

Mortality Works!

By Elder Brook P. Hales
Of the Seventy

Maisha ya Duniani Yanafanya Kazi!

Na Mzee Brook P. Hales
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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—

Licha ya changamoto ambazo sote tunapitia, Baba yetu mpendwa wa Mbinguni amesanifu mpango wa furaha kiasi kwamba hatujakusudiwa kushindwa.

Kwa miaka kadhaa nilipangiwa kuwa mwalimu wa nyumbani wa dada mmoja kiongo katika kata yangu. Hakuwa na maisha rahisi. Alikuwa na matatizo kadhaa tofauti ya kiafya na alipitia wakati mgumu katika maisha kutokana na ajali ya utotoni kwenye uwanja wa michezo. Alipewa talaka akiwa na miaka 32 akiwa na watoto wadogo wanne wa kuwalea na kukidhi mahitaji, aliolewa tena akiwa na miaka 50. Mume wake wa pili alifariki dunia yeye akiwa na umri wa miaka 66, na dada huyu aliishi miaka 26 ya ziada kama mjane.

Licha ya changamoto nyingi katika maisha yake marefu, alikuwa mwaminifu katika maa-gano yake hadi mwisho. Dada huyu alikuwa mwenye shauku ya elimu ya nasaba, mhudhuriaji wa hekaluni, na mkusanyaji na mwandishi wa historia za familia. Ingawa alikuwa na majaribu mengi magumu, na bila shaka wakati mwingine alijihisi huzuni na upweke, alikuwa na uso mchangamfu na mwenye shukrani na utu wenye kufurahisha.

Miezi mitatu baada ya kufariki kwake, mmoja wa watoto wake wa kiume alipata uzoefu wa kustaajibisha hekaluni. Alijua kwa nguvu ya Roho Mtakatifu kwamba mama yake alikuwa na ujumbe kwa ajili yake. Aliwasiliana naye, lakini siyo kwa ono au maneno ya kusikika. Ujumbe bayana ufuatao ulikuja katika akili ya mwana kutoka kwa mama yake: "Ninataka ujue kwamba maisha ya duniani ni muhimu, na ninataka wewe ujue kwamba mimi sasa ninaelewa kwa nini kila

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.

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.”

kitu kilitokea [katika maisha yangu] katika nam-na kilivyotokea—na yote ni SAWA.”

Ujumbe huu ni wa kustaajabisha zaidi mtu anapozingatia hali na magumu ambayo dada huyu aliyavumilia na kuyashinda.

Akina kaka na akina dada, maisha ya duniani yanafanya kazi! Yamesanifiwa ili yafanye kazi! Licha ya changamoto, maumivu na magumu tunayokabiliana nayo, Baba yetu mpendwa wa Mbinguni, mwenye hekima na mkamilifu amesanifu mpango wa furaha kiasi kwamba hatujakusudiwa kushindwa. Mpango Wake hutoa njia kwa ajili yetu kuinuka juu ya kushindwa kwetu. Bwana amesema, “Hii ndiyo kazi yangu na utukufu wangu, kuleta kutokufa na uzima wa milele wa mwanadamu.”

Hata hivyo, kama tunahitaji kuwa wanufaika wa “kazi na utukufu” wa Bwana, hata “kutokufa na uzima wa milele,” lazima tutegemee kupewa elimu na kufundishwa, na kufaulu kupitia moto wa msafishaji—wakati mwingine hadi kufikia ukomo wetu. Kwa kuelewa kikamilifu matatizo, changamoto na magumu ya ulimwengu huu ingekuwa kukwepa mchakato ambao kwa kweli ni muhimu kwa ajili ya maisha ya duniani kufanya kazi.

Na hivyo, hatupaswi kushangaa wakati nyakati ngumu zinapotufikia. Tutakumbana na hali ambazo zinatujaribu na watu ambao wanatuwezesha kufanyia mazoezi hisani ya kweli na uvumilivu. Lakini tunahitaji kustahimili chini ya magumu yetu na kukumbuka, kama Bwana alivyosema:

“Na yeyote autoaye uhai wake katika kazi yangu, kwa ajili ya jina langu, atauona tena, hata uzima wa milele.

“Kwa hiyo, usiwaogope maadui zako [au matatizo, changamoto au majaribio ya maisha haya], kwani nimeazimia ..., asema Bwana, kwamba nitawajaribu ninyi katika mambo yote ikiwa mtakaa katika agano langu ... ili muweze kuwa wenye kustahili.”

Tunapohisi kukanganyikiwa au kuwa na wasiwasi kuhusu matatizo yetu au kuhisi kwamba yawezekana tunapokea zaidi kuliko sehemu yetu ya magumu ya maisha, tunaweza kukumbuka kile Bwana alichosema kwa wana wa Israeli:

“Nawe utaikumbuka njia ile yote Bwana Mungu wako aliyokuongoza miaka hii arobaini katika jangwa, ili akunyenyekaze, kukujaribu kuyajua yaliyo moyoni mwako kwamba [utashika] amri zake, au sivyote.”

