

“Centered in Christ”

Susan H. Porter

Primary General President

Brothers and sisters, I am humbled to have the opportunity to speak to you today. I picture you spread across the earth with a common goal and purpose — to increase in knowledge and understanding so that you can support yourselves and your families and help build the kingdom of God! I realize many of you are working on your education at great sacrifice. I know the Lord will bless your efforts.

I pray that during the few minutes I have with you today, you will feel God’s love for you and receive whisperings of the Spirit meant for you.

Have you ever felt like you were living in a storm? Our lives can often feel in commotion as we face uncertainty about the future, including challenges in our families or with finances or health. As I have reflected on difficulties in our lives, I have thought about what we might learn from hurricanes.

Hurricanes are massive storms, often hundreds of kilometers wide, with very strong winds. But hurricanes have a distinctive feature: In the center of the hurricane is a place of calm called the “eye.” There the sun is often shining, and winds are very mild.

Interestingly, each eye of a hurricane is surrounded by what is called the “eyewall.” It is a massive wall of clouds that contain the fiercest winds in the hurricane. In other words, the strongest winds are closest to the calmest spot. So, if we are standing in the eye of the storm and look around us, all we will see is chaos.

Brothers and sisters, when winds are blowing and swirling around us, how can we get to the “eye” of our storm and not be discouraged by the most intense challenges directly in front of us?

I would like to suggest four steps we can take: stop, pray, remember, and move forward.

First, stop

Sometimes we need to stop. We can stop worrying, stop running faster than we have strength,¹ and take a few minutes to center ourselves and reach heavenward. Every time we are feeling overwhelmed, we can pause, take our eyes off the confusion that surrounds us, and look up to God.

President Russell M. Nelson has invited us to “think celestial and to envision an eternal reward rather than focus on the excruciating difficulties of the day.”² I picture in my mind the Savior, who stood in perfect majesty when He was surrounded by storms on every side in Pilate’s court.

Second, pray

As we pray in faith, it is as if we are looking up through the sunlight to a loving Heavenly Father, who knows well the storm we are facing. We can ask Him for peace, strength, and clarity of thought to know how to understand and deal with all that is unclear around us. President Nelson taught, “Our prayers can be — and should be — living discussions with our Heavenly Father.”³

¹ See [Mosiah 4:27](#)

² Russell M. Nelson, “[Think Celestial!](#),” *Liahona*, Nov. 2023, 118

³ *Ibid*

Sometimes we can stop and pray in a place where the winds are calm and peace prevails. Picture in your mind the peace and serenity of temples of God. Revelation and clarity of thought can flow when we are in the temple learning the ways of God. Chapels can also be like the eye of the storm. They are places where we can renew covenants and enjoy belonging with others who are seeking the Savior's strength in their own lives. Finally, we can strive to find a place of rest and peace in our own homes.

But, brothers and sisters, the Savior has the power to help us be centered in Him even when we cannot get to a place of calm.

After a long day of teaching the people, Jesus and His Twelve Apostles entered into a ship to sail to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. "And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full."⁴ As the Apostles feared for their lives, they found the Savior asleep. How could the Savior be calm enough to sleep when a storm was raging?⁵

"And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?"⁶

We can exercise our faith in the living Son of the living God. Through His great and atoning sacrifice, the Savior has power to help us overcome the storms of this life. We can go to the Father in humble prayer, in the name of Christ, and receive peace amid our storms.

Third, remember

What can we remember that will help us? We can remember times in our lives when we have known that God loves us and is aware of us. We can remember when we have received heaven's help.

No force of wind can break the bonds of the covenants we have made with Heavenly Father and His Son in baptismal fonts and in holy temples. When we strive to honor those covenants by living His commandments, we invite the Savior to uphold us in our storms.

We can also remember that hurricanes may be massive and strong, but they are temporary. They run out of force and clear skies return. If we are anchored to the Savior during the storm, we will be stronger when the storm passes.

And fourth, move forward

As we stop, pray, and remember God's goodness to us, we can "press forward with ... a perfect brightness of hope."⁷ That hope is not centered in ourselves or in our circumstances but in the Savior and His capacity to strengthen us and direct our path forward.

Several years ago, a few days before Christmas, I was in a hospital where my husband had recently undergone surgery. In a matter of a few hours, his health declined rapidly. The doctors had no idea what the cause was and did not know what course to take. I watched helplessly as he could no longer stand or sit up. We were about 2,000 miles (3,000 kilometers) from home, and I was alone. There were so many unanswered questions. I felt like I was in the middle of a storm over which I had no control.

⁴ [Mark 4:37](#)

⁵ See [Mark 4:38](#)

⁶ [Mark 4:39-40](#)

⁷ [2 Nephi 31:20](#)

I stopped and looked for a peaceful place. I found a stairwell where few people walked and offered a prayer and a small sacrifice I felt I could offer — a fast for one meal. It was all I had the strength for. The next morning, as I fasted and walked the halls of the hospital, my phone rang — twice — both calls from loved ones offering me support. I realized that what the Lord was offering first was not answers or solutions to Bruce's precarious health situation; instead, He was clearing the skies so that I could feel His love and care. I was in the eye of the storm with the Savior at my side.

Brothers and sisters, as you look at this picture of the Savior holding a lamb, I hope you understand that the lamb He is holding is you.

I pray as you face storms in your life, that you will stop, pray for help, remember His goodness, and move forward with the knowledge that God is aware of you and will help you. You are His child. He loves you.

I bear my witness that God lives. He sent His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Savior and Redeemer. He will stand by you as you center your life in Him. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.