagata.”

Ae ui o lea, afai e tatau ona avea i tatou o ni ē faamanuina i le “galuega ma le mamalu,” o le Alii e oo foi i le “tino ola pea ma le ola e faavavau,” e tatau la ona a’oa’i ma aoao i tatou, ma ui atu i le afi a le tunu auro—o nisi taimi e oo i le si’ui e gata ai lo tatou malosai. Ina ia matuai aloese atoatoa mai faafitauli, luitau, ma faigata o lenei lalolagi, o le laa ese lea mai le faagasologa lea e matuai tatau ai mo le olaga nei ia aoga.

O lea la, e le tatau ona tatou tete’i pe a oo mai taimi faigata i o tatou luga. O le a tatou fetaiai ma tulaga e tofotofo ai i tatou ma tagata o le a tatou mafai ai ona faata’ita’i le alofa mama moni ma le onosai. Ae e manaomia ona tatou onosai i lalo o o tatou faigata ma ia manatua, e pei ona fetalai mai le Alii:

“Ma ai se tasi e tuu i lalo lona ola i lo u faamoemoe, mo lo u igoa, o le a toe maua e ia, o le ola lava e faavavau.

“O lea, aua tou te fefefe i o outou fili [po o a outou faafitauli, luitau, po o tofotofoa o lenei olaga ... , na fetalai mai ai le Alii, ma o le a ou tofotofoina outou i mea uma, pe tou te mau i a’u feagaiga ... ina ia mafai ona outou agavaa.”

Pe a tatou lagona le popolevale po o le atuatuvaale e uiga i a tatou faafitauli pe lagona faapea atonu e tele atu faigata o lona olaga nai lo isi, e mafai ona tatou manatua le mea na fetalai mai ai le Alii i le fanauga a Isaraelu:

“Ia e manatua le ala uma na taitaiina mai ai oe e Ieova le Atua i nei tausaga e fagafulu i le vao, ia na faatigaina ai oe, ma tofotofo ia te oe, e iloa ai mea o i lou loto, pe e te tauusiusi i ana poloai-ga, pe leai.”

E pei ona sa aoao atu e Lia e lona atalii o Iakopo:

“Sa e mafatia i puapuaga ma le faanoanoa tele. ... Ae ui o lea, ... o le a faapaiaina [e le Atua] ou puapuaga mo ou manuia. ... O le mea lea, ua ou iloa ua togiolaina oe, ona o le amiotonu o lou Togiola.”

Because this life is a testing ground and “dark 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

Ona o lenei olaga o se nofoaga e tofotofo ai le olaga ma “a tu mai se ao uliuli ma lamatia ai i tatou,” e aoga le manatua o lenei fautuaga ma le folafolaga o loo maua i le Mosaea 23 e faataata i luitau o le olaga: “E ui i lea—soo se tasi e tuu atu lona faalagolago i [le Alii] o ia lava lea o le a sii a’e i le aso gataaga.”

A o o’u talavou, sa ou oo ai lava i se tiga tele faalelagona ma le maasiasi na oo mai o se tau-nuuga o ni faatinoga amioletonu a se isi, lea na aafia ai mo le tele o tausaga lo’u lava ta’uaogaina ma lo’u lagona o le agavaa i luma o le Alii. Ae ui o lea, ou te tuuina atu la’u molimau patino e mafai e le Alii ona faamalosia i tatou ma lagolagoina i tatou i soo se faigata e tuu aloaia mai tatou te o’o i ai i le taimi o la tatou malaga puupuu i lenei lalolagi o faigata.

Ua tatou masani i le aafiaga o Paulo:

“Ina ne’i faamaualuga a’u i, le silisili ese o mea na faaalua mai [ua ou mauaina], sa tuuina mai ia te a’u le mea matuitui i le tino, o le agelu a Satani e tu’i mai ia te au, ina ne’i o’u faamaualuga.

“Na ou aioi faatolu atu i le Alii ona o lea mea, ina ia alu ese ia te au.

