

**FROM THE
PASTOR'S DESK**

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A Different Can of Worms

A can of worms! For many, the idea of a can of worms doesn't conjure up pleasant thoughts. To me, many a happy day began with a "can of worms". We would "dig" worms to go fishing. Really, most of the time we didn't have to dig, as we found that if we laid boards on the top of the ground in certain places, the worms would come to the surface. All we had to do was to turn the boards over and pick up the worms. We then headed to the Kawkawlin River for a day or night of fishing.

I remember my brother Ted fishing at one of the bridges that went over the Kawkawlin River. That was in the days when you could actually eat fish that came out of the river. We were using our can of worms and Ted thought he had caught the "big one". As he started to pull the "big one" in, he looked down and saw he had actually caught a large snapping turtle and not a fish. My father told him, "pull it in, pull it in". As Ted looked down at that ugly snapping turtle, he suddenly said, uh-uh, and dropped the turtle back into the water. Those were the good days of happy memories of a family fishing together.

You probably have heard the expression, "opening a can of worms". I never thought about a can of worms being a negative thing. The expression however, implies a can that we would be better off leaving closed. Perhaps it came from some time in the past where cans of food got wormy. I don't know where that expression started. But we have cans of worms in our theology. A couple of those "worms" is that some people might be burned and the other is

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**TESTIMONIES AND
SERMON NOTES**

**The Lord's Prayer - A
Better Understanding**

Reading from Matthew 6:1-15, Elder Steven Smith opened his presentation on the more complete understanding of the prayer that Christ taught His disciples to pray: "And it came to pass that, as Jesus taught his disciples, he said unto them, Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your father who is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let it be unto thee as thy left hand not knowing what thy right hand doeth; That thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly.

"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men; for, verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the hypocrites do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Therefore be ye not like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. Therefore after this manner shall ye pray, saying,

"Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.

Give us this day, our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And suffer us not to be led into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen."

Brother Smith then introduced his subject by referring to his profession as a professor of anatomy and physiology. "As an instructor in anatomy, I have to start with what my students know

about the body, but I have to give them a new language to describe the body. I have to try to translate the new language in terms of what they already know, and the translation is not always exact. So it is with the Lord's prayer."

With that background our speaker took each word or phrase of this scripture, so familiar to us all, and attempted to increase our understanding by noting the meaning of the Greek or Hebrew words that were translated into English.

The prayer begins with us addressing "Our Father". In Greek the word is Pater, as in paternity, meaning the parent who rules in strength in contrast to the Mater, as in Alma Mater and maternity, which means the parent that nourishes - the mother.

"Who art" - Art is the second person of "to exist". It says "You are, You have been, You always were". It is more than just "is". There is no word in the English language that exactly describes the state that art is intended to describe.

"In Heaven" - Again there is no word in the English language that exactly describes doramos, whose root is "to rise above a plane" or "an elevated plane". In explanation Brother Smith referred to the classic philosopher's Plato's Cave. In the cave people are chained to a log or a bench. Behind them there are flames of candles or lanterns. Before them are rocks on which the shadows dance constantly. The people think that the shadows are reality. If some of them get free, go to the outside where they see blue skies, running water, flying birds, green grass and return to try to describe what now is reality to them, those inside will not believe them and may even kill them for saying that what they now know is reality, not that which they and those still chained in the cave had believed. It's just like people today who will not believe the testimony of those who have seen a greater reality and often will kill the prophet. In our society today we often walk into our houses, flip on the TV, watch the flickering images and think we are viewing reality. Frequently there is a real difference in what we are seeing and in that which is really happening. Likewise, there is a difference in what we see and hear daily and that higher plane of existence we call heaven.

"Thy Kingdom come" - The basic word is also the word from which basilica is coined. It means the realm where royalty rules.

"Thy will be done"- The word for will denotes an option, a determination, a decree, an inclination, a desire, a pleasure. We are asking that God's choice be ours.

"On the earth" - The word translated earth is soil, little or large, plus the occupants of that soil. It is a personal thing that can be expanded. It is different than a globe. You are talking about the soil you are on and also the people who are on that soil.

"Give us this day" - Didomee means to give, bestow, offer, smite, utter.

"Our Daily bread" - The word for daily has to do with place as well as time. One meaning is, needful for the ensuing day.

Bread is Artos, simply a loaf or bread.

"Forgive us" - The Greek word for forgive has many meanings but basically it means to go or send forth in a different direction or make a different situation. To go, to send forth, forsake, lay aside, leave, let alone, let go, let loose, omit, send away, remit, yield up, suffer in the manner of "suffer us not to be led" later in the prayer.

"Our Debts" - Translated from a word meaning something we owe or a fault.

"Our Trespasses" - Translated from a word meaning to lapse - to slip or slide, unintentional errors, trying to do well but erring, faults, offenses, sins.

"Suffer us not to be led" - Suffer is translated from the same word from which forgive is translated. Do not leave us alone to be led into temptation. Led denotes motion - to carry or endure.

"Into temptation" - to prove by experimentation. We are asking not to let the crowd lead us into experimenting with bad things that lead us into lapses (trespasses) from which we need forgiveness.

"Deliver us from evil" - The word for deliver is a verb, a derivative of flow or current to rush or rescue. Brother Smith likened it to a crowded alley where everyone is going one way and it is difficult or impossible to escape without assistance.

Evil refers to character. It is different from temptation. This is a long term character flaw. Words used to describe it are harmful, evil influence, disease, malice, guilt, bad. We are asking to be taken out of the current, the flow of bad things that would be harmful to us.

"For thine is the power" - This power is that which is able - the miraculous power in which there is the ability to do anything!

"The glory" - The Greek doxoh, like our doxology, thought of or accounted of good reputation, glory, dignity, honor, praise, worship.

"Forever" - Perpetuity - without beginning or end.

"Amen" - This word is both in the Greek and in the Hebrew meaning, "So be it". The root means to build up, support make firm, make permanent. It's a builder's term that denotes a firm foundation intended to be permanent - forever.

As he closed his review of the meaning of the words that have been translated to form the prayer which we so often repeat alone and with each other, our speaker asked us to consider these more expressive meanings each time we pray the prayer. May they continue to help us remember the One who gave us the words as the pattern by which we should pray.

The Culture of the Moral Negative

"Is there anyone here this morning who is worried about being killed in a terrorist attack?" It was our Pastor, High Priest Robert Rolfe who asked the question Sunday morning, October 8, 2004. Then he continued, Well, I would like to read a scripture, and then I would like to ask you a question again. "And thus the Lord did pour out his blessings upon this land which was choice above all other lands, and he commanded that whoso should possess the land should possess it unto the Lord or they should be destroyed when they were ripened in iniquity, and upon such, saith the Lord, I will pour out the fullness of my wrath'. Having heard that, is there anyone that is concerned about a terrorist attack - if you want to think of God as a terrorist."

Well, folks, I believe that scripture means exactly what it says, and that we are in danger of that very thing happening. Let me ask you this. How long did it take to wipe out the Indians on the east coast when the settlers arrived from over seas? They were just wiped out over night! Tribe after tribe just disappeared. And that is what the prophecy says in the Book of Mormon - that they would be swept off - not that they would just disappear, but that they would be swept off the land! And we are not immune from that same judgment.

What Is a Moral Negative?

What I am going to be talking about today, considering that we

are having an election here shortly, is what David Miller, who is a Baptist minister - I'm sure none of you know him, but he says that America has become a culture of the "moral negative". Those of you who are older know what negatives are. Some of you younger ones say, "What is that?" because everything is digital now. But the negative is the thing that you used to print the photograph. And if you remember, when you look at a negative, the light part of the negative is the dark part on the photo and vice versa. Things are just switched around - completely reversed in terms of what you actually get.

Now, I don't know about you thinking a moral negative is a bad thing, but I might point out to you that most of the Ten Commandments are expressed in the negative - "Thou shalt not"! In fact, one of the bill boards in this country recently said, "What part of 'Thou shalt not' do you not understand?" And so a moral negative exists when right and wrong are reversed. Do you see that happening in this country? Isaiah said, "Woe to them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter." That's Isaiah 5:20. I believe that is what's happening right now in this country. It has been going on for some time; and I think it is actually continuing to worsen. And so today, if you oppose a woman's right to kill her unborn child, you're not fit to be a judge. Tolerance of all things is the highest moral virtue! And for those of you who are Christian, evangelism is hate speech. The words, "One nation under God", is unconstitutional. Heterosexual promiscuity is normal. Homosexuality is normal and is even admirable. Virgins are the odd balls! If you hang a crucifix on the wall that is setting in urine, that's art and protected by the First Amendment. But if you hang the crucifix on the wall of that same building, it's a violation of the First Amendment!

