



Church of Jesus Christ Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

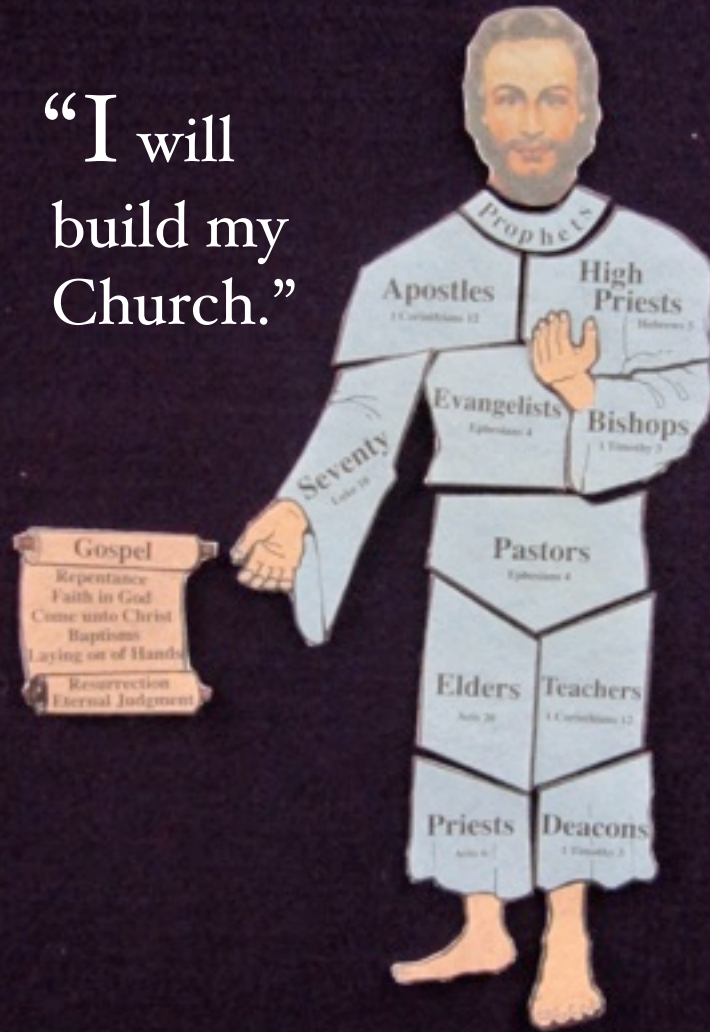


NEWSLETTER

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“I will
build my
Church.”



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News & Notes

Record-News gets a Lift

Twenty-some individuals gathered Saturday, January 8th to help insulate the ceiling at the Mt. Ayr Record News, which has been printing this congregational Newsletter for many years. It was a small effort on our part, but we were glad to help Brother Alan Smith and his business.

[If you have a project you need help with, let us know and we'll work make it happen.]

Valentines & Pizza

Sunday, February 13th at 6:00 will be a congregational pizza dinner and movie. Bring your sweetheart or a friend for a “dine-in” Valentine’s Day movie at Ron & Di Smith’s

Priesthood Retreat

February 26-28 at Geneseo, Illinois. 6 PM Friday thru Noon Sunday.

**REPENT****February 2011****Elder Steven Smith***Lamoni, Iowa*

January 2, 2011

From the Pastor

Recently I reread Jeremiah 42. When I read 42:20, I was given an understanding that I had not had before. It may be that my brothers and sisters of the church have long understood this, and I alone had overlooked the message of the passage and its application to our day.

The military leaders of the people of Judah had come to Jeremiah to inquire of him how they should proceed in their then present circumstances. They pointed out to Jeremiah that there were only a few of them left (42:2). Jeremiah seemed to be aware that because of their small numbers they were afraid they would be unable to defend and remain in their land (42:9-12). Their faith in God's ability to defend and preserve them in the land had diminished. Apparently there was disagreement as to whether they should remain in the land which had been given to them by the Lord, or if they should abandon the land and go to Egypt, where it appeared they would be safe and have plenty of the world's substance. Going to Egypt would, of course, put them and their subsequent generations in the midst of a society that worshiped other gods. Their children, etc. would most likely intermingle with the Egyptians and adopt their ways, abandoning the words and ways of the God of Israel, Jehovah.

Jeremiah agreed to go to the Lord and present their request to know from God ". . . *the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do.*" (42:3) These leaders assured Jeremiah that whatever the Lord told Jeremiah in response to their request they would unequivocally do. (42:6)

Jeremiah went to the Lord and received an answer which he then delivered to the leaders of Judah. Basically, the Lord told them to remain in the land in which He had placed them and to rely upon Him for protection and the fulfilling of their needs. But even as he returned to these leaders with God's answer he seemed to know (by the revelation of God) that they would not obey God's answer in spite of their earlier assurances to him when asking for God's direction. In verse 20 he tells them, "*For ye dissembled in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the Lord your God, saying, Pray for us unto the Lord our God; and according unto all that the Lord our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do it.*"

I believe he was saying to them that even though they had come to the Lord asking for direction and promising obedience, they were not of one heart and sincere in their promise to do as the Lord directed. Rather, they had come assuming, each one, that the Lord would confirm what they each one had already decided was right. Their hearts were "dissembled." They were not of one heart. They had no intention of giving up their own predetermined positions. They each one came

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The tone for the message of repentance was set by a song whose words were penned and sung by Alan Smith, accompanied by Cessaries Galusha:

We come into your presence Lord
To remember you and trust your word
That when we'll be a child of yours
Your spirit's gift will then be ours.

The bread and wine we eat today
Reminds us of the sacrifice.
You paid the price for all our sin
And took our sufferings as your own.

You know the way for us to find
Joy in the plan of life you teach
But still we wander from your path
And find that we're enmeshed in sin.

Break through the darkness in our lives
Please fill our hearts and minds with light
We know rebellion takes its toll
And keeps us from your blessed peace.

Help us to see into our hearts
The way that you can see in them
And may we view each one around
With your eyes too and your countenance.

The covenant we've made with you
To embrace your truth and look above
Makes reality of life with you
Not just a promise, but a bond.

So may we leave this morning, Lord,
Refreshed, refilled, and as a child
Respond to what you need from us
That we may see your kingdom come.



“Good morning. We have come to the beginning of a new year where many will make New Years resolutions. How many made a New Years Resolution this year? (Four individuals shyly raised their hands.) The question then becomes why did you make a resolution?”

Steve Cunningham volunteered that he made his because he wanted to better himself. Brother Smith asked if that meant that he was not good or insufficient in the first place. He followed with a question of why others did not make a resolution.

George Knotts indicated that we were at communion and that was a better place for resolutions. Elder Smith replied, “George you have stolen my thunder. If a resolution is an opportunity to better yourself, it is an opportunity for repentance.”

He continued, “Repent comes from two roots - ‘re’ which means again, and ‘pent’, which comes from the root ‘pont’ . Pont is used in our language today in words like pontoon, and means to bridge or go. To repent means to go again. Inherent in repentance is the possibility of failure, in which case it is important to repent again...and again...and again until you get it right. Lack of success in repenting is often not because you lack resolve, but rather that one lacks endurance.”

Green Olives

“I would like to tell you about green olives. All of my life, I have hated green olives. I love black olives, but despise the green. The taste of vinegar was so overpowering that I would find my throat constricting, a gag reflex, causing my throat to pulsate along with a pulsation of my abdominal muscles.

“Green olives were good for one thing. You could take one, bite off the bottom of it, and use it as a short bore pea shooter, or in this case a pimento shooter. The short bore made it so it was not particularly accurate. Thus, you had to stand 4-5 feet from the target. The short bore also gave a whistling sound when it was blown through, or at least an amplification of the blowing sound, so it had to be done in a noisy room, like at potlucks. The best target was the back of the neck. Target individuals would feel the wet on the back of their neck...slap the wet pimento that was the texture of a blood clot, then look at the red in their hand. Never was their reaction to taste it to see if

it was a pimento that had landed on their neck. Usually they assumed that they were bleeding and reacted accordingly. The problem with this use of the green olive, was that when you bit off the back of the green olive, you sometimes would taste the vinegar, then inhale so you could cough, and the pimento would lodge somewhere around the glottis and the puke reflexes would start, with the joke being on you.

“About 6 weeks ago, while Elaina and I were shopping, she mentioned that we never bought green olives and she loved green olives. We bought a jar and went home and I vowed to learn to love green olives so that we would have one more thing in common. I had taught in nutrition that it took about eight exposures for an individual to become accustomed to a new texture and flavor, so I vowed to take one green olive each day until I could eat a green olive. After the eight days, I was still not past the puke reflex. In fact it took me a month of eating one green olive a day until I discovered that I liked green olives.”

CRD

“The making of a resolution is an act of commitment. One of the reasons that we often do not keep our resolutions is that we sometimes do not remember. When you make that resolution or repent, you must remember. Finally you must do what you remember to commit to. In Alcoholics Anonymous, they find ways to help you commit, then a number of things to help you remember, and finally a number of ways in supporting your actions following that commitment. If you fall off the wagon, it is important to recommit, remember, and redo. The three parts of repenting is to Commit, Remember, and Do.