“Na ia fetalai mai ia te au, “O lo’u nei alofa tunoa e lava lea e fesoasoani ia te oe, aua o le vaivai e faaatoatoaina ai lo’u mana.” O lea ua tele ai lava lo’u fiafia i mea ua ou vaivai ai, ina ia tumau i o’u luga le mana o Keriso.”

Tatou te le iloa pe o a “mea matuitui i le tino” o Paulo. Na ia filifili e aua nei faamatalaina pe o se ma’i i le tino, se vaivaiga faalemafaufau pe faalelagona, po o se faaosoosoga. Ae e le manao-mia fua ona tatou iloa lena auiliiliga ia iloa ai sa tauivi o ia ma sa aioi atu i le Alii mo se fesoasoani, ma o le iuga, o le malosiaga ma le mana o le Alii o mea ia sa fesoasoani ia te ia.

E faapei o Paulo, o le fesoasoani a le Alii na i’u ai ina faamalosia au faalelagona ma faaleagaga, ma mulimuli ane ou iloa ina ua mavae le tele o tausaga, sa avea pea a’u i taimi uma o se tagata ta’uaogaina ma le agavaa mo faamanuiaga o le talalelei. Sa fesoasoani le Faaola ia te au e faatoilalo o’u lagona o le le agavaa ma tuuina mai le faamagaloga faamaoni i le tagata faatausuai. Na i’u ina ou malamalama o le Togiola a le Faaola o se meaalofo patino mo au, ma e alolofa atoatoa lo’u Tama Faalelagi ma Lona Alo ia te au. Ona o le Togiola a le Faaola, ua aoga ai le olaga nei.

E ui sa i’u ina faamanuiaina atu i le iloa ina o le ala na laveaiina ai a’u e le Faaola ma sa tu pea

through those experiences, I clearly understand that the unfortunate situation of my teenage 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.

i o'u autafa i le aluga o na aafiaga, ae ua manino lo'u malamalama faapea o le tulaga le manuia o tausaga o lo'u talavou ola'umalaga ma aafiaga patino, o le faaiuga e le mafai ona muai iloa lona taunuuga e oo i ai i latou na mafatia ma tumau pea ona mafatia ai mai amioga amioletonu a isi.

Ua ou iloina o aafiaga o le olaga—lelei ma leaga—e mafai ona aoao ai i tatou i lesona taua. Ua ou iloa nei ma tuu atu la'u molimau e aoga le olaga nei! Ou te faamoemoe e avea o se taunuuga o le tauaofai o aafiaga o lo'u olaga—lelei ma leaga—ua ou maua ai le mutimutualofa mo i latou e aafia fua ae ta'umamaina, ona o faatinoga a se isi ma le lagona o'oo'o mo e ua mafatia.

Ou te faamoemoe ma le lotofaamaoni, e avea o se taunuuga o aafiaga o lo'u olaga—lelei ma leaga—ua sili atu lo'u agalelei i isi, faia isi e faapei ona faia e le Faaola, ua sili atu le malamalama mo le tagata agasala, ma ua atoatoa lo'u amiosa'o. A oo ina tatou faalagolago i le alofatunoa o le Faaola ma tausi a tatou feagaiga, e mafai ona avea i tatou o ni faataitaiga o aafiaga o'oo'o o le Togiola a le Faaola.

Ou te faasoa atu se faataitaiga faaii e aoga le olaga nei.

O le uso o le tina o Elder Hales, o Lois VandenBosch, ma lona tina o Klea VandenBosch.

Sa lei faigofie le malaga a lo'u tina i le olaga nei. Na te lei mauaina ni faaneeneega po o ni mamalu faalelalolagi ma na te lei mauaina avanoa faaleaoaoga i luga atu o le aoga maua luga. Sa pisia o ia i le ma'ipipili a o laitiiti, ma taunuu ai i le tiga ma le le manuia o lona vae agavale i lona olaga atoa. Ina ua tagata matua, sa feagai o ia ma le tele o faigata ma tulaga luitau faaletino ma mea tautupe, ae sa faamaoni i ana feagaiga ma sa alofa i le Alii.