Lynda recently made a comment. I tease Lynda about conversations we have, but this time it was a really remarkable insight. (I'm giving you this ahead of time so you will really see that I think it is remarkable.) She said, "Why is it that all the heterosexuals don't want to get married and all the homosexuals want to get married?" Think! What's wrong with that picture? And part of the reason is because we really are a culture of the moral negative. We have reversed right and wrong!

In 1 Timothy 4:1-3, Paul says that the Spirit "is speaking expressly" - that means very specifically - that in our day this is what is going to happen. There will be some who will "depart from the faith". They "give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils". They "speak lies in hypocrisy". Their conscience is "seared as with hot iron, forbidding to marry".... Does that sound anything like our land here today? And even among our church members who attend church, our young people just live together - have "significant others". The scriptures refer to this as fornication! We just don't call sin what it is, and that is wrong!

I might point out to you that we all have sins and if I pick on some of these, that's not to say that if those are your sins that they are somehow worse than my sins. As one friend of mine said, his problem with his sin was that it was very visible, and it's bad to have a visible sin. Why? Because everyone can see it. You can see part of my sin. See? It's right here around my waist. I eat too much. I think that is really a sin; and you pay for that later on in life from all the things that go wrong with your body because of the punishment. Isaiah said, "Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter". I even had a Priesthood member in Independence tell me that he thought that if a couple were fornicating, that

was not a reason not to serve them Communion. I disagree with that. You know, twenty seven times at least, in the Book of Mormon it talks about people "dwindling in unbelief". It isn't something that just happened overnight. It's a matter that step by step they dwindle in unbelief; and I might ask you, how can this country survive with that kind of a moral background? You know, that's really a question. Billy Graham is quoted many years ago as saying that if God didn't judge America, He would have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah. That tells you what his thought is. The reason I bring this up is that he has a campaign in Kansas City right now.

Well, don't give up just because it sounds like this is negative. Remember that just before a flower becomes a flower, it has to push up through a lot of dirt. There's always hope for things beautiful at the end.

Court Decisions Versus Founders' Intent

One of the big changes in calling evil good and good evil is the expression of the courts as to the intent of our founding fathers. The people who began this country believed that religion and morality were inseparable from good government. You won't hear that today, but also, and more importantly, they believed that if you didn't have religion and morality joined with government, you were not going to be a success - your country would fail! They thought that religion was an indispensable thing in government. So from 1940, or thereabouts, on, our law has become a moral negative, It has been rewritten and we are now ruled by men rather than by law. Recently one of the attorneys that works for the Justice Department argued in Texas that the first ten amendments of the constitution mean whatever the justice department attorneys say they mean! He argued that there is no objective meaning to those amendments. Many of our schools and our colleges do not teach the history of America as it happened. It has been rewritten. Our laws have been rewritten by the decisions of the Court. There are over a hundred and fifty years of sound decisions that were completely reversed, and where are we now? I am going to go through a few of these for you, and this is just the tip of the iceberg of the decisions that have been made in the last fifty years.

Now, if you remember, and I do remember this, that God died in 1960. That's what the papers said. I remember reading that in the newspaper. For those of you who were not alive in 1960, I'm sorry, but in the newspaper in 1960 it said God died - that God is dead! Well, since God died, in 1965 in Michigan, if you prayed over your lunch out loud in school, that was unconstitutional. In 1979 in South Dakota, it was unconstitutional to ask a kindergarten class whose birthday was being celebrated at Christmas time. In 1989 in Nebraska, a student was prohibited from reading his Bible silently during free time or even to open his Bible at school. In 1990, moving from the schools, it was considered unconstitutional for someone to have a planter in the shape of a cross in the public cemetery. Why? Because somebody who sees it might suffer emotional distress. This was in California, as you might guess. In 1990 in Colorado it was unconstitutional for a classroom library to contain books which deal with Christianity or for a teacher to be seen with a personal copy of the Bible at school.

And in 1993 the Ten Commandments couldn't be displayed at a public courthouse - that was in the state of Georgia. And to go a little further, you know how many have personalized license plates? That's getting to be a fad. In Oregon, the word "PRAY" could not be on a license plate. It was unconstitutional! And in Virginia the word "GOD4US" couldn't be there. And in Utah the words "THANKGOD" - unconstitutional! You can't have those words on

your license plate!

And most of you remember this - just last July the first, the Federal Court of Appeals for the State of Alabama affirmed the lower court's decision telling Judge Moore, the Supreme Court Justice, to get the Ten Commandments, that were sitting on a rock, out of the Supreme Court building, and kicked him out of office because he refused to do so! In November he was expelled from the office of Chief Justice! And I might ask you this: "Was that decision actually in keeping with our constitution?" You might be interested that since then the Fifth District Court in Texas ruled that the Ten Commandments monument on the grounds of the Texas State Capitol was not unconstitutional, and in Pennsylvania they recently affirmed the same thing. So if you are in Alabama, no Ten Commandments monuments, but if you are in Texas or Pennsylvania, I guess you will be OK.

You know that Alan and Valle and Lynda and I went to Washington, D.C. I wanted to visit the Supreme court building. (Any time you are a judge or a lawyer, you would like to see the Supreme Court building - right? I mean that's kind of an important thing for you to see.) I had heard what was in there, but I wanted to see for myself. So I went to the door and am looking right where those nine judges sit. But I have to honestly say, I have never seen the TV cameras move up to show you what's right above them, carved in the marble. Do you know what's above them? It's a picture of Moses giving the Ten Commandments to the people. It stretches all the way across the room, up on the top. It is interesting what the Court would say about Judge Roy's monument if they heard it. Maybe that's why they wouldn't hear the case - because if you have the Ten Commandments up above you and you say you can't put those in a public building, that means maybe they would have to go up and carve those off or put a drape over them or I don't know what you would do! But that is the circumstance. And I might point out to you that as I went through Washington, I found lots of monuments to other gods and other religions. They were there. You just don't think about them being there, but they are there on all kinds of rock and other things.

Well, how many of you know that when most of the Thirteen Colonies of this country formed their colony, they codified the Ten Commandments? By that I mean that the Ten Commandments were written into the law of that colony, including, "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me", and if you did have other gods, that was punishable as a civil crime. So the Ten Commandments actually are, as Judge Moore said, a basis of law in this country and have been for quite some time.

By the way, the First Amendment over which all this fuss is about says, "Congress shall make no law respecting and establishment of religion". Have you ever heard of separation of church and state? Those words are not in there! And lots of other things are not in there that are argued as if they were.

Well, what do those first ten words in the First Amendment mean? For the first one hundred and fifty, sixty, seventy years of our country, they certainly didn't mean that it was a government devoid of religion. You likely don't know this, but I do. This is a fact. Our civil law looks like someone opened the Bible and started with the Law of Moses and wrote it into the statute. It's just obvious that our whole law in this country is based on the Mosaic Law.

Book of Mormon Prophecy Fulfilled

Let's turn to the Book of Mormon again. This is First Nephi 3, starting at verse 152. This is where Nephi is having this vision of what his father saw, and I would like to read just a little bit of this:

"And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles who had gone forth out of captivity did humble themselves before the Lord, and the power of the Lord was with them;" (You might keep that in mind. "The power of the Lord was with them.") And I beheld that their mother Gentiles were gathered together upon the waters, and upon the land also, to battle against them; And I beheld that the power of God was with them;" (Do you get the picture?) "and also that the wrath of God was upon all those that were gathered together against them to battle. And I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles that had gone out of captivity were delivered by the power of God out of the hands of all other nations." (That's three references to the power of God.) "And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld that they did prosper in the land; And I beheld a book, and it was carried forth among them." And you go on and read from there and you see that it is talking about the Bible.

It says the power of God was with them. Is there any historical proof that the power of God was with the people who founded this country? Do you remember being taught that in your classes at school - that this country was established by the power of God? Probably not unless you are really old. How many of you have heard of the book called, *The Bullet Proof George Washington*? There is such a book, and the fellow who wrote it is supposed to be in Des Moines next Wednesday. If I can, I would like to go and hear him.

The *Bullet Proof George Washington* tells about events that occurred during the French and Indian Wars. Do you remember those? That's a part of our history. France has set up shop on the interior of the country and the English were along the coast. The two countries began battling over the nation. The French enlisted the Indians to help them, and so we had what is called the French and Indian Wars. They were battling from Michigan across Ohio, all the way to the east coast.