“The first letters of Commit, Remember, and Do are CRD. If you are making cheese the best part of the milk becomes the curd or CRD.”

Lord’s Supper

“The Lord’s supper is an opportunity to make a ‘New Month’s’ resolution. Just like the New Year’s resolution, it requires us to make a commitment. In fact, if we go to D&C 17:22d, we see that we have promised to ‘take his name upon us.’ This is an act of adoption by God when we choose to be baptized. When we accept God as our Father and commit to that, we are accepting that in our newly adopted

family, God is the rule maker. He has given us commandments and promises, or rules that we have consented to live by. As we read further, we are promising to ‘remember him.’ Wow, what a way to remember the commitment that we have made; Just remember Christ. Finally we promise to ‘keep His commandments.’

“Who would have thought that the CRD formula would have been thought of such a long time ago? If you want to repent, you must commit, remember, and do. Sometimes it will take only eight repetitions. Sometimes, like green olives it will take a month of repetitions. Sometimes, like with alcoholism, it will take a lifetime of repetitions to beat the grasp of sin.

“The special thing in the covenant we make today is that the Lord has promised to give His spirit to be with us, and help us, if we CRD.”

MASS principle

“While teaching, I told my kids about the MASS principle of learning:

(Motivation + Ability) x Spirit = Success

Motivation comes from within and often is influenced by our experiences. In religion, we sometimes call this faith. Ability is something that can be taught and worked on daily until it increases. This was my job as a teacher; to increase their ability. A student with high motivation but no ability initially, will become a success. A student with no motivation and high ability may just get by. A student with no motivation and no ability is called a dropout.

“In an East coast school, there was a study done in which they asked students if they believed in God and what their Grade Point Average was. The correlation developed showed that people who believed in God did over 10% better than those who professed no such belief. Having the spirit in our MASS formula tips the scale of motivation and ability so our success can be greater. God promised that if we would CRD, we would have His spirit, which increases our chances of success in repentance.”

Repentance and Forgiveness

“We are standing on the convergence of a great opportunity. Today is the convergence of our New Year’s resolution, New Month’s resolution, New Week’s



resolution, New Day's resolution, and New Moment's resolution. Today at this very moment, we are invited to repent. We have been reminded that the CRD principle and the MASS principle can help us be successful in our repentance.

"Repentance is necessary for our Salvation. If you accept that, then you must also accept that the plan of Salvation is available to others as well and you must forgive them because repentance and Salvation is available to them.

"I would like to end with Matthew 6:16, 'For if ye forgive men their trespasses, who trespass against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses.'"



OUR JOB IS TO BE PREPARED



Elder Gordon Winkler
Mt. Ayr, Iowa
January 9, 2011

Brother Alan Smith presided over the service and shared the following as a Call to Worship. 'Keep my commandments in all things; and if you keep my commandments and endure to the end, you shall have eternal life which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God.' (Doctrine and Covenants 12:3b)

"Good morning. I would like to begin this morning by sharing with you a

scripture reading from the book of 2nd Peter 3:8-10, 12-14. *'But concerning the coming of the Lord, beloved, I would not have you ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise and coming, as some men count slackness; but long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall shake, and the earth also shall tremble, and the mountains shall melt, and pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be filled with fervent heat; the earth also shall be filled, and the corruptible works which are therein shall be burned up.'* (8-10) *'Looking unto, and preparing for the day of the coming of the Lord wherein the corruptible things of the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the mountains shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless, if we shall endure, we shall be kept according to his promise. And we look for a new heaven, and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.'* (12-14)

"I told Alan yesterday that the longer he kept me working at the Record-News, the shorter my talk was going to be this morning. [Several from the congregation had help do repairs to the ceiling at Brother Smith's business the day previous] I really don't know that to be a fact. I say what comes to my heart and mind in preparation and whatever that time ends up being is what you are going to get today. I did want to ask those of you who were here last Sunday (Steve Smith spoke), how you are coming with your taste for green olives? How are you coming with that plan of commitment, remembering and doing? Maybe we can continue to build on that this morning.

Life Can Change in an Instant

"Life changes suddenly and sometimes in an instant. As I look around our congregation I can see where that has been true in your lives. I think of Sherman sharing a testimony of his father and his ability to read and how that came in an instant to someone desiring he could read the scriptures. I look at Jim Barber. He can tell you that life changes in an instant

if you get your jacket caught in the wrong place on a corn picker and lose your arm. Life changes in an instant.

"I work in an industry that deals with things that change suddenly and happen in an instant. Health care news is certainly that way. How many times have you experienced in your own families or heard of somebody that had an appointment with a physician. They were not feeling terribly bad but knew that something was wrong and came away with news that changed their life in an instant; news of cancer or cardiac problems.

At the hospital we also have an emergency department. Often times the news that comes out of the emergency department changes life suddenly in an instant. Sometimes we are asked to make phone calls to parents about children that have come into the emergency department, maybe because of a car accident. One young woman in the community was involved in a car accident and was paralyzed for the rest of her life. We have to make those kind of phone calls. So, life changes suddenly and in an instant.

I really was inspired and appreciated the testimonies of Kyle Chown when he was here over Christmas. He shared with us his experience of having cancer. I was reminded of this scripture in the Doctrine and Covenants 23:4b that says *'Be patient in afflictions, for thou shalt have many; but endure them, for lo, I am with you, even unto the end of thy days.'*

Attacked in Iraq

Life changes suddenly in an instant. I would like to share a story with you about a gentleman by the name of Bob Woodruff chronicled in a book he coauthored with his wife, Lee. It's entitled In an Instant. The book was a number 1 best seller with the New York Times. Bob Woodruff was ABC's news anchor. Bob followed after Peter Jennings when Peter became ill and eventually died from lung cancer.

Bob's wife Lee was a keynote speaker at a Health Care Conference I attended last fall. She shared the story of their family's tragedy that occurred on January 27, 2006. Lee tells the story about how Bob loved being a journalist. He drew sustenance from being on the road and from the stories that he was able to participate in. The energy and the adrenaline just rejuvenated him, she said. Finally she said that, 'Bob loved finding human interest in world events.'



On January 27, 2006, Bob was embedded with the military outside of Bagdad riding with an Iraqi armored patrol. He was on that assignment gathering some news pieces for Good Morning America. While Bob was over in Bagdad, Lee was at Disney World with their four children. Lee said that, 'the Sunday morning phone call pierced the quiet and jolted me awake to a floral pattern bedspread in a totally unfamiliar room.' It took her a moment to register where she was. Then she thought, OK Disney World wake-up call so she picked the phone up off the receiver and the voice on the other end spoke, 'Lee, it's David Weston, president of ABC News.' Now she was wide awake. The president of ABC News does not make social calls to employee's wives at 7:00 AM on a Sunday morning. David continued, 'We've been trying to reach you. Bob's been wounded in Iraq.' I'd like to read just a little bit of their phone conversation.

"Okay," (this is Lee), I said in a small voice, "Tell me what you know. Please tell me what happened."

"Bob and the crew were traveling on a road in Taji on a routine ride," David said. "Bob was in an Iraqi armored vehicle. We believe he was doing a stand-up at the time, and they were hit by an IED [improvised explosive device] in an orchestrated attack on the convoy. There was gunfire after that, but neither man was hit. Bob and the cameraman, Doug Vogt, have been taken by helicopter to Bagdad and are going into surgery."

"Apparently he asked Vinnie, his producer, if he was alive; he did come to." David spoke coolly and rationally, but he was clearly rattled.

So he spoke, I thought. He spoke. This is going to be okay. The General in my brain dictated that nothing less than recovery would be acceptable. There were no other options. Bob would be okay. He was always okay. He was lucky and bright and hardworking and a good man. Things like this didn't happen to good people. I could feel hope in my heart, on its simplest level, as clear and bright as the streak of a shooting star. Hope is the most basic human emotion. It was the hope that wives have had since the days of the caveman, when they sent their mates out past the campfire to fight marauding tribes. Hope was good.

It was a brain-stem reaction. The General in my brain moved hope into the front lines, preparing for the next maneuver."

Lee talked to her health care audience about the interactions and experience she and Bob and their families had through surgery, through recovery, and through rehab. Bob had sustained significant injuries. The IED was packed with rocks and other shrapnel and when it exploded it blew through even part of his protective gear so he had brain injuries and large holes in his chest and neck. He was in a coma for quite a while. She talked about her interactions with the doctors, surgeons and people in health care, but I don't really want to share that part of her story. What I want to share with you is what Lee touch on in the previous quote I read. Her message was really about the support that comes from family and true friends and from prayer at times like this. She said, "People can see the realities. We need to speak to them about hope." Life changes suddenly in an instant.