Ina ua 55 tausaga o lo'u tina, na maliliu le isi o'u tuafafine matua, ma sa tuua sana pepe teine e valu masina le matua, le tama a lo'u tuafafine, ua leai se tina. Ona o ni mafuaaga eseese, sa i'u ai ina tausia e lo'u Tina le tama a lo'u tuafafine mo le isi 17 tausaga, o le tele o taimi i lalo o tulaga faigata tele. Peitai, e ui i nei aafiaga, sa ia tautuaina lona aiga ma le fiasia ma le naunautai, tuaoi, ma tagata o le uarota, ma sa avea o se fai sauniga i le malumalu mo le tele o tausaga. I nai tausaga mulimuli o lona soifua, sa mafatia ai lo'u Tina i se ituaiga o ma'i o le mafaufau, sa tele ina feme-meai, ma sa taofimau ai i se nofoaga mo tagata matutua. O le mea e faanoanoa ai, sa na o ia i le

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 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.

taimi na maliu faafuasei ai.

I ni nai masina talu ona maliu o ia, sa fai ai sa’u miti ou te lei faagaloia lava. I la’u miti, sa ou nofo i lo’u ofisa i le Maota o le Pulega a le Ekalesia. Sa ulufale mai lou Tina i le ofisa. Na ou iloa lava na sau mai le lalolagi o agaga. O le a ou manatuaina pea o’u lagona na i ai. E le’i i ai sana tala na fai mai, ae sa susulu mai ia te ia le lalelei faaleagaga ou te le’i vaai i ai muamua ma e faigata ia te au ona faamatala.

O ona foliga ma lona tagata sa matuai maoae lava! Ou te manatua la’u tala na fai atu ia te ia, “Tina, e ese lou lalelei!” e faasino i lona mana faaleagaga ma le matagofie. Sa ia iloa au—ae e lei i ai foi se tala. Sa ou lagonaina lona alofa mo au, ma sa ou iloa foi i lona taimi o loo fiafia o ia ma ua faamaloloina mai ona tuatuaano’a ma luitau o le olaga ma o loo faatalitali ma le naunautai i “se toetu mamalu.” Ua ou iloa mo lou Tina, sa aoga le olaga nei—ma e aoga foi mo i tatou.

O le galuega ma le mamalu o le Atua “o le aumaia o le tino ola pea ma le ola faavavau o le tagata.” O aafiaga o le olaga nei, o se vaega o le malaga lea e mafai ai ona tatou tuputupu ae ma alualu i luma i lona tino ola pea ma le ola e faavavau. E lei auina mai i tatou iinei ia toilalo, ae ia manuia i le fuafuaga a le Atua mo i tatou.

E pei ona sa aoao mai e le Tupu o Peniamina, “Ma e le gata i lea, Ou te manao ia outou manatunatu i le tulaga manuia ma le fiafia o i latou o e e tausi i poloaiga a le Atua. Aua faauta, e faamanuina i latou i mea uma, i mea uma faaletino ma faaleagaga; ma afai latou te tutumau i le faamaoni e oo i le iuga, e talia i latou i le lagi, ina ia mafai ona latou mau faatasi ma le Atua i se tulaga o le fiafia e le gata.” I se isi faaupuga, e aoga le olaga nei!

Ou te molimau atu a o tatou mauaina sauniga o le talalelei, ulu atu i feagaiga ma le Atua ona tausia lea o na feagaiga, salamo, auauna atu i isi, ma tumau e oo i le iuga, e mafai foi e i tatou ona maua le faamautinoaga ma le faatuatuga atoatoa i le Alii e aoga le olaga nei! Ou te molimau atu ia Iesu Keriso ma o lo tatou lumanai mamalu faatasi ma lo tatou Tama Faalelagi, ua mafai ona o le alofatunoa ma le Togiola a le Faaola. I le suafa o Iesu Keriso, amene.