



Phoebe's Miracle

November 1838, Phoebe was traveling with her husband to Quincy, Illinois when she was attacked with a severe headache which deepened into a serious life-threatening condition called "Brain Fever." Phoebe was in terrible pain, made all the worse because her little girl was also sick. However, the company could not stop and despite rough roads and inclement weather they journeyed on. For days Phoebe hovered at death's door, at times more dead than alive and more than once she was given up for dead.

Finally December 2, 1838, Phoebe called her husband to her bedside and said she thought she had only moments to live. She exhorted him to faithfulness and obedience. In deep distress, her husband laid his hands on her and prayed for her. Phoebe revived somewhat and slept through the night.

The next day Phoebe was once again very low. Her husband watched over her bedside until that evening when it became apparent to all that Phoebe had passed on. The sisters gathered around, weeping for her, while her bereaved husband stood looking on.

Then suddenly the spirit of faith came upon him. Notwithstanding his wife lay before him as a corpse, he bowed himself before the Lord; then laid his hands upon her, and in the name of Jesus Christ...rebuked the power of death and the destroyer, and commanded the same to depart from

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her, and the spirit of life to enter her body. Her spirit returned to her body, and from that hour she was made whole.”

What no one in that room knew was that Phoebe had indeed passed on and stood looking down at her body and those gathered to mourn her passing. Just then “two personages came into the room. . . . One of these messengers informed her that she could have her choice: she might go to rest in the spirit world, or, on one condition she could have the privilege of returning to her tabernacle and continuing her labors upon the earth. The condition was, if she felt that she could stand by her husband, and with him pass through all the cares, trials, tribulations and afflictions of life which he would be called to pass through for the Gospel’s sake unto the end. When she looked at the situation of her husband and child she said: ‘Yes, I will do it!’

“At the moment that decision was made the power of faith rested upon [her husband],” and he laid his hands on her and blessed her to live. Three days later when the company prepared to move on Phoebe arose, dressed herself, walked to the wagon, and journeyed on rejoicing.

Phoebe stood true to that promise. Through all the unique struggles and trials of their time, Phoebe stayed by her husband’s side for another 47 years, until that day she was called home. And by any standard they were not easy years. For you see, Phoebe, was Phoebe Woodruff, the wife of President Wilford Woodruff—the fourth president of the Church.

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Sources:

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