

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

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Secrets To A Happy Marriage

As Nathan Smith and Julie Howlett are planning an August wedding, I thought about what I might be able to give them for advice about having a long and happy marriage. "Never go to bed angry" is one piece of advice I have received. An old Dutch proverb is: "Before marriage, keep both eyes open. After marriage, keep one shut." One elderly lady said that after 50 years of marriage the secret was, if you were wrong, to always admit it. She said her husband always did that. When asked if she always admitted she was wrong, she said, "I can't remember that ever happening."

Proverbs 31:10-31 is a classic statement of the qualities of a good wife. What is not stated is that it is her husband that is likely that author. I tell many of the people for whom I perform a marriage, that they should talk to their spouse in the same way they would if it were their first date. Titus 2:4 tells wives to love their husbands. Col. 3:19 tells husband to love their wives. Love has a great deal to do with treating the other person with simple respect.

One couple tells me they keep no secrets from each other. In fact, before they were married, they told each other everything they had done. I think honesty in marriage is a good thing. But, some people have trouble with such honesty. Cathy sent me the following story about such a couple.

They had shared everything. They had talked about everything. They had kept no secrets from each other, except that the little old woman had a shoebox in the top of her closet that she cautioned her husband never to open or ask her about. For all of these years, he had never thought about the box, but one day, the little old woman got very sick and the doctor said she would not recover.

Continued on page 11

TESTIMONIES AND SERMON NOTES

You're Not God

Our Brother Rodney Bastow brought the message for the Sacrament service June. After the rousing hymn, "We've a Story to Tell to the Nations", brother Bastow brought us his scripture from the Book of Mark 12:33-36.

And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is; Hearken, and hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord;

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.

This is the first commandment. And the second is like this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these..

Upon partaking of the emblems of our Lord and Savior, Brother Bastow greeted us with, "I am thankful for the opportunity to be here this morning. Are you? I hope we've all come here this morning expecting to receive. And I have prayed that God might bless us here with His Holy Spirit, so that on this Communion Sunday our lives might be changed. So that we might begin anew as servants of Jesus Christ."

"The other day I was having a talk with my eldest and wisest son. I was a typical father, telling what he should be doing. And he came back with this response, "You're not God." And I've thought a lot about that this week; and that's what I'd like to talk to you about this morning.."

I'm not God

"Now for the record, I've have not proclaimed to be God. I've never said that I was. There might have been some times in my younger days, when I would make such statements as, "In this house I am. In this classroom I am, or in this school I am God. But I didn't mean to be taken that way. I'm sure that none of you ever claimed that either.

"But do we sometimes like we are God. Or do we sometimes talk like we think we are God. You know, when I was growing up I thought my mom was God. Mom always had all the answers. It didn't matter what the question was. She could give you the right response. And there wasn't any problem that it didn't seem like she couldn't take care of. And when she really wanted to speak to me she'd shake my whole being, just with her voice. And you know I've had some teachers who were like that also. My parents, like most parents, wanted what was best for me, and they did what they could

do to provide for this. But they weren't God. God loves us like a parent. He wants what's best for us. He knows what's best for us. And He's set rules for us, like our parents have set rules for us. And He's told us what is good for us and what is not good for us. But He leaves it up to us to choose, whether or not we want to follow those rules or not. There's not being grounded if you've come in after midnight, or things like this. But He has given us promises that if we don't follow these commandments, certain things could happen."

Brother Bastow, like the rest of us recalled that as he got older he entered that stage where he thought he had all the answers. And nobody could tell him what to do. He continued with, "And I could live recklessly, and I thought that I could never be hurt. Did I think I was God?"

We sometimes think we're God

"The latest fad of BJ has been to get a motorcycle. And it has to be the loudest and the most noticeable and the fastest motorcycle. We've had concerns that these young men who have been doing this who have no fear and think that they can't be hurt. And the day before school was out, one of them did have a very bad wreck. Fortunately all he lost was some skin. And fortunately also, the motorcycle was banged up bad enough that he probably won't be riding it for a little while. But we go through that stage. Most of us live through it. And most of us grow out of it. You know some people think because of their education, or their material possessions, or their looks or social status, they think that they are God. But they aren't."

Brother Bastow then read what Jesus thought about those who think that they're God from the Book of Luke 18:10-14

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself; God, I thank thee that I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers; or even as this publican.

I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess.

But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner.

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other; for every one who exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he who humbleth himself, shall be exalted.

"My school has been out now for a little over a week. And most of you that know me, know how much I enjoy getting back to the farm. I've just always been that way. There's always something to do. I enjoy working outdoors, I enjoy working with the livestock. But I've noticed, and especially last weekend, that even though I was out there doing what I wanted to do, doing what I enjoyed doing, I wasn't happy. You can ask Debbie, I was somewhat difficult to live with. I didn't understand. I don't know why I was like that. I would get angry very easily and I'd be very impatient. It just didn't make sense to me. So Monday, I headed out to the hay field with the windrower. And I was thinking about this. And before I got to the field, I stopped the tractor and I said a prayer right there. And I asked that God would help me enjoy this day, that I would enjoy what I was doing. And that any problems that would come, that He and I would be able to handle them so I could enjoy me life. I had a good experience -- things went well that day. But I felt so uplifted out there. You know, these hymns came to my mind, and I thought about things that I wanted to talk about. I need to do that more often.

"I had another problem this week that I was really concerned about -- something that I was not looking forward to doing. And it was going to cost money, which I didn't want to spend. I really didn't want to have this problem. But I arranged for my brother-in-law to come help me with this, and I prayed about this a lot. He

came, and we worked together that day, we got the problem solved. He related that his brother-in-law arrived at 7 a.m. that morning and stayed until 8 p.m. that night. And even though it was a long day, things went well for them and it went by quickly.

"You know, when I'm at school teaching I pray a lot. Anyone that tells you that there isn't prayer in school isn't a schoolteacher. Just ask Debbie, you have to pray a lot to get through the day. And I pray about my students. I pray about doing a good job, and serving God. And I pray that I won't say things that would hurt someone's feelings, or that might be inappropriate. And I'm very conscious about this. I know that I'm not God, and I recognize His power and His importance in this phase of my life. But out on the farm I have the attitude that I can be independent of God. That since this is something that I enjoy doing, I don't need His blessing. I don't need His help. And things can get hectic when I try to do things without God's help. And I shouldn't, because I'm not God. I need to trust in God in all things. And he needs to be my guide in all things. And I know that if I do this I will have that joy that I had out there on that tractor. I know that I will be happier and I know that I will do a better job at serving the Lord.

"I had a devotional that I read this week that asked these questions, which applies to all of us I think.

Where do I turn when I experience a crisis? When I am hurting or afraid, to whom do I go? When I have a financial problem, who do I want to tell first? And where do I seek comfort when I am under stress or I am discouraged.

God can meet these needs. God can meet all of our needs, and He's the only one who can.

A dream of Gods blessing to those who prepare themselves

Brother Bastow told us that a couple of weeks ago he had a dream which was very similar to a dream that he'd had a couple of months before.

"In this dream, I'm at church and I'm asked to speak. Normally this would be something scary for me, because ever since I was called into the priesthood I've been afraid that that would happen 'Oh, by the way, you're suppose to speak today.' But in this dream I am asked to speak here at church. And as I begin to speak the power of the Lord comes over me and gives me those words to say. And I'm speaking for God. And it's such a wonderful feeling. I remember the dream, but I can't remember what I said. I wish I could. But I was able to present God's message to His people during that dream.

"Now when I've awakened from these experiences I've wondered what has just happened? Was it really a dream? Was it triggered by some other thing in my subconscious? Or was God trying to speak to me. Now I believe that through these dreams, He has been trying to tell me that I need to prepare myself to do His will. And if I do that, and if I will prepare myself, how great will be my joy in serving Him. Today we have a choice to make. You've already taken of the emblems, but today you had to choose when you made that decision to take the emblems, you chose whether you wanted to continue to follow God and go His way. To go the way that Jesus has taught you. Or you could have chosen to go your own way, the way that you think is best, and see where that leads you. Today we can start a new life. We can be forgiven of our sins. We can begin afresh. There are still consequences of past behaviors, but God will forgive us and we can start new as servants of His. We can choose to be more like our Heavenly Father -- more like He wants us to be. And we can find that happiness that comes from serving our Lord."