I also thought about other stories that I could share. The one that comes to my mind, and I think I've used this in a different context before, is Saul's conversion experience. It's first recorded in the 9th chapter of Acts. I don't intend to read the whole chapter but just want to highlight some of it. Remember Saul was traveling and he came near Damascus. He was traveling with a group who were out looking for those people that were considered Saints and Christian followers. He was persecuting them and was going to collect them and bind them and take them back to Jerusalem. He says beginning in verse 3, *'And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven; And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.'* (3-6) *'And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man; but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.'* (8-9) That is how Saul's life

changed suddenly in an instant.

He went into Damascus where there was somebody else who had had a life changing experience, a man by the name of Ananias who was a servant of the Lord. Ananias was told in a dream that he would need to go to Saul and place his hands upon Saul and pray for him that his eyes would be opened. Well Ananias knew about Saul and his persecution of the Saints. Do you think that Ananias was comfortable knowing he was going to go pray that Saul's eyes would be opened so that Saul would see Ananias as one of the Saints he had come to persecute. This was probably not what Ananias had in mind. *'Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem; And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way; for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.'* (13-15) So Ananias did go and he did put his hands upon Saul to pray for him and the scales were removed from his eyes. It says, *'And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.'* (18) Life changed suddenly for Saul and I think probably also changed for Ananias.

The End of the World?

Last Sunday Bob Rowland asked me between church and potluck if I had heard on the news the story about somebody predicting the end of the world. I hadn't heard it. Bob apparently had been listening to Family Radio while he was driving to or from work. I did see it later in print. It was on an MSNBC news report. I don't know if any of you saw that or not but this report was written from the point of a young lady who had been following a family based worldwide radio group out of Oakland, CA. There is an independent Christian minister there whose name is Harold Camping. Harold is predicting that the end of the world will be March 21, 2011. This young lady is out trying to warn the people that she comes into contact with that the end of the world is nigh. To get the word out they are organizing caravans of RV's and using bulletin boards and having messages put on their cars. Harold says, 'We're hoping people won't take our word for it. We're hoping that people will search the



scriptures for themselves.' I would have to agree that searching the scriptures is a good thing. Harold believes strongly in the rapture which you can find a small reference to in Matthew 24:47-49. He believes that the world starts to come to an end on March 21st and will end in October.

There have been many, many people that have tried to predict the end of the world over time. One of those people is William Miller who predicted that the end of the world would be October 22, 1844. His prediction later became known as The Great Disappointment. There have been many that have tried to predict when the end of the world will be. There are many that believe that the scriptures are simply a cosmic calendar that reveals that timeframe. I'm not here this morning to validate that date. I certainly don't know the day or the hour of Jesus return, but from my reading of the scriptures, and admittedly my limited understanding of the scriptures, knowing the end date doesn't seem to be the important factor. Being prepared, persevering and enduring to the end is what is important and that's what our responsibility is. I think if we can do this His coming will be a celebration for us.

In Revelations 3:11 it says, *'Behold, I come quickly; . . .'* As I thought about that *'quickly,'* Jesus died 20 centuries ago. What is quickly? A lot of times we think of quickly as meaning fast or swiftly but quickly really has other meanings too. Quickly can mean suddenly, quickly can mean by surprise or as the scripture said, as a thief in the night. It doesn't seem consistent that the last more than 20 centuries would suppose that Jesus would come swiftly so it must mean that Jesus will come suddenly as a surprise which should be an inducement, I believe, for us to prepare ourselves for that time. Even Jesus indicated in the scriptures that no man, nor the angels know the time of His coming, only His Father.

I have a couple of scriptures that I would like to share with you from 2nd Nephi in the 13th chapter. Nephi says, *'And now, my beloved brethren, I know by this, that unless a man shall endure to the end, in following the example of the Son of the living God, he can not be saved.'* (21) And further he says, *'Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.'* (30) So living our life by the

example set by His Son and by feasting upon Christ's words we have the way to eternal life. Whether it comes on March 21st or it comes at some other time it is of God's determination. His message to us is to be prepared and be waiting.

"So living our life by the example set by His Son and by feasting upon Christ's words we have the way to eternal life."

Probably that message isn't any more easily understood than a parable that Jesus gave in the 25th chapter of Matthew, actually it kind of starts in the 24th chapter and ends in the 25th. Jesus is talking about the end time and He is talking to His disciples just prior to His being crucified and so He is trying to comfort them. He is not trying to scare them. He's not trying to frighten them. He's trying to comfort them so that they can have an understanding of what the end time will mean for the world. *'But of that day and hour no one knoweth; no, not the angels of God in heaven, but my Father only. But as it was in the days of Noah, so it shall be also at the coming of the Son of Man.'* (43, 44) *'And what I say unto one, I say unto all men;* (all men, all of us, it says it unto all men) *And what I say unto one, I say unto all men; Watch, therefore, for ye know not at what hour the Lord doth come. But know this, if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to have been broken up; but would have been ready. Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.'* (49-51)

The Ten Virgins

Jesus goes on to give the parable of the ten virgins. I came across an article written by a man by the name of Norman Storey. I thought he really did a nice job of talking about this parable so I am going to share that with you.

The message of the parable of Jesus is found in the context of a Middle Eastern village wedding celebration which was culturally somewhat different back then. In our culture, the wedding is mostly the bride's special day, but in that patriarchal society, the focus was on the groom.

The bride and her attendant

bridesmaids would wait all together while the groom and his party negotiated the 'bride's price' with her family.

A sign of the families love for their daughter, was to be difficult and draw out the negotiations, to show their reluctance at losing their daughter.

You'd have to have haggled and bargained in a Middle Eastern market to appreciate how much they enjoy the verbal exchange --- the give and take is an important part of their culture;--it's not really about the money or the cost of the item, but its establishing a relationship and respect.

So having appropriately discussed at length the 'bride's price' and once an agreed upon figure has been carefully negotiated, its now late into the night when the groom and his party would go and bring the bride and her attendants to the great wedding feast and celebration.

This was before the age of fireworks and neon lights; so the bridesmaids would provide lamps and torches; their job was to illuminate the way, their light creating a bright festive atmosphere.

Part of the fun and delight was to catch them napping, not ready; to show up unexpectedly, surprise and catch them off guard. So Jesus frames his parable within that particular cultural context.

Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps.

To all outward appearances, there is no perceptible difference, between the wise and the foolish bridesmaids --- they are all dressed in the same long gowns, their hair done up, each looking their best, with their lamps ready to celebrate.

If you just look around at them, you can't tell which ones are the foolish, or which ones are the wise. Only by the passing of time, only the long delays will tell, who is prepared and ready for the unexpected, and who not.

The groom and his party are delayed, they show up very late, and they catch the girls napping ---they are



surprised, and then there is a mad scramble for the procession to begin.

Now the bridesmaids have just one responsibility, to provide a bright light ready for when the groom arrives. The five wise bridesmaids fill up their lamps with spare oil, but the five foolish have not planned ahead and prepared.

They have no oil for their now depleted empty lamps, and with no oil, there is no light, so they cannot fulfill their one critical responsibility, so they aren't ready to take part in the procession.

As soon as the groom and his party arrive the celebration begins. Then there is no more time for preparations & getting ready.

The foolish are not prepared or ready to do what is expected of them, they cannot provide light to honor the procession; which within that peasant village cultural context, would be a major insult against the bride & groom.

Well, it is futile at that late hour to go out looking for oil. It is futile to try and prepare once its already too late, so they are not welcome or permitted to share the joy of the wedding celebration. The wedding procession and celebration will go on without them.

The parable is really that simple and straight forward, the challenge is understanding how it applies to our lives.

Being ready is not a life spent figuring out when and how, it's not a passive life spent watching the skies, and its not being sequestered away from the world – or standing on mountaintop singing hymns, checking our watches. A lot of Bible interpreters seem to focus on the judgment aspect, be ready or else --- with the threat of accountability – answering for our sins, they teach fear and terror at the Lord's coming.

Jesus told this parable just days before his arrest, it was meant to reassure his frightened disciples, to give them courage and hope in facing the future. The setting is the joy of a wedding celebration – not a funeral. For Christians, the coming of Jesus is good news, not bad.

If we believe, if we know and walk with Jesus now, then it describes the

joyful coming of a close friend. It's the happy excitement of a festive celebration, which is hardly reason or cause for fear & dread.

To those who already know the Bridegroom, this marks the fulfillment of our heart's deepest desire and delight.

Yet at the same time, clearly there is a challenge to this text; will we have oil for our lamps when the Bridegroom comes for us?

The oil for our lamps is our relationship with God through Jesus; it is living out an on-going and growing walk with God. It is living out his teachings – reflecting his light, and dwelling purposefully in the presence of God's Holy Spirit.

It is taking God and God's Word seriously, living a life that honors God and imitates Christ, seeking to grow deeper & more faithful in our walk.

I thought his writing really captured the essence of that parable. Well, I am coming to the end of my prepared thoughts. Life changes suddenly. It changes in an instant. Jesus is going to come again, and He is going to come suddenly in an instant. Whether we know the date and the hour and the time is not as relevant as whether we've spent our life preparing for that date in time, that we have followed His commandments, that we've imitated the life of Jesus, that we've shared that gospel message with those around so they also have opportunity to be prepared for that time.