There was a general from England who was brought over who was going to run this war - General Braddock - who turned out to be an incompetent nincompoop. He thought he could fight wars over here like he did over in England and ended up losing three fourths of his men in one battle. George Washington was in that battle. He was one of General Braddock's junior officers. (I would like to just tell you, this is recorded in our history and you can find it if you want to dig it out.)

One famous Indian warrior, who was a leader in the attack, was often heard to testify, "Washington was never born to be killed by a bullet." He said, "I had seventeen fair fires at him with my rifle, and after all could not bring him to the ground." Now, despite what you see in the movies, most of those marksmen didn't miss; and I guarantee that if you had seventeen shots, you wouldn't miss! You would be good enough to hit with one of those.

Another testimony came from Mary Draper Engles - that's not the same as the Little House on the Prairie Engles. This Mary had been captured from her home in Virginia by a band of Shawnee Indians. While she was a prisoner, she heard the French officers talking at a council with the Indians about what was going on in the war. She heard that they were talking about George Washington, so she asked the French, "What are you talking about?" The French said there was an Indian named Red Hawk who told of shooting eleven different times at Washington without killing him. At that point he quit shooting because his gun had never missed, and he was convinced that the Great Spirit was protecting Washington. Fifteen years after this battle, George Washington was traveling west into the area that is now Pennsylvania and West Virginia with

a Doctor Cralik who was a good friend of his, and they were doing some exploring. While they were there, a council of Indians who had heard that were they, asked to have a council with them. During the council, an old, old chief approached them and this is what the chief said through an interpreter. I am reading from his actual words as they were recorded: "I am a chief and ruler over my tribes. My influence extends to the waters of the Great Lakes and to the far Blue Mountains" (That's down in Tennessee and that area, so you are not talking about a local chief. From the Great Lakes to Tennessee. You are talking about one who would be called a nation chief today.) I have traveled a long and wear path that I might see the young warrior of the great battle. It was on the day when white man's blood mixed with the streams of our forest that I first beheld this chief." (And he is talking about Washington.) I called to my young men and said, "Mark you the tall and daring warrior." Washington was six feet two, by the way.) He is not of the Red Coat tribe. HE heathen Indian's wisdom, and his warriors fight as we do. Himself alone is expose. Quick! Let your aim be certain, and he dies!"

"Our rifles were leveled, rifles which but for you new not how to miss. 'Twas all in vain. A power mightier far than we shielded you. Seeing you were under the special guardianship of the Great Spirit, we immediately ceased to fire at you. I am old and soon shall be gathered to the great council fire of my fathers in the land of shades, but ere I go, there is something bids me speak in the voice of prophecy. Listen, the Great Spirit (pointing at Washington) the Great Spirit protects that man and guides his destinies. He sill become chief of nations, and a people yet unborn will hail him as the founder of a mighty empire. I am come to pay homage to the man who is the particular favorite of heaven and can never die in battle." And Nephi says, "I beheld that the power of God was with them". And there is an account of Washington, if you want to dig it out, that his coat in that battle had holes shot through in several places, but he never got hit with a bullet in all that time. Now you are not talking about a small battle. There were thousands of people fighting there. They were met by quite a superior force shooting at each other at close range. This is not a situation where you were sitting and shooting over hundreds of yards. Black powder rifles are pretty close fire instruments, and Washington survived that!

What Did Our Founding Fathers Actually Say?

Well, Nephi also saw them carrying a Bible. What did our founding fathers believe about religion and government? Was it supposed to be separate as some of the courts are telling us today? And is it evil now to have religion in public? Now, the best way to determine what was intended is to read what they actually said. Do you think that is fair? Rather than tell you what I think they said, why don't we just read what they said? That's probably a pretty good way, and I have chosen a few statements of what the framers of our government actually said.

"Religion and morality are the essential pillars of civil government." Who said that? George Washington.

"Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." That was John Adams, the second President of the United States. "Religion and good morals are the only solid foundation of public liberty and happiness. Once the people lose their virtue, they will be ready to surrender their liberties to the first external or internal invader." That was Sam Adams who was a member of the Continental Congress, signed the Declaration of Independence and is known as the Father of the American Revolution.

You have heard that Thomas Jefferson was not a believer. Listen to this. "We all agree in the obligation of the moral precepts of Jesus, and nowhere will they be found delivered in greater purity than in His discourses."

James McHenry, who was a signer of the Constitution and Secretary of War, "the Holy Scriptures can alone secure to society order and peace, and to our courts of justice and constitution of government purity, stability and usefulness."

And I like this next one because it was a lawyer who said this, "It is impossible for those who believe in the truth of Christianity as a divine revelation to doubt that it is the especial duty of government to foster and encourage it among all the citizens and subjects." "What does that sound like in terms of what we are doing today?" "It yet remains a problem to be solved in human affairs whether any free government where the public worship of God and the support of religion constitute no part of the policy or duty of the state in any assignable shape." Who said that? Joseph story who is called the Father of American Jurisprudence. He was on the Supreme Court for thirty four years. He wrote two hundred and eighty six opinions, and of those two hundred and eighty six, two hundred and sixty nine were the majority of opinion, which meant that most of the Court agreed with him. HE says it is duty of government, the especial duty of government, to foster and encourage religion among all the citizens and subjects.

How about a doctor? that ought to be good. This person was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, a member of the Continental Congress, Surgeon General of the Continental Army, Treasurer of the US Mint under three presidents, known as the Father of American Medicine. His name is Benjamin Rush. He says, "In contemplating the political institution of the United States, I lament that we waste so much time and money in punishing crimes and take so little pains to prevent them. We profess to be republicans (Now he is talking about a form of government, not Republicans or Democrats.) and the republican form of government; That is the universal education of our youth in the principles of Christianity by means of the Bible." That's what we are talking about! He is saying that is what we need to do. Did you know that the Bible was, in many schools in early America the text book? That was what was used! Then how could it be unconstitutional for a teacher to even have a copy on their desk today?

Separation of church and state - the words, "Walls of separation". I mentioned are not found in the Constitution. Chief Justice William Rehnquist described the phrase as a "misleading metaphor" and then noted - and this was in a recent Supreme Court case: "The greatest injury to the wall, (Quote, unquote, "Notion") is its mischievous diversion of judges from the actual intention of the drafters of the Bill of Rights. The wall of separation between church and state is a metaphor based on bad history - a metaphor which has proved useless as a guide to judging. It should be frankly and explicitly abandoned." So if Judge Rehnquist can get one or two more votes, what so you think is likely to happen? If that's what he said here in 1984 in the case of Wallace vs Jaffree, he'll probably be trying to do that. Recently in this same case, Judge Rehnquist made this comment, and I thought, "Boy, this is insightful!" It says, "History must judge whether it was the Father of this country in 1789 or a majority of the Court today which has strayed from the meaning of the First Amendment." Well, all you have to do is to go back and read what they said; and you don't have any doubt as to what they intended.

One of the very first laws passed by Congress was the North-

west Ordinance. How many of you ever heard of the Northwest Ordinance? This is a federal law which is one of four foundational laws setting forth the requirements for statehood. It was passed in 1779 and signed into law by George Washington on August 7th, 1779. This is what it says: "Religion, morality and knowledge, being necessary to good government and happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged" and if you go on to read that, what they are saying in that law is that the schools should teach religion.

How Did This Happen?

Well, Saints, how did the moral negative occur? I would suggest it is because, as Christians we didn't do our job very well. The churches didn't do their job and we are continuing to lose the battles in this war. Back to the Book of Mormon, and this is the Book of Mosiah, chapter ten starting with verse 34: "Therefore choose you by the voice of this people, judges, that ye may be judged according to the laws which have been given you by our fathers, which are correct, and which were given them by the hand of the Lord.

"Now it is not common that the voice of the people desireth anything contrary to that which is right; but it is common for the lesser part of the people to desire that which is not right; Therefore this shall ye observe, and make it your law to do your business by the voice of the people. And if the time comes that the voice of the people doth choose iniquity, then is the time that the judgments of God will come upon you; Yea, then is the time he will visit you with great destruction, even as he has hitherto visited this land."

That ought to give us pause to think! Have we met the qualifications for that great destruction? You know, most political ads I have noted of any party do not tell the truth. Will Rogers said that if you put truth into politics, you wouldn't have any politics. That's the way he referred to it. However, as most of our public don't base their vote upon reason, or even consider if it is possible for all those promises to be fulfilled, we are going to continue to do that for awhile. We need right now, and I don't care what persuasion you are - whether you are a Libertarian or a Communist, or Republican, Democrat, Green Party, whatever it is. We need people who will vote for candidates who will do what's good for this country- not what's just good for themselves. We have way, way too many people, - and I have been guilty of this in the past - that would vote for somebody because it was good for me financially. What does the Book of Mormon say, all the time when it's talking about those who dwindle in unbelief? They did this for what reason? To get gain! In other words, to make money. And the principles of morality should not ever permit that to happen.