Brother Bastow then brought the close of his sermon with these words from 1 John 3:22-24

And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the

name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

The service was then concluded with the singing of the hymns, "I Love to Tell the Story" and "He Leadeth Me" with a benediction brought by Brother Steven Smith

To Know God's Purpose in You

"The heavens, they are many and they cannot be numbered unto man, but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine; and as one earth shall pass away and the heavens thereof, even so shall another come; and there is no end to my works, neither to my words; for this is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality, and eternal life of man." Doctrine and Covenants 22:23. This powerful statement of God's purpose in mankind, which God revealed to Moses, was the scripture on which Elder Norman Nelson chose to base his sermon June 9.

"One of the things I keep thinking about," Dr. Nelson said, "is, 'By their fruits you shall know them'. Sometimes we get to thinking that we are a pretty righteous group of people. We have to remember that the statement is true - 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' So we have to look at what are our fruits? What are we actually doing of value for our Lord? I am sure all of us recognize that we are not doing enough.

Norman then turned to the Third Book of Nephi 5:6-8. A voice was heard from heaven, and it was the third time they heard it that the people opened their ears to hear; "And their eyes were towards the sound thereof; and they did look steadfastly towards heaven, from whence the sound came; and behold, the third time they did understand the voice which they heard; And it saith unto them, Behold, my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name, hear ye him." "You and I have to realize that the ability to understand those scriptures and to really know what is being said, is not something that everyone has. It is a special gift that those of you who have that understanding possess. It is a special gift for you from the Lord, to know and understand what is being said.

"We sometimes seem to criticize others because they don't seem to understand. You have to realize it is a special gift for you. I don't know how many of you have actually had the privilege of seeing and communicating with your Lord. It is a wonderful thing. There are no words that I can say to describe the feelings that you can have, but it is certainly worth everything in this world you can possibly do to have that experience.

You Must Seek Your Lord

"So many places you are told, 'Ask and ye shall receive. Knock and it will be opened to you.' Unless we really try to have that experience, we never will. You have to study and pray and worship and seek to be with your Lord, if you want to be there. It doesn't really matter what church you belong to or what congregation you serve with. Are you LDS or RLDS or Methodist or what? What does really matter in this life of yours is, 'This is my beloved Son. Hear ye him!' What does he say that you can do?

"Behold, verily, verily I say unto you, I will declare unto you my doctrine. And this is my doctrine, and it is the doctrine which the Father hath given me; and I bear record of the Father, and the Father beareth record of me, and the Holy Ghost beareth record of the Father and me, and I bear record that the Father commandeth all

men everywhere, to repent and believe in me; and whoso believeth in me, and is baptized, the same shall be saved; and they are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God. And whoso believeth not in me, and is not baptized, shall be damned.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine; and I bear record of it from the Father; and whoso believeth in me, believeth in the Father also; and unto him will the Father bear record of me; for he will visit him with fire and the Holy Ghost. And thus will the father bear record of me; and the Holy Ghost will bear record unto him of the Father and me; for the Father and I, and the Holy Ghost, are one."

How Do You Seek?

"Repent, be baptized, believe on me and keep my commandments'. It's that simple," Brother Nelson explained, then asked, "How do you know the commandments? You study, you read, you pray, and you ask, and you knock. That's the way you find out. But if all our day is filled with getting a new car or paying for our house or doing all of the other things, we won't know. We can criticize each other for that, but until we ourselves have done that and have witnessed and have really seen the Lord and have really talked with Him, and become His sons and daughters, we can't really give that information to someone else. Until you, yourself know the Christ and have witnessed of his love, how can you tell someone else how wonderful it is if you don't know yourself? And how can you know except you ask, and you study and you try?"

Our speaker turned to Genesis 1:1-5. "And it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Behold I reveal unto you concerning this heaven and this earth; write the words which I speak."

"Write the Words which I speak." Norman repeated. "It is specially given for you. He wrote the words that you could know. 'I am the Beginning and the End, the Almighty God. By mine Only Begotten I created these things. Yea, in the beginning I created the heaven, and the earth upon which thou standest. And earth was without form and void, and I caused darkness to come up upon the face of the deep. And my Spirit moved upon the face of the waters, for I am God.'

Our speaker continued with Genesis 3:1 - "And I, the Lord God, spake unto Moses, saying, That Satan whom thou hast commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten is the same which was from the beginning; and he came before me, saying, Behold I, send me, I will be thy Son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it, wherefore, give me thine honor. But behold, my Beloved Son, which was with me from the beginning, said unto me; Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever. Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God had given him; and also that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down; and became Satan. Yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive, and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice."

Understanding the Lord's Prayer Helps

"Remember the Lord's prayer? 'Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.' What are your daily needs? What are you saying when you say, 'Give us this day our daily bread'? Is it really for food that you need? Or what kind of food are you asking for? It is more than bread and water. It's the bread of life. It's the bread of light. It's the understanding of the world you live in - the understanding of truth and intelligence - the understanding of your God. That's what you are asking when you say, 'Give me this day my daily bread.' It's much more than most people really have dreamed of.

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass

against us.’ Take the big black spot out from in front of my eyes so I can see to help you. So often we think, I know all of the answers. Just do what I tell you to day and you will be OK. But that’s not true. Ask of God. Do what He says - not what I say. Ask of God. Keep His commandments. Let’s talk together and help each other understand that. It is God that has the commandments. Not you or I. “Suffer us not to be led into temptation, but deliver us from evil.’ You and I have been given our freedom to choose. Each day is a special day. We can choose to do things our way or we can choose to find the way that God would have us go. And how do we choose unless we ask, and study and try and really understand what God would have us do?

“Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever.’ So often we fall so short of what the Lord would have us do because we don’t understand. We haven’t tried. We haven’t studied. We haven’t become the people He wants us to be. The glory of God is intelligence or light and truth. If you are going to be intelligent, you have to understand what He would have you do. Remember, ‘This is my work and my glory, to being to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.’

God Wants That For You

“That’s His goal with each one of us - to make us intelligent, creative souls who can dwell with Him. He created each one of you as a very, very special being. There is nobody like you. You have a very special mission - a very special part of his Holy world. If you fail, that part isn’t fulfilled in the body of Christ. If you don’t do your job, there’s a piece missing in this creation that He made.

“Today is a special day. I would like to read some of things that Christ did. Christ has foretold our times. He said when the Gentiles reject the fullness of my gospel - When it happens, and it has happened, hasn’t it? The day of the Gentiles is fulfilled and now He is turning special toward the remnant of the seed of Jacob and the seed of Joseph.

“I want to digress just a little bit. I went to see the temple in Nauvoo last week. The more I looked at that situation, the more I wondered, ‘What are we doing? Why are we doing this kind of thing?’ Some people asked me some questions and I had to say, ‘You know, this is the work of Satan. He diverts our efforts from that which is good to those things which are beautiful to the world, but in every instance, it’s ‘Give me thine honor! Allow me to be God.’ How often do each of us have the same feeling - allow me to be God? We make beautiful buildings, beautiful things, beautiful cars, but we neglect the more important thing of bringing our soul in contact with the creator - the one who loves us. The one who desires us to be with Him; but we can’t until we are cleansed and sanctified and choose to be His children.

“In the eighth chapter of the Third Book of Nephi, beginning at verse 28, ‘And it came to pass that Jesus commanded His disciples they should bring forth some bread and wine unto him.’ And while they were gone for the bread and wine, he commanded the multitude that they should sit themselves down on the earth. And when the disciples had come with bread and wine, he took of the bread, and break and blessed it; and he gave unto the disciples, and commanded that they should eat. And when they had eaten, and were filled, he commanded that they should give unto the multitude. And when the multitude had eaten and were filled, he said unto the disciples, Behold, there shall be one ordained among you, and to him will I give power that he shall break bread, and bless it, and give it unto the people of my church, unto all those who shall believe and be baptized in my name. And this shall ye always observe to do, even as I have done, even as I have broken bread and blessed it, and gave it unto you. And this shall ye do in remembrance of my body, which I have shown unto you. And it shall be a testimony unto the Father, that do always remember me.’

