

## If the Way be Full of Trial, Weary Not



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Devotional

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My maternal grandmother's favorite hymn is titled, "Pe a faigata le ala, taumafai". Its English version from which it is translated was written by William Flavel over 130 years ago, "If the way be full of trial, weary not.1" Appropriately so, my grandmother Mele, whom I am named after, has had a blessed life but not without hardships and trials that she so endured well throughout her life. Her father, my great-grandfather Aupiu Savea Moe along with my great grandmother Talalupele Tuitogama'atoe, shortly after marrying in their very young lives, were called to serve as one of the many couple missionaries who traveled the Samoan islands to help establish the church. Their mission lasted for over 50 years. An appreciation for them grew deeper when a recent trip to Samoa to visit the church schools there reminded me of their service to the church. They started their family while on this mission. Many times, at a moment's notice in one assigned area, they would be called to another assignment in another area or island, often times with my pregnant great-grandmother and very young toddlers in tow. Mind you, travel during those days was either by walking, by horse or by canoe.

My dear beautiful mother Ane Ah You Pili is present here today, and I would like to acknowledge her as well; for her life, has been full of hardships and trials. But her great faith in her Savior and Heavenly Father sets a precedence for us to follow. These two special women and those like my great grandparents amongst many others, like the rest of us, go through life not immune from the struggles and challenges that life has to offer. There are many of us here in this audience, I can safely say with confidence, who have not been spared from difficulties in our lives. Elder Neil L. Anderson aptly describes our sorrows as such:

Our trials he says "may come from a natural disaster or an unfortunate accident. They may come from an unfaithful husband or wife, turning life upside down for a righteous spouse and children. The wounds may come from the darkness and gloom of depression, from an unanticipated illness, from the suffering or premature death of someone we love, from the sadness of a family member dismissing his or her faith, from the loneliness when circumstances do not bring an eternal companion, or from a hundred other heart-wrenching, painful "[sorrows] that the eye can't see." (1p. 2) [close quote]

As a teacher at this great institute for over 20 years, I have been privy to the lives of the many students whom I have had the wonderful privilege to teach since 1997. I have witnessed first-hand your struggles: to do well in your studies, or to not do well. I have seen your sorrows at a loss of a parent or family member while you are here unable to return home to be with family. I have read your stories in my classes of the struggles in your lives, of your impoverished lives, your difficult circumstances, and with some your struggles to get here to BYU-Hawaii.

As a former member of the Married Student Stake Relief Society Presidency here at BYUH, I have witnessed personally your struggles as young married couples, some with young children trying to make it through school. Some have not enough to eat but too ashamed to ask for help. I have seen you struggle through illnesses some debilitating and your hopes for the future are shattered.

Yet, your faith to endure well your trials inspires me and moves me to compassion.

Likewise, Flavell's motivational hymn lists many of the unpleasant things we experience in mortal life: trials, denials, weeping, sorrow, tribulation, temptation, and misfortune.

Elder Anderson continues, "We each understand that difficulties are part of life, but when they come to us personally, they can take our breath away. Without being alarmed, we need to be ready... Along with the bright colors of happiness and joy, the darker-colored threads of trial and tragedy are woven deeply into the fabric of our Father's plan. These struggles, although difficult, often become our greatest teachers." (1)

My patriarchal blessing says not once, not twice, but three times interwoven into that special blessing, that I will face many trials and tribulations in my life. At first I did not think too much about it, but when things started to happen, I began to see the wisdom of the Lord letting me know to be prepared for such hard things.

"If the way be full of trial, weary not;" my grandmother's favorite hymn admonishes us to "taumafai" or keep trying.

Today, as I have contemplated a message to share with you, I have been prompted to speak about my personal experiences overcoming some very difficult challenges that have come my way. I bear solemn witness that Heavenly Father loves you. He loves each and every one of his children. The Savior of the world is ever so near to comfort and lift us up because He understands so well all our sorrows that we know or will ever experience in our mortal lives. It is He and our loving Heavenly Father that we must look to - to help us through our trials.

