

Trip to the inscriptions at Los Lunas, NM

BY MICHAEL JORDISON

Brother Ron Smith and I had quite an extraordinary experience on our return trip from the Navajo Reunion. Having passed a sign for a certain small town in New Mexico as we traveled West on I-40, we determined to forego a visit to the Grand Canyon and Four Corners region and take a chance that the stories that each of us had heard a few years previous were true.

Ron had heard about this place while ministering in Colorado four or five years previous. A man who had been to the place told about a small rugged mountain on the edge of a valley near the small town of Los Lunas. Upon this mountain he said, was a large stone with an ancient inscription engraved into the side. It was said that certain groups from the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, had visited this site and declared it a hoax. However many archaeologists weren't quite so sure.

I first heard of this site when I saw a video tape from the Christian Center for the Book of Mormon in Lamoni that documented the site as authentic. Two men schooled in Paleo-Hebrew had heard of the discovery of this stone in the 1930's and decided to investigate it for themselves, enlisting the critique of the world's foremost Paleo-linguist at the time, Dr. Cyrus Gordon. These men concluded as have a few others before and since that the writing on this stone is indeed authentic, dating to somewhere between two to three thousand years old.

So away on our journey we went. Having got a late start and taken a rather confusing drive through the dark streets of downtown Albuquerque we arrived in Los Lunas, New Mexico around 10 PM Friday night, July 18, 2003. Los Lunas, named for a prominent family associated with the Railroad, lies 15 minutes South of Albuquerque and is nestled in a narrow valley along the upper Rio Grande. We stopped for dessert at Chili's and asked our waitress if she had ever heard of the Los Lunas stone. After Ron described it to here she said that the story must not be true. She had lived in the area for ten years and was sure if there had been such a stone, she would have

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TESTIMONIES AND SERMON NOTES

What Does It Mean to Remember Him?

Brother Robert Rolfe began his sermon on Communion Sunday, July 6, 2003 reading Matthew 26:22-25. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and brake it, and blessed it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is in remembrance of my body which I give a ransom for you. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it. For this is in remembrance of my blood of the new testament, which is shed for as many as shall believe on my name, for the remission of their sins. And I give unto you a commandment, that ye shall observe to do the things which ye have seen me do, and bear record of me even unto the end."

He then sang Don Fernando's 'The Eyes of Man':

Just as Eve desired the fruit denied her,

The eyes of man are fooled by what they see.

Dazzled by this world and all it's splendor,

We reach for what it promises but never brings to be.

Refrain:

The eyes of man have seen the Lord's salvation,

And the hands of man have touched His only Son.

He gives us eyes to see the truth that sets us free,

And the blood that washes clean from all we've done.

Blinded by the ruler of the darkness,

Like eyeless men we grope along the wall.

Were it not for Jesus and His mercy,

The only question left us would be how and when we fall.

And now with eyes of faith I see the highway.

His word lights all the path before my feet.

Like the dawn that slowly brightens to the noonday,

In the road I walk beside him 'til my journey is complete.

Then with these eyes I will see the face of Jesus,

And with these hands I'll touch the wounds that made me

whole.

And 'til forever has an end, and then begins again
Won't be long enough to gaze upon
The wonder of the Savior of my soul.

The Lord's Supper was served before the sermon progressed. When he spoke, Brother Rolfe commented first of the relationship between himself and Lynda whom he teases a lot even from the pulpit. He said he seriously wanted us to know that the one really right thing he did in life was to ask her to marry him. "She is the best wife for me. In fact she's the only one I have and I hope she's the only one I continue to have," he said earnestly. "She's been a blessing to me!"

What Do You Do to Remember?

"I would just like you to think about this morning what you do to remember things that you have to remember. Lynda lamented awhile ago about the day she had forgotten everything. Part of that is the pressures that we have upon us. The Lord tells us to do that which we have just done in remembrance of Him, so think a little bit about what it actually means to remember Him.

"A lady that I was at Graceland with twenty years ago called and said, 'You know me because we were in 'Fiddler On the Roof' together.' She told me her name. I don't know about your recall system, but there was nothing there, and I was thinking, 'I know I should know this lady if we were in 'Fiddler On The Roof' together. After a time, all of a sudden - kind of like the computer is running but takes a long time to boot up - her face comes up and that of her husband, and I actually did remember who this person was.

"I have a feature that Derek put on this new computer he made for me, like a post-it message where you can put a note on the face of your computer and it just stays there. You can wipe other things out but the note is still there. Now, that's what I need to remember - have it in front of my face. I am one of those that, despite the fact that I can remember numbers backwards and forwards, phone numbers, zip codes, addresses and all of that sort of things, I have trouble with more important things like the three things Lynda told me to get at the grocery store. I ought to be able to remember three things, shouldn't I? Why is it so hard? I think there is something about the way we are - the way we are hard wired; that the Lord knew we were that way. That's why He spent so much time telling us to remember. You will find over and over in the scriptures, 'Remember the words I have spoken! Remember this! Keep this in remembrance!' I hadn't thought about that until I looked and saw how many times those words are in there, which is probably saying, 'If I don't jerk your chain a little, you will forget!'

"I would like to point out to you that when Jesus was on this continent, just as on the other, He said this, 'Not every one that sayeth unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not, (1) prophesied in Thy name, (2) cast out devils, (3) done many wonderful works? Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.'

The Fruits of Remembering

"Now, could we say, 'Jesus, how could you forget me?' But that's indicating that there is something happening there that causes Him to say, 'I didn't know you!' It's kind of a scary thought, isn't it? He says you can tell the people who are His by their fruits. Having grown up on a farm, I understand that. There were things you raised for the flowers for decoration, and there were things you

raised for the fruit. If there wasn't fruit, what did we do with those kinds of trees? Cut them down, cut them into fire wood and burn them up. There's a kind of a lesson there for those of us that think we ought to pay attention to our fruit.

"There's a hymn that says:

'According to thy gracious word, in meek humility,
This will I do, My dying Lord, I will remember Thee.
Thy body broken for my sake, my bread from heaven shall be.
The cup, thy precious blood I take, and thus remember Thee.

"When to the cross I turn my eyes and rest of Calvary,
O Lamb of God, my sacrifice, I must remember Thee.
And when these failing lips grow dumb and mind and memory flee,
When Thou shalt in thy kingdom come, Then, Lord, remember me.'

And I hope when the Lord comes in His kingdom, He'll say, I know you! You are one of mine!"

"In terms that you might remember, some of you are old enough to have had your Father die; and if your father died, how many of you can remember the last conversation you had with your father? What if, though, instead of just a conversation, you father lying there dying, and you know that he's dying, says, 'Remember these words. I'm dying. I want you to remember them.' Would you remember them? More likely than not you would because of the special emphasis.

Symbols That Help Us Remember

"The scripture lesson in Mosiah 3:17, if you picked up on this, says, 'How knowest a man the master?' Then it has three categories: which (1) he hath not served, (2) who is a stranger unto him, (3) and who is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart. There are those that call upon the name of Jesus all through the land but they don't serve Him; they don't have His thoughts and intents on their hearts. How does He know the thoughts and intents on our hearts? He made us. That's what Alma says. And think for a minute, why of all the symbols He could have had us remember, why did He choose bread and wine? How did that help us remember? We break the bread. The wine is the right color. Is that the only symbol that He might have used? I have said this before, every time that Jesus appeared after His resurrection, he was eating. Now, that's my kind of God! Food and drink are important to me! I think he used the symbols that as we are eating those, we are taking that body and that blood into us, it becomes part of us, and that is what He would like to have happen - that we become part of Him and He part of us.

"How many of you have ever heard of Quetzalcoatl? Most of you here. It took me most of two years to even be able to say that word. Do you know what Quetzalcoatl looks like? It's a snake with feathers. I wonder how many of you would like to use a snake as a symbol of God? We would say, 'Why would anybody put a snake as a symbol of God. Yet, not only is it a snake, but it's got feathers on it. I don't know about you, but there are two things that we think we know. One of them is that snakes don't fly, and another, they don't have feathers. So why would anyone make that kind of symbol? If you go down to the ruins in Central America, in many places, you will find that image to God, the God Quetzalcoatl. There is a lot of discussion as to who this God was and what he meant, etc. Our speaker read from a publication entitled 'The Feathered-Serpent' taken from the Internet from Ancient Landmarks, number 23 of a 59 part series, Vol. 16, Number 22, 1927. It talked about the origin of the Toltecs and how the Mayans later removed them. "This

native chronicler represents them as coasting down lower California and Mexico and arriving at a place in 378 AD. It's interesting that that's roughly the time that the Nephite people disappear. Anyway, what I wanted to get to is where it talks about Quetzalcoatl. It says, 'Although there is hardly a single cultural or social custom whose origin has not referred to Quetzalcoatl, he is to be especially remembered in connection with the planet Venus, the Maya calendar and Maya writing.' Now, is Jesus connected with the planet Venus? Yes He is. One of His names is 'The Morning Star' .

"I'm not going to get into this calendar thing. It's kind of interesting, but they had a calendar that said the first definite date in the history of the new world is August 6, 613 BC. Does that strike you as interesting in terms of our chronology? That's the first date of the new world. When did Lehi and his family leave Jerusalem? Right about that time! That's kind of interesting, and here's what's really interesting to me: 'Quetzalcoatl carried a wand resembling the rod of Moses, by which the latter lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, and representations of the lifting up of serpents frequently occur in Mexican paintings.' (That's really interesting.) 'The reign of Quetzalcoatl was the golden age of the Toltecs. Maize was plentiful and cotton grew in all colors, needing not to be dyed. But this blissful state could not forever endure.'

As an aside, Rob asked, "Did you know that cotton grew in different colors? I didn't know that. This article is about a hundred years old, and this guy is telling that's the way it was down there. If you wanted a red dress you would grow red cotton, I would guess, though It depends on what colors it came in.

"We were thinking about the symbol and wondering why these people would have snakes being held up and snakes with feathers. I'd like you to think about another thing that I have talked about before and that is Joseph Smith, Junior had an interesting evening on September 21, 1826. Do you remember what kind of an evening that was? He had an angel visit who gave him the same message three times. By the time the messenger left, it was morning; which tells me he didn't get much sleep that night, and his father noticed when he was out working the next day.