“And then, you know the story of when he was ready to leave,

all of the disciples asked him to stay longer. Then he asked all to come forward who were sick and afflicted, and He healed every one of them. Then he asked them to bring their children. He took and blessed them. Then he had the whole congregation kneel; and they watched as the angels encircled all of the children, and the children would speak wonderful things. They were instructed in the way of the Lord. They were cleansed. They were sanctified, and they became holy individuals. That experience along with the rest of His teachings, made it possible for those people to become a very righteous, wonderful people, to the extent that this experience lasted for four generations. They were cleansed. They were sanctified. They were able to dwell in the presence of God. They became celestial type beings in the Spirit. This is what He asks you to do - to pray and study and seek to be with Him, but you have to want to do it very badly.

How Much Do you Want it For Yourself?

“I remember the story of a wise old man to whom a young man came and asked, ‘How can I become what I want to become?’ He says, ‘Go get me a bucket of water.’ The young man brought the water. The wise old man grabbed the man’s head and stuck it under the water. He left him there for a minute or so until the young man began to worry and began to struggle to get out. Finally, when he was almost destroyed, the old man let him up and says, ‘When you want to do this as much as you wanted to breathe, it will happen.’ “When you want to become the children of Christ - when you want to live the Celestial law as much as you want to breathe, then it will happen - not before. We can’t keep doing the little things we do every day and have that Spirit with us that we need to accomplish the goal that is ours. To have the Spirit that you need to become people of the Celestial kingdom, you have to want it as much as you want to breathe right now.”

Let Us Hear And Obey

For a scripture reading, Elder Michael Jordison read Third Nephi 11: 1-27. Jesus is telling the people of Joseph’s land the things that he told Malachi to write and commands that the words be written for this time in history - the time of preparation for His return to the earth to reign. He speaks of the purification that must take place, of the necessity of the hearts of the children being turned to their fathers and of the hearts of the fathers being turned to the children. He gives the promise that he gives to all those who recognize His ownership of all things by bringing all of the tithes into the storehouse. He contrasts the final state of those who live righteously and those who remain wicked. Please read it for yourself.

Michael’s first question was, “Why did you come here this morning? You surely didn’t come here to hear me. Hopefully you came to meet with your King.” Then he turned to the words of Malachi in which Jesus saw something He wanted the people then and now to hear and to know; and He had them recorded in the Book of Mormon. Again, when the angel came to Joseph Smith, he repeated a portion of that passage. And although he paraphrased it, he spoke of returning the hearts of the fathers unto the children and the children to the fathers. “It is something that is true on different spiritual planes.” Michael declared. “Elijah, or the Restorer will come, and the hearts of the fathers will be turned to their children and their families, and the families will be restored. He will come and he will restore the hearts of the church and the children of the church to the covenants which were made with the Fathers, even the scattered of Israel. And he shall turn the hearts of Israel back to their God.”

Parable of The Sower a Key

Brother Jordison recalled his former sermon when he spoke on

the parable of the sower as it is found in Mark, chapter 4. He said that the parable of the sower was more than just a lesson in agriculture. It was the key to understanding all of the other parables, the endowment, Zion, and our own personal salvation. It was the lesson of life that we all must learn, that Jesus Christ gives His gospel on His terms, not on man's. "Anything less than the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Gospel of the flesh, and we know that the flesh bringeth death." Mike said. "The true Gospel is given with God's definitions and it alone brings salvation and life eternal."

Friday, Julie and Mike had attended a home schooling conference in Des Moines that was presented by NICHE, The Network of Iowa Christian Home Educators. One of the classes Mike chose to attend was presented by Norm Wakefield, the keynote speaker of the Conference. He and his wife are the founders of the Spirit of Elijah Ministries, an organization dedicated to turning the hearts of the fathers back to the home - to bring restoration to families. Mr. Wakefield titled his class, "Ears to Hear", and he recalled the parable of the sower. He wanted to show his hearers what Jesus was trying to convey; and he did it, as Brother Jordison did it for us; by standing in the place of Jesus, and asking us to put ourselves in the place of the listening multitude. Then he read it, "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and it was trodden down and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up." He who hath ears, let him hear. "Some fell on a rock, and as soon as it was sprung up it withered away because it lacked moisture." He who hath ears, let him hear. "And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it." He who hath ears, let him hear. "And others fell on good ground and sprang up and bear fruit an hundredfold." He who hath ears, let him hear.

"He who hath ears, let him hear," Michael observed, "was Norm's understanding as to why this parable was the key. 'He who hath ears, let him hear what I am saying', Jesus told the multitude, because the word always comes to us as seed - always!" Once we receive that seed, there are four ways that we can respond. We can nurture the seed, or just collect it.

Three Kinds of Listeners

The careless listener is the one who receives the seed on the wayside. He doesn't care about it. He doesn't care about the word of God, and it's taken from him even before it gets a chance to grow. He may be the child who is dragged to church by his parents. He doesn't care about being there. He goes because he has to. He doesn't receive the word and it doesn't even have a chance to grow up.

"The overwhelmed listener is the one who receives the seed on the rocky soil. She's one that comes to church, and notices that the speaker speaks the truth. She says within her heart, 'Amen. I know what he said was right on', but there is no change brought within her. She's very enthusiastic, happy to be here, there every Sunday and there every Wednesday night. But she allows no root to develop within her. Unfortunately, our congregations are filled with this sort of listener.

"Or maybe this is the Priesthood member who takes quiet time in prayer and scripture study each morning, and as he is reading through the word of God, he is interrupted by his son saying that the baby has just thrown his oatmeal on the floor again and this is the seventh morning in a row. It's all over the cabinets, and it's all over his hair. The cat's on the counter eating the oatmeal, getting into everything. So the Priesthood member gets up, rushes off to deal with things, angry, frustrated, doesn't quite know what to do. Then, after everything is cleaned up and everybody's crying, he comes back to his quiet place. He looks for where he left off and begins reading from there, never thinking about those words that he just read and how he could have handled that situation better - how he could have let the power of Jesus Christ influence his life and direct his motives and his actions.

"The occupied listener is the one who receives the seed and the thorns, the cares of the world come up and choke it. This is the one who doesn't heed Jesus' warning found in Matthew, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasure upon earth where moth and rust doth corrupt and thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal; For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' He's too occupied with the things of the world to take time to study the word. His treasure is his house, his job, his toys. He's the one who goes to church and hears the word, receives the seed, then gets in his car, turns on the radio, drives home or maybe goes out to have lunch. After lunch they go home and maybe have a nap, get up, watch a little football or maybe go out and mow the lawn or do something like that. Then it's time for dinner. Then maybe they go off shopping or go to a movie, never allowing the seed to grow - never nurturing that which they have just received.

"Or maybe this is the one who gets in his car after church and says to his wife, 'Did you hear what the speaker just said? Were you listening?' And she says, 'Was I listening? Were you listening?'" So they were both listening for the other party. So the next thing you know they are in an argument, and the seed never had opportunity to grow because they allowed the cares of the world - they allowed Satan to come through and steal that which they had been given. This type of listener is also prevalent in our congregations.

"Yesterday many of us had an opportunity to go to Nauvoo. And we had a chance to see a temple that was built by a people who were this type of listener. That temple was built by a people who said, 'Jesus Christ is not enough. There is something that we have to do. We have to work it out.' They believe that salvation comes through their own merits as well as the merits of Jesus Christ. They believe that exaltation comes as a process, not as restoration. But the Gospel of Jesus Christ teaches that a man is saved through faith in Jesus Christ. And faith leads to repentance from dead works, and to being born again through baptism of water and of fire and of the Holy Ghost. They say that's not enough, and they have become preoccupied with the works of antichrist. And the antichrist places things in place of Jesus - places things in place of the word, so that we no longer focus on what is right and what is true. The things of the world - the cares choke it out and we never use the gospel's fullest terms to our understanding.

