

AKRON OHIO STAKE

Stake Presidency Message Suffering

Perhaps this tender, unpleasant topic is seldom leisurely contemplated, only forcibly thrust into mindfulness as in these times of disease, death, loss of employment, financial reversal, fear and other miseries which, unfortunately, constitute but a sample of the pains and afflictions humankind experiences.

Our existence on earth (and more so in many other parts of the earth) is not called a vale of sorrow (Alma 37:45) for no reason. And no wonder the Savior called the Holy Ghost and Himself Comforters (John 14:16, 18).

Suffering is conflictingly many things. It's a brutal teacher. It's a benevolent mentor. It's a just rewarder of the evil; it's a merciless torturer of the innocent. It slows time, but it may quicken our senses. It softens hearts; it hardens hearts. It comes by God, the adversary, man, nature, chance, and the fallen state of the world. It shouts and insists on being heard, but we often don't get its reason, which only adds to the despair. Surely it is a consequence of sins and errors—ours and others', individuals' and nations'—and letting the wicked fill their cup of iniquities. But it is also a prerequisite for sanctification (D&C 101:5). It breaks hearts and bodies, and, at times, souls. But its ravages can also change us fundamentally, help us see the eternal, and feel for all sufferings and sufferers. The good and wise preempts much of it by their right living, but it does not pass them over. It can make gold pure because it is fire.

Like death is resurrection's collaborator, joy, not by irony, but by the law of opposition, is in part suffering. In our beautiful, cheerful, joyful Savior is forever also a poor

wayfaring man of grief whose suffering we remember each week. Perhaps that's why in their extremities, our pioneers became acquainted with God. Brokenness is part of wholeness; wholeness includes brokenness. Our perfect Savior weeps (John 11:35, Jacob 5:41, Moses 7:37) and still bears the wounds of the atonement (Zechariah 13:6).



President Wen

When the sufferings Christ bore for us got so sore, so exquisite, so unbearable (D&C 19:15), He prayed more earnestly the Father to let the bitter cup pass from Him. And when the cup wasn't taken away, He partook (D&C 19:19).

Sufferings are usually something that someone or some circumstances inflict on us. Christ's taking and drinking the bitter cup was, however, He acting on suffering. As we follow our Exemplar in all things, this may be the aspiring way for us to face our share of suffering that cannot be taken away—even to submissively partake them and bear all things (13th Article of Faith).

The Lord, knowing our burden, does give us birds and flowers and sunshine. And a Comforter who can speak peace that passeth all understanding (Philippians 4:7). His injunction is for us to mourn with and minister to each other. He provided us Job, who after all he went through said in the last chapter of the sufferer: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee." (Job 42:5)—so we know sometimes we have to go through the deep to know the infinite.

Still, to those bearing sore and long suffering, we keenly feel the febleness of words to console. But the words of He who suffered to the point of bleeding at every pore must be listened to. For amidst His and others' distresses, three times in His mortal ministry He offered a reason to be of good cheer:

To one sick, He said, "be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." (Matthew 9:2) To disciples troubled and fearful, He said, "Be of good cheer: it is I." (Mark 6:50) To dear ones whom He knew would soon undergo fiery tribulations, He said, "be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33).

Indeed, what are the glad tidings of great joy (Mosiah 3:3) that will cause us to remember our pain no more (Alma 36:19)? Are they not the rejoicing in the cleansing of our sins, the person of our Lord and Savior, and the ultimate and eternal victory of Christ against the world and its darknesses?

The cross before the crown. The crown because of the cross. Tears of sufferings may become tears of joy!



Deepen conversion to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and the restored gospel.

4. Minister to others spiritually and temporally.

RELIEF SOCIETY HAPPENINGS

by Sister Alice Hauser, Stake Relief Society Second Counselor

Hear Him

During these past weeks, I have been continually drawn to President Nelson's words from General Conference this April. "Hear Him." (April 2020 General Conference) He promises that although the temples are closed because of the pandemic, that if we turn to Family History work, we will be able to "increase and improve our ability to hear Him."

I have taken those words to heart. One thing that I have focused on is reading the personal histories, letters, and patriarchal blessings of my mother and grandmothers, and the great women that gave life to them. It has bolstered my strength and endurance during these difficult times, and many times, I have felt the presence of the Holy Ghost, not only as a comforter but also as witnesses of our Savior and our Heavenly Father.