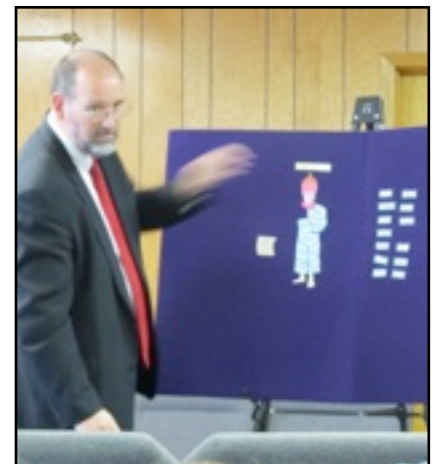
I'd like to conclude then with one final scripture. It's from the Book of Mormon. I read a lot of executive summaries. It's just kind of my nature to try and get the shortened version of things. I consider this passage to be an executive summary. This scripture comes out of the book of Moroni the 8th chapter 29th verse. So if you're looking for how all of this fits together, if you are looking for a short synopsis, this is for you. *'And the first-fruits of repentance is baptism; and baptism cometh by faith, unto the fulfilling the commandments; and the fulfilling the commandments bringeth remission of sins; and the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart, cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter*

fillet with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God.'

My hope for you this morning is that you take the opportunity to look at your preparation, that you look at the opportunity that you have to repent, to be baptized if you haven't been baptized, to accept the remission of sin that comes through the life of Jesus Christ and that you can look forward to that celebration of His return and His second coming to this world. Whether He comes March 21st or He comes at a later date, whether He comes during your lifetime or during your children or grandchildren's lifetime, our responsibility and our work is to be prepared and to spread the gospel of His good news.



THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST



Seventy Ron Smith
Lamoni, Iowa
January 16, 2011

And Jesus again shewed himself unto them, for they were praying unto the Father, in his name; and Jesus came and stood in the midst of them, and said unto them, What will ye that I shall give unto you? And they said unto him, Lord, we will that thou wouldst tell us the name whereby we shall call this church; for there are disputations among the people concerning this matter. And the Lord said unto them,



Verily, verily I say unto you, Why is it that the people should murmur and dispute because of this thing? Have they not read the scriptures, which say, Ye must take upon you the name of Christ, which is my name? for by this name shall ye be called at the last day; and whoso taketh upon him my name, and endureth to the end, the same shall be saved at the last day; Therefore, whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name; therefore ye shall call the church in my name; and ye shall call upon the Father in my name, that he will bless the church for my sake; and how be it my church, save it be called in my name? For if a church be called in Moses' name, then it be Moses' church; or if it be called in the name of a man, then it be the church of a man; but if it be called in my name, then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel... Now this is the commandment, Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day. Verily, verily I say unto you, This is my gospel; and ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do, that shall ye also do; For that which ye have seen me do, even that shall ye do; therefore if ye do these things, blessed are ye, for ye shall be lifted up at the last day.

(III Nephi 12:15-20 & 33-35)

The True Church of Jesus Christ

“This morning I want to talk about the church. We sometimes forget that there are people out there who are looking for the true church of Jesus Christ. I hear many, many testimonies from Africa of people who have been searching for the true church of Jesus Christ and believe they have found it. It is neat to hear those types of testimonies. Most of us have grown up in the church, and we don’t always appreciate the struggles that other people go through. We don’t always appreciate what a neat thing it is to be in the church that we are a part of.

“Let me start with Matthew 16:14-20. This is where Jesus asks His disciples,

“Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? And they said, Some say John the Baptist; some Elias; and others Jeremias; or one of the prophets. He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.”

“Here Jesus says, “**I am going to build my church.**” Now he didn’t build it out of sticks and stones and rocks. It is not a church building like the one we are sitting in. Jesus never built one of these. But He did talk to Peter about building on a rock. We understand that rock to be the revelation that Jesus is the Christ. That is the foundation of Jesus’ church. What I am going to do is show you how that church comes together as the body of Christ.

“Some people say that Jesus didn’t really build a church. They say he got some guys together and did some good things and did some good teaching, but that He never did build a church. If you are of that persuasion, then you need to go to Matthew 18:15-20. In that place Jesus talks about the church in the context of the law of reconciliation.

“*Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be*

bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.’

“In this passage Jesus indicates that the church has power to affect things in heaven as well as on earth, so we know that to Jesus the church was more than just a group of people out there. Now turn to Acts the 2:37-47. Here we find Peter preaching on the day of Pentecost and everyone heard in their own language and they were convinced by his preaching that they had crucified the Son of God.

“*Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. ... Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.’*”

“Can you imagine three thousand being added to the church, a baptismal service that large? It goes on to say that ‘*the Lord added daily to the church such as should be saved.*’

The Church Made of People

So we know that there was a church in the New Testament and that it was made of people rather than sticks and stones. The members of the church are called saints throughout the New Testament. In Ephesians 1:1 we find that the letter is addressed to the saints who were at Ephesus. These weren’t special people who had special revelations from God and were canonized by the church. These were the people who were the members, those who were added to the church daily.

Next I’d like to read a little from Ephesians 5: 22-32. In this passage, Paul is making an analogy between the relationship between a husband and a wife and says that that should be the same as the relationship between Christ and the church. The understanding that Jesus is the head of

February in the United States is associated with Love and with healthy hearts. As the Body of Jesus Christ, we are the members and we are linked together by blood vessels which carry the sustaining life blood of Jesus. This blood is the Love of God. When parts of the body are cut off and separated, the Love of God cannot flow as it should and the *whole body* suffers. Every part and every member is important and needs the Love of God to be healthy.

Let nothing separate you from one another and from receiving the Love of God.



the body and people are members of that body is the heart of this particular analogy that he is making. In verse 23, *'For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the Savior of the body.'* And verse 30, *'For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.'*

"We could spend some time on the analogy but the point here that it was well understood in the New Testament church that Jesus was at the head. (Ron put the head on the flannel-graph.) The members, you and, the saints, make up the body of Christ. That is the analogy that we are going to be using today.

"If you look at Luke 6:12-16 you find that Jesus went into a mountain and prayed all night. Can you imagine praying all night? That would be tough. This must have been really important to Him. *'And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called his disciples; and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.'*

"A reference to this same story is found in Matthew 10: 1 *'And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.'* Matthew goes on to name the twelve that He chose. These twelve special disciples are called apostles in many other places. Jesus gave them the power to do certain things. He said they could heal the sick, they could cast out devils, they could do miracles. We can read a lot more about what the twelve did because almost all of the New Testament is talking about the apostles and what happened to them.

"Next we read from John 20: 21- 23. The context of this is when Jesus came back after His resurrection and visited His apostles. *'Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained.'* To His apostles He gave the power to remit sins. (Ron put up the word Apostles.) So that is another thing that you should find in the church of Jesus Christ.

"We know that those first twelve apostles were not the only apostles that there were. In fact, after Judas committed

suicide, he was replaced. That is one of the first stories that we find in the first part of Acts where they replaced Judas with Mathias. We can find where there are other apostles that were named—James was slain, Barnabus and Saul were called and named apostles. James, the brother of Jesus was an apostle. There were many others that were made apostles. They kept on replacing apostles as they died.



"There were also other ministers in Jesus's church. In Ephesians 4:4-15 we find a list of several kinds of ministers that were in the New Testament church. Beginning in verse 11: *'And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; Till we, in the unity of the faith, all come to the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ;'*

"In this one we find that He gave firstly apostles, and then He gave prophets. The prophets speak for the Lord and help to connect the church to God. It also says that He gave some evangelists, and some pastors, and some teachers. He said that He gave those so that we could come to a unity of faith, until we all came to be perfect, that they would stay there until that time for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of the Christ, until we all come to a knowledge of God, to a perfect man.

"I am not sure that everyone has come to a knowledge of God, to a perfect man

yet, so we would expect those still to be in the church of Jesus Christ.

"There was another group that we find in Luke 10. *'After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face, into every city and place where he himself would come.'* He gave them the same kind of power that He gave to the apostles as far as telling them to heal the sick and to cast out devils and those kinds of things. He told them to preach the gospel.

"The gospel that they were preaching had to do with faith, repentance, baptisms, and the laying on of hands. In Hebrews 6 we find these principles of the gospel. This list includes the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment as principles of that gospel as well. We find several places in the scriptures where Jesus talks about the gospel. In the opening scripture reading, Jesus commands us to repent, to humble ourselves, to be baptized, and to endure to the end. This is the gospel that Jesus preached. In Doctrine and Covenants 3:16 Jesus says, *'Behold, this is my doctrine: Whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church; whosoever declareth more or less than this, the same is not of me, but is against me.'*

"So we would expect that in the church of Jesus Christ we would preach the gospel that Jesus Christ taught; that is what Jesus said was most important. He said, if you call your name after Me and preach My gospel then you are My church.

"There were also high priests in the New Testament church. In Hebrews 5 we find Paul talking about them. *'For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.'* From this we understand that high priests are responsible for the spiritual gifts that bring us to the Lord. That was verse 1. Verse 4 says, *'And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.'* So we find that we don't become high priests just by closing our eyes and wishing to be high priests, but you have to be called of God. We believe that goes with the other priesthood offices as well. These require that we be called of God. Aaron was called through his brother Moses. God told Moses to call Aaron, and to set him apart to serve as a priest. This is the way men are called in these days to the priesthood.