"Lots of things were given in that message, but church history says that one of the things the angel told him was, 'He shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers; if it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.' What are those promises that are made to the fathers? I think those refer to the covenants the Lord made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob primarily and to the other covenants made from the patriarchs forward through time. Why then Quetzalcoatl? Why the feathered snake? I would like to read to you from the Book of Mormon.

"(This question was in answer in part to the Elder from the Community of Christ who called me up and asked, 'Why do we need the Book of Mormon?' I gave him some reasons, and I said, 'Why do we need four Gospels?' And he said, 'I hadn't thought about that.' They are all essentially the same. Why do we need four of them? Why do we need Paul? Salvation comes from Jesus, and - anyway, that's a different story." Brother Rolfe quickly returned to his sermon.)

"I want to read 1 Nephi 5:132-135. 'Behold, he loved our fathers, and he covenanted with them, yea, even Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and he remembered the covenants he made with them, wherefore, he did bring them out of the land of Egypt, and he did straighten them in the wilderness with his rod, for they hardened their hearts, even as ye have; and the Lord straightened them

because of their iniquity. He sent fiery-flying serpents among them; and after they were bitten, he prepared a way that they might be healed; and the labor which they had to perform was to look! and because of the simpleness of the way, or the easiness of it, there were many who perished. And they did harden their hearts from time to time, and they did revile against Moses, and also against God.' Isn't that interesting that he was referring - this is Numbers 21 in which Moses had this happen when he put this brass serpent up on a pole and said, 'If you'll look at it, you'll be healed.' If that was all you had to do, wouldn't you say, 'Why wouldn't everybody just look?' Such a simple thing. Sheer cussedness is what my mother would call it! You won't look because you say, 'That's not going to do any good!' and you make up your mind ahead of time. So knowing that that was the case, can't you see that people that had this tradition might be putting serpents up on a pole. Why would they be feathered? Things with feathers fly, right? I don't how you draw in stone a serpent that's flying. It would be hard, wouldn't it? We don't really know what these serpents were that are talked about in Numbers. We don't know of any snakes that are fiery. Strongs says the people were bitten. It doesn't say they were injured in some other way. It says they were bitten.

"All I know is that the brass serpent that Moses put on a pole was said to be a type of Jesus Christ. That's what it says in Alma 16:191 and John 3:14-15, Jesus refers that event to himself - The Son of God will be lifted up that all men might come unto him. This was a type of Jesus. Look upon it in faith, you live. If you don't look upon it, you die. We don't remember that part from John, because we remember John 3:16 - 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Begotten Son ...' . And then it goes on to say, 'For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through him might be saved. He who believeth on him is not condemned, but he who believeth not is condemned all ready because he hath not believed on the name of the Only Begotten Son of God which was preached by the mouth of the Holy prophets where they testified of me.' And at verse 14, 'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so shall the Son of Man be lifted up that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life.' And so, it's symbolism. When you put these two together you realize that the people in Central America kept that tradition of their fathers to help them remember. They would build a fiery serpent and put it into a monument to help them remember the covenant that the Lord made with His people.

The Point of the Story

"The point of all this is what? God wants us to remember Him. How do we remember Him? Do we say, 'There's a picture. Oh, yes, I remember him. That's the picture on the front of the sanctuary. That's Jesus, and when you see Him you can say, 'I remember you. You are the one who's picture was on the front of the sanctuary.' Is that how you remember Him? Or do you need to remember Him by putting into your hearts and minds His words, and doing the things that He tells you to do? What did He say? This is how you will know you are my disciples. Because you don't give a thought to me until next Sunday? Is that what you do? No! You keep my commandments. That's how you can tell His disciples. The scripture lesson said, 'How knoweth the man the master which he has not served, and is a stranger unto him, and is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart.' You really can't know Jesus if that is the case. Are we really like that? Do we remember Him by putting His word into our hearts? Do we keep that word in our memory and His commandments in front of us every day? That's what He had in mind when

He said, 'Remember me and Do this in remembrance of Me'.

May God bless each of you as you strive to remember our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."

The Quick Start to Real Happiness

"And then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:31-32 was Elder Steven Smith's opening scripture. Brother Smith then explained that he felt inspired by talks he had with his wife and experiences with youth, especially this summer, to talk about "Quick Start".

"When I came to Graceland, I picked up the computer, on which I had done some word processing, but not much else. There were programs on there like Word and Excel with which I had no idea what was going on. They handed me a book - a big book, bigger than this (he held up the scriptures) - and it had everything in it I needed to know about the Microsoft, Word and Excel, Power Point and everything else. I looked at that book and considered it might take me a semester to figure out what was going on. I opened up the book and read the preliminaries. On the first page they had 'Quick Start' - one page that told me everything I needed to know to get started. I had the entire book to read up on the nuances of that one page, but I had a 'quick start' in those programs that were new to me. So I thought today it would be worth while to talk about the 'quick start' for a happier life. What can we do right now to get started without getting bogged down in all the big questions that are out there?

"I've have an opportunity to teach biology research at Graceland. That's one semester in which students have the chance to research one question and come to some conclusion on that one question - reading all the old research but hopefully doing new research on the topic. Initially, when my students come into that class, they have questions like, 'How can I supply water to the thirsty individuals in Africa?' 'How can I save the world with biology?' And as they try to solve those questions they find out that really there is a bunch of little questions that they have to answer first. So a part of the process is getting down to the little questions and answering one or two of them; and as we answer the little questions, we get into answering the big ones. So my quick start is going to deal with answering some of the little questions in life.

The Simplest Quick Start is Love

"Now, for those who don't want to listen very long, I'll give you a synopsis of what we are going to talk about. First, if you want a quick start and you can't remember anything else, you can hold up this one finger. The greatest commandment is to love God. If you do that, you are in His word - you are His disciple, and you are going to be set free. For those who want maybe a little bit more on that, the other thing I am going to talk about is that you've got to figure out what your situation is - assess the situation. That's going to take a second finger because now you have to create a plan. And once you have created a plan, you've got to do it. You've got to assess, create and do! And if you will do that when it comes to things of God - those little questions like, 'How do I have friends?' 'How do I follow God?' those little questions about freedom - when you come to those little questions, if you will do those things, and those are very

scriptural, you will find that you have your quick start program. Assess where you are at, figure out what needs to be done different, make a plan and then do it.

"At camp this summer, there was a young lady who had a good grounding in the church. She knew about repentance. She knew about faith, but she was not very happy. She had recently become very angry at a friend, because her friend had said something to her that she didn't feel was her friend's prerogative to say. So she had lost a friend. She asked for an administration. She wanted to figure out how to be happy. The camp Pastor asked if I would help.

"When we went to administer to her, I asked her, 'What do you want us to ask the Lord for?' She was kind of taken back by that because she figured the Lord knew what was going on and so had not put into her mind what she wanted to ask for. So we talked about the situations that were plaguing her. We talked a little about how happiness is a choice. We soon saw that she knew of a lot of the stuff in the Big Book, but she didn't know how to put it together to get a quick start. She knew of repentance, but it seemed so overwhelming to do everything that had to be done with repentance! She knew the big questions that had to be answered, but didn't know how answering the little questions led to answers for the big questions. She knew she needed to find answers, but there's such a big book - so many books- that she had given up trying to find the answers for herself.

We Choose Between Two Ways

"We talked for quite awhile before we administered to her, and in talking, we tried to tell her how faith and repentance work into this quick start program. You see, God created us. He gave us our agency and with that agency, we had to make a choice. There are two primary ways that we can choose. One is a life that is centered around God. If we choose that, we are promised that we will be happy. We can choose a life centered around ourselves -self centered. Those two ways are not real compatible all the time. Although choosing the life centered around God will make us happy, sometimes it looks like choosing the self centered route is going to make us happy, and we have to judge between those two. "We have to judge? Christians don't judge? Yes! We have to judge! You see, there are more references in the scriptures to the fact that we are to judge, and we are to judge righteously because the way that we judge is how we are going to be judged in the end. If we don't make any judgment at all, that's going to be a problem. There are more scriptures to the fact that we are supposed to judge than not. And the scriptures that talk about us not judging are talking about not carrying out a judgment on another person, which is different than making a choice - exercising our agency. And so we are supposed to look at situations and, I'll call it assess - assess the situation that's in front of us. If we choose the way that God asks us to do, and, by the way, God, you know the one who made us, sent us a manufacturer's manual (Steven held up the scriptures) telling us how to be happy - how we work the best. So if you are having a hard time, go back to the manufacturer and find out what the manufacturer says in the warranty.

"In Second Nephi 1:115, it says that Adam fell that men might be, and men are that they might have joy. God wants us to have joy! God wants us to be happy. As we were talking with our young friend at camp, we said, 'What things are making you unhappy?' She could identify some things that made her unhappy. One of them was that she wouldn't forgive those by whom she felt offended. So we said, 'Look in the mirror when you are unhappy. Find what you can do to become happy, because happiness is a choice. People who are

in dire circumstances can still be happy. Look in the mirror and find those things that can make it so that you are happy.'

"Now the scriptures are full of good little hints of how to be happy. In fact, if you go into the scriptures, and I don't want to go too far into happiness here, you will find the very same point made for becoming happy as I heard on a TV show about two years ago about a sociologist who was doing studies on how to be happy. The people who are the happiest are the people who forgive others, who have mercy, the people who have God as their Lord. If you have a belief in God, you are 15% more likely to be happy too.

The other thing that the sociologist found, which was also verified by some of the biologists, was that if you smile, you are going to be happier. That wasn't necessarily in the scriptures, although Doctrine and Covenants 59:4 does tell us to do all things with a cheerful countenance and then the fullness of the earth is ours.

"If we examine those situations in which we find we are unhappy, it usually indicates that we tried for happiness by going the self centered route instead of going the God centered route; and when we go the self centered route, the happiness doesn't last. So if you say, 'This isn't working. I have made the judgment - I have made the assessment - that this is not working, then make a plan that will work. Going into the scriptures for the plan is fantastic, but you don't have to always go into the big part of the book for it. There are other things that have been placed on this earth to help us learn how to do it. That's the job of meeting together often, allowing everybody to have their say so that the church as your family can be helpful. That's a part of the job of the Priesthood to help out - part of the function of the individual family. Your spouse, your parents, your friends can give you information. Satan will give you information, too, and so will TV. Somehow you've got to decide whether this information is going to lead you to a God centered or a self centered way of living.