"The Nauvoo Temple is a very beautiful building - fine craftsmanship for the most part, and they have a very persuasive video telling about their church. It's done very well with a nice, deep, rich voice narrating it, beautiful music in the background and beautiful scenery. It's persuasive to those that are caught up in the cares of the world. They have four different rooms of learning in this temple, a creation room, a celestial, a terrestrial, and a heavenly room. These rooms all represent different glories, as they say. But they are like the multitude on the shores of the Sea of Galilee when Christ came to them and shared with them that parable. You know, they heard, but they didn't understand. They see the Gospel, but they don't perceive. The parable teaches that there is only one response that ever bears any fruit. And the one response that bears any fruit is that last one. The seed falls on good ground and is nurtured and cultivated, brought up. When God does anything, He always does it best. When He created the earth and the heavens and the universe, He created it the very best that it could be. And what was it that God said after He had made it? He said, 'It is good.' When God restores us, He restores us to a state of perfection. When we are born again, we are brought to a place of perfection. We are restored. We are brought to a Celestial level. We then have the choice whether to remain on that level or to work back down. It doesn't matter what you call that level, it's a perfect level. He doesn't say, 'Work up to this level.' When He touches us, He's like the refiner's

fire and the fuller's soap. He cleanses and purifies everything. There's no half saved.

Fruits of Listening

"The three types of listeners that I talked about, are the ones that make up our congregations for the most part. I certainly have to include myself in that type of listener. Why? Or how do I know? Jesus said, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' and He wasn't just referring to the wolves in sheep's clothing. He was saying, 'What is the fruit of the seed I have sown in your life?' You know, we look for fruit in each other. We look for fruit of our congregations. We look for fruit in the Restoration branches or in whatever organization with which we might be affiliated. We look for the fruit, don't we? We can say that the fruit that we have are testimonies. We have healings. Do not other congregations - other churches - Do not the Methodists? Do not the Catholics? The Lutherans? Episcopalians? Do not they have testimonies of Jesus Christ? Do not they have testimonies of Jesus? Do not they have testimonies of healings - of how the Lord has touched them? Are we any different in that regard? Faith to heal is not something reliant on Priesthood. If it was, the world would be in a very sorry situation. Where is the fruit in our congregation? Where is the prophecy? Where are the tongues? Where is the fruit of the expulsion of devils and spirits which have some of us bound? And where is the fruit of healings as we would like to see them? We are very concerned about the physical health of our people. Shouldn't we be more concerned about our spiritual health? The promise was this, 'And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name they shall cast out devils. And they shall speak with new tongues. and they shall take up serpents and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them. They shall lay their hands on the sick, and they shall recover.' Are not signs fruit of belief?

"There are other fruits. Paul and Moroni give the fruits of charity and love. I won't go into that right now.

"What about the fruit of Zion? Isn't Zion a fruit? Isn't the building of the Kingdom a fruit? The condition says that when men shall keep all My commandments, Zion should again come on the earth. That when thy posterity shall embrace the truth and look upward, then shall Zion look downward and all the heavens shall shake with gladness and the earth shall tremble with joy, and the general assembly of the church of the first born shall come down out of heaven and possess the earth and shall have place until the end come.' If we are not seeing the fruits, it is an indication that we are not seeing the word from the top level - that we are not cultivating it as we had ought.

The Determined Listener Ponders

"And that brings us to the fourth type of listener. That's the determined listener. He's the one that receives the seed on the good ground. He hears the word with his ears and he understands with his heart. Then he endures unto the end. He hears the word. Then he believes it, or he searches the scriptures daily, as those in Thessalonica, to see if the word is true. 'For blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly nor standeth in the way of sinners nor sits in the seat of the scornful, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night.' That's what it takes to receive the seed on good ground. 'In His law doth he meditate both day and night'." When we receive the seed, Michael asked, do we agree that it is good then just collect it or do we think about it - ponder it?

In this regard, Brother Jordison shared a testimony of two men who, on their lunch break, were pondering the scriptures concerning the time that Philip baptized the Eunuch. As they were pondering, they said a vision opened up to both of them, and through a portal they beheld a woman who was lying on the ground. They stepped through the portal and saw this woman had a deep wound in her side. She had flies and bugs and things crawling in this

wound. So they administered to her and immediately the side was healed. The woman got up, took them to her house and tried to offer them food. They knew that they had more food back in their lunch boxes than this woman probably had in her whole house, so they said, 'No,' stepped back through the portal, back into the warehouse.

"You know these types of experiences happen when we ponder - when we consider the word. Are we looking for that? Is that what we want? I think so. Do we want to be seed gathers or do we want to be fruit harvesters. I think we would all want to be fruit harvesters. I know I want to be. Since I am up here now, I can say this - perhaps many who prepare sermons for Sundays, what do they do? They find their bag, reach in and pull the seeds they have collected and start arranging the seeds and putting them in different orders so they can share them with the people, or with the Sunday School class or whatever it may be. They are just resowing seeds that have already been sown. They have never taken the time to nurture that seed to make it grow. And what happens when that seed grows? It grows into fruit and inside the fruit is the seed, but now they have a testimony of the seed and they have an assurance and they can speak with the authority of God.

"You know, I have to apologize here. I didn't follow the counsel, and I always feel bad about this, given in the Doctrine and Covenants. It says, 'Take no thought what ye shall say, but treasure up the words of life continually and in that hour, you shall be given what you need.' That comes from our seeds that we have cultivated and from the fruit which is borne.

"Alma says, 'And he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God, until they know them in full.' Know them in full. And those who harden not their heart refers to those who receive the word and believe."

Michael told of the large number of books in his basement. "Some of those books I have read through. Maybe some I have read through two or three times. Others I have read parts of and never finished the whole book. Then I have some other books that I have just taken the time to read just the title page or maybe the back of the book and probably never will read them. These are church books, not all from our church but they are church books. You know those books are like that seed. And the only books that I have received any fruit from are the books that I have read through, and dependent on how many times I have read that book, or how well I have studied it determines how much fruit I get - whether it be thirty, sixty or a hundred times the fruit, as the parable says.

The Light Must Be Shared

"Jesus went on to explain this type of listener, the determined listener, 'But that which fell on the good ground are they who receive the word in an honest and a good heart, having heard the word, keepeth what they hear, and they bring forth fruit with patience.' Then He goes on and says, 'For no man, when he lighteth a candle, covereth it with a vessel or putteth it under a bed, but he setteth it on a candlestick that they who enter may see the light. For nothing is secret which shall not be made manifest, neither hid which shall not be made known and go abroad. Take heed, therefore, how ye hear. For whosoever receiveth, to him shall be given. And whomsoever heareth not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.' That word has got to be placed in the prominent position of our hearts when we receive it. It's got to be. Psalm 97 says that 'light is sown for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart.' Light is like seed. For section 83 says that 'the word of the Lord is truth, and whatsoever is truth is light.' Section 90 goes on to say, 'And that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers. But I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth.' "Seed is the word, and the word is light and truth, and it is the commandment of Christ that

we bring up our children with understanding how to apply the word when they hear it - how to listen.

“I read from Luke, ‘No man when he lighteth a candle covereth it with a vessel or putteth it under a bed, but he setteth it on a candlestick that they who enter may see the light.’ We don’t walk in the room and turn on the light or a lamp and then stick the lamp under the covers and try to get ready for work or maybe for bed or whatever, do we? Why turn on the lamp? And when we come to church on Sundays, do we come to hear the word to nurture it, or do we just come to collect the seed or to make a good appearance? Why bother coming if that’s all we are doing? If we are not going to listen on the top level - if we are not going to apply that which we have heard in our lives, what’s the point of coming? I think Jesus made that clear in the account from Mark. It says, ‘And when he was alone with the twelve, and they that believed in him’ - this was after he told them the parable of the sower - ‘they that were about him with the twelve, asked of him the parable. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all things are done in parables.’ I’m not going to waste my time telling these people something they are just going to trample under their feet. They have to want it. They have to desire it.

Luke 8:19-21 reports, “‘Then came to him his mother and his brethren and, could not speak to him for the multitude. And some who stood by said unto him, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are those who hear the word of God and do it.’ What did James, the brother of Jesus write? He said, (James 1:22-25) ‘But be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like a man beholding his natural face in a glass; for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not being a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.’