I see I am about out of time, so you are going to get a real fast, microwave version of the rest of the topic. OK?

I would like to tell all of you young people here, do you know why Jesus never got into trouble? You say, Why sure, He got crucified. But you know why He never got into trouble as He went along all during His life? Because He took His Father with Him every where He went. How's that for a spooky thought - to have your father with you? But that's why Jesus never got into trouble - because He had His Father with Him every where He went. He always said, "I tell you what the Father told me, and I do what the Father told me." I would like to suggest to you today that you are either going to do what your Heavenly Father wants you to do today, or you are more than likely going to do what the other father wants you to do - the Father who Jesus was talking about to the Pharisees when He was telling them who their father is. And that's your

choice. Your Heavenly Father wants everyone of you to be a member of His Kingdom which He is intending to establish an what we call Zion. And the time has been said to be short. It is so short now that this is the last chance that you have to get it right - to get it together and behave as members of our Father's Kingdom.

And so, I would say this: pray for your country. Pray for your leaders. Pray for all of us that we will choose righteous leaders, maybe I should say more righteous leaders, and ask the Lord what it is that He wants you to do today to bring about His Kingdom. I will leave you with one proverb: "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice, but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn." Proverb 29:2. And that is sure true!

Thank you for your prayers and your attention.

What is Great Love?

In his preliminary statements Seventy Ronald Smith thanked the Galusha family for sharing their gift of music with the congregation as it has developed through the years. Then he announced, "I would like to read from a love letter. This love letter is found in First John the fourth chapter, and I am going to read only a part of it. You might want to read all of it. It's not too long. It says: (7-14) 'Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time, except them who believe. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world."

"And I'm going to skip down just a few verses:(18-21 'There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

"We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."

The congregation sang a hymn and again Ronald spoke before addressing the subject of the day saying, "it's a pleasure to be with you, a little bit scary too - just so you'll know - trying to bring the love of God into your lives and to share that which has meaning this morning. Last Wednesday as we were traveling home from prayer meeting at Gordon and Linda's house, Jimmy Lin was driving, and he asked me, 'What is great love?' We had been talking about Jesus' words to His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount, and Jimmy asked, 'What is great love?'

Great Love Is:

My immediate answer was to quote from John 15:13 where Jesus said, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends,' because that, of course, is great love. But I would like to explore just a little bit further what great love is.

We are aware that there are two families in our midst who have recently lost a family member - Gordon's sister last week and

Rodney's Mom this week. I feel a little bit like I did at one time when Alan Waugh lost his little daughter to leukemia. I went over to the house because I knew that I needed to be with them, and I sat across the street not knowing what to do. I probably sat there for forty-five minutes just praying and asking the Lord. "What can I do?" And nothing really came. I was hoping to say something profound or do something that would be of worth, and there was nothing to do. So I went over and knocked on the door, came in, shook hands, sat down in a chair; and I sat there for about an hour. I didn't say anything. Nobody said anything. We just sat, and when it came time to go, I got up and asked if I could offer a prayer. They said, "Yes," and so I prayed for the family. And in that time, it wasn't so much the prayer, but it was the sharing of love; and even though nothing was said, the Spirit was there. Certainly it was not anything that I did, but I believe that ministry was brought because of the love of God. That's great love when it comes from God!

"I would like to talk just a little bit about what it meant for Jesus to lay down His life for His friends. You see, Jesus was in the beginning. The scriptures tell us that it was Jesus who created the heavens and the earth. And in Isaiah the forty-second chapter it tells how He stretched out the heavens and spread out the earth. I never really appreciated stretching out the heavens until I began to understand the case that is being made for an expanding universe. If the whole universe is expanding, how do you account for all the energy it takes to expand the universe and here the book says the He stretches it forth! And He is still stretching it - supplying all of that energy.

I remember talking with Hensley Mbanasso in Nigeria not too long ago. I was telling him about how many stars there are. A hundred billion stars more or less in our galaxy. That's an estimate. We can't see them all because there are just too many of them, and a hundred billion galaxies - that's also an estimate, but a ball park figure of what we can see out there. And the scriptures tell us that He knows every one, because He made it. And yet, with all of that, He loved the world - this world - so much that He sent His Only Begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Is It Really True?

Jesus became a man, and He took upon Him all of our sins and our iniquities, and all of our burdens, and all of our afflictions, and loved us so much that He was willing to die as a man. And He was willing to take on Him all of the burden of our sins so that we could rise again. It's at times like these when we actually face the death of a loved one when it becomes more crucial to ask yourselves, "Is this really true?"

I was over at the Lamoni Manor (Lamoni Nursing and Rehabilitation Center) talking with an old man, and he asked the question. "Is it really true, all of those things that we have said?" He was facing the time of his own mortality and was wondering, "Is it really true?" And as we look back at the evidence, what evidence is there that Jesus really rose from the dead? In Second Peter, the first chapter, sixteenth verse, Peter says, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, for we saw His power, and we heard the voice, and we know that it's true!" (I am paraphrasing a little here.) We have a cloud of witnesses of people who say that they saw Jesus. We have the testimony of Thomas, the one we call Doubting Thomas, whom I have always appreciated because he did ask the question. He says, "I'm not going to believe until I put my finger in His side where the hole is and into His hands. I'm not going to believe until I actually feel with my hands." And so Jesus, in His

great love, appeared to him and said, "Thomas, come here. I want you to put your fingers into My hands and into My side so that you will know!" And we have, over and over, the testimony of those who have seen Him and have felt Him.

This is one of the reasons why I have appreciated the Book of Mormon story and why I am so interested in people being able to find out whether it's true; because the Book of Mormon tells us that when Jesus came and visited the people in America after His resurrection, He stood there where there were two thousand people, and He said, "Come. I want you to feel the prints of the nails in My hands and thrust your hands into My side so that you will know that I am the God of Israel and the God of the whole earth and have been slain for the sins of the world!" And the book says that the people went forth, one by one. He let everybody do that! They went forth one by one until they had all seen and heard and felt, and bore record that this was He of whom the prophets testified should come into the world!

We have the testimony, over and over that it's true! We have Jesus' own words in John the eleventh chapter and the twenty fifth verse, as He talked with Martha before He raised Lazarus from the dead. He said, "Martha, do you believe?" Martha says, "Well, yes." He says, "Do you believe that your brother will be resurrected from the dead?" And she says, "Yes, I believe that there will be a day when everyone will be resurrected from the dead." And Jesus said, "But I am the resurrection and the life! If you believe in Me, though you die, yet shall you live." Then He went and raised Lazarus from the dead. And because of that, the scriptures tell us, the people sought more ways to kill Him!

Jesus didn't raise everyone from the dead. When Jesus' cousin John was beheaded, it says He went out and found a lonely place - or tried to find a lonely place. He couldn't because people kept wanting Him to do His miracles and even though He was wanting to be alone, they kept asking for His ministry. He didn't raise John from the dead. There were many others. He said He only did that which His Father told Him to do, but He did say that He was the Resurrection and the Life, and that those who believe on Him, though they were dead, yet shall they live. So we have Jesus' testimony as well as the testimony of others.

Great Love Is More Than A Feeling

But, what is great love for us? We can't go out and be the propitiation for other's sins. There may be some of us who will find that we have to lay down our life for our friends. But not all of us will do that. And that's not something you can do every day of your life. And yet we need great love. Jesus commanded us to love one another, "Even as I have loved you." And so, how do we do that if we don't just go out and lay down our life for someone? What does it mean for us to have great love?

First of all, we need to understand that great love means great commitment. Some of you older folks are fans of Don Francisco. He wrote a song in which he talked about love. He said, "Love is not a feeling. It's an act of you will." I don't know whether you know the story of Don Francisco's life, but that song came because of the battle that his wife had with alcoholism that lasted many years. Don shares his feelings of going through that period and says, Jesus didn't die on the cross because it was fun. He did it because He loved us, and sometimes our love requires us to do that which we would not do otherwise. And so he says, "Love is not a feeling. It's an act of the will!" reflecting his own commitment, and the fact that it took a long, long time to do.

When I think of great love, I think of Bruce Graybill. I had an

opportunity to talk with Bruce one day several years ago. Many of you knew Doris and her long, protracted fight with MS before she died. And at one point in the conversation, Bruce said, "It's been twenty years!" You know, the world would say, "If you spent twenty years, you have put in enough time! You have done far beyond the call of duty here." The world would say, "After twenty years, you have every right to walk away and live your own life - to be free. You deserve something else!" But I suspect it was probably another ten years after that before Doris died, and he was faithful to his wife. He took care of her when she could not care for herself in all that time. That's what I think of as great love.

