

4- The life of Ann Rowley, a pioneer woman in the early days of the Church, demonstrates how exercising faith impacts our lives for good. A widow from England, Sister Rowley exercised her faith to answer the prophet's call to gather to Zion. She was a member of the Willie handcart company, which encountered deep snowdrifts along the trail in the fall of 1856. They had reached a point in the trek where her seven children were literally starving. She wrote: "It hurt me to see my children go hungry. ... Night was coming and there was no food for the evening meal. I asked God's help as I always did. I got on my knees, remembering two hard sea biscuits that ... had been left over from the sea voyage. They were not large, and were so hard they couldn't be broken. Surely, that was not enough to feed 8 people, but 5 loaves and 2 fishes were not enough to feed 5,000 people either, but through a miracle, Jesus had done it. So, with God's help, nothing is impossible. I found the biscuits and put them in a dutch oven and covered them with water and asked for God's blessing. Then I put the lid on the pan and set it on the coals. When I took off the lid a little later, I found the pan filled with food. I kneeled with my family and thanked God for his goodness. That night my family had sufficient food."<sup>14</sup>

5- Ann Rowley was living the gospel at great personal sacrifice. She needed help and asked for it in prayer. Because of her faith, she was filled with hope and miraculously provided with food for her family. The Lord also blessed her with the eternally significant ability to "endure in faith to the end."<sup>15</sup> Despite an uncertain future, she did not demand to know how she was going to feed her children the next day; instead, she patiently "wait[ed] upon the Lord"<sup>16</sup> and pressed forward with hope—just as the beautiful hymn expresses:

Lead, kindly Light, amid th' encircling gloom; Lead thou me on! The night is dark, and I am far from home; Lead thou me on! Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see The distant scene—one step enough for me.<sup>17</sup>

6- We too can exercise such faith in the Lord, believing and trusting that our kind and constant God<sup>18</sup> will bless us with His miraculous power suited to our circumstance, according to His timing. As we do so, we too will see the hand of God manifest in our lives.

7- The Lord commands us to take "the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench *all* the fiery darts of the wicked."<sup>19</sup> Satan will use such things as doubt, fear, or sin to tempt us to let go of

faith and lose the protection it offers. Let us briefly examine each of these challenges to faith in turn so that we can recognize and heed not the adversary's temptations.<sup>20</sup>

8- First, unbelief in the Lord or His gospel will cause us to resist the Spirit of God.<sup>21</sup> The Lord's antidote for doubt is simple. As King Benjamin declared, "Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend."<sup>22</sup>

9- If, because of unbelief or doubt, you find your faith wavering, remember that even the ancient Apostles implored the Lord to "increase our faith."<sup>23</sup> Bearing in mind that faith and reason are necessary companions, consider the following analogy: faith and reason are like the two wings of an aircraft. Both are essential to maintain flight. If, from your perspective, reason seems to contradict faith, pause and remember that our perspective is extremely limited compared with the Lord's.<sup>24</sup> Do not discard faith any more than you would detach a wing from an aircraft in flight. Instead, nurture a particle of faith and permit the hope it produces to be an anchor to your soul—and to your reason.<sup>25</sup> That is why we are commanded to "seek learning ... by study *and also* by faith."<sup>26</sup> Remember, faith precedes and produces miracles for which we have no immediate explanation within our experience, such as a Dutch oven full of food from two small biscuits or simply enduring in faith against all odds.<sup>27</sup>

10- Second, fear distracts from and undermines faith in the Savior. The Apostle Peter looked to the Lord one stormy night and walked on water—until he averted his gaze and "saw the wind boisterous [and] was afraid" and then sank into the stormy sea.<sup>28</sup> He could have continued walking if he had not feared! Rather than our focusing upon and fearing the boisterous wind and waves in our lives, the Lord invites us to "look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not."<sup>29</sup>

11- Third, sin diminishes the presence of the Spirit in our lives, and without the Holy Ghost, we will lack the spiritual stamina to hold onto and exercise faith. It is best to exercise our faith to "touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing"<sup>30</sup> and to "be diligent in keeping all [the] commandments, lest ... your faith fail you, and your enemies triumph over you."<sup>31</sup> If sin has stained your life, I invite you to exercise "faith unto repentance,"<sup>32</sup> and the Savior, through the Atonement, will purify and heal your life.

12- Brothers and sisters, the Lord will, according to our faith, fulfill His promises and work with us to overcome every challenge.<sup>33</sup> He did so for Ann Rowley and has done so for His people in all nations and in every age and generation. Because He is a “God of miracles” and “changeth not,” He will likewise bless each of us with hope, protection, and power according to our faith in Him.<sup>34</sup> Steadfast faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will—like the cables on the path of Huayna Picchu—anchor you and your loved ones to “the rock of our Redeemer”<sup>35</sup> and His matchless power to save.