Doers Are Blessed

“This man shall be blessed in his deed,” Mike repeated. “Don’t you think James was probably there that day on the shores of the sea of Galilee when Jesus told this parable? When he said, ‘Who are my mother and who are my brethren? They are those who hear the word and do it.’ That probably influenced his ministry. He goes on, we only deceive ourselves when we collect the seed. It looks like we are going to church to somebody on the outside. We are doing a good job. We are playing but we are really just collecting seed. To be close to God requires that we move forward. God changes not, but God is always moving forward in His purposes and in His work. ‘My work shall commence’ indicates that there is a forward movement of His purposes - in His promises of His covenants, and when we stand still collecting seed, we are not just standing still. We are moving backwards. When God moves forward and we are here, we just increase the distance between us and God. We are moving backwards.”

Brother Jordison then referred to the story Norman Nelson told of a man whose head was placed under the water until he could almost hold his breath no longer. “Norman was telling us that when we want the Kingdom of God as bad as that man wanted air, then we are going to be about the business of the church. Then we are going to be doers of the word and not hearers only. We have been hearers for a hundred and seventy two years - varying degrees of hearers - there have been doers, and I am speaking collectively. Anyway, we want to have a congregation that thirsts after righteousness - that hungers. As Alan shared with us, do we want to be satisfied with the crumbs? I’m not satisfied with crumbs. I want meat. I want something we can chew on - something we can bite. “Have we made plans today for something other than serving Jesus

Christ or nurturing the word? I’m not trying to condemn anybody, but let us consider that. We have been given counsel over and over again, ‘time is running out’, Brother Roy Weldon told us many years ago. Walter Weldon gave us statements, ‘Tell My People.’ What’s God trying to tell us? ‘Be obedient to what I have said. Listen to me. Hear and obey. Everything will be OK if you will do those two things, hear and obey.’”

Elder Hensley Mbasso’s Testimony

Brother Hensley Mbasso, visiting Elder from Nigeria, read from 2 Timothy 2:19-26 read, “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” The scripture goes on to speak of the vessels needed in a great house - vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth - some to honor, and some to dishonor. Paul has been counselling Timothy concerning some things in which he should not be engaged. Now he says that “If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do engender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those who oppose themselves; if God, peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”

He then read 1 Corinthians 3:1-15. It is Paul’s instruction to the Corinthians reminding them that the minister who brought them to the Lord is not the one to be praised but God who brought the increase to the seed that the ministers had planted. Furthermore, he declared, those who built upon the foundation he had laid should be careful of what materials he built since his work would be tried by fire. If his building was destroyed by fire, he would suffer loss even though he might still “be saved; yet so as by fire.” Please read it all for yourself.

As he took the pulpit for his sermon, Brother Hensley began singing in the way he would sing in his home congregation in Nigeria, “You are worthy, Lord, You are worthy Lord. I am saying You are worthy, Lord”. He signaled Seventy Ron Smith who was in charge of the service and had ministered in Nigeria, to sing with him. Ron sang and signaled the congregation to join with them. The words, ‘You are worthy, Lord’, interspersed with “I am Saying” and “You are saying” were repeated many times before our speaker was ready to proceed. He then offered this prayer:

“Most gracious God and loving Father, this morning we are gathered in Your presence. I have no word of my own to share, but my prayer is that you might - Jesus might increase this morning even through this spoken word. I bring myself behind the cross of Calvary, and I pray that I say nothing - nothing comes forth from this mouth but that which You wish to come forth. Bless this children this morning. Bless even myself that I might be blessed all together with this, Your great people. This I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.”

Brother Hensley spoke of other Priesthood whom he felt might be more powerful preachers than he, “but don’t mind me. I pray that the Lord might give me grace and understanding and perhaps that His Spirit might reveal where I’m coming from into your heart. You might not hear me very well because of my accent. I have a

different accent than yours because that is the way we are taught.” “This morning I have not come to preach or talk or testify about myself. I’m not here to exhibit wisdom which I do not have, neither knowledge, because I don’t have any, nor the philosophies of men, for I am not a philosopher. I am not well learned in books, but this morning I have come in the name of the Lord that He might speak to each and every one of us, me first, perhaps that we might be able to go forth and reach the world in strength if the Lord permits.

A Sure Foundation

“My message this morning. From where I read you might understand where I am coming from. I am talking on a message I caption, ‘A Sure Foundation’. We are a church that believes so much in foundation. We believe so much in our heritage. We believe so much in the order that has been set before us. We don’t believe in change. And I, too, don’t believe in a change on the doctrines which Christ has laid down. He says, ‘Go ye and teach all nations, all that I have commanded you’. ‘Teach all nations, all that I have commanded you’, Brother Hensley repeated. ‘In doing so, I will be with you.’ He’s not going to be with us if we go there and teach our own doctrines. He has set doctrines that He wants us to go and teach and preach unto all the nations of the world - not wavering nor shifting from the left nor to the right. It is already there. We so much believe in the foundations that are laid for us. We believe so much in the doctrines of the Restoration - the doctrines of Christ.

“We don’t believe in changes, but change is one thing that is permanent in this life. Change must come from time to time. We are subject to change. It is permanent. The only thing that is permanent in this world is change, and we are all, even all nature, is subject unto change; but we have one that is unchangeable, and His ways are unchangeable. His doctrines are unchangeable. These are His standards. We can’t now be shifted to the left and to the right. He cannot be dispensed with. The doctrine of Christ is one. It’s indivisible. You can’t divide it. You can’t change it. You can’t reprove it. It is there. It is a standard. If we follow it, there is blessings for us. If we do not, I don’t know what will come. You might provide the answer. But one thing I want to assure us is this, we have a sure foundation, and God has laid the foundation in Zion. The scripture says if the foundation be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?”

“Let me put it this way. If the foundation is destroyed, what shall the Saints do? All over the world there are no people, no church that regard themselves as Saints except we. We are the only church on the whole earth that call ourselves Saints. And the world hates to hear that. There are spots in this world where you cannot proclaim Jesus. Even within the United States there are places where people will not have the boldness to share their faith with their offices, with their friends, with their neighbors, with those who come in contact with them. Yet we have a foundation. We are all struggling. We have the promise. The promise is there for those who will accept it, who will want to work within the framework of His doctrine. He has set rules for us. One thing you have to bear in mind is that God is love - more so to those who keep His laws.

“The churches out there say, ‘We believe in grace.’ He is a very gracious God - very loving, but He has His laws, His principles, His doctrines, His standard. It must be kept if you will have the love of God. If you will accept the message of God, you must keep to His standard. You must keep the principles. You must follow the foundation that has been laid, and this foundation is laid on Jesus Christ, His only begotten. This is why He cannot dispense with it. The foundation of the church was laid on Christ and the doctrines of the church are based on the teachings of Christ, and these came from Heaven, and we cannot change it. Though we are subject to change, God remains the same. If we deny Him, He will not deny Himself. Yet He abideth faithful. Irrespective of our unfaithfulness, God remains the same.

Tests of the Restoration

“The Restoration has passed through a lot of tests. His church has suffered tremendously because of unfaithfulness on the part of those who believed. It is not because of the world that is outside that the church is suffering. It is because of those of us who are inside from the early days of the Restoration. Joseph Smith had much of his problems from within, not just without. Most of the time he was rebuking some of those he knew. The Lord laid it to his heart what problems the church was going to pass through. While Joseph was still alive, Brigham Young and the rest of them began to change doctrines. He was rebuking some of them openly in the church. “Yet we are talking of a foundation that had been laid on Christ. Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid. And every one that names the name of the Lord must have to depart from sin, from iniquity, from unrighteousness if we shall attain to His Celestial glory, that glory we are all looking for and talking about Celestial Glory. (Levels of glory is one thing that is so predominant in the Restoration.)

“In Joseph’s life time he saw what we are seeing today. He knew there would be these divisions. The Lord revealed it to him. Once or twice he presented his son and he rebuked Brigham Young and his group that this right of presidency does not belong to them. It is not their calling. Where he was led to designate his son, Joseph the Third, the young Joseph was presented, and they all knew it. And yet, because they wanted to introduce doctrines that would suit their purposes, they went ahead and took the majority of the church to Salt Lake City. Most of the church members followed him. Some discovered his fraud and retraced their steps.