Actions that Really Make a Difference

"When you take that information and you say, 'I can do this thing differently, you have just developed a plan. That plan is an action that you want to take. It's an action that, if you think it will really make a difference in your life, the scriptures call faith. And it doesn't matter whether it's just the desire to believe or if it's a full blown belief, if you act on that plan, then you have faith. Remember two ways to kill your faith? One is to exercise it. It turns to knowledge, so it's no longer faith. The other way is not to exercise it, in which case, you don't really believe and it's not really faith anyway.

"So you have created an action plan. You have assessed the situation. You have made an action plan that will make a difference. Let's go to Alma 16:139-173. Wow! That's a long scripture! Alma is talking to the Zoramites. They are saying, 'We just got kicked out of our synagogues. We can't go there to worship God. Everything is just so overwhelming, we can't follow God!' Alma was saying, 'All right. Let's form an action plan, and I'm going to give you an example.' And the example he gave was, 'Let's pretend like the word of God is like a seed.' Steven began reading at Alma 16:149 (Please read it all for yourself.) Alma starts by saying, faith, like his word, is not a perfect knowledge but he challenges the people to arouse their faculties even to experiment upon his words and exercise a particle of faith, even if they can no more than desire to believe. If they let the desire work in their lives, it will grow like a seed that is planted in their hearts, if they do not cast it out by unbelief. Our speaker explained, 'If you believe it to the point that

you actually do it, that's going to be faith. If you don't do it - if you believe it but don't do it, that's casting it out because of unbelief.' Then he read on, as Alma explains if the seed is a good seed, it will begin to swell within your breasts; and when you begin to feel these swelling motions, you will begin to say the seed, or the word, is good for it begins to 'enlarge my soul, ... to enlighten my understanding ... to be delicious unto me.' So faith begins to increase but has not grown up to a perfect knowledge. Like a seed, if it grows and produces fruit, it was a good seed. If it does not grow, it is not good and is cast away.

"Our speaker explained again, "What is happening here, not only are we believing to the point that we do it, but doing it is changing the thoughts, the words and the actions we were doing. That's repentance! So now you are repenting by simply planting the seed, you are watching it grow and your faith is growing along with it because you are actually seeing it grow. Occasionally we have a seed that doesn't bring forth good fruit. We plant it and it's not working out the way we like. Sometimes that's when we have to assess, go back to the faith and the repentance.

"If the seed does begin to grow, Alma asks, 'Is your knowledge perfect? Yea, your knowledge is perfect in that thing, and your faith is dormant;' Once you have the knowledge, your faith kind of goes away, 'And this because ye know ... that the word has swelled your souls, ... your understanding doth begin to be enlightened, and your mind doth begin to expand. O then is not this real? I say unto you, Yea; because it is light; and whatsoever is light, is good, because it is discernible; therefore ye must know that it is good. And now behold, after ye have tasted this light, is your knowledge perfect? Behold, I say unto you, Nay, neither must ye lay aside your faith, for ye have only exercised your faith to plant the seed, that ye might try the experiment, to know if the seed was good.'

Alma goes on to explain that as a tree must be nourished if it is to bear fruit, so also must your faith be nourished if it is to grow and bear fruit. "'But if ye neglect the tree and take no thought for its nourishment, behold, it will not get any root; and when the heat of the sun cometh and scorcheth it, because it has no root, it withers away, and ye pluck it up and cast it out. Now, this is not because the seed was not good, neither is it because the fruit thereof would not be desirable. But it is because your ground is barren, and ye will not nourish the tree; Therefore ye cannot have the fruit thereof.

"And thus it is if ye will not nourish the word, looking forward with an eye of faith to the fruit thereof, ye can never pluck of the fruit of the tree of life. But if ye will nourish the word ... by your faith with great diligence, and with patience, looking forth to the fruit thereof, it shall take root, and behold, it shall be a tree springing up unto everlasting life. And because of your diligence, and your faith, and your patience with the word, in nourishing it that it may take root in you, behold, by and by, ye shall pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious, which is sweet above all that is sweet, and which is white above all that is white; yea, and pure above all that is pure; and ye shall feast upon this fruit, even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst. Then, my brethren ye shall reap the rewards of your faith, and your diligence, and patience, and long suffering, waiting for the tree to bring forth fruit unto you.'

Experiment

"Experiment!" Brother Smith urged. "When I teach biology research, I ask the kids to experiment. Sometimes they learn by what didn't work. And the Lord asks you to experiment - to make a plan and act on it. Inaction is what kills faith the most. Act on it. The Lord understands that we are human and sometimes our plan

is imperfect, even though we think we fashion it after the Lord's plan, and so Alma says, 'And then, my brethren ye shall reap the rewards of your faith, and your diligence, and patience, and long suffering.' You need to have patience and diligence and long suffering.

Long Suffering is For Me, Too

"Long suffering does not mean to suffer for a long time. When Christ said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me,' He said, 'Allow them to come unto me.' And when He says long suffering, He's talking about long allowance. In preparing for this, I realized - sometimes epiphanies come at different times. I had always thought that long allowance was my allowing Gordon to sin, and when I allow Gordon to sin, eventually he will get it right, if he keeps assessing it, making a plan and doing it. I've got to allow him to do that, and long suffering does allow him that opportunity. My epiphany today was, I've got to allow me to goof. I can't be so hard on me. The Lord allows me to make all sorts of sins and has told me how to come back. And when I have made my assessment and made my plan, and I've taken the best that I can find and still goofed, I've got to allow myself to make that goof. Repentance is there. I can start all over. I can make a new assessment. I can make a new plan, and I can keep going. If fearing that goof - if fearing that I might make that goof - if fearing that I may not measure up stops me from making that plan and doing it, I'm no longer using faith. I'm being self centered. I'm in sin! And so, we must: make an assessment, judge what's right and what's wrong, create a plan, use a little bit of faith, think, 'Hey! This can work!' and then go on and do it, and in doing it, we repent.

"I had a young boy at youth camp about two years ago. He had a good family. He was grounded in the scriptures. He fought with his own demons. One of those demons was that whenever he needed a little more attention, he would take knives and razor blades and slice his arms. One of the demons that he dealt with was that he also had a hard time going to sleep at night. The guys from his cabin reported that at three o'clock he was still bouncing off of the walls. And by Wednesday his counselor had suggested that he get administered to, and I was a part of that administration. Again, before the administration, I had an opportunity to talk with him. We talked about what was going on in his life, and there were some traumas there. I'm not a psychologist and didn't pretend to be a psychologist, but we talked about some of the things he wanted to do. He knew he needed to change, but his biggest problem was that he didn't know how to get forgiveness for everything that he had done. Some of the things he had done were some of the things that a hyperactive kid will do anyway, but he just didn't know where to start. It was too overwhelming for him. We asked him to start with one thing at a time, and we would ask the Lord to heal him of this particular thing - to heal him from cutting himself. This was a history he had from about the age of nine or ten, so he had been doing it for awhile. We talked about his responsibility for believing that the Lord would take that desire from him and for coming up with a plan for how to deal with those moments when that, which can be an addictive behavior, happens. He took that, and we administered to him.

"At the end of the week, I had a chance to talk to him. Actually, I had already known, because his counselor had reported, that he was now sleeping through the night. He was amazed that he would go to bed at ten o'clock and stay asleep all night long. But I asked him how he was doing with the cutting. He had not had any desire to cut himself for the rest of that camp. I saw him about two months

later and asked him how he was doing with the cutting. He said he hadn't had a desire to cut himself. And I saw him at this last Reunion at Graceland. He had a lot of problems - still a very hyperactive kid, but I asked him 'How's the cutting?' and he said, 'It's not a problem in my life. I was healed!'

Make a plan. Use your faith. Implement that plan, and there are helpers out there for implementing the plan. Sometimes it's administration. Plant that seed. Take the word, whether it's the word that comes to you through the Spirit, the word that is written, the word that's given to you by your family, by your church. Plant it in your life. See if believing to the point that you actually make a change - having faith unto repentance - won't really work for you. It will really work. Be patient as instructed here. Be diligent, enduring to the end. Be sincere.

"Remember sincerity comes from the old Greek word - sin which means without, and cerce which means wax. So be without wax. Sincerity came from that time when they had clay bowls. Sometimes they would crack, and they found that if you melted a very hard wax and put it in the crack, no one would see the crack. So you could still sell your bowl. Otherwise, no one would buy it because it wouldn't hold hot soup, or hot drink or whatever. With wax you could sell your bowl and it wasn't until the buyer put hot soup in the bowl and found it running all over the table that he would discover that he had purchased a faulty bowl. So the first place we see sincerity used is in an advertisement by people who hawked their pots claiming that they had sincere pots - pots that were made without wax - quite a guarantee that you were not going to lose your soup all over the table. So how do we be sincere? How are we without wax?

Christ Took Care of Our Mistakes

"We don't have to cover up our own mistakes. That's not the quick start plan. That's in the big book, and we can get into that a little bit later. Christ took care of that. How do we repent? That's part of the big book, too. There's lots to read about - lots to discuss - really exciting stuff there! Repentance is just doing it - starting all over again - creating that plan and doing it. Use patience, diligence and endure to the end. Be sincere. Have long suffering. Allow the fact that you are going to make mistakes, even when you are repenting, and it's more important to try - to honestly try - to sincerely try and goof than it is to sit back and be overwhelmed with all that's out there.

"If we do that, one of the things that happens, besides the happiness that we feel, is the presence of the Spirit. I would like to suggest that there are three parts to the Spirit. You see, when we repented we changed our thoughts, words and actions. Be consistent with this new plan, and one of the things that will happen is that you will have the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23 says. 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law.' Can you imagine having all this fruit of the Spirit? Now I am not talking about all the fruits of the Spirit. This is the fruit! We are talking about - one thing. A lot of people have love who don't have the Spirit. Having love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, meekness, goodness, faith, temperance - this is the description of the fruit. When you have that - as you develop that, sometimes we call that happiness, you will be in a position where you know that you are on the right track because the Spirit is with you. The fruit is given to all who have that Spirit.

You also have the gifts of the Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:7- "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of Spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.'

