

# "All things shall work together for your good"

Ward Conference  
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## "What have I done wrong to deserve this?"

- My daughter Jennifer said to me "what have I done wrong?"
  - This after her husband's snowboarding accident (crushed vertebrae) and her husband's job went through an upheaval
- Have you ever felt this way?
- I want to be clear, we *can* by our own choices bring woe and misery upon us
- But is everything "bad" that happens to us a result of sin or choices we make?
  - No – that is simply not so
  - Things will happen that are not related to any sin of ours
  - Things completely out of our control
- The Savior (who was perfect) had this happen to him
  - Matt 27:27-31  
"Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him"
- The Blind Man
  - John 9:1-3  
" And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, *who did sin*, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, *Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*"

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- Joseph Smith
  - Suffered much affliction
- Jacob
  - 2 Nephi 2:1-2
    - "And now, Jacob, I speak unto you: Thou art my first-born in the days of my tribulation in the wilderness. And behold, in thy childhood thou hast suffered afflictions and much sorrow, *because* of the rudeness of thy brethren."
- It is very clear to me from these scriptures and from my own personal experience that many things happen to us that are not a result of sin

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- Therefore we can and should expect that there will be things in our life happen that are not a result of sin or our choices and even in spite of our prayers otherwise
  - Tragedy
  - Loved ones who stray
  - Financial setbacks
- A questions for you and I then become:
  - "How can or should I then "deal" with these things"
  - "Why even might they happen to me?"
- Let me speak of one aspect
- D&C 90:23
  - "Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and *all things shall work together for your good*, if ye walk uprightly and remember the covenant wherewith ye have covenanted one with another"
- "The Current Bush" (Apostle Hugh B Brown, January 1973 New Era)
  - See pages at the end of this talk for "The Current Bush"

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What did the Gardener do or say for those people we read about earlier?

- Blind Man
  - John 9:6-7

"When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing."
  - *We too may be literally healed*
  - *We may also be healed in such a way that metaphorically speaking we can "see" where we couldn't before*
- Jacob
  - 2 Nephi 2:2

"Nevertheless, Jacob, my first-born in the wilderness, thou knowest the greatness of God; and *he shall consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain*"
  - We can see that this did indeed happen to Jacob
    - He saw his Redeemer (2 Nephi 11:3)
    - 2 Nephi 9
      - Jacob teaches in this chapter clearly and beautifully about Christ the Redeemer and the need for an infinite atonement
  - *Our afflictions may be consecrated for our gain and we grow and change from them*
- Joseph Smith
  - D&C 121:7-8

"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"
  - *We too can find peace amid our afflictions*
- The Savior
  - Hebrews 5:8

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;"
  - *We too can learn from the things which we suffer*

## "All things shall work together for your good"

### What can we do so that "All things will work together for our good?"

- D&C 90:24  
"Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and *all things shall work together for your good*, if ye walk uprightly and remember the covenant wherewith ye have covenanted one with another"
  - Expound on the verse
    - Note what it doesn't say:
      - "work together the way I want them to"
      - "work together so that it is easy to do"
      - "work together so that it is fun"
  - Keep the covenants we have made
  - Act in faith and not in our fears
    - When we let our faith guide us and not our fears we can have hope
  - How do we "endure it well"?
    - To me enduring it well or enduring to the end is simply keeping our covenants day by day

### "I am the Gardener Here"

- What then? – Do as described in D&C 90:24
- Who? – Recognize and thank the Gardener in our lives
- How does it work? – Through the *Atonement*
  - *God so loved the world he gave his only begotten son*
  - Through the Atonement we can find peace (Matt 11:28-30)
  - We can have hope
  - The atonement will exchange "*Beauty for Ashes*" (Isaiah 61:1-3)
  - Consecrate our afflictions for our gain (D&C 121:7-8)

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The Currant Bush

by Elder Hugh B. Brown (1883-1975)

Previously published in the January 1973 New Era.

Hugh B. Brown, "The Currant Bush," New Era, Apr. 2001, 12

You sometimes wonder whether the Lord really knows what He ought to do with you. You sometimes wonder if you know better than He does about what you ought to do and ought to become. I am wondering if I may tell you a story. It has to do with an incident in my life when God showed me that He knew best.