Great love is commitment to one another, and commitment to doing those things that would be caring. It's not something that just comes because of a feeling that you have. Some of you young people who are thinking about getting married someday, you need to understand that it's not just the feeling that needs to be there but also the commitment - the commitment to the same ideals, the same causes, the same kinds of ways of life because that's what keeps love going - it's the commitment and not just the feeling. The feelings will come and go and come, and hopefully stay, but they don't always stay. It's the commitment that you have to look for as well as the feeling.

Great love is doing for others what you wouldn't necessarily do for yourself. The fourth chapter of first John, which is the latter part of what I read to you, says, "If you say you love God and don't love your brother, you are a liar and the truth is not in you." Those are fairly strong words, but He is saying that we have to act out our love by what we do with our brothers, and do for them the things that we wouldn't just do for ourselves.

I always think of the story of Alan Kent and Steve. I know that I have told lots of you lots of times the story, but I don't know that Anan has heard it and maybe some of the others haven't been aware of this. Alan Kent was our neighbor up in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and he was, what we called then, mentally retarded. The labels have all shifted around so much that it's hard to keep track of what to call it now, but he was slow at school - slow at learning. But he loved people and he loved to talk and he loved to help. One time Steve was painting the house, and Alan wanted to help. So Steve got a can and a brush and let Alan help. Steve spent lots of time fixing up where Alan had painted, cleaning the things he had painted over and fixing the things he had done wrong. If it had been me, and painting the house was really important, I would probably say, "Well, go inside and see if there is something somebody else can get you to do." But Steve let him help.

I think of that when I think of what it means to love someone. When you have something that's really, really important to you to get done, and some one wants to help, do you let them? I know that Mom always said that the time it took to finish the jobs depended on how much help she was required to accept, and that's often the case. But when there's something that's really important and they let you help - even when you are going to botch it - even when you are going to mess it up - then you know that there is love.

God Wants Your Help

And God calls us to help in the thing that is His most important task. "This is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." He says, "And I want you, Steve, to help, even though you are going to botch it. I want you, Rodney to help, even though I know you will blow it. I want you, Colleen, to help, even though there are going to be times when you are going to let Him down, He still wants you to help. Jazmyn, He wants you

to help - all of you, Aquila, I want you to help. Tyler, "I want you to help". Yeah, Matt, He wants you to help, too. And He says that by doing that, He shows that He loves you and that He really is concerned about you.

Jesus says, "If you love Me, you'll keep the commandments." The command is that we love one another, and that can't stop at the church door. It can't stop with just the people who love us. He calls us to love all people. He says, "I want you to forgive all people". He says, "I'll forgive whom I will forgive." He says there will be justice. There will be a time when we face the judgment bar and we have to account for the things we have done. He says, "I'll forgive whom I'll forgive, but to you, you must forgive all men!" Saints, that includes forgiving Remnant people. That includes forgiving Mormons. That includes forgiving Jehovah's Witnesses, and Catholics. It includes forgiving all the people that you think have gone astray because they preach some doctrine or other that you don't like. It means forgiving one another. It means that we go to the people that we have aught against and make it right, and do everything in our power to make it right. We need to keep the commandments!

John says in his love letter that we can know that we are doing the right thing if He gives His Spirit to be with us. And I know that God has given His Spirit to be with us on many occasions and in many ways. I know that He would like to give His Spirit to us more often and in more abundant power, and that He will as we respond to His word and keep his commandments.

This is great love: that we have the love of God for others within us, that we do for others those things that we wouldn't do for ourselves, that, when it comes to doing the important things in our life, we let others help, and that we are committed to one another and to the Lord. We need to bear each others burdens. We need to mourn with those that mourn. We need to comfort those that stand in need of comfort. We need to do the things that Jesus has asked us to do, and He says, I will be with you, even to the end. Amen!

Is It You Or Are You Wearing a Mask?

High Priest Robert Rolfe alerted us to the fact that the scripture he was going to read was brief and required our full attention. He read Doctrine and Covenant 76:7j, "They who dwell in his presence are the church of the First-born; and they see as they are seen, and know as they are known, having received of his fullness and of his grace; and he makes them equal in power, and in might, and in dominion."

Michael Jordison sang of God's love and redemption through Jesus Christ His son. The final plea of his song was:

"Make us people Oh God, called by Your name,
Brought from the dark, made pure by the flame.
Zion's pure light, because of the One,"

Who ransomed and pardoned us, Jesus the Son."

Rob remarked, "What a setting for the message!"

"It won't be long until some of our citizens will be putting on masks, and going places where they expect to get something which they don't deserve. What do you think I am talking about?" The response from the audience related to Hallowe'en. "In a sense I could be, but I am really talking about all of our people who come to church - not just here, but to other churches throughout the land.

But our children will be putting on masks and I am one who basically enjoyed Hallowe'en when the kids were home and little, and now I have to enjoy it through the grand kids. There's something about little ones who just enjoy the play of going to get candy, unless you are someone who thinks they shouldn't eat candy and won't let them have it. Then Hallowe'en is not so enjoyable. I always enjoyed going around with the children except one night when it was raining real hard. I was out with the kids and I had on a big black coat and a big black hat to keep me dry; and I just stood out in the driveway as they went in. As they were ready to leave, one of the mothers happened to see me standing out there. She grabbed the children and pulled them back into the house, because she thought I was some horrible person out there dressed in black, hiding in the shadows.

Why Do We Wear Masks?

It is interesting to me that children started wearing these masks years and years ago to protect themselves from demons. They thought the demons wouldn't know who they were if they had the masks on. The wearing of masks in certain circumstances is a custom that goes back, I don't know how long, but a long, long way. You probably see the Mardi Gras advertised on TV every year. Did you know that was a party started by secret societies, and they wore the masks to keep people from knowing who they were? At one time there were 15 different gay groups involved in the Mardi Gras, and they wore masks so others wouldn't know who was involved in this life style. That has dropped down to five now since they have acquired the Immunity Deficiency Syndrome; but they are still prevalent in that celebration. And if you don't want people to know who you are, put on a mask!

I guess you people who are moderately mature will remember a hero who wore a mask, and rode around on the radio. You would hear a (Our speaker demonstrated the clop, clop of horses hooves beating on his desk.) all of the time and you would know that was the Lone Ranger, the masked man. I remember staring at the radio week after week listening to the Lone Ranger and his faithful Indian companion, Tonto. If you are old enough to remember that, you know the stories. If not, you have to listen on Sunday night; and late Sunday nights some of the radio stations here in Iowa run some of the old radio programs. I remember when I wanted to listen to those and my kids objected, "Who would want to listen to that?" When we got to Lamoni, it was a quarter to eleven, and they wanted me to drive around town for fifteen minutes so they could hear the rest of the program. They enjoyed it very much because those were enjoyable programs.

I don't know if you have thought about it, however, that as we come to church, at least many of us - I think I do - I wear a mask, because I don't want people to see the real person that's underneath. It would be great if we trusted each other enough that we could really get to know all of those persons behind the masks. That's why I read that scripture. There will come a time when those who are in celestial glory will see as they are seen and know as they are known - no mask! We will all know what's going on.

When you think about it, isn't makeup a business? We have stuff that goes on your face. We have hair color, rinses, toupees, wigs - it just goes on and on. Why do we do it? Why do we let people in Madison Avenue and other places convince us that we need to do that - that we aren't beautiful or that we aren't handsome of whatever if we don't use all of these products? That includes soaps and creams and perfumes and so forth. You have got to have this or you are not ___! And now the kids have all this metal that pierces

their body in lots of places that I wouldn't want anything stuck in me; but they do that, do they not? And what is the purpose? Could it be that we want to appear as we are not? We don't want to appear as we are, so we use these things to appear as something else.

One author says that creates a problem of identity crisis. The question is, "Which person are we if we are wearing a mask?" Am I my mask self or am I my true self? Are we really the person that we pretend to be, or are we the person behind the mask? There are three possibilities. One is that we are just the mask - we don't have a face. Another is that the mask subconsciously knows that there is a face behind it. And the third is, we are the person with no mask. Dr. Maxwell Martz, in the book, Psychocybernetics, that sounds like a part of us, doesn't it - says "It is no exaggeration to say that every human being is hypnotized to some extent either by ideas he has repeated to himself or convinced himself are true." Do you think that's a true statement that we say things to ourselves that aren't true, but we convince ourselves that they are true? Do you think that we rationalize - that's what we call it - rationalization - to get ourselves to do certain things?