"In 1 Timothy 3: 1-13 you find a list



February 2011



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THR	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

Sunday Schedule

DATE	February 6th	February 13th	February 20th	February 27th	March 6th
SPEAKING	Alan Smith	Sherman Phipps	Steve Cunningham	Rob Rolfe	Gordon Winkler
PRESIDING	Sherman Phipps	Gordon Winkler	Ron Smith	Alan Smith	Steve Smith
PIANIST	Pat Bolingbroke	Jan Jordison	Pat Bolingbroke	Jan Jordison	Pat Bolingbroke
SPECIAL MUSIC	Rob Rolfe	Beth Knotts	Yvonne Galusha	Diane Anderson	Jim Barber
FAMILY DEVOTIONS	Sue Beck	Patty Bolingbroke	Darren Cunningham	Steven Cunningham	Jan Jordison
GREETERS	Michael Jordison	George Knotts	Sherman Phipps	Rob Rolfe	Bob Rowland
CUSTODIANS	Bob Rowland	Alan Smith	Ron Smith	Gordon Winkler	Ed Anderson
SUNDAY EVENING	Bob Rowland	Ron Smith	Steve Smith	Rob Rolfe	Bob Rowland

Wednesday Prayer Service Schedule

DATE	February 2nd	February 9th	February 16th	February 23rd	March 2nd
LOCATION	Rob Rolfe	Alan Smith	Ron Smith	Steve Smith	Gordon Winkler
PRESIDING	Steve Smith	Ron Smith	Alan Smith	George Knotts	Rodney Bastow



Special Events & Activities

Sunday, February 6th: Priesthood Meeting at 8:30AM - Potluck following Communion service

Saturday, February 12th: Special Prayer Service at the Waldo Restoration Branch in Independence for Patriarch Verle Cornish. Service preparation will begin at 12:30.

Sunday, February 13th: Special Valentine's Day Dinner and Movie. 6:00 PM at Ron & Di Smith's

February 14th: Valentine's Day

Wednesday, February 16th: Day of Fasting

February 26-28th: Priesthood Retreat at Geneseo, Illinois reunion grounds. See Rob Rolfe for details

Birthday's this month: Alan Elfson, Beth Kinnaman, Teegan Rowland, Candy Thomas, Beth Knotts, Sam Anderson, Ben Anderson, Cede Smith, Rodney Bastow, Jared Beck, Brock Bastow

Anniversary's this month: Orlin and Ruth Thomas (Feb. 22nd)

of the personal qualities required for one holding the office of a bishop. It says that you have to be the husband of one wife, and you have to be grave, and you have to have your house in order, and it has a whole bunch of other qualifications that are desirable in a bishop. It also talks about the deacons in that same chapter.

“Acts 20:17-28 talks about “the elders of the church” and about going into all of the congregations in this particular area and ordaining elders who were to be overseers of the church. In James 5: 14, 15, *‘Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.’*”

“In Acts 6: 1-7 we find a story about the priests. It says a great company of the priests were faithful to the church and it names 6 of them who were ordained at that particular time. The next 2 chapters talk about Steven, who was one of them, who ended up being killed because of his witness of the Lord. The next chapter talks about Phillip and how he went to Samaria and preached and baptized and did miracles. It is a wonderful story but I don’t have time to tell it right now. You can find it in the 8th chapter of Acts.”

The Garments of the Body

“Here we see all of the priesthood offices that are listed in the New Testament as being part of the body of Christ. The feet and the hands, those are the members of the church. That’s us. The priesthood is like the garments that cover the body. Paul makes it very clear that not everyone is going to be an apostle, not everyone is going to be a teacher, and not everyone is going to have various gifts. But God has a very special plan: namely, by taking all of the gifts and abilities of all these different offices and working together, the body of Christ will be edified.

“I’d like to go to First Corinthians 12 and read about the gifts of the Spirit that are in the church. Starting with verse 7, we read, *‘But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to*

another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.’ All of those gifts are part of what is found in the church of Jesus Christ.

“It goes on to say, *‘But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit,*



dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.’ Suppose the foot should say to the head, “You are not like me, so you are not part of the body!” That wouldn’t make much sense. If you are going to have a headless foot it is not it is not going to live very long. And suppose the ear should say to the eye, “I don’t need you. I can hear just fine!” That doesn’t make much sense either. Paul is telling us that we need all of the body together if we are going to have the edification that needs to be done.

“I somehow skipped putting up prophecy here. If you are going to have prophets you are going to have prophecy. We find that many times in the Bible. We also find that Joel tells us that in the last days there will be dreams and visions and all those kinds of things. We also find Paul telling us that you have all of these gifts

but the greatest of these is love. If you don’t have love then you might as well forget the rest of it because that is what is important in the church of Jesus Christ.

“There it is, the church of Jesus Christ as we read about it in the New Testament.

A Falling Away

“Now you would like to think that the church of Jesus Christ was going to be perfect, because He made it. But the church wasn’t made out of perfect things. It was made out of people. Because it was made out of people, the Bible tells us there is going to be a falling away. II Thessalonians 2:2 says that Jesus is going to come, but He is not going to come until there is a falling away. The Bible also tells us that there is going to be a great restoration in the last days.

“I am going to spend a few minutes on what happened to the church. When we look back in history, after Jesus left, there was a time when there were apostles being called. But after a while the apostles died out. After the first century we really don’t hear much about the apostles. There were seventy. Eusebius writes about seventy in the third century, but after that they died out. People began to think that prophecy was no longer a part of the church. They said that the Bible was finished. The word of God was the Bible and that was all there was, just the Bible.

“There were people in the church who said Jesus isn’t here so we need a vicar of Christ, the vicarious body of Christ, to be at the head of the church. In the church they kept the bishops, but replaced the high priests with archbishops. They no longer had evangelists, pastors, elders, teachers, or deacons. In 817 they began the college of cardinals. From 1587 to 1958, there were 70 cardinals. Instead of preaching baptism for the remission of sins, a person was baptized for Adam’s sin. So infants had to be baptized because they were under the curse of Adam. Instead of repentance you would come and make confession. After a time there were indulgences sold, so if you were going to commit a sin it would cost so much and then you could do that.

“Many bad things began to happen in the church. One wonders, does that look like the church of Jesus Christ? Well, not very much. Around the 1500’s, the Bible began to be available in everyday language. Up until that time, the Bible had been the exclusive property of priests and

monasteries. Bibles had to be copied by hand and it took a long time and it was very expensive. You could only have one if you were really rich or if you were in a monastery someplace.”

The Reformation

“Around the time of the Gutenberg printing press, the first book that was printed was the Bible. People began to read about the New Testament church and discovered the Church of that day did not look like the New Testament church at all. The Lord worked with people like Martin Luther who was a Catholic priest. He found that there many things wrong with the church and began to want to reform that church. He tacked up a list of 95 things on the Wittenberg, Germany church, daring anyone to come and debate with him about those things. Luther discovered grace in the Bible. The Pope told him he was going to go to Hell if he didn’t stop preaching what he was preaching. He told the pope he was not going to stop what he was doing, and said that the Pope did not have the authority to send him to hell.

“The reformers took the position that the Pope no longer had the authority to be the head of the church because so many things had been changed. So the reformers began to put Christ back as the head of the church. They basically said that anything that was in the Catholic church we are going to get rid of. There were a number of reformers so I am far oversimplifying here. Most reformers turned to pastors. Some of the Protestant churches had evangelists, and some of them had elders, but they said the priesthood is the priesthood of the believer, and if you read the Bible you have just as much authority as anybody else. You can start a church, and in particular there is nothing that the priesthood has to do with the remission of sins. That is a really important point for us to understand.

“They believed in some of these things (referring to the list of gifts of the Spirit) although various people believed different things. Some didn’t believe there were any miracles or casting out of devils or tongues or healings or that sort of thing any more. So they tried to reform the church, but they didn’t put bishops or priests back in because they thought those were Catholic offices. Some of them had deacons.”

The Church Restored

“We believe that the church, in order to be the body of Christ, had to be restored to the earth and that God Himself had to be in charge of restoring that church. We believe that Restoration actually happened. Our church history tells us that John the Baptist came and put his hands on the heads of Oliver Cowdry and Joseph Smith Jr. and restored to the earth the power to baptize for the remission of sins. Among the other things that were restored to the earth, you have the prophets, apostles, seventies, high priests, bishops, deacons, priests, and teachers. The deacons, priests, teachers, and elders are the standing ministry in the church, which is why they are the legs in our illustration. The pastors preside over them. The standing ministry are ministers basically for the branches. Then you have the other ministers to the whole church.

