

LIGHT REFLECTIONS

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Present Help

September was a bruising month. On September 5, our beloved colleague and friend, Ed Adams, died suddenly in Liverpool, England, just weeks into a well-deserved leave following a decade of magnificent service as dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communications. Five days later, our quiet valley was rocked by the assassination of Charlie Kirk on our neighboring campus of UVU. On September 27, our beloved prophet, President Russell M. Nelson, passed through the veil where he will be richly rewarded for a remarkable life and a miraculous ministry. The next morning, a congregation of Latter-day Saints in Grand Blanc, Michigan was murderously attacked by a gunman turned arson. Among the worshippers slain was the father of one of our BYU colleagues.

This has been a season of grieving and trauma for our campus, for our community, and for our country. We draw comfort from the Comforter, and we find strength in our faith in Christ, the healer of all wounds, the Resurrection and the Life. But it remains a weighty and a tender time.

Often when we speak of trials, we rightly focus on their ultimate termination. We testify that, through the Savior's power and grace, everything is going to turn out okay—that all will be put right in the end.

Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning (Ps. 30:4).

My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes (D&C 121:7-8).

These are true and eternally significant messages. They are essential to the Christian virtue of hope. As Elder Jeffrey R. Holland once

taught: “For emotional health and spiritual stamina, everyone needs to be able to look forward to some respite, to something pleasant and renewing and hopeful, whether that blessing be near at hand or still some distance ahead. It is enough just to know we can get there, that however measured or far away, there is the promise of ‘good things to come.’”¹

I am a believer in good things to come. I am a witness of the Lord Jesus Christ, our “high priest of good things to come” (Heb. 9:11). But I also believe in Christ as the Lord God of the present tense.

When Martha expressed her ringing conviction of future blessings, Jesus immediately asserted His very present triumph:

Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

*Jesus said unto her, **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. Believest thou this?

She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world (John 11:24-27; emphasis added).

The very same psalm that invites us to “be still, and know that I am God,” begins with this clarion witness: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Ps. 46:10, 1; emphasis added).

We can claim that present help in the present tense. As we look forward to ultimate blessings of comfort, deliverance, and relief, we can claim a foretaste of those blessings even now.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:16).

I have come to realize over time that the blessing of hope in a future dawn is complemented and amplified by the blessing of knowing that we are even now being led through the darkness toward that coming day of promise. We miss half of the blessing if we perceive it only in the future.

The Lord's blessing to Lehi's family was not limited to the promised land itself. It also included being led toward the promised land and knowing that it was God who led them.

"I will also be your light in the wilderness," the Lord promised; "and I will prepare the way before you, if it so be that ye shall keep my commandments; wherefore, inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall be led towards the promised land; *and ye shall know that it is by me that ye are led*" (1 Ne. 17:13; emphasis added).

God's covenant is not confined to the realization of distant promises. It includes our covenant connection with Him all along the way—our experience of His holy *hesed*, our embrace in His covenant love.² The everlasting covenant centers finally not in a land flowing with milk and honey, but in an eternal relationship: "And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God" (Jer. 30:22).

We trust in Him and in His promised blessings—past, present, and future. And so, in this weighty season, we sing with increased

tenderness and fervor the words of a great Restoration anthem:

We thank thee, O God, for a prophet

To guide us in these latter days.

We thank thee for sending the gospel

To lighten our minds with its rays. . . .

When dark clouds of trouble hang o'er us

And threaten our peace to destroy,

There is hope smiling brightly before us,

And we know that deliv'rance is nigh.

We doubt not the Lord nor his goodness.

We've proved him in days that are past. . . .

We'll sing of his goodness and mercy.

We'll praise him by day and by night,

Rejoice in his glorious gospel,

And bask in its life-giving light.³

President Reese told us a couple weeks ago that the proper response to darkness is to assert the Savior's light.⁴ May we invoke His ever-present help as we reflect His brilliant light into a world that desperately needs it.

¹ Jeffrey R. Holland, "An High Priest of Good Things to Come," *Ensign*, November 1999.

² See Russell M. Nelson, "The Everlasting Covenant," *Liahona*, October 2022. See also Kerry M. Muhlestein, *God Will Prevail: Ancient Covenants, Modern Blessings, and the Gathering of Israel* (2021).

³ "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," *Hymns*, no. 19.

⁴ See C. Shane Reese, "Introductory Remarks," *BYU Devotional*, 19 September 2025.