“So, brothers and sisters, we are here this morning. The same foundation the old Saints stood upon is the same foundation we are standing upon today - the same foundation which the early apostles stood upon - the same doctrine we are having today. God is the same. He has never changed. He will never change. His purposes are always the same. His prayers are the same. His teachings are the same. From ages past, from the foundation of the world God has demanded nothing but righteousness and holiness from the Saints. ‘Be ye holy, for I, the Lord am holy.’ Aspire unto perfection. How do we if we throw away the doctrines?”

Brother Hensley expressed his concern for the many times he has seen the Saints without their children in church. He particularly told how disappointed he was at the behavior of the children with whom he visited Nauvoo. His concern was that without that experience with their parents they would not know the foundation on which the church is laid when, in the future, the parents will be no more and the children will be the church. “I didn’t feel happy, he said, “because these are those who will take our place when we are no more. They need to be well informed.”

“We have several divisions in the Restoration today. Each one is standing on one thing or the other. One is claiming to be a prophet. I don’t know how an individual can stand up and claim, ‘I am the prophet of the Church of Jesus Christ.’ It has never been that way. It has been by revelation from God - from Heaven. Heaven revealing, and when it comes there is no doubt. Everyone will accept that person. One has risen and claimed to be the one mighty and strong. I wonder how it could be. And if one should be one mighty and strong in one week or two, the whole world would have known a difference. The difference would have been clear in that one week. If this man is one mighty and strong, the world would know it. His voice will echo around the whole world. But I don’t see how one mighty and strong could be elected by men. If that title should be unto a man, heaven would reveal it, and the earth will know that a difference is come. The God we serve will catapult that man into such a fame that the world will know the truth that this is the one mighty and strong. How long did it take Joseph and his men to be heard all over the United States and across the sea? How long?

Because he was appointed by God to carry out the message to the world. The news spread across the United States that God had restored His church on earth, and it didn't take a long time before the world heard of it.

"Today we do more of talking than doing. We preach more than we go out there to reach the world. We have always said, 'There is no money to do this. There is no money to do that.' I don't think they had more money than we do today, and yet they did tremendous work for Christ. If we believe God and if we trust Him, He will see us through in our ministries. He will have a way. He will show us the way out. This conference (Elder's Conference) theme said, 'The Way is Prepared'. I'm hoping and I'm looking to see something more than what we have had. I'm looking for to see the way has been prepared. I'm looking for to see a great miracle, I mean a great ministry brought to the world. The way is prepared. The harvest is plenty, but laborers are few. The fruit is ripe, already to harvest. Who will go? Who will reach them? The Lord needs you as much as He needs me. Who will volunteer to go?"

The Restoration's Firm Foundation

"We have a foundation that has been laid. We believe, and we certainly believe on this sure foundation. What a firm foundation we have! No other people on earth have such a claim as we do. We claim a lot, and that is true. We have a lot from the Lord, but we need to do more than we claim. We can't sit down here and see the work carried out in the whole world. He needs our hands. We are the hands of the Lord, and these hands must be clean. We have to come before Him with clean hearts if this work will go forward. Our hearts should be as clean as what we proclaim. We are proclaiming a resurrected Christ - a risen Lord who is no more held bound by the grave, but sometimes we behave as if to say we are following one that is still in the grave. We need to express our joy. We need to express our heart felt gratitude to the world around us. They might not accept us, but God, in His time will bring us forth to the world, and the world will see us on so many things that He that is despised and rejected could become beautiful in the eyes of the world. At the very appointed time, we will prepare our hearts and walk into the ways that are prepared - if we will cleanse ourselves - if we will look up unto God, making our ways perfect and right before Him, doing the best we can - not just anyhow. He needs our best. God needs the best we can do with our whole might. Who will go? Go, teach all nations. Who will do that? Each and every one of us needs to lay our hands to the plow, and the scripture says, he that lays his hand to the plow and looks back is not fit. If you have laid your hands of the plow and you are looking back, and the affairs of this life are pulling you back, you are not fit for the Master's use. He is looking for men and women who shall devote their heart, their lives, their time, their everything to serve Him - to live for Him - to obey His commandments.

"In obeying His commandments blessings come. We cannot attract blessings from the God of Jacob without obeying His commandments. Go. It has to be, Go! You have to go first before blessings come. When God called Abraham, He called him out of his people - his father's house- to leave everything, and he left everything and moved at the biddings of God. And when he went there, God blessed him. It has been go first. God will not bless you while you are sitting by at your home and praying, 'Oh, God, I need a miracle of so and so to happen. Or, 'Let this happen' and you give God conditions. I will not go. No! You have to go. Obey His command. Follow His bidding. In so doing, blessings will come.

"Seek to build up My Kingdom first, and establish My righteousness, and everything good will follow. It is not good things first coming to you and then you do His will. This is what we are saying today, 'God give me this. Unless you give me this (Brother Hensley did not voice our threat). Have you taken time to bless the name of the Lord from your hearts without complaining? Have you

taken time for one whole day when you didn't ask God for anything and you just keep on blessing His name? 'Bless the Lord, my soul, and all that is within me, praise His holy name.'

On Living a Holy Life

"We are called to live a holy life on this earth. There are people who say, 'Fish that are in the ocean cannot deny water. How can a man deny sin - live without sin?' I mean, that is a terrible phrase. I have always attacked that. It can be so. Ye are the temples of the living God. God does not dwell in great cathedrals or in temples built with human hands. He dwells in you and in me. We are the temples that God dwells. How can you say that a man cannot live holy in this life. We can do it by His grace. It is not by our power. We are made complete in Christ. Those who believe Him are made complete in Him. Because we believe in His grace, we believe in His sayings - in His commandments. We do His commandments and His grace comes and abides with us. His grace cannot abide with us without we obey His commandments. We don't need to turn things upside down. The world has turned things upside down. They say, 'It is by grace we are saved, not of works; so just grace. We are covered. We can do anything on that grace.' No! We can have grace only when we keep His commandments. Accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior - is it by proclaiming it by mouth, 'I accept Jesus as my Savior? Jesus has come into my life. Oh, I thank you that You are in my life.' No!. That is what they say that is how they receive it. And they say, 'Just by grace we are covered!' No! You can't have the grace of God unless you keep His commandments. Unless you build according to his word!

"Paul was shaming the early Christians because there was division among them. Some say, 'I am of Peter. Others say, 'I am of Paul.' Others say, 'I am of Apollos or I am of Matthew.' And I know Judas even may have some followers. But Paul now rebuked them in this way as we read. 'Who am I who plants or who labors? I was nothing. Who am I? Who is Peter? Who is Paul? Who is Apollos or Barnabas? Are we not all servants of the Lord? Where comes division?' Because men are trying to change the foundation. Each time people want to change the foundation for their personal aggrandizements, personal gain, for selfish interests. They will try to change the foundation with one small language that will draw men to them. Then here he said, 'Some say, I am of the circumcision. Others say I am of the uncircumcision.' Who is Peter? Who is Paul? Are not all co-laborers. We amount to nothing without God giving the increase. All the glory should go to Him who gives the increase. Not to me who planted or to him who watered. When we must have done all that we could, we should declare, 'I am an unworthy servant.'

Servants, Not Rulers

"But today, people want to be known. People want to define themselves. People want to be respected and honored and exalted and receive an exalted position when they are coming among the Saints. They introduce one thing or the other. They go to the doctrines in the Doctrine and Covenants and pull out one thing and say, 'Oh this is it! I have it! It is me. It is my world. You cannot do this. You cannot do that. You must please me. It must be this way.' We are not rulers over God's precious people. Even when Christ was here below, He never claimed rulership. He called us His friends, His brothers. He never exalted Himself. He took the form of a servant, the scripture says, and that was why He humbled Himself to the point of washing the feet of the Disciples.