My great grandmother, Leona Jane Hatch Wilcox, is one of my greatest examples of strength, humility, and endurance. She married at age 20 in 1905 to Joseph Edward Wilcox in the Salt Lake City Temple. They



had a farm in Farmington, Utah. After her first son, Ellis, was born, her husband was called to Australia for a three-year mission in 1907. The postcards that have been preserved leave just a trace of her loneliness and struggles to maintain the farm in his absence. But she continually showed her love to him and hoped that they would one day be together again. When he returned, they had my grandfather Wilford, and four more children, but their youngest, baby Dale, passed away before he was a year old. Harley, a few years younger than my grandfather, fell out of one of their cherry trees and spent two years in Primary Children's Hospital in a body cast. When he was finally released,

his back was so crooked that he spent most of his days in a wheelchair. Leona spent many hours tutoring him since he couldn't go to school.



They had an old victrola, and Harley loved to listen to music. In 1925, her beloved Joseph was electrocuted in a freak farming accident. His brother Clyde was driving horses they were using to move a derrick. Something scared the horses, and they raced ahead before they could lower the pole. The pole came in contact with a high-tension power line, and everyone fell with the shock.

My great grandfather was the only one not to get up. The boots he was wearing were old military boots with iron-studded soles. He was killed instantly. Two weeks later, their youngest son, Joseph, was born. Leona was left again, this time to raise six children by herself and run the farm. She lost Harley



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Hear Him *continued ...*



to complications of his fall when he turned 18 and the old victrola was never to be used again. Her 16-year-old daughter LaVaun passed away a year later to meningitis.

Not only did she love and mentor these children and run a farm in difficult times, she loved and mentored my mom, who at 18 lost her own mother. My mom always referred to Leona as “Grandma Wilcox on the Farm.” How she loved her. The few times I remember being with Great Grandma Wilcox are precious to me.



I climbed those same apple trees that cost Harley his health and then his life. I remember her brown bread and her old black iron stove. She wrote me letters as a child and made me a quilt for my doll.

I take courage from her. If she could handle such a life, can I gather some of that strength and be a force for good during these times? Well, yes. And so can you.

I’ve been watching the sisters around me serve with great strength and personal revelation. Some of those acts of service have been making masks for health care workers, family, and friends. Bishop Hauser and I have been the beneficiaries of hot bread and cookies.



Sisters have delivered meals to those in need. Our Primary chorister put together a beautiful video of all of our ward children singing and holding the words to a beautiful song...sharing it online to uplift us. Families are gathering in prayer and fasting with our prophet, praying for our country.

There are countless needs in communities all around us. President Nelson said, “I renew my plea for you to do whatever it takes to increase your spiritual capacity to receive personal revelation.” Let’s take his words and gather the strength from the women who made the way for us, and invite our Father to instruct us on the best way to use that strength.

Shall we not carry on in so great a cause? (Doctrine and Covenants 128:22)

We love each one of you. May God bless you and keep you. Hear Him.

Self-Reliance Corner

*by Sister Diane Burgoon, Stake Self-Reliance Specialist
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The Lord has declared, “It is my purpose to provide for my saints...” (D&C 104:15). I’ve included this passage in each of my newsletter submissions. We are living in extremely challenging times, and it is so important to see the hand of God in our lives. He has a plan, and with faith, we can accept that plan and look to a better day. That knowledge can comfort us, but we can still feel anxious and concerned. See some tips on how to cope.

Contact your ward Self-Reliance Specialist, or myself, for more information on joining a self-reliance group or Pathway. If you have any other questions or concerns, please let me know.

For more information on becoming or helping others become more self-reliant, see: <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/self-reliance/blog>

TIMELY IDEAS FROM FAMILY SERVICE

Social-Emotional Health

In a time of challenges and stress, it is important to focus on your and your family’s well-being physically, mentally, and emotionally. Here are some tips to support yourself and others through this time:

- Get plenty of rest
- Eat as healthy as possible
- Exercise and stay active
- Share your feelings with others and let others know they can share with you
- Find opportunities to play and laugh