What If We Remove Our Masks?

What if we remove our mask? What if we just take all of these things off and just appear to everybody just exactly as we are and let them know that person inside that we keep hidden. One author said, "There is no coming to our true selves and peace without labor pains." Julie knows what those are. She just went through that. Some of you other mothers who have had children may faintly remember.

The fact is that at the moment we start being unacceptable to ourselves is when we start being more acceptable to God because we are wanting to change, and that's what repentance is all about. Remember Judas? Do you think that Judas wore a mask that covered what he really was and what he really thought? To his credit, after he betrayed Jesus, what did he do? He removed his mask that loved money and deceit and said, "I have betrayed innocent blood!" And according to scriptures, he hung himself; but the mask came off before that. He finally realized what and who he was. He didn't try, as many of us do today, to blame the church or somebody else, or blame society, or blame the Republican party or whatever for the trouble.

(The reason I say that is because Lynda's uncle always said that God was a Republican and that's why the weather was so bad for farmers. I'll just throw that in. I don't believe that God is a Republican or a Democrat or any other party, even though some people in their talks here lately would have you believe that that is the case.)

What about the woman taken in adultery? She may have had a mask on, but when she got to Jesus, and she was lying there in the dirt, and there is a whole bunch of people there ready to kill her, do you think that the mask came off? What about those who were standing there with their stones? They are ready to kill her, and Jesus said, "Well, those of you who do not have sin, cast the first stone." There's something about being in the presence of Jesus that makes the mask come off. I have a feeling that you could hear the sound of stones dropping, as the mass started to melt away when they had that experience. In fact, I secretly believe that what Jesus was writing, with His finger in the dirt, was the names of all those who had been with this same woman. That's why the stones are hitting the ground, because they knew that He knew. It's kind of hard when they are condemning her when they are guilty of the same sin.

What Blinds Us?

The poet has said, "Our lives may be a masked ball, but there will come a time when the music will stop and each of us will have to face our true identity." It's been said that seeing is believing. Could it also be said that disbelieving is blinding? We talked about disbelieving this morning. Does that blind us? I would like to read a passage from Alma. (This is a little bit longer, so you will have to pay a little closer attention, but it will be familiar to you so that will help.) It has to do with disbelieving and whether that blinds us. This is from the sixteenth chapter of Alma, and if you have ever read the sixteenth chapter, you can find about everything in that chapter. If you were going to keep only one chapter of your scriptures, that would be a good one because there is an awful lot in it. I'm going to start here at the sixtieth verse, and it says:

"Now Korihor said unto him, I do not deny the existence of a God, but I do not believe that there is a God; and I say also, that ye do not know that there is a God; and except ye shew me a sign, I will not believe.

"Now Alma said unto him, This will I give unto thee for a sign, that thou shalt be struck dumb, according to my words; and I say, that in the name of God, ye shall be struck dumb, that ye shall no more have utterance."

"Now when Alma had said these words, Korihor" - felt bad? No. It says, he "was struck dumb, that he could not have utterance according to the words of Alma.

"And now when the chief judge saw this, he put forth his hand and wrote unto Korihor, saying: Art thou convinced of the power of God?" ((Now would you have to be a rocket scientist at that point?)

"In whom did ye desire that Alma should shew forth his sign? Would ye that he should afflict others, to shew unto thee a sign? Behold, he has shewed unto you a sign; and now will ye dispute more?

"And Korihor put forth his hand, and wrote, saying: I know that I am dumb, for I can not speak; and I know that nothing, save it were the power of God, could bring this upon me; yea, and I also knew that there was a God." (That sounds a little different from what he was saying a little bit earlier, doesn't it?) But, behold the devil hath deceived me; for he appeared unto me in the form of an angel, and said unto me, Go and reclaim this people, for they have all gone astray after an unknown God." (Remember Apostle Paul said, even though an angel of light appeared unto you, don't follow him if he preaches a different gospel?) "And he said unto me, There is no God; yea, and he taught me that which I should say. And I have taught his words; and I taught them, because they were pleasing unto the carnal mind; And I taught them, even until I had much success, insomuch that I verily believed that they were true; and for this cause, I withstood the truth, even until I have brought this great curse upon me.

"Now when he had said this, he besought that Alma should pray unto God, that the curse might be taken from him." And if you want to read the rest of that story, you will have to turn to the sixteenth chapter of Alma and read it yourself. Did you notice how disbelieving is blinding? And in that case, it was making him dumb as well - blind and dumb? Deaf, dumb and blind!.

Well, that's just the Book of Mormon. Who believes those stories? It's my belief that the world, that is Satan, doesn't like the Book of Mormon to be believed. And this ought to be a good reason for us to believe! If satan works so hard to fight the Book of Mormon, that should tell you how important it is. He wouldn't waste his time after something if it wasn't important. David

Whitmer, in his "Address to All Believers", says, "The very colors of darkness have combined against the Book of Mormon to prove that it is not the word of God, and this should go to prove to men of spiritual understanding that the book is true."

Isaiah again, I said this the last time I stood here, (Isaiah 5:20) "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!" Again a scripture from Isaiah 59:9-10: "Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us; we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes; we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men." Those are the ones who disbelieve. That's what happens. They really become blind.

And again, if I could turn to the eighth chapter of Alma, Verses 36 and 37: "But Amulek stretched forth his hand, and cried the mightier unto them, saying: O ye wicked and perverse generation; why hath Satan got such great hold upon your hearts? Why will ye yield yourselves unto him that he may have power over you, to blind your eyes, that ye will not understand the words which are spoken, according to their truth?" Over and over the prophets testified that giving heed to the power of satan will blind you. If you want to be blind, then listen to him. If you want to see and see the light, then you need to hearken to the voice of the Spirit.

Some of you have gone to school down at Warrensburg, Missouri. Many years ago the Daily Star Journal had a cartoon in which the laboratory technician is looking through a microscope. The microscope is labeled, "The Tobacco Industry". The technician is saying, "I don't see a thing!" Behind him are mountains of evidence that tobacco is bad for your health. Isn't that the situation for all of us? "Why, I don't see anything!" As one person told me recently, "I'm not a bad person!" Is that a good indication that we are not bad persons - just that we feel we are not bad persons? Probably not, if we don't do the will of the Father.

Isaiah said we are all like sheep. We have all gone astray. (Brother Rolfe asked if any of us raised sheep.) I have been told that one of the reasons we may be like sheep is because we can't see. It is said that sheep are not supposed to have very good eyesight - that they can't see very far in front of them, and that they also do not have any sense of direction like dogs and horses, and cats, etc. You know if your dog or your cat gets lost, or your horse, most of the time it can find its way home. In fact, I had an uncle tell me that when he was dating, he would just put the reins on the rail and the horse would walk home. He didn't have to drive the horse. He could ride home with his girl friend without worrying about it. But sheep don't have compasses built within, and I would like to tell you that you can become blind to what you are doing while you are wearing your mask.

Clearness of Sight Depends On The Sureness of Light

Donald Landon - I remember Donald Landon. He used to have radio sermons back in the days when radio was more prominent. He says, "It has been observed that no man can live crookedly and still see straight. The clearness of our sight seems dependent upon the sureness of our light. As a person grows in righteousness, they also increase in the accuracy of their seeing. Perhaps that's why Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.' We should be aware that the manner of our living has everything to do with the manner of our seeing. The distorted and senseless visions of Hitler issued from a violent and arrogant light. It came from the inside out. That's what

Jesus said; “You don’t get pure water from a bitter fountain, and none are so blind as those who see in sin.”