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 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 forgive-

Kama Lehi alivyomfundisha mwanawe Yakobo:

“Umeteseka kwa masumbuko na huzuni nyingi. ... Walakini, ... [Mungu] ataweka wakfu masumbuko yako kwa faida yako. ... Kwa hivyo, ninajua kwamba wewe umekombolewa kwa sababu ya utakatifu wa Mkombozi wangu.”

Kwa sababu maisha haya ni uwanja wa majaribio na “shida zinapotuzonga na kutisha amani yetu,” inasaidia kukumbuka ushauri huu na ahadi inayopatikana katika Mosia 23 kuhusiana na changamoto za maisha: “Walakini—yeyote atakayeweka imani yake [kwa Bwana] yeye atainuliwa juu siku ya mwisho.”

Kama kijana, binafsi nilipitia hisia nyingi za maumivu na aibu ambazo zilikuja kama matokeo ya matendo yasiyo ya haki kutoka kwa mtu mwingine, ambazo kwa miaka mingi ziliathiri ustahili wangu binafsi na hisia ya kustahili mbele za Bwana. Hata hivyo ninatoa ushahidi binafsi kwamba Bwana anaweza kutuimarisha sisi na kutubeba juu katika magumu yoyote tunayoitwa kupitia wakati wa safari yetu katika bonde hili la majonzi.

Tunafahamu uzoefu wa Paulo:

“Na makusudi nisipate kujivuna kupita kiasi kwa wingi wa mafunuo hayo [niliyopokea], nali-pewa mwiba katika mwili, mjumbe wa Shetani ili anipige, nisije nikajivuna kupita kiasi.

“Kwa ajili ya kitu hicho nalimsihi Bwana mara tatu, kwamba kinitoke.

“Naye akaniambia, Neema yangu yakutosha: maana uweza wangu hutimilika katika udhaifu.” Basi nitajisifia udhaifu wangu ili uweza wa Kristo ukae juu yangu.”

Sisi hatujui “mwiba katika mwili” wa Paulo ulikuwa ni nini. Yeye hakuchagua kuelezea kama ilikuwa maradhi ya kimwili, kiakili au mapungufu wa kihisia, au majaribu. Lakini hatuhitaji kujua hilo ili tujue kwamba yeye alihangaika na kumsihi Bwana kwa ajili ya msaada na kwamba mwishowe, nguvu ya Bwana na uweza ndivyo vilivyomsaidia.

Kama Paulo, ilikuwa kupitia msaada wa Bwana kwamba hatimaye niliimarishwa kihisia na kiroho na mwishowe nilitambua baada ya miaka mingi kwamba daima nimekuwa mtu wa thamani na mwenye kustahili baraka za injili. Mwokozi alinisaidia kushinda hisia zangu za kutostahili na kutoa msamaha wa dhati kwa mkosaji. Hatimaye

ness 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 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

nilielewa kwamba Upatanisho wa Mwokozi ulikuwa zawadi binafsi kwangu na kwamba Baba yangu wa Mbinguni na Mwanawe wananipenda mimi kikamilifu. Kwa sababu ya Upatanisho wa Mwokozi, maisha ya duniani yanafanya kazi.

Wakati mwishowe nilipobarikiwa kutambua namna Mwokozi alivyoniokoa na kusimama nami wakati wote wa hayo niliyopitia, kwa uwazi kabisa naelewa kwamba hali hizo za bahati mbaya za ujana wangu zilikuwa ndizo safari na uzoefu wangu binafsi, azimio ambalo kwalo na matokeo ya baadaye hayawezi kuonyeshwa kwa wale walioteseka na wanaoendelea kuteseka kutokana na tabia zisizo za haki za wengine.

Ninatambua kwamba uzoefu wa maisha—mzuri au mbaya—unaweza kutufundisha masomo muhimu. Na sasa ninajua na ninashuhudia kwamba maisha ya duniani yanafanya kazi! Ninatumaini kwamba kama matokeo ya majumuisho ya uzoefu wa maisha yangu—mema na mabaya—ninayo huruma kwa watu wasio na hatia ya matendo ya wengine na huruma kwa wanaodhulumiwa.

Kwa dhati ninatumaini kwamba kama matokeo ya uzoefu wa maisha yangu—mzuri au mbaya—mimi ni mkarimu zaidi kwa wengine, nikiwatendea wengine kama ambavyo Mwokozi angetenda, na ninao uelewa mkubwa zaidi kwa mtenda dhambi, na kwamba ninao uadilifu kamili. Tunapokuja kutegemea neema ya Mwokozi na kushika maagano yetu, tunaweza kutumika kama mifano ya matokeo yenye kufika mbali juu ya Upatanisho wa Mwokozi.

