

A God of Miracles

Sydney S. Reynolds

Sydney S. Reynolds was First Counselor in the Primary General Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this General Conference address was given at the Conference Center in Salt Lake City in April 2001.

For further information contact:

BYU Broadcasting, 2000 Ironton Boulevard, Provo, Utah 84606.

1 (800) 298-5298 – <http://www.byub.org/>

With Moroni of old, I believe in a God of miracles. Moroni wrote to the people of our dispensation, "Behold, I will show unto you a God of miracles, . . . and it is that same God who created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are" (Morm. 9:11). Moroni proclaimed that Jesus Christ did many mighty miracles, that many mighty miracles were wrought by the hands of the Apostles, and that a God who is the same yesterday, today, and forever must be a God of miracles today (see Morm. 9:18; 9:9).

Think of the miracles of the Old Testament. Remember Moses and the parting of the Red Sea. For all future generations of Israelites, the great miracles that led to their deliverance from Egypt provided undeniable proof of God's existence and His love for them.

Many Book of Mormon prophets, including Nephi, pointed to the story of Moses to encourage faith and belief in a God who could deliver His people in their distress (see 1 Ne. 4:1–3). Other Book of Mormon prophets reminded the people that they themselves had witnessed miracles that should convince them of God's power.

In the New Testament, the Apostle John shared his reason for recording many of the Savior's miracles—namely, "that [we] might believe that Jesus is the Christ" (John 20:31).

In this dispensation we witness the great miracle of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the earth. It began when a young boy entered a grove of trees near Palmyra, New York, and poured out his heart and his questions to a God he believed could answer him—the God of miracles. And miracles have

followed in this dispensation—mighty miracles—including the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, which is itself another testament of Jesus Christ.

Just as important as these "mighty miracles" are the smaller "private miracles" that teach each of us to have faith in the Lord. These come as we recognize and heed the promptings of the Spirit in our lives.

I am grateful for a teacher who encouraged his students to keep a journal of the whisperings or promptings of the Spirit in their lives. He directed us to note what we felt and what resulted. Little things became evident. One day I was frantically trying to complete some assignments and prepare for a trip. I had just been down to the laundry area of the dorm to move my clothes from the washer to the dryer. Unfortunately, all the dryers were in use, and they all had many minutes to go. I went back upstairs discouraged, knowing by the time those dryers finished, I had to be on the road. I had barely returned to my room when I felt prompted to go back downstairs and check the laundry again. *Foolishness*, I thought—I had just been there, and I didn't have time. But because I was trying to listen, I went. Two of the dryers were empty—and I was able to meet all my commitments. Could the Lord possibly have been concerned about smoothing my way in such a small but, to me, important matter? I have learned since through many such experiences that the Lord will help us in every aspect of our lives when we are trying to serve Him and do His will.

I believe that all of us can bear witness to these small miracles. We know children who pray for help to find a lost

item and find it. We know of young people who gather the courage to stand as a witness of God and feel His sustaining hand. We know friends who pay their tithing with the last of their money and then, through a miracle, find themselves able to pay their tuition or their rent or somehow obtain food for their family. We can share experiences of prayers answered and priesthood blessings that gave courage, brought comfort, or restored health. These daily miracles acquaint us with the hand of the Lord in our lives.

My mind has been much on this topic because of an experience our family has had in the last few months. Our daughter and her husband took a while to find each other and then, though they wanted children with all their hearts, over a number of years had difficulty realizing that dream. They prayed and they sought priesthood blessings and medical help, and eventually were thrilled to learn they were expecting twins.

Things did not go smoothly, however, and three and a half months before the babies were due to arrive, the mother-to-be found herself in the labor and delivery section of the hospital. The doctors at first were hopeful that they could stop the labor for a few more weeks. Quickly, however, the question became, would they even have the 48 hours necessary for medication to prepare the babies' immature lungs to function?