I was living up in Canada. I had purchased a farm. It was run-down. I went out one morning and saw a currant bush. It had grown up over six feet high. It was going all to wood. There were no blossoms and no currants. I was raised on a fruit farm in Salt Lake before we went to Canada, and I knew what ought to happen to that currant bush. So I got some pruning shears and clipped it back until there was nothing left but stumps. It was just coming daylight, and I thought I saw on top of each of these little stumps what appeared to be a tear, and I thought the currant bush was crying. I was kind of simpleminded (and I haven't entirely gotten over it), and I looked at it and smiled and said, "What are you crying about?" You know, I thought I heard that currant bush say this:

"How could you do this to me? I was making such wonderful growth. I was almost as big as the shade tree and the fruit tree that are inside the fence, and now you have cut me down. Every plant in the garden will look down on me because I didn't make what I should have made. How could you do this to me? I thought you were the gardener here."

That's what I thought I heard the currant bush say, and I thought it so much that I answered. I said, "Look, little currant bush, I am the gardener here, and I know what I want you to be. I didn't intend you to be a fruit tree or a shade tree. I want you to be a currant bush, and someday, little currant bush, when you are laden with fruit, you are going to say, 'Thank you, Mr. Gardener, for loving me enough to cut me down. Thank you, Mr. Gardener.'"

Years passed, and I found myself in England. I was in command of a cavalry unit in the Canadian Army. I held the rank of field officer in the British Canadian Army. I was proud of my position. And there was an opportunity for me to become a general. I had taken all the examinations. I had the seniority. The one man between me and the office of general in the British Army became a casualty, and I received a telegram from London. It said: "Be in my office tomorrow morning at 10:00," signed by General Turner.

I went up to London. I walked smartly into the office of the general, and I saluted him smartly, and he gave me the same kind of a salute a senior officer usually gives—a sort of "Get out of the way, worm!" He said, "Sit down, Brown." Then he said, "I'm sorry I cannot make the appointment. You are entitled to it. You have passed all the examinations. You have the seniority. You've been a good officer, but I can't make the appointment. You are to return to

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Canada and become a training officer and a transport officer." That for which I had been hoping and praying for 10 years suddenly slipped out of my fingers.

Then he went into the other room to answer the telephone, and on his desk, I saw my personal history sheet. Right across the bottom of it was written, "THIS MAN IS A MORMON." We were not very well liked in those days. When I saw that, I knew why I had not been appointed. He came back and said, "That's all, Brown." I saluted him again, but not quite as smartly, and went out.

I got on the train and started back to my town, 120 miles away, with a broken heart, with bitterness in my soul. And every click of the wheels on the rails seemed to say, "You are a failure." When I got to my tent, I was so bitter that I threw my cap on the cot. I clenched my fists, and I shook them at heaven. I said, "How could you do this to me, God? I have done everything I could do to measure up. There is nothing that I could have done—that I should have done—that I haven't done. How could you do this to me?" I was as bitter as gall.

And then I heard a voice, and I recognized the tone of this voice. It was my own voice, and the voice said, "I am the gardener here. I know what I want you to do." The bitterness went out of my soul, and I fell on my knees by the cot to ask forgiveness for my ungratefulness and my bitterness. While kneeling there I heard a song being sung in an adjoining tent. A number of Mormon boys met regularly every Tuesday night. I usually met with them. We would sit on the floor and have Mutual. As I was kneeling there, praying for forgiveness, I heard their singing:

"But if, by a still, small voice he calls  
To paths that I do not know,  
I'll answer, dear Lord, with my hand in thine:  
I'll go where you want me to go."  
(Hymns, no. 270)

I arose from my knees a humble man. And now, almost 50 years later, I look up to Him and say, "Thank you, Mr. Gardener, for cutting me down, for loving me enough to hurt me." I see now that it was wise that I should not become a general at that time, because if I had I would have been senior officer of all western Canada, with a lifelong, handsome salary, a place to live, and a pension, but I would have raised my six daughters and two sons in army barracks. They would no doubt have married out of the Church, and I think I would not have amounted to anything. I haven't amounted to very much as it is, but I have done better than I would have done if the Lord had let me go the way I wanted to go.

Many of you are going to have very difficult experiences: disappointment, heartbreak, bereavement, defeat. You are going to be tested and tried. I just want you to know that if you don't get what you think you ought to get, remember, God is the gardener here. He knows what He wants you to be. Submit yourselves to His will. Be worthy of His blessings, and you will get His blessings.

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