"The tradition had in those days in Judea, because the road used to be muddy during the rains and very dusty during the dry season, when a man has a guest in his home, he would send one of his lowest servants or slaves to go and wash the feet of the guests before the guest comes into the main living room. That was the system. That was the method so they would not bring mud into the home or dust because they usually go in sandals, no shoes. So that was done, and

when the Lord came he took that form of a servant. He took the form of a slave. Even the servants sometimes were not happy to do it because they were forced to. Their condition or position made them to do it, so they were not doing it happily. They were not doing it through joy, but the Lord Jesus took that form. In the first place he took the form of man. Being God, He left His throne on high and descended and took the form of man and was born like a human being like each and every one of us that He might redeem us from the curse of sin. He took the form of man. He took the form of the lowest slave, and came and died. It's a mystery. The mystery of godliness cannot be comprehended by the wisdom of man. We have a God who is infinite. You can't search Him out through our studies. Through or researches, you cannot put God into a laboratory for a test to research Him as you can do man. His thoughts, His wisdom, His knowledge, His ways are past finding out. We can't find God out. He sent His Son Jesus to die, and He died that we might have life and have life more abundantly.

"More abundantly. That scripture gives me joy! He came that we might have life and to have life more abundantly. We need to live life in the fullest when the grace of God is upon us. We need to live life and enjoy life to the fullest if we are living in righteousness, for the scripture says that the fruit of righteousness is peace. If you are living in righteousness you will certainly have peace. Your inward being would be conditioned with peace. We are not having peace because we are not living right before God.

Brother Mbasso proposed that we choose one week and decide to live a life that is under God. "You will see you have peace. You have joy. Just one week remain in the presence of the Lord throughout that week. You will see the glory of God about you. You will even know more about God than you have known all your years. If you will choose to live in His presence for one week, doing nothing else but praising God and giving Him all the glory. Bowing your knees in praise. Prostrating before Him in adoration. There is nothing else we can give to God. We can't give God money. We cannot give God food. He does not eat human food. He had taken His last sacrifice when His Son was hanging there on the cross of Calvary because of our sins. That was the last sacrifice God took, and He will not have any again. And even while His Son was hanging there it was not a joyful thing. You remember the cry of the Lord, 'My God, My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?' Just because He was bearing our sins and our iniquities. Let those who name the name of Christ depart from iniquity. That is one essential part of our faith - to depart from iniquity - to live in righteousness - to live a life that is acceptable before God - to have good testimonies before all men. It is not by our strength. We cannot live it just by our strength. We have to follow the commandments - the laid down rules - the laid down doctrines. No man that is worried and entangled with the affairs of this world has success. For if you are running in a race for mastery, you have to run in accordance to the rules of the game to win laurels. You cannot win laurels without running according to the rules of the game.

Paul was an intelligent man. He used several illustrations to drive home his points. No one runs in a race and wins that race without running according to the rules of the game. Every game has its rules, and so have this faith. Every religion of this world has its rules, and we are blessed and most opportunely to have the best faith - the only true faith that came from heaven. How glorious will it be the day we meet our Lord and Savior! How glorious will it be if our Lord and Savior will receive us in open hands and say, 'Welcome, thou faithful servant.' We are all building on a foundation that is already laid. Except you build according to the instructions your building shall fall, and your works shall suffer loss! The Lord says, if you are building, you must first count the cost before you start building. He gives a comparison of two persons. One built on sandy soil. The other one built on a solid rock, on a firm foundation. And

He said, when the winds came and blew, the flood came upon the house, the storm beat upon it, the one that was built on the sandy soil could not stand the test of time. But the one that was built on the solid rock, which is Christ, that's an illustration He used, stood. The rain beat upon it, the heat of the sun, the storms, the flood and yet, it stood firm because it was built on a solid rock.

Brothers and sisters, we have the promise more than any other church group or organization can think of or can boast of. If we would keep this promise. If we would obey His commands, all His promises would be ours. He's looking for it from us. God desires our labors. The death of Christ on the cross of Calvary should not be in vain. The sacrifices of the early Saints of the Restoration should not be in vain. If we were to begin to change the foundations and begin to play on words. When men who feel they have gotten to a heights of wisdom, they begin to think they can think even better than God. They begin to introduce new ideas and changes that will do nothing but engender strife and draw away souls from God.

Though We Fall, the Foundation Stands Sure

"We have a promise, Brothers and Sisters. We need to keep up to that promise. We have a doctrine laid. We have a foundation strong and firm, solid, an infallible foundation. We all are subject to fall, but that foundation will remain ever strong. If we will keep to our vows the day we went down into the water - If every member of the Restoration from the early days had kept to their vows when they went down to the water and saw baptism, the whole world would have been swept by the Restoration movement. But because every Saint never kept, from the early days, we began to have a shift. They have never kept their vows." Our speaker recalled again the trek to Utah and the changes made in the doctrine of Christ and pled that we hold firm and remain strong, standing firm upon our foundation. He said we can choose with what materials we will build, Gold, silver, or stone. If you build upon that foundation with gold, when fire shall try it, when testing shall come, it shall be refined and you will find yourself, when He comes, in the celestial Kingdom. If you are building with silver, you will find yourself in the second level. If you are building with stone, you will find yourself in the third level. If you build with hay or wood or stubble, you will eventually suffer loss. He admonished us to build with gold.

"Because of the shame suffered for Christ in this age, many are not accepting it. The name of Christ to many sounds strange. They don't want to associate with it because we are living in the jet age and the computer age where people are moving ahead, and you are talking about Jesus. Where people are going to the moon - to space and you are here preaching Jesus, talking about Jesus, an old fashioned thing! The scriptures say that in the latter days, knowledge shall increase. To many, it shall increase to the point that they shall lose out their faith. When knowledge increases, we need to steer it in our faith if we are to receive His blessing in His Kingdom. Many will suffer loss because they are not building with anything precious. If you need to have a precious place in His Kingdom, you need to build with precious things. Not all levels - not all buildings require money. This level does not require money as such. It requires you - your sacrifice. It has to be by sacrifice. How can Zion come to be without a prepared people? It comes upon us when we are ready. When we look up, heaven shall look downward as Zion shall be. We are not yet looking up as a people. We are not yet united in our faith and purpose.

Our speaker observed that many people are living in Independence, but they are not gathered, because when they are gathered, they shall be of one mind and one heart - one purpose, one faith, one doctrine, charitable in all things they do. No poor among you. No critical. Like mind. Now, he says, almost all in the Restoration are critical and afraid. "Nobody wants to believe the other person, and my question is, 'We are looking. We are working, we are asking that

Zion should be. When we are not united, how can Zion be? It is one thing to buy a home in Independence and live there in the Center place. It is another thing to be gathered in Independence and live under God."

Again our speaker recalled the experience of the early Saints who did not follow the Lord's instructions and failed and repeated again the words of the hymn, "How long we have wandered as strangers in sin and cried in the desert for thee?" As God's people, we have wandered for so long. We need some consolation. How can that consolation come if we are not united? How can Zion come when there is still poor people out there crying among you? There are those who have no home to live in and yet they are God's people. How can Zion be when there are such people among you? Brothers and sisters, we have to be a people of one mind, of one heart. Every other thing in this life will go. Faith, mighty faith that will pull down mountains, they will all cease. One thing that will not cease is charity, and that is your level restored for Christ. Charity will not cease. Every other thing, prophecies, tongues, miracles, signs and wonders, they all shall cease but charity will endure to the end.

Are You Building On That Sure Foundation?

"So Brothers and Sisters, what are you building upon that foundation that has been laid?" It cost God everything He had - the only thing that God had that was so beloved to Him was His son Jesus Christ, and God was so willing to give His Son Jesus to die for us to come and lay Himself a foundation for all the whole earth - those who will believe. What has it cost you? 'I gave My life for thee. What hast thou given for Me?' Is the question. What are you building upon that foundation? I would advise, Brothers and Sisters that you build with gold so that when the Lord comes, we shall be refined. We shall be made pure. Time will prove us. If we pass through a fire, we shall be refined. Testing must come. Who will abide? Only those with clean hands, pure hearts.