“The gospel was restored and the power for remission of sins and prophecy and all of those things were restored to the earth. So where are we today? The church is still made up of people just like it always was. It is easy to look back at those people and say ah, they shouldn’t have done that, but sometimes we maybe have lost some of the love that we ought to have. Sometimes we’ve done some splitting up. Do we have apostles today? Well, we believe that there should be apostles. Do we recognize any apostles? This is a problem that I see that we are going to have to deal with. Apostles, prophets, high priests, bishops, evangelists. Do we have the right to stand in the way of those who would believe they are called? Do we have the right to keep the ministry of evangelists and bishops and apostles and those from the rest of the church? I’ve heard it said by prominent men that we can only have elders, priests, teachers, deacons, and pastors in the branches today. And if we ordain anybody to other offices, that is wrong. Furthermore, we are going to stay that way until Jesus comes back.

“Folks, I don’t believe that because that is not what the Bible teaches. The Bible says that the apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are there until we all come to a unity of the faith. I believe that we need to be praying and fasting and asking the Lord to find a right way. Yesterday those who came to our house for the fasting weekend met together, Brother Sherman (Phipps) made very clear that we need to be praying that we’ll find a right

way, that we would humble ourselves. Jesus said in III Nephi 12: 32-35: *‘Now this is the commandment, Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day. Verily, verily I say unto you, This is my gospel; and ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do, that shall ye also do; For that which ye have seen me do, even that shall ye do; therefore if ye do these things, blessed are ye, for ye shall be lifted up at the last day.’*

“My prayer is that all of us will be in a position to be lifted up at the last day, that we can endure to the end, that we can find the right way, that we can find the way to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and that we can find a way to share this precious gospel with all of the world. May God bless you all.



BEING LOST



High Priest Robert Rolfe
Lamoni, Iowa
January 23, 2011

Steve Cunningham presided over our Sunday Service. As a Call to Worship he started with Matthew 6:38, *‘Wherefore, seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.’* Then I’d like to drop down to Chapter 7 verse 9,

'Go ye into the world, saying unto all, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come nigh unto you.' Then I'd like to jump over to verse 22 and go to 30. *'Repent, therefore, and enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. And, again, beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing; but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits; for do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Verily I say unto you, it is not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, that shall enter unto the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.'*

As a scripture Rob Rolfe read from D & C 16:3c-4a. *"Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God; for, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him. And he hath risen again from the dead, that he might bring all men unto him on conditions of repentance. And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth. Wherefore you are called to cry repentance unto this people. And if it so be that you should labor all your days, in crying repentance unto this people, and bring save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father! And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy, if you should bring many souls unto me!"*

"That's excellent!" Brother Rolfe said to Devon Cunningham who sang 'I Will Go and Do What the Lord Commands' for the Special Music. "That's a wonderful idea. I will go and do what the Lord commands."

Our speaker continued, "I talked to a fellow about our tithing plan a couple of weeks ago, and he said, 'Well that sounds like you have an awful lot of room to do what you want.' I said, 'Well, that may be true but when you are called to be judged

on whether you made the right decisions, you are going to have to talk to God about whether that was the right thing to do or not.' He said, 'Good point.'"

God's GPS

"I am going to be talking about being lost this morning. In my family that's a common topic. Lynda has been lost for the first twenty or thirty years but she's doing a lot better now. With a GPS she even finds her way around. It's a wonderful invention. God has a GPS too. It's God Plan of Salvation. So if you don't want to get lost, then you need to use God's GPS otherwise you are not going to get from where you are to where you want to be.

"I like reading history and especially the history of this country. One of the things that is interesting to me is when the white people wanted to find their way around in this country who did they get to help them? They got an Indian guide, didn't they?

"When I read the Book of Mormon early in my life, I came across the account of Limhi's people. You find that where it's kind of a flash back in the story. Zeniff had left his homeland and his people finally got taken into captivity. Limhi's people were paying 50% taxes to the king there. I thought that didn't sound so bad. I wish I could get down to 50%. He sent 43 of his men to see if they could find their way back out because they didn't know where to find the people they came from. They got lost and they were lost for days. They were not just lost for a little while. (I tell Lynda I don't get lost, I get temporarily



Devon Cunningham

disoriented. I've never been lost for days and perhaps maybe I've never been in that big of a wilderness where I could travel for days without walking out.) If you remember the story, they found many waters. You can think about where that would be in Central America, bones of men, beasts, ruins of buildings, gold plates, large breast plates made of brass and copper and swords with the hilts rusted off. They brought a lot of those back to show the king what they had. Parts of those gold plates were translated and are included in the record of the Book of Mormon."

My Compass Doesn't Work

"Have you ever been lost? Do you remember how it felt to be lost when you really were lost and didn't have a clue which way you should go? Do you remember how that felt? Maybe being lost is such a regular experience that it doesn't cause so much trauma because you are just used to that happening and that's the way things are. I remember a 16 year old boy coming up to my father one day. Just so you understand, my father was a good part First Nation Cree, probably more of him than being "an apple". We talk about people that are red on the outside and white on the inside but he was more white on the outside and red on the inside. This boy told my father that he kept getting lost and my father asked him if he had a compass. The boy replied that he did. His dad had given him one. My father asked, 'How are you getting lost?' The boy said, 'The compass doesn't work.' My father said, 'What do you mean it doesn't work?' How many of you in the congregation understand the principle of a compass? Which way does the arrow point? North! My dad told him to get it out. He took it out in his hand and said, 'See right there it's pointing East.' On the face of the compass the needle was pointing at the E. My dad picked it up and turned it 90 degrees and said, 'Now it's pointing North. You notice the needle points the same direction whatever way the face of the compass is.' The boy suddenly understood.

"Giving someone a tool like that doesn't help unless they've been taught how to use it. Isn't that correct? A compass is a wonderful thing but if you don't know how to use it, you are going to be lost. My father, I think, knew me better than I knew myself because when he gave me a compass, he explained all this and showed me how it worked, but he added

one step. You know what that was? He said, 'There's going to come a day when you are going to look at that compass and you are going to believe that it is wrong. When that day comes, follow the compass.' Is that good advice? How long do you think it took me to get to that day? The first day I used the compass! To give you an explanation, we hunted in what was called the "Bentley Swamp" area. If you go the wrong direction, you have 50 miles to get to the next road. That's if you ever get there because there are so many bogs and swamps. I reached that initiation age where I was considered old enough to go with my father out hunting. Although it was winter with about a foot of snow on the ground, we stayed out in a tent. That sounds like fun, doesn't it?

"Anyway, I was out there with my father and he asked me before I left what direction I needed to go to come back. I told him that I needed to go East. I was in better shape at that time than I am now and typically I would walk maybe five to eight miles in a circle and come back and eat four or five venison hamburgers and then do it again. I think one day I put away about twenty of those in between meals. I was working hard. So anyway I was out there and it was about time I thought I should be heading back because my stomach was telling me I needed to come back. I looked at my compass and it was wrong! I knew which way East was. How could I not tell, right? I thought there was something funny going on. This compass must not be working. I had one of those that pinned on so you didn't lose it so easily, so I took it off and held it at arm's

that just to humor the compass and him and everybody else, I would go that way for a while and see if I could see anything familiar. Then I would know if the compass was correct. It took about a quarter of a mile and I realized that the compass and the hunter were right, and I was wrong. As I've gotten older I have thought back to that event and realized it was nice to have a father who understood me well enough that even though he knew I was going to screw up big time, he still provided a way to keep me from being lost."

The Scriptures are a Compass

"Our Heavenly Father has done the same thing. We have all kinds of compasses right here (holds up the scriptures). They tell you how to get from where you are to where you want to be. All you have to do is follow them, but you need to know how to use them if you are going to follow them, otherwise you are going to be hopelessly lost. There are big messages and little messages in the scriptures but one of the big messages says that all mankind is lost and that we became lost when Adam and Eve sinned. We were forever cut off from the presence of God. Why was that? Because God cannot stand sin! You can't be in sin and be in His presence. If you are, you are going to be barbeque sauce.

"If you want to get the very best definition and reasoning as to how the principal of the atonement works, read the 19th chapter of Alma. In that chapter Alma says, 'God is a God of justice and if He's a God of justice, if you break the law, you

come unto Him, then mercy will claim us. If we don't, we are still in the same boat as if Jesus hadn't been crucified. In another place it says, 'What does it profit a man if a gift is bestowed upon him and he receives not the gift.' Think about that. Somebody says, 'Here I want to give you something,' and you say, 'No, I don't want it.' It's not going to do you any good. I don't think the scriptures teach this idea that Jesus' death on the cross saved us all. In fact, Mark 16:15 says, '*He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.*'

"We've been talking about some things today in terms of what we should do. I am not going to tell you what you ought to do except this. Remember who's going to be your Judge. That's the one you have to satisfy. It doesn't matter what the guy sitting next to you or in front or behind you or anybody else thinks, it's what God is going to think when you come before Him. The scriptures are awfully clear that we are all going to get that "privilege, honor or joy". It depends on your choices.