Apostle Paul talks about those who are blind in sin. He has excellent analogies about this. I am going to read from Second Corinthians 4. There is a couple of verses here that really set it out very well - verses 3 to 6. It says, that the god of this world blinds men who are in sin. Who is the god of this world? It’s not Jesus in the sense of the way Paul uses it. It says: “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

The paradox of our time is that, as Daniel said, knowledge in the last days is going to be increased. Gerry talked about that not long ago - about how much knowledge is increased, but during the same time that knowledge is increased, there’s going to be such a time of trouble as has never been experienced before. In a sense you could say, that’s almost contradictory. How can we know so much more but have so much trouble if knowledge is something that helps? I keep reading these statistics. I don’t know who think all of this up, but it says the amount of knowledge out there keeps doubling, and the time it takes for it to double keeps getting shorter and shorter. As Steve said this morning, he is getting to know less and less about more and more. And if knowledge keeps doubling, the older we get the dumber we are! That’s the say that would be. Let me ask you about this: Does education and knowledge eliminate the inward drives, greeds, compulsions, passions and lusts for power? The more education you have, does that eliminate those kinds of motivations? Of course not! In fact, our society’s efforts toward solving these kinds of problems ignores what the root causes are and addresses the symptoms. To society, sin is caused by lack of housing, lack of sufficient income, lack of equal opportunity, lack of better educational facilities, better teachers, the need for employment, and that is going to solve the problems. Well, let me ask you this, and I think this is surely a fact you won’t disagree with, in the last century in America, we have built more schools, trained more teachers, and educated more people than we ever did in the history of any country, and if that’s the case, it should follow and be reasonable to expect that if this is going to do it, America would be the most peaceful, the most stable, the most moral nation on earth. Is it? Why not? Because it doesn’t affect the causes of these problems. In fact, we need, according to the politicians, more policemen, greater leniency in sentencing because our prisons are full of all these petty criminals. I can tell you, though, I don’t know how many millions of words are written about crime and its causes. That’s what I get to do. That’s why I know a little bit about it. I don’t think I ever have to worry about being out of business. How often do you hear that it is the spiritual and moral decline of this nation that is responsible for all the crime and the criminal behavior of our citizens? What’s our solution? We keep doing what we have spent the last ten years doing, and spending more money doing the same thing. I don’t understand why society, if we did something for ten years and it didn’t work, why we just spend more money doing more of the same thing. We ought to be smart enough to think, well, that doesn’t work. Why don’t we try something else? But I guess we wouldn’t expect our leaders to have that kind of vision.

Isaiah 60:1-3 says: “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.” Do you believe that prophecy? Do you believe that there is a personal God? You know, if you believe in a personal God, it’s going to affect your personal behavior. Satan’s rational is expressed really in Proverbs 21:2. It says, “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes!” I guess you could say that of women, too. We won’t pick on the men here. “Every way of a person is right in his own eyes!” Alma 5:71 says of the Lamanites, “Notwithstanding they believed in a Great Spirit, they supposed that whatsoever they did, was right;...” Are we that way? Do we think of ourselves, “I’m not a bad person!” Do we really take off the mask and look at ourselves and say, “Hey! There are lots of things that I m doing that are not right.” If we leave God out of the equation, unfortunately we eliminate the solution.

Are We Trampling God Under Our Feet?

I would like to read from First Nephi 5 starting with the verse 232. This is part of the vision that Nephi had seen. “For the things which some men esteem to be of great worth, both to the body and soul, others set at nought, and trample under their feet. Yea, even the very God of Israel, do men trample under their feet; I say, trample under their feet; but I would speak in other words: They set him at nought, and hearken not to the voice of his counsels; And behold, he cometh according to the words of the angel, in six hundred years from the time my father left Jerusalem. And the world, because of their iniquity, shall judge him to be a thing of nought; wherefore, they scourge him, and he suffereth it; and they smite him, and he suffereth it. Yea, they spit upon him, and he suffereth it, because of his loving kindness and his long-sufferings towards the children of men.”

I want to read another one from Second Nephi 15:2: “Behold, there are many that harden their hearts against the Holy Spirit, that it hath no place in them; wherefore they cast many things away which are written, and esteem them as naught.” Going down to verse ten: “But behold, for none of these can I hope except they shall be reconciled unto Christ, and enter into the narrow gate, and walk in the straight path, which leads to life, and continue in the path until the end of the day of probation.” You know, that’s pretty plain language as to what’s required. I want to get to another one. This is in Helaman 4. Remember, Helaman was the last book before what we call the New Testament in the Book of Mormon. This one is starting in the 47th verse, and I would like you to ask if this doesn’t sound like he’s talking about us? If you heard this on the evening news, would you say, “This sounds like what’s happening right now?”

“And it came to pass in the eighty and fifth year, they did wax stronger and stronger in their pride, and in their wickedness; and thus they were ripening again for destruction. And thus ended the eighty and fifth year. And thus we can behold how false, and also the unsteadiness of the hearts of the children of men; yea, we can see that the Lord in his great infinite goodness, doth bless and prosper those who put their trust in him; Yea, and we may see at the very time when he doth prosper his people; yea, in the increase of their fields, their flocks, and their herds, and in gold, and in silver, and in all manner of precious things of every kind, and art; Sparing their lives, and delivering them out of the hands of their enemies; softening the hearts of their enemies, that they should not declare

wars against them; yea, and in fine, doing all things for the welfare and happiness of his people; Yea, then is the time that they do harden their hearts, and do forget the Lord their God, and do trample under their feet the Holy One; yea, and this because of their ease, and their exceeding great prosperity.”

I don't know if you get the imagery there. You see Jesus laying here on the floor in the aisle? And it says we are tromping Him under our feet! We are just stomping him! What an image! That's powerful imagery if we really pay attention to what that is saying. The interesting thing about this, and I don't know if you ever heard this before, that Martin Luther is supposed to have said that if he were God and man had done to him what we have done to Jesus, that he would just kick the world to pieces. Aren't you glad that Martin Luther wasn't God, if that was the case, because he would say that's what we deserved?

To me, the only solution, the only recovery of our nation and our lives here will be when we humbly and passionately return to God; but, unfortunately, I don't see any signs of that happening. I would like to read a scripture from the Doctrine and Covenants. This is from section 105. Some of you will be familiar with this, starting at verse nine: “Verily, verily I say unto you, Darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people, and all flesh has become corrupt before my face.” By the way, this was given in 1837. “Behold, vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth--a day of wrath, a day of burning, a day of desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation--and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth, saith the Lord. And upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth, saith the Lord.” Who is first in line?

“First among those among you, saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me, and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house, saith the Lord.” Remember Sherman talked about blasphemy in his message last week? If you don't remember that, you might want to take a look at that again. I sincerely hope that none of us in this room is included in that message. But if we aren't looking to the face of Jesus and having that kind of gospel in our heart, then I would say we are at risk.

Well, let me just ask you in closing, Have you ever looked at the face of Jesus? Did He wear a mask? If He didn't wear one, we shouldn't either!

Psalms Featured At Music Service

Seventy Ronald Smith opened the October Music Service with the reading of Psalm 95:1-7 which invited the congregation to come together and make a joyful noise in singing before our Maker and our Lord:

“Oh come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it; and his hand formed the dry land. Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.”

Alan Smith's family, consisting of Alan, Valle and Cara explained that they had chosen a song from an old, old Saints' Hymnal called “The Song Gift” written by Vida Smith an Audentia Anderson, the two who wrote the words and music to “The Old, Old Path” for which they are best know. The Smiths really liked the words to the song and attempted to learn it, but as they prepared to sing it, the tune totally escaped them. They could not have someone accompany them because the music was not in their range originally and had to be transposed. They judged that one could see why it was not as popular as “The Old, Old Path” because the tune was “tricky” but they attempted to sing it. It spoke of singing for the Lord and wondering whether He would turn away or draw near. There is the assurance that if the singer does his or her best, they will be blest just for knowing that they are trying to express their gift for Him.

The very little ones in the nursery class sang, under Di Smith's direction, and demonstrated with joy and vigor, “My God is so big, so strong and so mighty that there's nothing that He cannot do.”

Anson, a student at Graceland University from Hong Kong, China, played a piano solo with a Chinese title that, translated, concerns dreams of a wedding.

Amy Mitchell, accompanied by her father Tim, sang the familiar “Morning Has Broken,” like the first morning of creation when the Creator spoke into being all that we enjoy. For all that we experience we praise Him!

Steven Smith sang his composition, “Memories” contrasting the type of memories that affect our lives and the power of our “Patron named Jesus” to buy them and help us to craft those we keep of kindness. “An artist whose works show I care.”

Yvonne Galusha, accompanied by her daughter Jazmyn on the violin, sang the beloved Russian Hymn translated, “Touch me Lord with Thy Spirit Eternal. Stir my soul to respond to thy call. Take my love, for I offer it freely. Hear my prayer as I thank Thee for all.”

The congregation sang “My Faith Looks Up To Thee”.

Jim Barber, accompanied by Jan Jordison at the piano, sang of God's forgiveness, our being born again with the admonition to share the love and power He has so freely given with others that they may enjoy that which has been given to us. “Freely You have received, freely give.”

Tim Mitchell played a piano solo titled, “This World is not My Home” and Amy followed with “Years I spent in Vanity” speaking of the time spent before learning of the sacrifice of Jesus contrasted with the years spent since learning of His love.

Ron read from Psalm 104:31-34:

”The glory of the Lord shall endure forever; the Lord shall rejoice in his works. He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth; he toucheth the hills, and they smoke. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord.”