"These are those who can be able to look upward when He comes. The wicked cannot look upward. The sinners, the abominables cannot look up when the Lord comes and they cannot dwell in His Zion. And Zion must be in spite of what we believe. God will certainly raise a people for Himself. He will certainly raise an army in spite of the way we look at it. If the doctrine of Zion is His, He will bring it to pass in spite of what we believe - in spite of the way we are looking at it. God is certain. If it be His, and I have searched through the scriptures and I find it is true, God will bring it to pass in spite of us. I don't know how you look at that. I don't know what your beliefs are. Some of us are beginning to change. Among the Restorationists I am beginning to hear some of the people think about it this way or that way. What do you think about this Zion? Is it a reality? If it is given from God, it is a reality and it must certainly come to pass. I encourage us to be strong. Do all we can. The scripture said, 'Having done all, stand.' You must have finished doing all you can. When you have done it, stand strong on this foundation. And the only thing, I say again, God cannot change His foundation. He has set His foundation in Zion and it must be that way. He has done that and He does not change His standard. His standard is holiness unto the Lord. Nothing short of it. So, Brothers and Sisters, it is time for us to stand up and go at His bidding where He is leading us. Go. Make disciples. Teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Lord when you must have told them the doctrines of the Lord. It is the same doctrine every where. And when you do, the grace of the Lord shall be abundantly multiplied upon you and upon His church. Amen!

June Music Service

Jan Jordison was the pianist for the service and chose patriotic songs for her prelude: "America the Beautiful", "O Canada", "The Star Spangled Banner".

The announcement was made that next Sunday we will have a business meeting in the place of classes. There are a number of proposals to come before the congregation which concern monetary expenditures that need to be considered. There will be a spreadsheet of facts available for background, and the meeting will be more for presentation than for decision making, according to the building committee working on the proposals.

Gordon Winkler was in charge of the service and began by recalling the world wide experience we had just had at the Seventy Missionary Family Reunion with music and speech in other languages. Juan Reyes, his son Eli and Arturo Gomez had sung, prayed and spoken in Spanish. Henseley Mbasso had spoken and sung in Nigerian. Lyla Jordan (Evelyn Directo Jordan) had sung in Hawaiian. In this service Roger Yu, a Graceland student from Taiwan who has become a part of our congregation by reason of his association with Ron and Di Smith, was to sing in the Chinese language. Gordon remarked

"We know God is not just the God of Mt. Ayr and Lamoni, but He is God of all the world. The earth is the Lord's. I finally got it! The Gospel is the same preached in all the world. People are like you and I - shorter, taller, skin is different colors, but people are just like us and want to learn the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the same for all!" Our first song was, "Let All the World in Every Corner Sing, My God and King". The second was, "Praise the Savior, all Ye Nations."

We thought the service was being recorded, so reporter's notes were not taken. Something unexplained happened, and we got a blank tape. We are sorry we cannot offer the report of all the offerings made. They were from old and young alike, by singing voice, instrument and the spoken word, all praising Our God, the God of all the nations. Perhaps the next time there are five Sundays in a month, you can join us to enjoy this offering of talent in worship of our Lord.

From the Pastor's Desk

Continued from front page

In trying to sort our their affairs, the little old man took down the shoebox and took it to his wife's bedside.

She agreed that it was time that he should know what was in the box. When he opened it, he found two crocheted doilies and a stack of money totaling \$25,000. He asked her about the contents. "When we were married," she said, "my grandmother told me the secret of a happy marriage was to never argue. She told me that if I ever got angry with you I should just keep quiet and crochet a doily."

The little old man was so moved, he had to fight back tears. Only two precious doilies in the box! She had only been angry with him two times in all these years of living and loving. He almost burst with happiness.

"Honey," he said, "that explains the doilies, but what about all of this money? Where did it come from?"

"Oh," she said, "that's the money I made from selling the doilies."

News & Notes

Funeral Held For Dan Beck

After suffering with a brain tumor for more than two years, Dan Beck was relieved of his suffering on June 11. His memorial service was held at the Wilson-Watson Funeral Home in Mt. Ayr Saturday, June 15. Alan Smith was in charge of the service. Dinner for the family was served at the church prior to the service.

Many Take Nauvoo Trip

Approximately forty persons gathered at Nauvoo to go through the newly constructed Nauvoo Temple. Although the outside has much of the appearance of the original temple, which was never completed, the interior has been significantly redesigned to accommodate the "Sacred ordinances" instituted by Brigham Young and his associates after the death of Joseph Smith. The logistics required to send thousands through the structure daily were superb. Fifteen of the Mt. Ayr congregation remained overnight to worship with the Nauvoo Restoration Branch on Sunday. We were housed at Farmington, Iowa, in the home of David and Kathy Drummond where testimonies of our faith shared Saturday night blessed us all.

Missionary Family Reunion Ministers

There is no way to chronicle even a tiny portion of the ministry the Seventy sponsored Reunion of 2002 provided for those who took advantage of the opportunity to spend a week with their Lord - for that was just what is was. From the early morning hall worships to the campfires that closed out each day, it was time spent with God. Classes were inspirational. Prayer meetings were Spirit filled. We have never seen entire congregations follow the direction of the one in charge as they did this past week. Prophetic ministry graced our lives, encouraging, assuring and directing us all. Even the recreation carried a spirit of joy and love that was marvelous to behold.

Congregation Ministers at Missionary Family Reunion

More than 500 people registered for the Reunion. Nearly half of those registered were children and youth. There were 48 registered from the Mount Ayr congregation, and this congregation offered a wide variety of ministry to the camp. Alan Smith was the director, Valle Smith was the registrar, Ronald Smith was one of the Seventy sponsoring the event, was in charge of all of the prayer services and taught a class. George Knotts, also a Seventy sponsoring the Reunion, also taught a class. Gerry and Patty Bolingbroke, and Gordon and Linda Winkler served at the registration table along with Alan and Valle. Fran Parker and Lynda also sat the table seeking volunteers for the nursery.

Danny Kinnaman was the head deacon serving at all of the large group services with the transportation of hymn books from the MSC to the Shaw Center and back daily the heaviest of his duties. Cody and Tiffany helped him. Michael Jordison was a Hall Shepherd in charge of the morning worship for those living on his family's hall. Julie assisted in the care of the children. Cara Smith and Melissa Winkler directed the recreation and the campfires. Fran

Parker was in charge of the nursery. Lynda Rolfe and Diane Anderson each did double duty. Lynda taught the first and second graders and assisted Fran in the evening nursery. Diane was in charge of first aid and assisted Lynda in her class as did Patty Bolingbroke part time. Norman Nelson served on the medical corps. Di Smith taught the Fifth grade class with Kent Clisby assisting with the crafts. Robert Rolfe offered ministry of music to the children under Lynda's care and Mildred and Delbert Smith shared stories of their adventures with God with the children of Lynda and Di's classes. Yvonne Galusha and Cessaries sang in the choir. Jazmyn, Akela and Gable Galusha, Benjamin and Matthew Anderson, Sam Jordison, Elizabeth Rolfe, Jordan Thomas, Cede Smith, Cody and Tiffany Kinnaman participated in the musical. Tyler Morris rehearsed but was out of town during the performance. Besides helping Di, Kent Clisby was everywhere doing all of the chores that had to be done to see that things went smoothly, even taking a turn in the nursery.

Gerry Bolingbroke managed the money, recording offerings, making out receipts, depositing the moneys, etc. until he left for Idaho and Robert Rolfe finished the job. Steven Smith created the thermometer that kept the camp advised of our progress to financing the Reunion.

Our budget of \$57,000.00 was reached by Friday. For those of you who are not aware of how the reunion is financed, the registration fee of \$50.00 secures a room and insurance for a family. All the rest of the expenses have to be paid by offerings. That plan permits families who otherwise could not afford the cost of the experience to participate along with the rest and allows those who are more affluent to even get a deduction on their income tax.

Nathan Smith (No longer strictly a Mount Ayr Saint, but we still like to claim him) was in charge of the children's music and directed the musical, "Sir Oliver's Song", performed on Friday evening by a cast that filled the stage with Richard (Techs) Jackel as Sir Oliver. Nathan and Julie Howlett, his fiancé, helped with the musical also assisted with congregational music from time to time.

All of the congregation's members without special assignments during the week gave the ministry of their presence, shared testimonies and prayers in and out of services, and generally enriched the spirit of the experience. Next year, perhaps you who were not there will decide to enjoy a portion of that spirit and join with the Restoration Seventy in allowing God to bless your home and family with increased understandings and dedication to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The next one begins June 22, 2003.

**CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
Mount Ayr Restoration Branch
607 E. Madison St.
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