"As we start to assess where we are at, create a plan and then do it, if we do this and it is God centered, we will come closer to God and as we come closer to God, we have more of His Spirit. We will have that fruit, and occasionally we will have some gifts - some manifestations, those things that go beyond the fruit that affect how we think, what we say, so we will have tongues and prophecy, interpretation of tongues as well as healings, wisdom and knowledge. And then we will also have the power of the Spirit. Look at Mormon 4:29-31. Mormon is talking about those people of this land who have gone before us that have been praying for us at this time. 'And he knoweth their prayers that they were in behalf of their brethren. And he knoweth their faith; for in his name could they remove mountains; and in his name could they cause the earth to shake; and by the power of his word did they cause prisons to tumble to the earth; Yea, even a fiery furnace could not harm them; neither wild beasts, nor poisonous serpents, because of the power of his word.'

"And so, as we develop in this Spirit, we will also see the power that develops with it. So, with that Spirit we have the method to once more assess where we are at. And if we miss, and that's what sin is - missing the target, we can reassess. We can make a plan and do it. We talk about faith, repentance, judgment, happiness, the Spirit. We have talked about a number of different things that can be done to quick start our life today. If you want to follow Christ, look in the mirror, decide whether you have the Spirit, and I think happiness is a good mark. Are you really happy with where you are at? And if you aren't, decide what's causing you to not have this happiness; and when you have decided - you have made your assessment - decide what will cause you to be happier. Then go for it! Do it! Start today! Start reaping the benefits today. Have that love, peace, joy, long suffering.

"Finally, one of the things we need to look at is, if that's too hard to remember - the idea of assessing where you are at, making a plan, and doing it - there is a shorter way. Remember, we can go God centered or we can go self centered. Go God centered. And the way to know if you are God centered is if you are keeping the greatest commandment, which is to love the Lord thy God with all your might, mind and strength and then love your neighbor as yourself. If you have that love, that's a kind of a shortcut. Because, 'Although I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity,' (this love of God) I am not God centered. I am nothing. 'And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long - (Not hurteth long but allows long) and is kind; charity envieth not, ... is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. It doesn't rejoice in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. It beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall

vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child. I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know even as I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.' (1 Corinthians 13).

Love is the quick start to happiness, but love can be, and often is, perverted as we make God into us. That is the essence of sin. To bring happiness, love has to be truly God centered. God centered love will cause us to assess our situation, create a plan and do it!

Zion Will Be - Kindness Is God's Way

Priest Rodney Bastow chose Matthew 18:21-23, the familiar record of Christ's answer to Peter's question, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus said unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times; but until seventy times seven. Then came the parable of the king who found one of his servants owed him 10,000 talents. He first decreed that the man's wife, his children and all that he owned be sold for payment; but was moved with compassion and forgave him the debt when he asked his lord to have patience and he would pay all. The servant fell down and worshiped him. That same servant had a fellow servants who owed him a hundred pence. He laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me that thou owest me.' His fellow servant begged him to have patience and he would pay all; but he refused and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. When other servants saw what was done, they told their lord all about it. Then his Lord called him in and said unto him: "O thou wicked servant! I forgave thee all that debt; because thou desired; shouldst thou not also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And the lord was wroth and delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your heart forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

Brother Bastow first thanked those who had created the setting for his sermon, Norman Nelson who taught the adult class of the morning, Sue Beck for singing, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is peace, etc.", for the Spirit that pervaded the place of worship, for the presence of the youth, especially his young ones, and for Debbie, his wife, for "allowing him to be there."

He then told of his growing up years when his family did not miss a Sunday morning or night at the church. His mother did not give a lot of latitude in the matter. He sometimes got into trouble until he got the 'evil eye' of someone in the congregation, not his mother because he didn't look at her. Sometimes he would be bored and wish the preacher would get done. Other times when there was a hell fire and brimstone sermon he would quiver in fear that he would go to hell right then. "Until I realized what the Spirit was all about, that didn't do a lot for me. I was just there." But there was one exception - the Pastor, John Lane. "John Lane was the father of the congregation in a very real sense. He was very much a man of God, and I know that he talked with God out loud. And I know that he was visited by angels, and he tended that flock like a very good

shepherd. He would know when someone was upset, or had something troubling them or they were doing something that wasn't right with the Lord. And he would come and speak to them, and he would tell you and you would obey. Everyone knows what Mom's like. She is very proud of her Scotch-Irish ancestry, and her prayer has always been, 'Lord, make do right for you know how hard it is for me to change.' But John could get her to change. She would do what John might ask her to do.

"John was the one I remember listening to because when John spoke it was in a very slow, deliberate, quiet voice, and as he spoke, he talked louder and louder and the words came faster and faster. He never looked at his notes, if he had any notes. By the time he would be about finished - and he would only speak about thirty minutes - that's probably one of the reasons I remember him so well, the words would be coming so rapidly to him and the tears would be coming down his cheeks, like he couldn't say the words fast enough because the Holy Spirit was leading him. And even ones like me could realize, listening to him, that there was something very special about that time.

"About the only similarity that I have with John Lane is that I don't talk very long usually. I don't have as strong a faith as John had. I haven't lived a life to be able to share the types of testimonies that he could share with us. There are not too many people like John. If we all were, Zion would be here, and Sue would be singing praises to Jesus.

"But I know that God loves me, and I know that God loves each of you. And I know that He will forgive us if we will ask for that forgiveness. And I know that if we will give Him the honor and the glory, He will bless us here this morning with His Holy Spirit so that each one of us, even the little ones, will know that being here has been something special. That is my prayer this morning.

Devotionals That Set The Tone For Life

During the summer, Rodney finds the work that he loves takes the place of the devotionals he usually reads during the winter. "I don't read a daily devotional like I do during the school year," he explained. "I guess during the school year, you need as much help as you can get, and you do want to be sure that you get every day started off on the right foot. ... During the summer, especially if things are going well, and you are out there on the tractor, it's like you are communing with God, anyway. I couldn't help but think this week as I was mowing, how pretty the alfalfa looked, those purple blooms and things like that, and the barn swallows, which Debbie hates but that I love, were dive bombers coming down just putting on a real show for me. And every time I would turn around, here was this rabbit and she had eight or nine babies that would be hopping along going here and here. One time when I came around the turn, there was a coyote just kind of eyeing me saying, 'What are you doing out here in my territory?' So I get a lot of that. But as I tried to prepare for today, I looked for a devotional, and I found one that kind of fit my feelings, and it's kind of what I base my message on today. The title is, 'It's good to be a Christian and know it, but it's better to be a Christian and show it.'

"In *Les Miserables* there is the story of Jean Valjean whose only crime was stealing a loaf of bread to feed his sister's starving children. Valjean served 19 years for this crime before being turned out penniless onto the streets. Hardened and unable to find work as a former convict, Valjean finally makes his way to the home of the good old Bishop who gives him a supper and a bed for the night. He serves Valjean using his best silver platters and candlesticks which Valjean recognizes as being highly valuable. Yielding to tempta-

tion, Valjean steals the Bishop's silver plates and slips away from the Bishop's home, but he's soon caught and returned by watchful police. When shown the silver plates, the Bishop says to the apprehending policeman, "Why I gave them to him. Then turning to the thief, Valjean, he adds, 'And Jean, you forgot to take the candlesticks.' A shocked and eternally grateful Valjean accepts the candlesticks as more than valuable silver pieces but as expressions of love beyond measure. The Bishop's act brought about true repentance and changed lives. Who knows which person might be impacted by your act of kindness today. What seems little to you, may be great in the eyes of a person in need of love."

"When my Dad died, I was touched by the many acts of kindness that were shown to me and to my family. A lot of it was by you people, but it was also by those that I still call my church family, although they go to that church, (Rodney pointed to the church on Lincoln Street in which he grew up and in which most of us had previously worshiped.) And it was by friends and neighbors and others. Until we lost Dad. I had never really lost anyone close, so I hadn't gone through that experience, but seeing what was done for me, I realized that I don't do that, and I need to do that for people because it meant so much just to be able to talk to Gordon or to Alan or whoever - just to be able to do that.

It's Easy To Show Kindness?

"It's easy to show kindness to those we love, or it should be - to our family, to our wife and our kids, our brothers and sisters. It should be a real easy thing, and I'm sure that we do that a lot. It should be easy to show kindness to our church family, and to our friends and to our neighbors. It shouldn't be difficult, but it must be for some people. All you have to do is look in Alan's paper, and you don't even have to read the police column, to see that some people have trouble being nice to their wives or to their husbands or to their kids, or being kind to their cousins or other people, and you wonder why. Why is that such a problem? Like Norman said this morning, there are times when people in the church look more for their own gain and don't think about what God wants. They step on toes and don't think about doing things for other people of the church. They just think about doing things for themselves. We need to do more for each other. You know the people that we used to go to church with, we need to look out for them and make sure they are doing OK. As Norman said, if you want to help somebody, usually all you have to do is ask God and He will show you a way. We just need to do that.

"I've kind of been looking for a way to do that." Our speaker said, and he told of the recent experience with his father's ninety year old brother Earnest who was brought to the nursing home at Clearview. "I hadn't seen Uncle Earnest for three years. He was always a great guy. He stood six feet three, so I really looked up to him at times. He was a lot like Dad. He never knew a stranger, and once he had met you, he could tell you who your father was, where you were raised - probably who your girl friends were. When we would go to see him, he would ask about the boys. One thing he wanted was to be able to go back to Tingley and see what the place looked like again. He had lived there all of his life. We visited him several times, and I thought we were doing him a kindness; but I was wrong. Every time that I would visit him, he did so much for me that it was like I had my father back, and I could talk to him like I did with my dad. You know there are so many people here in this place (Mt. Ayr Care Center) and the other place (Clearview Home) who spend such long, lonely lives, and I know they look forward to seeing us, to talking with us, and I know they would love to hear us sing. It

would be good if we did that more than we do. When I was preparing this, I thought, 'Wouldn't it be nice if sometime we could hold one of the music services at one of the homes if they would let us?' "My Uncle Earnest didn't stay with us very long. Right around Father's Day he passed away. It was kind of like *deja vous* - the same thing I just went through back in March. The day he died, Debbie and I went to see him. (His wife is Debbie's father's sister, so she was already our aunt before she was married to my uncle.) Earnest wasn't very responsive that day and Aunt Leola said he had said he wished he could die, and I thought, 'I wish Alan was here. I wish Alan could come and administer to Uncle Earnest so he could be at peace - just like when Alan administered to my Dad. But I just said a prayer for Uncle Earnest right there.