Perhaps one of the most devastating difficulties a parent must endure is to lose a child. As I share the story of my beloved son Daniel, please take particular notice of how Heavenly Father and the Savior's love is manifested in our experience to help us through this trial.

Our son Daniel, just a few months after returning from serving his Illinois-Chicago Spanish speaking mission, was out waving signs in the community with his friends to raise awareness to the prevalent use of "ice" in 2003. I'll let this video tell the story. I wrote this poem one year after the accident by the request of the creators of danielmapu.com (3) that Dallin and Tia Muti

"One Year Ago Today" Video

We took care of our son Daniel who suffered from severe traumatic brain injury and was unable to sit up, stand, walk, eat or do anything for himself for 10 ½ years before he passed away in 2014. He was always known as our “police baby” because he was born the year his father started his career as a police officer. When his dad retired after 32 years of service, our police baby retired also from this life.

I’d like to share very personal experiences to illustrate the Lord’s tender mercies in this experience.

While Daniel was in a coma after he was hurt, I sat next to his bedside in the Neuro ICU, with the soothing music of “In this very room” playing ever so softly in the background. We did not know at that time whether he was going to live or die. I remember quietly pleading with the Lord to bless my son. I had never prayed so hard before for anything. While in the act of praying, and crying, I paused for a moment, and as clear as day, in my mind’s eye, I could see the Savior embracing my son in His loving arms. He was not standing above him or next to him. His arms were wrapped around Daniel. I dared not open my eyes for fear of losing this image that helped to comfort and help a very distraught heartbroken mother. I was comforted from that special moment, and it strengthened me throughout the 10 ½ years of caring for Daniel.

The other special moment, among many, was through a dream that came to one of my former students, Paola from Peru. When Daniel came home from his mission, he helped the sister missionaries along with Brother Toluta’u’s son Augusti to teach a Spanish speaking couple the missionary lessons which resulted in their baptism. Paola lived with this couple and was present during the lessons and became well-acquainted with Daniel.

Shortly after Daniel’s accident, Paola was anxious to relate her dream to me. She was overjoyed to see Daniel in her dream. He seemed anxious to give her a message for our family. “Please tell my family,” Daniel said, “three things: first, tell my family not to worry about me; I am willing to go through this experience for Heavenly Father and whatever His will and purpose is for me. Second, please tell them that serving my mission was the best thing that I ever did in my life. I loved my mission! Finally, please tell my mom that I love her very much and thank her for taking such great care of me. I have to go, but please tell them.”

Upon hearing this message from Daniel, all the worries, the stress and anxieties I felt for him were lifted. I knew that our job was to take care of him as best as we could until **His** father made known **His** will for **His** son. Our daughter Ane was at that time serving her mission at Temple Square and sent us this scripture that helped:

Mosiah 24: 14-15

“And I will also ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot feel them upon your backs...and this will I do that ye may stand as witnesses for me hereafter that ye may know of a surety that I, the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions.

“... yea the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord.”

I testify that this happened. I testify that the Lord God did visit us in our afflictions and made our burdens light. I testify that He will do the same for you.

“Do not weary by the way  
Whatever be thy lot  
There awaits a brighter day  
To all, to all who weary not.”