"You remember the little story that Rodney (Bastow) read here a few months ago about the trial? I'll just remind you. The devil is the prosecutor and he is going through all of this fellow's sins and his attorney sitting next to him doesn't say a word. The defendant is thinking that he is doomed because the devil is right. He is going on and on and on and he's just vicious and hateful. When he gets done and says the defendant belongs in hell and wants the judge to send him there. The Father is the one sitting on the bench. The man thinks he is going to hell because he is

"And now, my son, I have somewhat to say concerning the thing which our fathers call a ball or director, or our fathers called it "liahona," which is, being interpreted, a "compass." ...For behold, it is as easy to give heed to the word of Christ, which shall point to you a strait course to eternal bliss, as it was for our fathers to give heed to this compass..." - Alma 17:71 & 79

length and looked at it. It said the same thing. I thought maybe my gun was attracting it because metal will attract a compass so I put the gun against the tree, backed away and looked at the compass and it still said the same thing. I still didn't believe. Are you getting the idea of why my father told me that story? I think he knew what I was like. There was another hunter not too far away and I went over and asked him which way was East. He pointed it out and he agreed with my compass. I still didn't believe. You could say that I was a slow learner. I decided

suffer the penalty of the law.' That's the way it is supposed to work. If you sin, what are the wages of sin? Death! So man deserved to die and will continue to die and forever be cut off from the presence of God unless something happens. God took care of that. He created a way for all of us to have our sins covered by the sacrifice of His son, Jesus Christ. He did that because of His mercy. Alma goes on to tell you that mercy can't cancel out justice or justice overcome mercy. Alma explains that by doing it the way He did when he was visited by the angel; if we repent and

guilty. Then his attorney gets up and walks up to the bench and puts His arm on the bench and says, 'Hi, Dad. This is one of mine. I died for those sins and so I want you to permit him to come into heaven.' That's essentially the story, but it is also the principal of how mercy works to provide our salvation. That atonement covers our sins."

A Covering for Our Sins

"You can find the idea of a covering expressed all the way from Genesis. You remember Adam and Eve didn't start out

so well. God gave them a clear, unequivocal message. Don't eat the apple! He gave them clear, unequivocal consequences. If you eat the apple you are going to die! and they still ate it. Later on an angel comes to Adam and says, 'Why are you sacrificing this lamb?' Adam, who had learned his lesson, said, 'I don't know, but God commanded me.' There's a scripture that says I would rather have obedience than sacrifice and we all need to remember that. We need to be obedience to what He is telling us to do. So, Adam had learned his lesson, if you will, that God commanded it and he didn't have to understand why he was doing it. He did it because God commanded it.

"What I would like to have you do for a moment is just think about what He is going to ask you when it comes time to visit with Him face to face. There's a song that talks about how you pave your parking lot; you can put pads on your pews; you can say, I love you, in every song that you have ever sung, you songs of praise can be loud enough to raise the dead, but this is what I want to ask you. Have you done the things I said? I am one of those people that have trouble with my memory. It seems worse as I get older. If you look in the gospels, what was the last thing that Jesus told His disciples to do? Go into all the world teaching all nations, baptizing, etc. If that is the last thing He said, He might point that out and ask you how you did on that?

"How many of you have gone around teaching anybody about the gospel? Do you know of anybody in the last month or six months or year that you have talked to about the gospel with the intent of trying to help them save their soul if they, in fact, did not have the gospel in their life? What did Jesus say to do first? If you are a Smith you ought to know this by heart. Seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God and then is there a next? The next is what is said in Mark 16:15 and that is if you do that and are seeking the kingdom, then you are going to want to repent and be baptized so that you can be saved.

"Unfortunately sometimes we act like Pharisees. We don't want to associate with certain people because they might make us impure and unclean because of the way they live and the way they act. You know what they said about Jesus? He eats and drinks with sinners. Do any of you have trouble eating and drinking with sinners? I don't think so, because we are all sinners.

So if you are eating and drinking with a sinner, don't feel too bad about it because you are in the same category as they are. In fact, the whole Christian message was that He had come to seek the lost and to save them. That was His purpose in coming. If you are out dealing with the lost then you are only doing the Master's business. The whole 15th chapter of Luke is what I call the 'Lost and Found Department' of the Bible. You have the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the lost son. Jesus talked about that in many, many ways. Part of the lesson was the joy in the finding. It wasn't just that the lost got found, it was the joy in the finding.

"When I was lost but didn't know it, I felt pretty good when I found out that I really wasn't lost and I knew which way to go. I was happy that my father told me the truth and even made the point of saying, believe what this says to get it through my thick skull. I could say that to all of you here. Believe what those scriptures say. It doesn't matter what your personal opinion is, they tell you the truth and you can follow them. If you remember, the sons of Mosiah said that they couldn't bear that any soul should perish. Do you have that feeling about all of these people out here that don't know the gospel in the world? Does it bother you that their soul might perish because you don't open your mouth?

"In Lamoni we had this story about these guys that lived down by the railroad track. There was a fellow that lived right between them. His name was George and he had never been baptized, never accepted the gospel. When he died, Peter and Jim went to the funeral. After the funeral they went up to Grandma's Place and had some coffee. Pete said to Jim, 'Did you ever get around to telling George the gospel?' Jim said, 'No, I didn't. Did you?' Pete said, 'No, I didn't either.' They looked at each other and one of them said, 'Do you think he will tell?' That may be one of the questions that you are going to have to answer when you get to the other side. You knew all of this and you didn't say a word. What's the answer going to be? What are you going to tell those people that you are in contact with? Are you going to tell them that for whatever reason you didn't say anything because you were thinking they might think you were some kind of a kook.

Are You Lost in the Woods?

"Part of the reason is that we are lost in the woods; that's spelled 'w-o-u-l-d-s' which is another kind of woods. We **would** like to do lots of things. The pastor of the Holden Branch had this in his little newsletter-- *If you have four birds sitting on the wire and two of them say, 'Let's fly south.' How many birds are on the wire? There's still four because just saying that you are going to do something doesn't change the number.*

"I might just ask you this. When you say the woulds you'd like to do: would you like to attend prayer service more regularly? Well that's easy. That's not so hard. Would you like to be obedient to the financial law? Would you like to be able to tell your friends and neighbors about Jesus? Would you like to be kind to your brothers and sisters in the faith? Would you like to build Zion? The list could go on and on. I would like to do all that. What have you done in the last thirty days that you think will help build Zion or do you even think about what you do as being consequential in terms of building Zion? What have you done in the last month in terms of taking the gospel to all the world? When the Lord comes He is going to say, 'That's the last thing I said. Didn't you get the message?' 'Oh, yeah, I've read it lots of times.' Oops I shouldn't say that because then He will know that I knew. I won't have any defense at all. I won't have any excuse.

"Jesus talked about that too. You remember Jesus' parable of the great supper in the scriptures? This king planned a great supper and invited all these people to come to the supper. Right off the bat they started making excuses. First one said, 'I just got a new car. I need to try it out.' Another one said, 'I just bought this land and I need to go out and take care of it.' Another one said, 'I just got married. I can't leave my new bride and go to the supper.' Do we make up excuses for why we don't do what the Lord has commanded us to do? Sure we do.

"I am bringing you, like Dave on Channel 8, the top 10 excuses so you can have these available to you for a variety of things.

10. I forgot.
9. No one told me to go ahead.
8. I didn't think it was that important.
7. Wait until the boss comes back so we can ask him.
6. I didn't know you were in a hurry for

- it.
5. That's not the way we've always done it.
 4. That's not in my department.
 3. How was I to know that this was different?
 2. I'm waiting for an answer.
 1. That's his job, not mine.

And for the computer people: The problem is on your end. (This is what all the Techs tell you if you call them up.)

“What are the important things we are called to do? Is the problem on our end? First, seek the kingdom. Ron (Smith) has spent his life talking about that. Second, go into all the world. I think there is some place that says if you can't go, send, so if you haven't gone, send. Have you sent anybody? Third, build Zion. I have a feeling that we just think about this. We would like to do it but we don't get past the thinking stage as far as building the kingdom and building Zion.



Thinking you can is just not enough, not if you are going to be a Christian. How many of you remember the story, The Little Engine That Could? I am going to give you a little altered version of that story.

The little blue engine looked up the hill
 His light was weak, and his whistle was shrill
 He was tired and small, and the hill was tall
 And his face blushed red as he softly said,
 “I **think** I can, I **think** I can, I **think** I can.”

So he started up with a chug and a strain
 And he puffed and pulled with might and main
 And slowly he climbed, a foot at a time,
 And his engine coughed as he whispered soft
 “I **think** I can, I **think** I can, I **think** I can.”

With a squeak and a creak and a toot

and a sigh
 With an extra hope and an extra try
 He would not stop --- now he neared the top
 And strong and proud he cried out loud
 “I **think** I can, I **think** I can, I **think** I can.”

He was almost there, when ---
 CRASH, SMASH, BASH!
 He slid down and mashed into engine hash
 On the rocks below --- which just goes to show
 If the track is tough and the hill is rough
 Thinking you can, just ain't enough.