"Uncle Earnest's only son drove up from Texas that day and shortly after he arrived, Uncle Earnest went to sleep. So once again, I felt I had the opportunity to show a kindness. Dean didn't have any other brothers or sisters. It was just he and his Mom. So we were with them that night and the next few days. We kind of knew what they had been feeling because we had just been through it. We knew how difficult it was to lose someone that they loved so much." Rodney and Debbie helped Dean's family find a place to stay, helped make funeral arrangements, had a cook out for them with both Debbie and Rodney's families, on Father's Day, the day of the visitation.

"Once again, I wanted them to have the kindness that I had been shown, but it was the other way around. They thanked me for doing what I was doing, but I enjoyed so much that day and that time. My cousin Dean was about 16 years older than me, so he was almost of another generation. I got to know him a little better during that time, and we had some good talks. I felt rewarded by getting to know him and his two girls who had two little ones, and I really enjoyed them. I tried to do what I could for them. They decided Aunt Leola should be down with them, so they took her with them. I was supposed to help them when they loaded her things out, but I was over here doing hay and somehow they got done before I could help. I felt kind of bad about that.

"Then Debbie said, 'You know, the strangest thing happened. I looked for them to see when they needed us but never did see them; but I went out there just a bit ago and here was this really nice blue recliner sitting there on our patio and a note saying, 'Thanks for all you have done. We hope you can use this.' We put the recliner in the living room and took out the one that was falling apart. What kindness did I show? I didn't expect that!

Dealing With Unkindness

"When I was a principle, I worked with a lot of good people - I really did - and as you know from listening to me talk before. I had a lot of good experiences, but it seemed like the last two years I was a principle, maybe it was just me, but it seemed like a lot of people that I dealt with had a lot of anger and a lot of hatred. It seemed like there were constant conflicts and strifes - people getting mad at either me or teachers or someone else. I guess I had gotten old - I don't think so but that seemed to just be more and more difficult for me to deal with. I don't miss that too much, to be honest with you. Debbie's brother is a part of the sheriff's posse here in town. He volunteers to do it. He doesn't get paid. I think, 'Gosh! That would be tough.' I'm glad he does it, because he fulfills a very good purpose and other guys like him, too. There are so many people that get very angry if you don't agree with them. It's not a matter of agreeing to disagree. It's, 'I hate you!' or they get violent with their anger. I guess, like Norman said, they think they should have their

own set of rules. They don't think they should have to abide by God's rules. They don't think they should have to obey the rules of the land or the school or their parents or whatever. They think they should be able to do whatever they want to do, and it makes them unhappy that they can't. As long as they are like that, they are not going to be happy.

"I had a person who had a terrible temper. He would get in fights at little league ball games. He had a daughter who had just as bad a temper. He came in all of the time, but one time fortunately, he met with the superintendent, and he says, 'What do you think of my temper?' It was like he was proud of it - like he was Irish and he was glad that he had this temper - like he was born with it and he was going to die with it. He never could change!

"I recognized that I had a temper just like my father had a temper, and hopefully I do better now - that I don't deal with people in anger as much as I used to. I still remember Dad. He had a terrible temper. Hopefully, none of you knew this, but if you were ever around the barn when he was trying to get a cow to take her calf to suck or something like that, you could hear some words that you did not want to hear. It was like that - very expressive. When he got called to the Priesthood, that left. I never did hear him use the Lord's name in vain again. I never did hear him lose his temper again. Sometimes people think I have lost my temper, but it's just that I have a very loud voice and I can talk pretty loud at times, but it's not that I have lost my temper.

We find in the scriptures words that kind of address that. It is in Proverbs 16:16-33.

'How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver! The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.

'Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud. He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good; and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he.

'The wise in heart shall be called prudent; and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning. Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it; but the instruction of fools is folly. The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips. Pleasant words are as a honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.

'There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death. He that laboreth, laboreth for himself; for his mouth craveth it of him. An ungodly man diggeth up evil; and in his lips there is as a burning fire. A froward man soweth strife; and a whisperer separateth chief friends.

'A violent man enticeth his neighbor, and leadeth him into a way that is not good. He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things; moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass.

'The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.

'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.

"Can we control our anger? Can we control our emotions when life doesn't seem fair? When things are not going right for us and we are getting upset, can we say to ourselves, 'This is not how I want to be. This is not how God wants me to be.' If we are filled with anger and hate, we can't serve others, and we can't serve God.

"One time when I was still a principal, we had a ball game with

a team, and it was recognized that our team was not being very nice to the other team. When the other team left, we discovered that one of our players had a pair of basketball shoes missing. These were expensive shoes and very new. I contacted the other school, which was very difficult because they weren't very happy with us. I told them what had happened and we thought that one of their players had taken the shoes. Of course, they were real certain that had not happened, but they investigated. I was surprised when a day or two later, I got a call from the principle saying one of their players had taken the shoes and he was bringing him back with the shoes to apologize to our player and to his mother. They came over. The boy made a very nice apology - said he was sorry, and I thought the matter would be resolved because most people would say, 'That's OK. We forgive you this time.' But this mother was different. She just lit into that young man and really chastised him, threatening to press charges against him and just refusing to let him off the hook. It got to where I really felt sorry for the young man. It sure made an impression on him.

Jesus Told Us How

"But that's not what Jesus said to do. Jesus said, and this is in Matthew 5:40-50, and you probably know what I am going to say: 'Ye have heard that it hath been said. An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have it; and if he sue thee again, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him a mile; and whosoever shall compel thee to go with him twain, thou shalt go with him twain. Give to him that asketh of thee; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.

'Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love only them which love you, what reward have you? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans the same? Ye are therefore commanded to be perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.

"When we have been hurt physically or emotionally or financially by someone, how have we responded? Did we give them the candlesticks too? Did we forgive them what they owed us? Can we show kindness to someone we think has offended us? Can we be children of God?

"This week has been a really good week for me. I got some things done that I wanted to do, and I really didn't have any problems. I was making a second cutting of hay. Even with all of the rain we have had, it just seems like the hay this year has been rather short, and there is not enough of it. Debbie says I just have too many cows. I know that, looking at what I will need for this winter, I don't have enough feed. So the day that I was putting up this second cutting of hay, they were combining those oats over on what used to be the folk's farm. I thought, 'Hey, I know the guy that owns that and he doesn't have any cows and straw is worthless, you know. Who would want that, but I could use it. I could feed it to my calves and stuff. If you feed corn with it, your cattle will get some good out of it. So I called him that night. I should have been at prayer meeting, but I stayed home and called him instead. I asked him if he had plans

for it. 'Nope!' I asked if we could make a deal on it. He said, 'What do you think it is worth?' I said, 'Well, not much.' I was hoping he would say, 'Yeah. You can just have it.' But he didn't say that. He said, 'It should be worth \$15-\$20 a bale.' And I said, 'Yeah, I could bale it and pay you your half of it or whatever.' He says, 'Well, that wouldn't give me much for my half.' I'm thinking, 'This isn't going anywhere.' And he says, 'Well, this is on my development corporation land, so I will talk to people in charge of the land and get back to you.' And I was thinking, I could go this much or do that.

The Test

"So the next day I'm out waiting and thinking, 'He's going to call.' I went out and got my bales and happened to look over there and here's a baler going. And I'm thinking, 'Wait a minute. He didn't call me. Why didn't he give me a chance for this?' I was upset. It is starting to look like rain and I'm thinking, 'Yeah! Go ahead and rain on it! Don't wait until they get that put up!' At one time the tractor stopped, and I'm thinking, 'Yeah! break down!' and I thought, 'I should just go over there and just tell him off right now - tell him what I think!' Then I thought, 'This is a test!'. God, you are testing me right now, aren't you? You know what I am going to be talking about Sunday, and You are trying to see if I can do what I said I was going to preach. Isn't that right? I should go over there right now with my baler and help him bale that! That's what I should do if I'm going to follow this.' I didn't do that, by the way, but I thought, 'OK. I will accept it. It's his. He can do with it what he wants. I'm not going to be upset. This shouldn't bother me. Whatever he wants to do with it, that's fine. It's not worth anything anyway, so what the heck!'

"I pretty well calmed down. Everything was OK. Then the next morning, he pulls in to the driveway. And I think, 'He's got a lot of nerve to be doing that. He's going to try to sell me that straw. The nerve of that man!'

"He says, 'You want to buy that straw?' I say, 'Well, I don't know.' 'I'll take \$10 a bale for it.' I'm thinking, it would cost \$7.00 a bale just to bale it. He's already baled it. 'Yeah, I'll even help you bring it home.' I'm thinking, 'Wait a minute. I'm supposed to be indignant about this and I'm supposed to say 'No! Definitely, No! I'm not going to do this.' But then I think, 'Wait a minute. Here I'm going to get it for about the price I thought I was going to get it anyway, and I didn't have to do all of the work of baling it.' And I'm thinking, 'I'm going to say, 'Yes!' So I say, 'Well, yeah. I can do it this time,' and that's what I did. We got the hay picked up and he hauled half of it home for me and it just worked out real well. It's real good straw and he says possibly when we go to put this up again, we can make another deal.

"You know, I didn't react in kindness, but I didn't react in unkindness either. If I had reacted to him like I felt like reacting, he would have just gotten mad, and I would never have seen that straw. I would never have had a chance at anything like that. Because, hopefully I did what God wanted me to do, things worked out right for us.

We are told in the Doctrine and Covenants 117:13 to sustain each other in peace and 'you shall be blessed with My Spirit, in comforting and strengthening you for my work.' That's what we are to be about, isn't it? One thing I remember when John Lane spoke, he would be going a hundred miles an hour there, and all of a sudden, he would break and it was a pause, and he would say, 'Zion will soon be here!'. It would scare me to death because I was just - you know, and I wanted to live my life and if Zion was going to be here, I wasn't going to get a chance to do any of that; but he'd say,

'Zion will be here!' And we've got to keep in mind what time is in God's eyes.

"And Zion will soon be here, and we've got to strengthen ourselves. We have to be at peace with others and show kindness to others if we want to be a part of it. We have a work to do. May we be find ways to show others kindness in the days and weeks ahead.

Jesus, Our Best Friend

High Priest Sherman Phipps began his sermon on July 27 with a beautiful scripture given to us by Nephi in the Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 8:6:

"Nevertheless, God sendeth more witnesses; and he proveth all his words. Behold, my soul delighteth in proving unto my people the truth of the coming of Christ: For, for this end hath the law of Moses been given: And all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of him.