Anan sang a number he is preparing to sing in auditions for the Lyric Opera competition soon. His song speaks of the misery that gambling brings to a family.

Barbra Jordison spoke, “There were fourteen generations from the time of Abraham to David, the same David of whom it is said of Christ, ‘He is the Son of David’. I would like to read to you this morning some words of a song written by David: Psalm 25: “Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in thee; let me not be ashamed; let them be ashamed who transgress without cause. Show me thy ways, O Lord, teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me; for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.”

“Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses; for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness’ sake, O Lord. Good and upright is the Lord; therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in judgment; and the meek will he teach his way. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenants and his testimonies. For thy name’s sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity for it is great. What man is he that feareth the Lord? Him shall he teach in the way that he should choose. His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.

“The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant. Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net. Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged; O bring thou me out of my distress. Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins. Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred. Oh keep my soul, and deliver me; let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee. Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.”

Ron and Di Smith sang a song that combines the assurance that In His Time God will do just what He says He will do and our Communion prayer: “Here We have Come, Oh Lord to Thee, Of thy transforming grace aware” asking that we may share in the attributes of our Lord and Savior - asking forgiveness of our sins that by that grace we may live. Then comes the reaffirmation that it will be done in God’s time and ends with the plea: May each song I have to sing, be to you a lovely thing in our time.”

Brian Short explained that the song he was to sing was one he heard played by a bagpiper a few years ago when he was praying as he tried to decide what number to sing at the Genosseo branch. Again, for almost the past twenty years Martha Mercer, a friend with whom he had grown up in his branch in Rock Island, Illinois had asked him to sing at her funeral. Brian could not be at her funeral because of his work as a pilot for a major airline. So today he chose to sing for us “and also for Martha” “I Need Thee Every Hour”. His wife Nancy accompanied him on the violin.

As the hour drew to a close, Brother Smith said, “I would like to thank all of you who came and shared with us. We are reminded that God is looking over us and blessing us and allowing us to live and have our every breath from Him. I would like to once again turn to the Psalms, Psalm 103:

Oh come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it; and his hand formed the dry land. Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today if ye will hear his voice,

Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits;

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies;

Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

“I hope that you have felt the Spirit of God today as we have shared in our music, and whether it has been the gifts of piano playing or the gifts of singing, or that of reading or just the gift of sharing the best that we know how, we know that God is looking down on each one; and we pray that you will continue to have His blessing. As you go from here, remember to sing and to look up and make a joyful noise unto the Lord.”

The service was closed with the hymn, “Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us” and the benedictory prayer pronounced by Priest Gordon Winkler.

News and Notes

Helen Bastow Dies

Sister Helen Bastow passed away Friday, October 15. For some time she had lived in the Mt. Ayr Care Center next door to the church, and was usually a participant in the Sunday services, even on the Sunday preceding her death. Her son, Rodney and family made her participation possible. The congregation hosted the family at lunch following the funeral service at Wilson-Watson and Armstrong Funeral Home. High Priest Robert Rolfe was in charge of the service, Elder Alan Smith gave the sermon and Sue Beck provided the vocal music.

Fasting and Prayer Weekend Observed

The quarterly period of fasting and prayer for the souls of those who know not God was observed October 22-24. Evening meetings were held at the home of Norman and Cathy Nelson in Lamoni. Saturday the group gathered at the church to work when not in prayer and the final worship was the usual Sunday schedule.

Christmas Cantata Announced

Jan Jordison, director of music, announced this month that a Christmas cantata is planned for Sunday, December 12. Singers are invited to contribute their talents from Mount Ayr, Decatur City, Lamoni and elsewhere. CDs of the music are available for those who wish to participate but cannot be present at all rehearsals. The first rehearsal will be held following the Zionite dinner on Communion Sunday, November 7. Subsequent rehearsals will be held on Sunday evenings at 6:00 and accompanying prayer services at homes where there is a piano.

Nathan Smith In Concert at Graceland U.

Dr. Nathan Smith, finalist in the Alexander Tansman competition of musical personalities, Lodz Poland, gave a preview of the music he will play in competition Saturday, October 30 at Graceland University. Music lovers from Mt. Ayr joined many from Lamoni and vicinity to applaud his musicianship. Jack Ergo of the Graceland University music faculty, was generous in his praise of Nathan's performance. Nathan's father, Alan, plans to accompany him to Poland for the competition.

Congregation Enjoys Fall Hay Ride

Approximately thirty members and friends of the Mt. Ayr congregation congregated at the farm home of Jim and Linda Barber near Bethany, Missouri Saturday evening, October 30 for a ride on a wagon of real hay. Jim Barber drove the farm tractor that pulled the wagon across many acres of farm pasture to the secluded cabin in the woods overlooking a six acre lake. Singing as we rode added to the fun. At the site, we enjoyed a massive nature scavenger hunt that showcased a brand of exquisite sportsmanship not normally seen in competitions. A wiener roast complete with somers and climaxed by a campfire preceded our return ride on the hay wagon where the constellations of the bright sky above us vied with the singing for precedence. It was an experience that bears repeating!

The Youth Report

Rex Lin is employed in his native Taiwan. His new position requires frequent travel to Thailand.

Dan Martwick is in Italy in an airborne division of the army. He will be returning to Ft. Benning, Georgia for parachute training and then expects to be deployed to Afghanistan.

Colleen Wilcoxson reports that the Creston High school Band has received another number one rating in competition. It is the smallest band in its division and is in its sixteenth year of receiving number one ratings.

Winter Term Trip Planned to Guatemala

Seventy Ronald Smith, Professor of Mathematics at Graceland University, is guiding a group of some twenty students on the Winter Term experience titled "The Book of Mormon and the Lands of Mesoamerica" in January, 2005. The class convenes in Lamoni at the Christian Center for Book of Mormon Studies for the first week of the term then flies to Guatemala for the tour. Lyle Smith and Don Bebee of the Pre-Columbian Studies Institute are the mentors for the tour.

Attend Elder's Gathering at Temple

High Priest Robert Rolfe and Elders Norman Nelson and Michael Jordison drove to Kirtland, Ohio to meet with other Restoration Elders in prayer and worship the final weekend of October. Their report will be forthcoming at a later time.

Thanksgiving Dinner November 21

The branch will have its annual Thanksgiving Dinner Sunday, Nov. 21, following the service. Plan to come and share in this joyous event.

From the Pastor's Desk

Continued from page 1

that some people might be damned. Our modern writers would have you believe that a God of love just wouldn't do that. (Damn or burn someone) But the scriptures clearly say that He has and He will do exactly that. One of promises found, as claimed in the testimony that follows is in Malachi 3.

I like the simplicity of Malachi's message. Jesus did too. He specifically gave it to the Lehighites upon his visitation to the Americas. Do we believe Malachi's message today? And if we do, are we willing to trust God to deliver? Will he tell the destroyer to pass over us?

"When I lived in northern Montana some years ago, I had a homestead of 320 acres of good land. I had improved it with a house and had a crop of 12 acres of flax, 20 acres of oats and 10 acres of wheat. I came home one day at noon for dinner and while eating lunch I looked out the kitchen door across the road to Mr. Alair's wheat. He had 320 acres all in wheat, I saw a large black spot on the ground. I said to my wife, "what's that over on Alair's wheat?" She said, "I don't know. I've been watching it all morning and it's getting larger." I said, "I'm going over there and see". I went, and of all the worms I had ever seen that was the limit. It looked to me like there was a carload. I came back and I said,

"Sweetheart it's about time we were getting down on our knees. She said, "what?" I said, "that's army worms and they are coming straight toward our crop and taking that wheat smooth to the ground." It was in June, the wheat was about six inches high. She said, "they will take our crop." I said, "No they won't. I've paid every cent of my tithing and the promise is, "the destroyer will pass you by". She said, "Do you think God would send those worms by?" I said, "He sure will. Let's pray right now and ask him to do it". We agreed and right there we got down on our knees and I told the Lord all about it, and asked him to send those worms by. He did. And those worms crawled right straight across my place for three weeks and took the crop on the other side. That Mr. Alair was a Presbyterian preacher who talked at the school-house and had his Sunday school every Sunday. He was up there to my place every day, and he would always say, "Case, are they eating on you yet"? I'd say, "No, the Lord sent those worms by". He said, "You don't think He could do that do you"? I said, "Certainly. Don't you know about that promise? They will pass you by." He said, "I didn't think He could do it for you." I said, "look at those worms they are in a hurry, they didn't take a bite out of anything I had, garden or crop". (From My Book of Acts, by Oscar Case.)