“It's kind of humorous but when you think about your salvation, it requires more than thinking about it and talking about it. Matthew 7 and Luke 6 tell about a parable that Jesus told about the wise man building his house upon the rock and the foolish man building his house upon the sand. I remember when I was four years old and attended the local Baptist Church. We sang this song for a program and I was up front with all the other little ones. I liked the part about the man who built his house upon the sand because when we got to that and said, ‘the house on the sand fell flat’ we all got to fall down on the stage. That was great fun. I didn't really think too much about what was being said there. The guy who built his house on the rock and the one that built his house on the sand were identical with one exception. Do you remember what the difference was? The parable said that they had both heard the word of God, but the one who built his house on the rock was the one who heard the word and did it. The one who built his house on the sand was the one who heard the word of God and didn't do it. It is the doing that counts.

I just encourage you this morning not to be like the little engine that could because you think you can. You have got to be willing to do it. If you are going to seek the kingdom of God, you have to do more than just think about it. If you are going to build Zion you can't do that by thinking about it. And if you are going to take the gospel into all the world, you have to actually do something about it.

I regret, in some ways, that we are in the situation we're in. I talked to Mildred (Smith) shortly before she died. One of

the things that she said was that we waited too long to try to put things back together and as a result we are locked in our own little institutions. We have institutionalized ourselves just like the institution we were rejecting and left. We've just replaced one institution with another. I think she was correct in that observation but what do we do about it? Do you think you can do anything about it? Are you like the little engine, you are in engine hash cause you went crash, smash and bash on the rocks below? I hope not. I hope you will be like the man who built his house on the rock because you heard the word of God and you did it. May God bless us all as we strive to follow the example of His Son Jesus Christ.



SHARING SERVICE

January 30, 2011

Our sharing service for the first quarter of 2011 was presided over by High Priest Robert Rolfe. It began with the singing of hymn “The Old Old Path”.

Brother Rolfe read Seventy Oscar Case's testimony from the book, “True Restoration Testimonies” Book Three.

“As the young man came home from teaching school, his concerned father asked, ‘Oscar Case, when are you going to take up the ministry?’

‘The ministry’, Oscar exclaimed, ‘The Lord knows my name and address. If He wants me, He will let me know.’

‘But I received a testimony when you were a baby that you would preach the Gospel’, the father reminded his eighteen year old son.

Oscar saw the disappointment on his fathers face as he turned and slowly walked away. That expression disturbed Oscar and his conscience was pricked because he had answered in such a smart-aleck way.

A few days later Oscar decided to attend part of the reunion at Logan, Iowa. Friday evening, after Oscar's pupil's had left, he was still concerned because of the way that he had answered his father. Going to his desk, Oscar knelt in prayer and asked the Lord's forgiveness. ‘But Lord, if

you want me for the ministry, I want you to tell me so I won't have to guess about it. I would appreciate it if you would let your Spirit rest upon an individual in the prayer meeting at this reunion and tell me that it is an answer to this prayer.'

It was about midnight when Oscar arrived on the grounds and found his tent. Early the next morning he attended a prayer service where 1500 people were seated. After a season of prayer the testimonies began. An old man directly behind Oscar rose and spoke in tongues. He put his hand on Oscar's head while he was speaking. During the interpretation his hand was again placed on Oscar's head. 'Yes, you are called to the ministry and called now. And this is in answer to the prayer that you offered at the school house. The church shall soon call for you. You will be sent out into the mission field and you will be instrumental in baptizing hundreds into the church.'

When the meeting was over Oscar turned around and met the old man, Brother Rudd. Then a man pushed his way through the crowd to Brother Rudd. The man asked, 'Do you speak Hebrew?' Brother Rudd said that he did not. 'Well, that was the best Hebrew I have heard since I left the Old Country. And that translation was verbatim. There was not a thing left out!'

Oscar was convinced that the message was of the Lord and that the Lord truly was calling him into the mission field."

Brother Steven Smith then shared an original song that he composed about the warnings and promises outlined in the Word of Wisdom - D&C 86. Paraphrasing about the stewardship over our bodies that God has given us, the chorus goes:

"Uh-oh! Oh No! I'm neither ignorant nor insane. God's promised if I care for my body and brain; good life, healthy children, wisdom, knowledge galore. I can run and not get winded or pass out on the floor."

Brother Rolfe then read again from the same book.

"Z.Z. Renfroe's father and W.S. Simmons were holding a series of meetings in Dallas, Texas. Brother Simmons had gone through much persecution for the gospel. He had been egged eight times while he was preaching. He said he was willing to be egged that many more times if necessary, so he could witness for Christ.

In Dallas the meetings of these two elders were well advertised. That caused a mob to assemble which planned to take the two elders and give them the beating of their lives.

Four men went into the building. When the sermon was over, they were to follow the ministers out, grab them, and take them to the rest of the waiting mob.

As Brother Renfroe was preaching, R.F. Moore, one of the men sent inside to catch him, sat listening to the sermon. He began feeling the Spirit of God. Soon he saw a halo of light above the preacher's head. He stared, then looked away, wondering if he were seeing things. But the halo still remained above Brother Renfroe's head.

Mr. Moore melted. Turning to the man at his side he whispered, "I don't think we should harm these men."

The other man had also felt the Spirit of God. He agreed. They looked to their two friends across the room and shook their heads, revealing that they were not going to harm the ministers. The others nodded in agreement.

During the sermon, the police came out and the mob broke up and left.

Shortly after this experience R.F. Moore wrote Brother Renfroe. He asked him to come and hold another series of meetings because there were many people in Dallas who would like to hear the gospel as he had preached it.

Brother Renfroe went back, preached again, and baptized many people. R.F. Moore was ordained to the priesthood. Later he became the pastor of the branch."

Bryce Wilson followed with a song on guitar about coming back to the 'Heart of Worship'.

Jan Jordison played "He Will Carry You" on piano; "If He carried the weight of the world upon His shoulders, I know my brother that He will carry you."

Cheryl Phipps shared a testimony based on Mark 10:51, 'What Do You Want Jesus To Do For You?'

Brother Rolfe concluded the sharing portion of the service with the testimony of Brother John Sheehy in 1929.

"John Sheehy had spent considerable time in the mission field before the Depression hit in 1929. The church had no money; neither did anyone else. John kept thinking of the unfinished work he had left in the New England states. He recalled the

rich Spiritual experiences as he had seen God reach out and touch many lives. His greatest desire was to return and work for the Lord.

He talked this over with the church officials, but they could see no possible way of giving him any financial assistance. Finally John asked to be sent on his unfinished mission to Maine even though the church was unable to aid him financially. It was agreed.

John only had enough money to purchase a ticket as far as New York. After bidding his family and friends goodbye, he boarded the train, believing that God would provide for his needs.

Riding along on the train gave him time for thought prayer and study. He sought the Lord earnestly for money so he could reach his destination and continue his labor.

As he traveled, John's body grew tired. Needing some exercise, he arose and walked down the aisle toward the drinking fountain. He wondered if by chance there were any church members on the train. How could he find out? He conceived the idea to whistle the tune written by a church member, a hymn not known or sung by those not of his faith. As he strolled along, John began whistling the Old, Old Path.

That did it! As he came back to his seat a man stood up, moved down the aisle and asked if John were a member of the RLDS church. After they talked awhile, the man asked about John's financial status. Upon learning the truth, he cheerfully purchased John's dinner and they ate together on the train. He purchased a ticket so John could complete his journey, and he also handed him a ten-dollar bill.

As they parted, the each felt blessed. The giver rejoiced in his heart to be able to do a bit for the Master. Ten dollars was sufficient at that time to provide for the needs of a missionary for least a month.

John's heart was lifted in thanksgiving and praise as again he witness the promise made to Christ's servants- that when they go in faith, God will provide."

The congregation was challenged with the closing Hymn; "Send Me Forth Oh Blessed Master, there is service to be done. Send me forth to homes of want and homes of care. And with joy I will obey Thy call and in Thy blessed name, I will take the blessed hope of the gospel there!"





**Church of Jesus Christ
Mount Ayr Restoration Branch**

c/o Cheryl Phipps
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Lamoni, IA 50140



CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST - MT AYR RESTORATION BRANCH

FEBRUARY 2011

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. (Revelation 14:6-7)

From the Pastor ...Continued from page 2

presuming that they were right and that if Jeremiah was truly a prophet, he would confirm the stance they had already taken. If Jeremiah did not agree with what they thought, before asking the Lord, then they rejected Jeremiah as a prophet and went their own way, also rejecting God's word and counsel.

Are we, who claim to be God's people, willing to come down into the depths of humility and to have a broken heart and a contrite spirit? Are there even a few of us who are willing to truly approach the Lord, in one heart and one mind, asking for His direction, truthfully willing to walk where He directs us and do whatever thing He

will allow us? If not, and we insist on going on in our wisdom, in our own paths determined that "we" are right even though the flock continues to be scattered and ravished by predators, then surely we shall find ourselves rejected by the Lord and destroyed along with Babylon.

Please! Read the scriptures for yourselves. All of them. Not just the parts and pieces that fit individual stances. Pray and fast. God will speak to you if He knows you will listen, and He knows, even as you ask.

Read D & C 1:4; 59:5b; 58:2b; 108:11-13; 105:13a; 2:1-2 just as a start!

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Elder Gordon Winkler (Counselor)

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