"And also, my soul delighteth in the covenants of the Lord which he hath made to our fathers; Yea, my soul delighteth in his grace, and his justice, and power, and mercy, in the great and eternal plan of deliverance from death. And my soul delighteth in proving unto my people, that save Christ should come, all men must perish. For if there be no Christ, there be no God; and if there be no God, we are not, for there could have been no creation. But there is a God, and he is Christ; and he cometh in the fullness of his own time."

Brother Phipps continued to share with the congregation several of his personal experiences where he has been given evidence that there is a God, and He works personally with each and every one of us, if we will ask for his guidance. Sherman told us that he just came to talk to us about a friend of his. . . Jesus, and to him Jesus is a very real friend. He described his feelings about Christ by saying that he doesn't know how he would get through each day without Jesus.

One day this past week as Brother Phipps was driving down the road thinking about the decisions he needed to make that day, some of them having a direct impact on other people's lives, he became very aware of the trees, the sky with clouds, and the creation around him. He remembered again how God is really in and through all things. It's not just a scripture; it's the truth. He (God) is.

Brother Phipps works as a judge in various court houses around the state, and on his way into the court house this particular day he thought about picking a leaf off a tree and putting it on his desk as a reminder all day that God is "in and through all things". No matter what is going on, He is present, and Sherman believes he needs to be sensitive to that.

He was also reminded of the scripture that tells us that when Christ returns there will be those who will try to hide under a rock, but they won't be able to do that. It won't be that they will be hiding under a rock and God can just look around and find them. The problem for them is that Christ is "in and through" everything. No matter where they go, there He is. And for those who reject Him, that's a terrible experience. For those who love him, it's a great thing. Sherman counts on it every day. He depends on the fact that no matter where he is or what is going on, or how much confusion there is, no matter how much people are fussing and no matter how much pressure there is, God's right there. He is never removed from God.

Sherman asked us if we had ever had a friend that we could go and talk to about anything and everything that is going on in our lives. He wasn't sure he had ever had a friend like that other than

Jesus, but he believed there probably are people like that. It's a freeing thing to have a friend where you can go and say, "I've made a terrible mistake, and here's what I did," or you can say, "Boy, I had a wonderful experience, and here's what it was." It really frees you up to be able to talk about those things. Jesus is like that. The idea that Jesus knows everything, that there is nothing that can be hid from Him, can be a scary thing, but to Brother Phipps it is great. It means that even when he makes a mistake, Jesus already knows. There is no hiding it. So he might just as well talk to Jesus about it and figure out how not to do it again or how to correct it. Knowing Christ as a real friend is a very freeing thing; there's no price you can put on it.

Sometimes it can be reflected in little things. Several years ago, Brother Phipps and his wife went canoeing and took the daughter of a friend (Amy Hosie who was 4 or 5 years old at the time). They had never been canoeing before. They were warned by others that there were some dangers on the river because of some flooding that had occurred that spring. The waters were high, were flowing rapidly, and there was debris in the water. As they went down the river, they ran into some problems. A tree had fallen into the river and gotten caught. As they came around a bend in the river, there was no way to avoid the tree. The end of the canoe hit the tree and flipped over. Amy had a life jacket on. The water where the canoe tipped over was deep. Before they fell out of the canoe, Sherman noticed that a little further down the river there were some people helping others out of the river who had gotten into a predicament similar to the one they were in. As they tipped over, Sherman grabbed Amy's life jacket, thinking that if he could just get her to the top of the water, she would float down to where those people were, and they would get her out. Then she would be saved even if he drowned. The water was deep, and at first Sherman tried to hang on to Amy as they both swam to the top. But, his efforts didn't seem to be getting them anywhere. Finally, he let go of Amy while at the same time he pushed her to the surface. Eventually, he managed to get himself to the surface also. Later in the day as they were talking about the problem, Amy said "Yeah, once you let go of me I was fine." Maybe there's a lesson to be learned in that part of the experience too. Sometimes we need to let loose of people, so they can go on their way and be fine --- for example, our children.

In the course of all this, Sherman's car keys and other belongings that were in his pockets fell out into the river. He realized that they were not only locked out of their camper, but out of their car as well. This was going to cause quite a problem for not only his family, but for others who would need to help him. Sherman tried to go back into the river and go to the bottom to search for the keys, thinking that perhaps they'd be right there somewhere where he could easily get them. But, the river was moving so fast that he couldn't get to the bottom. The force just washed him downstream. Two other men volunteered to try by hanging on to a nearby tree while at the same time pushing themselves to the bottom. They tried several times without success. As Sherman was standing there thinking about what a problem it was for them, he began to talk to Jesus by saying, "Jesus, I know you know right where those keys are. I guess it's a matter of --- is this important to you or not? If it isn't, then help me to understand it's not that important to me either. And if it is important to you, then please help us to find the keys." And about that time, one of the guys who had gone down for what he said was his last time, popped up and said, "You're not going to believe this!" And he held the keys up. He had found them right up next to a rock, right in the bend. That's the kind of Jesus

that Brother Phipps knows. He's always right there. He's willing to help him if he asks.

This goes along with the scripture that says "Ask and ye shall receive, Knock and it will be opened to you, Seek and ye shall find." While in high school, Sherman went to a youth camp at Stewartsville. His brother David was there with him. One night at a campfire, his brother told him that a light came down out of the heavens, shined directly across the nearby pond and came to where he was sitting. David said an angel or a voice quoted the above scripture to him. The Spirit told him that there are a lot of things promised in the scriptures. We sometimes wonder why we don't have those things, but a lot of times it's plain and simple -- it's because we don't ask. That if we would ask in faith, and if it was not contrary to the Lord's will, that they would be given, just for the asking. Sherman has found this to be true in his experiences in life, and sometimes he wonders why the Lord is so liberal. But it seems like if he asks, the Lord gives. He believes there are a lot of things the Lord wants to give us, but for some reason we forget to ask, or we just don't take the time to ask. This is not necessarily just for big things that would surprise everybody. This is also for little things, day to day -- the things we need to get through the day and be a witness for Him and not get distracted.

Sometimes we can get distracted from doing things the Lord's way. Brother Phipps gave an example of when he starts out the day by getting in his car and beginning to pray that the Lord will help him to be humble and give him direction in regards to the decisions he has to make. Then someone cuts in front of him and right away he has become distracted from talking to the Lord. Things like that interfere with the Lord's ability to answer. Sherman asks for things, but then all of a sudden he is responding to a different spirit. He would like to learn how to be humble and not be distracted by outside things. When he thinks to ask the Lord to help him ignore those things that distract him, and not be concerned about them unless God's concerned about them, the Lord is quick to help him.

Brother Phipps was reminded of the scripture that says, "In as much as you do it unto the least of these . . ." In our congregation we have several people who have had the opportunity to travel to other countries to share the gospel. This is good and important. At the same time Brother Phipps sometimes gets concerned that some of us might be sitting around asking ourselves, "Is there anything I can do? I'm never going to get to go here or there, to another people." Some of us may be thinking that somehow what we have to offer isn't important because it's not as noticeable or exciting. Of course that's not true because every one of us is called to minister for the Lord. For some of us it may turn out that we won't go anywhere else to fulfill that ministry.

In the book *Return from Tomorrow* a man had a spiritual, out-of-body experience after being pronounced dead in a hospital. In his experience he saw a street corner in New Orleans. Later in life he drove through the area and recognized it as the one he had seen in his experience, but he had never been there before. In the experience, there was a person on the corner who was an alcoholic. The man understood that the person on the street corner had had the option of doing different things with his life before coming into this earthly life. He had elected to live in that type of existence so he could sit on that corner and be a reminder to a certain person who came by that corner every day, a person who had wealth and position. He wanted to be a reminder to that wealthy person to humble himself.

Brother Phipps thought that was not only interesting but excit-

ing that there are people in the world who cared enough as they came into this life to forgo some of the things that we think we want and need just so they can be a reminder to the rest of us that we need to repent and to humble ourselves.

Maybe that's our calling, from one day to the next. Maybe our calling is to share with our children, or our neighbor, or to witness to our spouse. Sometimes our spouse may be the last person we think about. We tell the Lord we really want to do His work and do whatever He wants us to do and share in the Lord's ministry. But, sometimes the last person we think of when we are saying this is our spouse. It might be that that's the one person we're suppose to minister to. That's the one person we really have an obligation to. It might be that our relationship with them is one of the most important things the Lord has called us to do.

Brother Phipps concluded his time with the congregation by offering an opportunity for those in the congregation who wanted to share a testimony to do so. His message was meaningful and reminded each one of us of the true friend we have in Jesus Christ .

Editor's Note: By computer error, a work sheet was published in the June issue of the Newsletter instead of the sermon of Elder Gerald Bolingbroke. We apologize and herewith submit the sermon.

The Eternal Gospel

Elder Gerald Bolingbroke began his sermon on the eternal gospel on Sunday, June 8, by reading to the congregation from Genesis 4:6-9 and 5:44-45. He then explained that the Inspired Version of the Holy Scriptures states that after Adam transgressed by eating the forbidden fruit and was cast out of the Garden of Eden, he was commanded to offer sacrifices. At first, Adam did not know the meaning of this. He was told by an angel that it was a similitude of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Gerald also explained that the priesthood was in the beginning as was baptism. The work that was begun with Adam has continued through time. There was a persistent effort by God to bring men to a stable goodness, but this was continually opposed by sin. Each new revelation was succeeded by a falling away from that which was revealed.

We catch glimpses in the scriptures of some of the spiritual heroes of the early dispensation of time. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, walked with God. He had direct communication with Divinity so that he could see the end of time and could prophesy of that which was to come in the future in the day of judgment. The book of Jude says it this way in verses 14-22, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints. To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts, and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

"But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto

eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference;" We do not want to be like the sinful people described in the book of Jude, Brother Bolingbroke said. We live in a time in which these sayings are true. We must always be diligent and stay close to God. There are some in our own community who do not believe the scriptures. They say they are just stories made up by men and not from God.