The second most recent devastating experience for our family is the loss of my dear eternal companion Simi in early March. While I was working, my retired husband oversaw the renovation of our downstairs. It was to be our “space” with a deck that he loved to sit outside of and called out to passersby especially the neighborhood children who were attracted to their ‘Uncle Simi’ not only because he loved them but would often load them up in our van and off to McDonalds or “Sam’s Store” down the road they would go to pick their treats. We were excited to move downstairs. But at the end of January, Simi suffered a massive aorta aneurysm. He was not supposed to survive this! But through the tender mercies of the Lord, he did survive; his surgeon explained to us after the long surgery that, in his own words, “It was short of a miracle because when the main large artery burst, survival from it does not happen often, but somehow, the aorta sealed itself and allowed him time to get the much-needed surgery to do repair.” It was a major surgery and we were uncertain about the outcome. After my son Jimmy gave him a blessing, he went to surgery. I prayed ever so fervently to the Lord to bless those overseeing Brother Mapu’s care. This time, I especially prayed to Heavenly Father to please allow Daniel to come and be with his dad to comfort him and help him through the surgery. The surgery was successful; Brother Mapu survived. When he awoke, we were talking in his ICU room when I cautiously asked him, “Hey Dad, did you happen to see Daniel?” Without hesitation, he said with confidence, “Yes, he was with me on the table holding my hand.”

I know for a surety when we are faced with these hard situations, if we ask our Father in Heaven, he allows our loved ones beyond the veil to come to our aid. I know that to be true!

Brother Mapu survived for another month. We had often joked with him that he was rejected from heaven! In fact, he was making such great progress and working hard at Kahuku Hospital to rehabilitate himself to transition home. While at Kahuku, my children, bless their hearts, and I took turns throughout the day in shifts to spend time to help with his care around the clock. He loved visits from our extended family, ward family, our police ohana, and community. We are grateful for those weeks we each had to spend with him individually during our shifts. He was always so apologetic and grateful for the service and sacrifice we provided to be with him around the clock despite our work schedules and demands. We deem this a very special time that we were allowed to spend with him individually and collectively as a family. My children and I are grateful for the Lord’s tender mercies by allowing us that time to care for him and to be counseled by him. We miss him terribly but find comfort from the scriptures and words of modern prophets to help us know where Daniel and his dad are at, and that they are very happy and busy indeed! We are so happy that they have each other - free from the pains of this mortal life and await our joining them some day.

Flavell’s hymn places emphasis on the rewards of enduring until the harvest: brighter days, joyous greetings, happiness, salvation and the Savior’s love (1). The pinnacle of the piece is the reminder that Jesus never will forsake or leave us, and there is nothing that can separate us from his love.

If the way be one of sorrow, weary not;  
Happier will be the morrow, weary not;  
Here we suffer tribulation,  
Here we must endure temptation,  
But there'll come a great salvation, weary not.

If misfortunes overtake us, weary not;  
Jesus will never forsake us, weary not;  
He will leave us never, never,  
From His love there's naught can sever,  
Glory to the Lamb forever, weary not.<sup>1</sup>

No matter what struggles we go through, no matter how insignificant or of great magnitude, remember it as a test of our faith, a test to help strengthen us so that we may work toward becoming like our Father and Savior in the eternities.

I echo and confirm Elder Anderson's testimony:

“My brothers and sisters, it is my promise to you that increasing your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will bring you added strength and greater hope. For you, . . . , the Healer of our souls, in His time and His way, will heal all your wounds. No injustice, no persecution, no trial, no sadness, no heartache, no suffering, no wound—however deep, however wide, however painful—will be excluded from the comfort, peace, and lasting hope of Him whose open arms and whose wounded hands will welcome us back into His presence. . . . and God shall wipe away all tears from [your] eyes. This day will come.<sup>2</sup>”

Do not weary by the way  
Whatever be thy lot  
There awaits a brighter day  
To all, to all who weary not.

Before we close today, will you sit back and listen to the words of this hymn and be strengthened by its inspiring words. For my grandmother and mother, they will sing it in Samoan as well.

I say these things in the name of Him who lovingly and willingly succors us in our moments of despair, even our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ. Amen

## Notes

1. Information about William Flavel retrieved from The Beebe Sound, Larice Music Enterprises, 2019 at <https://www.hymns.com/store/pg/144-Hymn-of-the-Month-August-2013.aspx>
2. See Neil L. Andersen, “Wounded,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2018, 83-86.
3. Dallin and Tia Muti created [danielmapu.com](http://danielmapu.com), a blog in 2003 to follow the progress of Daniel Mapu