Ninashiriki mfano wa mwisho kwamba maisha ya duniani yanafanya kazi.

Shangazi wa Mzee Hales, Lois VandenBosch, na mama yake, Klea VandenBosch.

Mama yangu hakuwa na safari rahisi maisha yake yote hapa duniani. Hakupokea nishani au heshima ya ulimwenguni na hakuwa na fursa ya kielimu zaidi ya shule ya upili. Alipatwa na polio akiwa mtoto, iliyosababisha maumivu maisha yake yote na kukosa faraja katika mguu wake wa kushoto. Kama mtu mzima, alipitia magumu mengi na hali zenye changamoto kimwili na kifedha lakini alikuwa mwaminifu kwenye maagano yake na alimpenda Bwana.

Mama yangu alipokuwa na umri wa miaka 55 dada yangu mkubwa aliyenifuatia alifariki dunia, akiacha nyuma mtoto mchanga wa kike wa miezi nane, mpwa wangu, akiwa hana mama. Kwa sababu kadhaa, Mama aliishia kwa sehemu

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 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 oth-

kubwa kumlea mpwa wangu kwa miaka 17 iliyo-fuatia, mara nyingi katika hali ngumu. Na bado, licha ya matukio haya, kwa furaha na kwa hiari alitumikia familia yake, majirani, na waumini katika tawi, na alihudumu kama mfanyakazi wa ibada katika hekalu kwa miaka mingi. Katika miaka kadhaa ya mwisho ya uhai wake, Mama aliteseka aina fulani ya kupungukiwa akili, mara kwa mara alichanganyikiwa, na alizuiliwa kwenye nyumba ya uuguzi. Cha kusikitisha, alikuwa peke yake wakati alipofariki bila kutarajia.

Miezi kadhaa baada ya kufariki kwake, niliota ndoto ambayo kamwe sijaweza kusahau. Katika ndoto yangu, nilikuwa nimekaa ofisini kwangu katika Jengo la Utawala la Kanisa. Mama aliingia ofisini humo. Nilijua alikuwa ametoka katika ulimwengu wa roho. Daima nitakumbu-ka hisia niliyokuwa nayo. Hakusema chochote, lakini alinururisha urembo wa kiroho ambao sijawahi kuuona kabla na ambao ninapata ugu-mu kuuelezea.

Uso wake na umbile lake hakika vilikuwa vizuri mno. Ninakumbuka kumwambia, “Mama, umekuwa mrembo sana!” nikirejelea uwezo wake wa kiroho na urembo. Alinitambua—tena pasipo kuzungumza. Nilihisi upendo wake kwangu, na hapo nilijua kwamba yuko na furaha na ameponywa kutokana na shughuli za ulimwengu na changamoto na kwa hamu anasubiri “ufufuko mtukufu.” Ninajua kwamba kwa Mama, maisha ya duniani yalifanya kazi—na kwamba yanafanya kazi kwetu sisi pia.

Kazi na utukufu wa Mungu ni kuleta kutok-u-fa na uzima wa milele wa mwanadamu. Uzoefu wa maisha ya duniani ni sehemu ya safari hiyo ambayo inaturuhusu sisi kukua na kuendelea kuelekea kutokufa kwa binadamu na uzima wa milele. Hatukuletwa hapa ili tushindwe bali tufaulu katika mpango wa Mungu kwa ajili yetu sisi.

Kama Mfalme Benjamini alivyofundisha: “Ningetamani kwamba mtafakari juu ya hali ya baraka na yenye furaha ya wale wanaotii amri za Mungu. Kwani tazama, wanabarikiwa katika vitu vyote, vya muda na vya kiroho; na kama wat-avumilia kwa uaminifu hadi mwisho watapokewa mbinguni, kwamba hapo waishi na Mungu kati-ka hali ya furaha isiyo na mwisho.” Kwa maneno mengine, maisha ya duniani yanafanya kazi!

Ninashuhudia kwamba tunapopokea ibada za injili, tunapoingia katika maagano na Mungu na kisha kuyashika maagano hayo, kutubu na ku-

ers, 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.

watumikia wengine, na kuvumilia hadi mwisho, tunaweza pia kuwa na hakikisho na tumaini kamilifu katika Bwana kwamba maisha ya duniani yanafanya kazi! Ninashuhudia juu ya Yesu Kristo na kwamba utukufu wa siku zetu za usoni pamoja na Baba yetu wa Mbinguni unawezeshwa kwa neema na Upatanisho wa Mwokozi. Katika jina la Yesu Kristo, amina.