The Scriptures Testify

Noah also walked with God. In Genesis 8: 3-7 we find these words: "And the Lord said unto Noah, The daughters of thy sons have sold themselves, for behold, mine anger is kindled against the sons of men, for they will not hearken to my voice. And it came to pass that Noah prophesied, and taught the things of God, even as it was in the beginning. And the Lord said unto Noah, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for he shall know that all flesh shall die, yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years; and if men do not repent, I will send in the floods upon them.

"And in those days there were giants on the earth, and they sought Noah to take away his life. But the Lord was with Noah, and the power of the Lord was upon him; and the Lord ordained Noah after his own order, and commanded him that he should go forth and declare his gospel unto the children of men, even as it was given unto Enoch."

Thus we see the gospel was plainly taught in the beginning. The Apostle Paul seems to have been deeply aware of the unity of the Gospel in every age. When he wrote to the saints in Galatia, he reminded them of the importance of obedience. Paul reminded them that he was not an apostle by the action of men, but that he was called of God through his son Jesus Christ. Then he greeted the church in Galatia. He said to them, "Grace and peace from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ who gave his life for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God." Then he gave the glory to God forever and ever.

In Gal 1:7-12, Paul says he was astounded that they had left the true gospel and gone into another gospel. He told them that there are some that are perverting the gospel and giving the saints trouble. He told them if Paul and the others with him or an angel from heaven, "preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

To emphasize this he repeated the same words. He said that he would not please men but that if he did so, he would not be the servant of Christ. He declared that the gospel which he had preached was not from man nor was he taught it, but he received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. His words are, "The gospel which was preached of me is not after man".

Paul also told the Galatians that this gospel which he was preaching had already been delivered to Abraham. Gal 3:6-9 tells us, "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."

Genesis 14 tells us that Melchizedek prepared bread and wine and served to Abraham and also Abraham paid tithes to him. Here are two more elements of the gospel which are everlasting.

On another occasion the Apostle Paul wrote to the saints in Corinth: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and

in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them: and that rock was Christ." (Cor. 10: 1-4).

That the gospel referred to in the above scripture is the same gospel we read about in the Old Testament is quite clear from a parallel reference in the epistle to the Hebrews where we are assured that the same gospel was preached to their ancestors, but did not profit them. Hebrews 4:2 tells us: "For unto us was the rest preached, as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."

In Hebrews 11: 24-26 we find Paul speaking of Moses: "By faith Moses, when he was come to the years of discretion, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Our heavenly Father has loved men from the beginning, and he has made repeated attempts to reveal himself unto them. But the people were not ready for the fullness of His trust. There was an apostasy after the days of Paul, and now there is an apostasy in our day, too.

The word Gospel comes from God and Spell, from the Anglo-Saxon, and means good tidings. In Romans 10:15 Paul says it this way: "And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things."

The Truth Is Revealed In The Restoration

We in the restoration Gospel alone have a knowledge of the Gospel being from the beginning. The conditions for eternal life are the same in every age. Even God himself cannot give us eternal life except we are obedient to the conditions which produce that life. This was true from the beginning in Adam's time. The Bible states clearly that no salvation is available except in the name of Jesus. This is evident in Acts 4:10-12.

In the book of Revelation 13: 8 we find that Jesus was "the lamb slain before the foundation of the world." It was ordained, however that his actual earthly ministry should take place in the meridian of time. We find God at work with humanity and with the Hebrew people in particular, preparing the way for our Master to come at a time when he could most fully influence the children of men.

Early in the history of the Restoration, the church was assured that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, through Christ. Section 17:5 of the Doctrine and Covenants tells us this. From this we understand that righteous men who lived before the coming of Jesus looked forward to the days of the Messiah in faith. They knew that the Son of God would actually take on the limitations of the flesh and live and die for the salvation of mankind. In the Book of Mormon we find people believing in Christ many hundreds of years before He would actually come on the Earth.

This Gospel is true and many people have worked to spread it on the Earth. Brother Bolingbroke told the congregation about a story he recently read by J.C. Clapp.

Declaring The Gospel in These Latter Days

Joseph Carlos Clapp was blessed and named by Joseph Smith, Jr., who prophesied that the boy would someday preach the gospel, even on the islands of the sea. Following the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, the Clapp family moved to Utah, where Brother Clapp saw his religious faith tested by strange doctrines and sinister activities. He left Utah for California and then faced many perils as he returned to rescue his mother and her children. While in

California Joseph Clapp united with the Reorganization and was ordained an elder. He consented to go on a mission to Oregon but doubted his ability because of lack of education and experience. But he started on foot without purse or script.

Joseph started from San Francisco and boarded a steamship for Oregon. The first night on the ship they could not pass through the Golden Gate because the sea was so rough. In the morning he had an attack of tonsillitis, so that he could not swallow and could hardly speak. He asked the captain to set him ashore, but the captain refused. He was not able to speak or eat anything until he entered the harbor at Astoria, Oregon, when his condition improved, and he got immediate relief. They had a stormy voyage to Portland, Oregon.

He got off the ship and went to the Western Hotel, paid for his night's lodging, and had just 30 cents left. He thought he was in a bad fix. He could have been supplied with money, but he told Brother Andrews that he did not need money. He thought he ought to go without purse or script as the law of God directed; so he only took enough money to buy a ticket on the steamship.

He started out the next morning at daylight. He heard a steamer whistling as though it was going some place and found it was going to Salem, about 50 miles or more. He told the steward that he wanted to go to Salem but had no money and was a minister. The steward thought Brother Clapp looked so green that those on the ship would have a lot of fun at his expense, so he told him he would let him on the steamer if Joseph would preach to them. Joseph readily agreed.

Brother Clapp engaged in mental prayer until the time he was to preach, and by this time he was fired with a desire to preach. He was greatly blessed in speaking, held the attention of everyone, and only stopped because he saw it was dinner time. The steward asked him why he had stopped and quit so soon. Joseph told the steward he had talked an hour and was afraid that he might infringe on their dinner. The steward responded, "Oh, forget the dinner! I could sit and listen all day without dinner to that kind of talk." When they landed at Salem, the steward gave Joseph a half dollar. Joseph left him with good wishes and much gratitude.

The next morning Brother Clapp started south, and after walking seven miles in the mud, he came to a place owned by a Mr. Wagner. Wagner was a member of a little church built up by G. M. Hinkle, the man who had delivered up Joseph Smith Jr., and Hyrum Smith, and others to the mob at Far West, Missouri. The church Hinkle led was called "The Bride, the Lamb's Wife." It was presided over by John F. Adams, Hinkle's brother-in-law.

Brother Clapp helped Mr. Wagner gather apples until Sunday and then preached in their schoolhouse. The people would have nothing to do with him at first, but some years after this he got on their good side and baptized nearly all of the them. Eventually, a branch was organized there with John F. Adams as president.

In Linn County Brother Clapp met with A.P. Morris. A.P. and his wife welcomed him and gave him bed and board. There Joseph made his first stand and gathered his first fruits in Oregon. A nearby family with the name of Ames had belonged to the church in early days. The Morris and Ames families soon came into the Reorganization, forming a nucleus around which a large branch was ultimately formed.

During this time in Oregon, Joseph was able to move about easily. He baptized 16 adults. The Sweet Home Branch was soon organized. He labored on until spring, and at a conference he was able to report 31 baptisms, organized one branch, ordained three

elders, and blessed of a number of children.

While he was stopped at Brother Morris's he learned there was a meeting on the Calapooia River, about six miles away, and decided to see if he could get an appointment to preach there. When he arrived he was surprised that the preacher was the same Davis who had opposed him in the Wagner neighborhood near Salem. The house was crowded, and it fell to his lot to sit up almost on the stand, very close to Mr. Davis, perhaps a little closer than Davis liked.

The congregation began to get restless, for it was getting late, and the preacher made no moves towards opening the meeting. Joseph looked at his watch and saw it was a half hour past time. He asked, "Mr. Davis, have you forgotten the time? It is now a half hour past." Davis stated in a very abrupt manner, "I don't care if it is! I'm not going to preach and have someone get up and criticize me!" Brother Joseph replied, "Elder Davis, I hope you don't think I would be rude enough to get up in your meeting unless I was invited." Then Mr. Davis said, "I don't care. I'm not going to preach anyway. You preach!" Joseph thanked him, walked to the stand, and began to preach at once.

Right in front of the speaker sat an old couple in chairs they had brought in from their wagon. Their name was Fields, and they were known as Uncle Tommie and Aunt Becca. When Joseph began preaching, the Fields took up their chairs and started towards the door. Uncle Tommie knew enough about Mormons for he had helped to drive them out of Missouri. Just as the old folks got near the door, a sharp shower of rain began falling, so they halted and set their chairs down for a moment. Joseph was talking quite easily, and he could see they were listening. Gradually they began moving back towards the stand. When Brother Clapp got through, they were sitting in their chairs just where they had been when he began preaching. When he walked out of the stand, the old man extended his hand and said, "Sir, do you call that Mormonism?" Joseph answered, "I call that the gospel of Jesus Christ." Then Mr. Fields exclaimed, "So do I, but I never heard it preached before in my life!"

The old folks were widely known and highly respected. They had been faithful members of the Campbellite Church for many years. This new light brought joy to their hearts, but it also brought trial. Many former friends and some of their own children turned against them even before they joined the church. Some told evil stories about Joseph and the Church, so it was a hard trial for the Fields.

Uncle Tommie and Aunt Becca had been praying for light, asking that the Lord would not suffer them to be deceived by the wiles of men. Early one morning they were out in their dooryard and received an open vision that forever settled the matter with them as to the truth of this latter-day work. Uncle Tommie saw a great concourse of people passing along in an easterly direction. He recognized them as being of all religious denominations, and their ministers were bearing banners with pictures of Christ on the cross. The pictures were so lifelike that one could see the very expression of agony on the countenance of the Savior while He hung on the cross.

Uncle Tommie declared to his wife, "See, Becca, they have Jesus with them. They are all right except the Saints, for there are no saints among them." Aunt Becca said, "Look over here, Tommie." He looked and saw another band of people that he understood to be the saints. Jesus in person was at their head! This convinced the old folks while others had the shadow of truth, the

saints had the substance. Joseph baptized them and their sons, daughters, sons-in-law, and daughters-in-law, to the number of about a dozen. Later Tommie expressed that he was sorry to have participated in the mob in Missouri.

Elder Bolingbroke closed his sermon by reminding us that we can see from the accounts in the scriptures that the same gospel which we have now was in the beginning with Adam, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham. He encouraged us to not forget what a precious gospel we have in this church. His hope is that none of us will ever leave this gospel.