A nurse came in from the newborn intensive care unit to show the couple pictures of the machines the babies would be hooked up to if they were born alive. She explained the risks for eye damage, for lung collapse, for physical impairment,

for brain damage. The couple listened, humbled yet hopeful, and then, despite all the doctors could do, it was obvious that these babies were coming.

They were born alive. First the baby girl and then the baby boy—weighing less than four pounds together—were rushed to the intensive care unit and put on ventilators, with umbilical tubes and intravenous lines and constant attention. They can't have too much light, they can't have too much noise, their chemical balances need constant monitoring, as the hospital, with millions of dollars of equipment and many wonderful doctors and nurses, attempted to replicate the miracle of a mother's womb.

There are multitudes of little miracles every day: a collapsed lung heals and then, despite the odds, continues to function properly; pneumonia is beaten back; more deadly infections invade and are overcome; IV lines go bad and are replaced. After two and a half months, the baby boy has gained two pounds and can breathe with an oxygen supplement. His ventilator is gone, he learns to eat, and his grateful parents take him home with monitors attached.

The baby girl keeps pulling her ventilator tube out, setting off alarms across the nursery. Maybe she wants to keep up with her brother, we think, but her throat closes off each time, and she just can't breathe on her own. Her throat is so inflamed that at times the respiratory therapists have great difficulty reinserting the tube, and she almost dies. Her normal progress is stymied by her continued dependence on the ventilator.

Finally, after her baby brother has been home for two months, the doctors feel they are forced to suggest surgery for her—a surgery that will allow her to breathe by opening a hole in her throat, a surgery that might solve the stomach problems by opening a hole in her side, but a surgery that will impact her little body for many more months and maybe for the rest of her life. As the parents wrestled with this decision, a beloved aunt sent a message to all the family. She explained the situation—the critical issue of timing, the importance of getting off the ventilator—and suggested that we join our faith once again, and in prayer and fasting ask for one more miracle—if it was the Lord's will. We would culminate our fast with a prayer the evening of December 3.

Let me read from a letter that was sent to the family the morning of December 4. "Dearest Family, Wonderful news! Blessings from the Lord. Our heartfelt thanks for your prayers and fasting in behalf of our little girl. Yesterday morning she came off the ventilator and has been off for 24 hours at this writing. To us, it is a miracle. The medical staff are still guarded about predicting the future, but we are so grateful to the Lord and to you. We are praying that this will mark the beginning of the end of her hospital stay. And we even dare to hope that she'll be home for Christmas."

She did make it home for Christmas, and both babies are currently doing "just fine." Our family has had its own "parting of the Red Sea," and we are prepared to testify that there is today, as there was yesterday and will be forever, a "God of miracles" who loves His children and desires to bless them.

Now, we know, as you do, that all petitions to the Lord and all fasts do not receive this same hoped-for answer. Our extended family also has faced the death of loved ones, serious illness, the trial of divorce, and children who are choosing another path. We do not always understand the reasons behind the tests that come with mortality. But our faith has grown, and perhaps yours has too, as we have watched loved ones, friends, and people we know only by reputation endure with faith in the Lord the most severe trials. They, too, know the God of miracles and witness in their extremity that whatever the future holds for them, the Lord knows them and loves them and is blessing them. They are sealed to Him and to each other forever, and they are willing to submit their wills to His.

How have they come to such a point? How do we access the quiet miracle that the Lord works as He transforms us, His children, into worthy heirs of the kingdom of God? I believe it is made possible because "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). I believe it comes as we yield to the enticings of the Spirit, put off the natural man, and are filled with the love of God (see Mosiah 3:19). "Through the Atonement of [Jesus] Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel" (A of F 1:3). All mankind—that includes me, that includes you—we can each have part in the Atonement, the greatest of all God's miracles.

God did part the Red Sea, and He did give us the Book of Mormon. He can heal us of our sins, and He can and will bless us, His children, in our daily lives. I

know that He lives and loves us and is
today a God of miracles, in the name of

| Jesus Christ, amen.