13- President Thomas S. Monson has stated, “The future is as bright as your faith.”<sup>36</sup> I testify of that sublime, hopeful truth and invite each of us to steadfastly press forward with faith in the Lord, “nothing wavering.”<sup>37</sup> I know that the Savior lives, is “the author and the finisher of [our] faith,”<sup>38</sup> and the “rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”<sup>39</sup> I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Notes

1. See Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–21; 2. See Articles of Faith 1:4; 3. Helaman 5:12; 4. See Doctrine and Covenants 76:53; 5. See Ether 12:3; 6. See *Lectures on Faith* (1985), 3; see also Jacob 4:6; Ether 12:7–22; Hebrews 11:4–40; 7. Alma 32:21; 8. See Joseph Smith Translation, Hebrews 11:1 (in Hebrews 11:1, footnote *b*); 9. See 2 Nephi 25:23; Alma 34:15–17; Ether 12:6; James 2:17–26; 10. See Ether 12:4–6; *Lectures on Faith*, 69; 11. See Moroni 7:40–42; 12. See Bible Dictionary, “Faith”; see also Mormon 9:8–21; Moroni 7:33–37; 13. See Doctrine and Covenants 27:17; Alma 57:19–27; 58:10–13; 14. Ann Rowley, in Andrew D. Olsen, *The Price We Paid: The Extraordinary Story of the Willie and Martin Handcart Pioneers* (2006), 113; 15. Doctrine and Covenants 20:25; 16. Isaiah 40:31; 17. “Lead, Kindly Light,” *Hymns*, no. 97; 18. See Jacob 4:10; Mormon 9:9; 19. Doctrine and Covenants 27:17; emphasis added; 20. See 1 Nephi 8:33–34; Alma 37:33; Doctrine and Covenants 20:22; 21. See Alma 32:28; 22. Mosiah 4:9; 23. Luke 17:5; 24. See Mosiah 4:9–10; Proverbs 3:5–7; Isaiah 55:8–9; 25. See Ether 12:4; 26. Doctrine and Covenants 88:118; emphasis added; 27. See Moroni 7:33–38; Ether 12:19; 28. See Matthew 14:25–31; 29. Doctrine and Covenants 6:36; 30. Moroni 10:30; 31. Doctrine and Covenants 136:42; 32. See Alma 34:15–17; see also Ether 12:3; 33. See Ether 12:29; Alma 7:27; 34. See Mormon 9:18–21; see also Moroni 7:33–38; Alma 37:16–17; 35. Helaman 5:12; 36. Thomas S. Monson, “Be of Good Cheer,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2009, 92; 37. See James 1:6–8; 38. Moroni 6:4; see also Hebrews 12:2; 39. Hebrews 11:6; see also Ether 12:41.

# By Faith All Things Are Fulfilled

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Faith will help us to safely climb the gospel path, overcome every challenge of mortality, and return to the majestic presence of our Heavenly Father.

1- Not long ago several of us in the Nash family hiked to the top of Huayna Picchu, a tall peak adjoining the ancient Incan ruins of Machu Picchu in the mountains of Peru. It is a very steep climb with breathtaking views and precipitous drop-offs. Sadly, some hikers have lost their lives by falling off that narrow, steep trail. To avoid such tragedies, strong cables have since been secured to the solid rock along the mountainside of Huayna Picchu. We held to those cables as we climbed, and they enabled us to safely reach the summit, where the view was majestic!

2- Like the path on Huayna Picchu, our mortal journey is a steep and difficult climb, one that requires our Heavenly Father’s help to successfully complete. For this reason, He established the principles and ordinances of the gospel to bring us unto the Savior and His saving power.<sup>1</sup> The first of those principles, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>2</sup> is like the cables on Huayna Picchu: if strong and securely attached to “the rock of our Redeemer,”<sup>3</sup> faith will help us to safely climb the gospel path, overcome every challenge of mortality,<sup>4</sup> and return to the majestic presence of our Heavenly Father. All things are fulfilled by faith.<sup>5</sup>

3- Faith is both a principle of action and of power.<sup>6</sup> It “is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore if [we] have faith [we] hope for things which are not seen, which are true.”<sup>7</sup> It is an assurance<sup>8</sup> of the Spirit gained through our learning that moves us to act<sup>9</sup> to follow the example of the Savior and prayerfully keep His commandments, even through times of sacrifice and trial.<sup>10</sup> Faith brings us the power of the Lord, which—among other things—is manifested by a hope of good things to come,<sup>11</sup> miracles that confirm our faith,<sup>12</sup> and divine protection in spiritual and temporal matters.<sup>13</sup>