More on Los Lunas visit

Continued from front page

heard about it at church. She did mention then that there was a large hill just west of town where the local kids would hang out and write their class year on the side of the hill in large white numbers. Considering this a very likely candidate for the mountain we were looking for we left and made our way up the hill.

Taking whatever roads it appeared (in the dark) would lead us to the base of this large hill we finally made our way along a sandy washboard track. When a fence and beaten down "No Trespassing" sign blocked our proceeding we decided to turn around. However finding that the sand was too soft and the road difficult to navigate backwards in the dark, we parked the motorhome in the middle of the lane and bedded down for the night, eager for what the morning would bring. Flashes of lightning in the distance brought to my lips a prayer of deliverance from a most unwelcome downpour. We were spared.

Morning light brought a fresh view to the darkened shadow of the night before. We considered using the telescope to search out the mountain from our location, but decided against that. Then we remembered the barbed wire fence in front of us. Did we really want to cross it? The more we thought about it, the more convinced we were that if we were going to find this place, we were not going to do it by illegal means. We backed our camper out and headed for town.

I told Ron that we needed to find a McDonalds or cafe where some old-timer, who surely would have heard of this place, would be sitting on Saturday morning enjoying coffee and breakfast. A McDonalds in the Wal-Mart supercenter seemed a likely prospect. However, all the employees were under 18, and the Wal-Mart hostess had never heard of it either. But Ron thought that we could find something about the place in the local library so we obtained the necessary directions and rolled out.

The library was closed until 9 AM, but it just "happened" that there was another McDonalds one block further. With the intent to eat breakfast while we waited for the library to open we headed over there. A casual glance at a fish symbol license plate announced the possibility of a Christian inside.

After ordering and sitting down we bowed our heads in prayer. Part of Ron's prayer went something like this, "Lord, we know that it's not a big thing, but if it's possible, and if this is legitimate, we would really like to see this stone. Please provide the means or a way where we can get there." We went on with our breakfast and conversation.

There were two other men sitting in booths across the aisle from us. One was drinking coffee and looking around. The other was just sitting there looking forward with a paper folded in half to the front page, not really reading just shuffling the paper around on

the table. I turned to the man and asked if he was a local. He replied yes. We made some small talk and then Ron joined the conversation. As this point I said a silent prayer, "Lord it doesn't really matter if we find this place or not. Just help us to minister in some way this day."

"I noticed you were praying, are you Christians?", the man asked all of a sudden. "Yes we were!" and then we proceeded to tell him of our journey to the Navajo Nation. We found out that this man was the pastor of a local non-denominational church there in town. Then Ron went on, "Really, the reason we're here is because several years ago in Colorado, a man told me about this large stone..."

"I've seen that stone", the man said. It had been several years ago, but he had been taken to the site. And though he was a little unsure of the exact whereabouts he had a friend who had been there many times. "Do you have a phone?" he asked. I loaned him my cell phone and he proceeded to call his friend John, who said he had time right then to take us all out to the site. We found out our new companion's name was Fred and agreed to meet him at his church building.

Climbing into Fred's van at the church, with bottled water he brought for us, we went to pick up John, whom we learned had taken Hebrew in Seminary and could read it adequately. John, of Swedish descent, also turned out to be the pastor of a non-denominational church. Riding in Fred's air-conditioned van (our motorhome had none) we stopped at McDonalds so he could get some breakfast. Now why he was sitting there earlier I don't have any idea, other than he was placed there by the Lord. He wasn't reading his paper, he wasn't eating anything and he wasn't talking to anyone. It was as though he was just waiting for us to show up when we did.

On the journey west out of town we went right by the large hill we had camped beneath. (It's a good thing we hadn't jumped the fence. We might still be out there.) During the drive John handed us a book called "Discovery of Ancient America" by David Allen Deal. This book documented the site which we were going to see and held the premise that ancient Hebrews discovered the America's. "The world says that Christopher Columbus discovered America, but that's just nonsense", our new guide said. The book along with other things had charts with Mayan and native languages compared to Hebrew words of similar or identical pronunciation.

We also learned that the site was located near the Isleta Indian Reservation. The Isleta Indians, we were told were a light skinned Indian, much like us. They had traveled up from Central America many years previous to this, and many had readily accepted Christianity. We thought that very interesting in light of the Book of Mormon's accounting.

Twenty minutes later we arrived at the base of what many locals call "Mystery Mountain" and which the older generations call "Hidden Mountain" and still yet the Indians called "Inscription Mountain." The mountain itself is described better as a very large hill comprised of a volcanic core with basalt boulders scattered throughout its sides and base. It seems to be around 500 feet high with steep slopes on all sides.

After making our way 3/4 to 1 mile along a service road, dried up marsh, and dry wash, we crossed an old fence and proceeded up a rocky gully. One quarter of the way up, right along the pathway stood a large basalt stone (around 8 tons it is said). There, on the side of this large boulder, which had fallen some many years in the



Ron Smith by the rock where the 10 commandments are written in Paleo-Hebrew near Los Lunas, NM.

past, were chalked out letters from an ancient Hebrew alphabet. The letters, which were weathered, had been highlighted with white chalk by someone in the recent past to make them more visible.

One thing of interest about this script is the fact that eyewitnesses have accounted seeing this inscription in the 1880's. This means that in order for this to be a hoax, whoever was responsible for it understood ancient Hebrew before the rest of the world's experts got a full grasp on it.

Our companion John proceeded then to read the inscription, which word for word, letter for letter, spelled out the Ten Commandments in Hebrew. It has been speculated that this large boulder at one time had been at the gate of the only way up this mountain. All who would enter in the camp would have to pass through the Law. At the top we were told of another stone with writing and some petroglyphs of constellations. We lacked the time to continue on up so we took our pictures and headed back to town.

After thanking our guides and returning to our vehicle, Ron looked at me and said, "You're not thinking of going back up there are you?" "Of course!"

So with fresh provisions we made our way back to the mountain and proceeded to the top. Along the way we met two lost and weary adventurers who had set out 6 hours earlier in search of the stone without any water. We shared a bottle of our water, told them where the stone was, and then pointed them in the direction of the parking lot, which they staggered back towards to meet up with their ride. After a few more pictures at the large inscription we made our way

up the steep boulder strewn gully which really provided the only practical route to the top. The top consisted of three separate peaks which made a triangle with the middle being a bowl that was "hidden" from the valley floor below. The top was easily defensible, as the only route was up the gully we had just climbed and the bowl proved shelter for the main body of the camp. It appeared that there were catch basins constructed from rock to hold any rainwater that might fall. This was only speculation on our part as there were many remnants of rock structures on all corners of the mountain.

The top provided other evidences of a Hebrew influence. On the South peak, the highest of the three, at the highest point was a large rock with the Hebrew inscription "Jehovah our God". Numerous petroglyphs covered the rocks, including one which appeared to be a chart of the night sky. It seems that this drawing included a map of planets and stars during a solar eclipse that has been calculated to a date of September 15, 107 BC which was the date of Rosh HaShanah of that year.

Before our descent we built a small stone altar and each offered a prayer of thanks and praise to the God of all things - the Lord Most High. We truly felt blessed to have been given an opportunity to see the paths of those who might have been Nephites or perhaps one of the other branches broken off and planted in the vineyard. The Lord had heard our prayer and given to us even as we asked.

After we returned home it was told to us that because we had accepted the call to minister to the Navajo's, the Lord had blessed us with this experience. He really is faithful in all things.

News & Notes

Fall Retreat Planned

Plans for the annual fall retreat of the South Iowa and North Missouri Restoration congregations are nearing completion. The retreat is to be held September 26-28 at Farwesta campgrounds west of Cameron, just off highway 36, near Stewartsville, Missouri. The location is the same as for the past two years. Bud and Mary Drummond are again the registrars. Alberta Cunningham of the Northeast Des Moines congregation will direct the food service, for which the Mt. Ayr congregation will be assigned responsibility for one meal. Alan Smith is the Pastor for the retreat. Mt. Ayr Priesthood will preside at the Sunday morning prayer and testimony service. Ron and Di Smith are in charge of campfires and mixers. Undoubtedly many will be involved in other activities of the event.

Brian Mundy will again moderate a session reporting testimonies of those serving in missionary endeavors this past year. Rudy Leutzinger will direct the adult classes, Faye and Gaylord Shaw will teach the Junior-Senior Highs. Others serving the gathering and giving teaching or other ministries include Dave Drummond, Henry and Maureen Eppinger, Beverly Brooker, Beverly Walker, Alicia Sindts, Judy Faunce and others not yet named. This year's theme is "Our Restoration Heritage".

Put September 26-28 on your calendar now and prepare to experience a wondrous weekend with your fellow Saints. The retreat is made rich by your spiritual preparation and financed by your voluntary contributions. Incidentally, the contributions can be made directly to the Church of Jesus Christ, Mt. Ayr Restoration Branch since the branch pays the bill for us all at the retreat.

Branch Outreach

Norman and Cathy Nelson are visiting Norman's Son David and family in Portland, Oregon having visited family and Restoration congregations en route.

Douglas Smith is again in Kenya having taken a number of young Priesthood members with whom to give ministry.

Robert and Lynda Rolfe returned from the Navajo Reunion in Arizona by way of Colorado where they visited with their family and ministered to the Saints.

George and Beth Knotts just returned from ministering among family and friends in Oklahoma and New Mexico.

Pat and Gerald Bolingbroke just returned from three weeks in Idaho on a similar mission. Valle Smith is spending a week assisting with Spectacular at Graceland University and Cara Smith is spending a week helping with a senior high adventure camp in Colorado.

Michael Jordison and Ronald Smith returned from the Navajo Reunion via Los Lunas, New Mexico where they studied the Inscription Stone on which the Ten Commandments were carved in Paleo Hebrew long before the birth of Jesus Christ. Their testimony is that the Lord provided their guide in answer to prayer; and they found not only the Inscription Stone but the ruins of a well fortified ancient city with a record of an eclipse that occurred in 106 BC and another stone on which was carved, also in Paleo Hebrew, the proclamation that Jehovah is the Only God.

Julie Jordison and the three Jordison children are in Canada witnessing among Julie's family and friends.

Ronald and Di Smith are giving ministry at Little Sioux, the Woodbine Reunion.