

Lessons from the Bishops' Storehouse (Letter from a storehouse patron)

When my husband was laid off, we felt an immediate reassurance from the Spirit that this was in the Lord's hands and He would watch over and take care of us. We knew we would be blessed, but we assumed that the blessings would come in the form of a job—not the experience we gained. Now, nearing seven months of unemployment, we look back at these blessings and realize that the Lord has held true to His word.



At the recommendation of our caring bishop, we accepted help in the form of food from the bishops' storehouse. This was not an easy thing to accept. I resisted for sometime until I decided that the Lord was trying to teach me to be more humble and that by accepting help, I could gain that attribute. I soon realized that by receiving help, I was greatly simplifying the blessings in store for me. Humility? Maybe—but I don't think true humility is gained that easily, nor do I think that is the extent of His lesson plan.

My Relief Society president brought over the order form and showed me how to fill it out. I thought it looked simple enough. However, it proved to be more difficult because this is not how I usually do my shopping. So as I tried to fill out the form according to what we needed for the next two weeks, at each item I would say, "I don't know if I need it. How much does it cost?" To that question, I felt the answer deep within me: "Yes, there was a cost. But it has already been paid for."

I could see in my mind the Savior with outstretched hands, showing me his nail prints, extending His mercy and love. I thought of the many ways I am in need of His atoning sacrifice, but I reject His offer because I know the cost is so great. I somehow think that by not partaking of His mercy, I can ease the burden He was called to bear. But that is not how the gospel of Jesus Christ works. Whether I accept His help or not, the price has already been paid.



When I received the food, I was surprised to see that not only was there such a broad variety but also that everything was of the highest quality. My school-aged children came home before I was able to put away the groceries. They came into a kitchen that had food covering the table, counters, and even floor. This food was not like the food they had been eating for the last few months. (Our food storage is good, but after a while it lacks variety, and the children sometimes preferred going without.) Their eyes got as big as the apples. *Everyone* was going to want an after-school snack today.

To help with expenses, we had rented out our basement and therefore no longer had a "food storage room." We had to be very creative to fit all this food in the cupboard of our kitchen. After all the children helped, we read from Malachi. We had just watched a very literal fulfillment of the promise: "[P]rove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it*" (Malachi 3:10).

I then explained the basics of the Church's welfare system. They remembered the times Dad had served at the cannery. The children expressed sincere thanks to every member of our stake for paying their fast offerings. They understood that these sacrifices were directly blessing our family.



This welfare system is run by many, many obedient members of the Church all over the world. It is successful because these people are full of compassion, love, and charity. However, it is important for me to remember that the biggest reason the system works is because it is a plan organized by the Lord Himself. This is His work. This is an expression and example of His love for His children. He will and does provide.

We have a saying in our family. Between the eight of us, it is said an average of four to five times a day. It is even said during Primary by our children. The saying goes like this: "We thank thee for the food that thou hast provided for us...please bless it."

That used to be a trite saying in our family. We continue to say it, even using the same words—only now we mean it. Sometimes it is said through tears. We are coming to see our reliance on the Lord and His willingness and ability to provide.

At first, we figured that we are only *now* relying on the Lord. I even explained it that way to my children. Then I realized how ridiculous I sounded by taking credit for the ability to "provide for ourselves" in the past—as if *this* food came from the Lord, but the food at the grocery store appeared without His hand. And that job my husband had for ten years—as if that was somehow a result of his sheer abilities and had nothing to do with blessings from above. Actually, we rely on the Lord no more now than we did a year ago. The only difference is in our awareness.

I corrected myself as all of us together realized that everything we have and all that we are come from a loving Heavenly Father who desires to give us all that He has.



Many long-term blessings are the result of this "trial." One is that my children, while in their youth, have a testimony of not only paying their tithing, but also a generous fast offering. They do not complain, but give full support when Dad is gone rendering service. And they have learned in whom they can trust.

As for the bishops' storehouse, my six-year-old has a hard time saying all those syllables. Instead, she calls it "Jesus' store."

I want to thank all those who work together on His team to provide this great service. This is His work and His glory, and it has blessed and will bless me and my family through the eternities.

Note from author's child, included with the author's letter

Dear Bishop's Store House

Dear Bishops' Storehouse,

Thank you a million times over
for the amazing food! My family
and I appreciated it so much!
We love you to death!

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Love,

(name withheld)

