

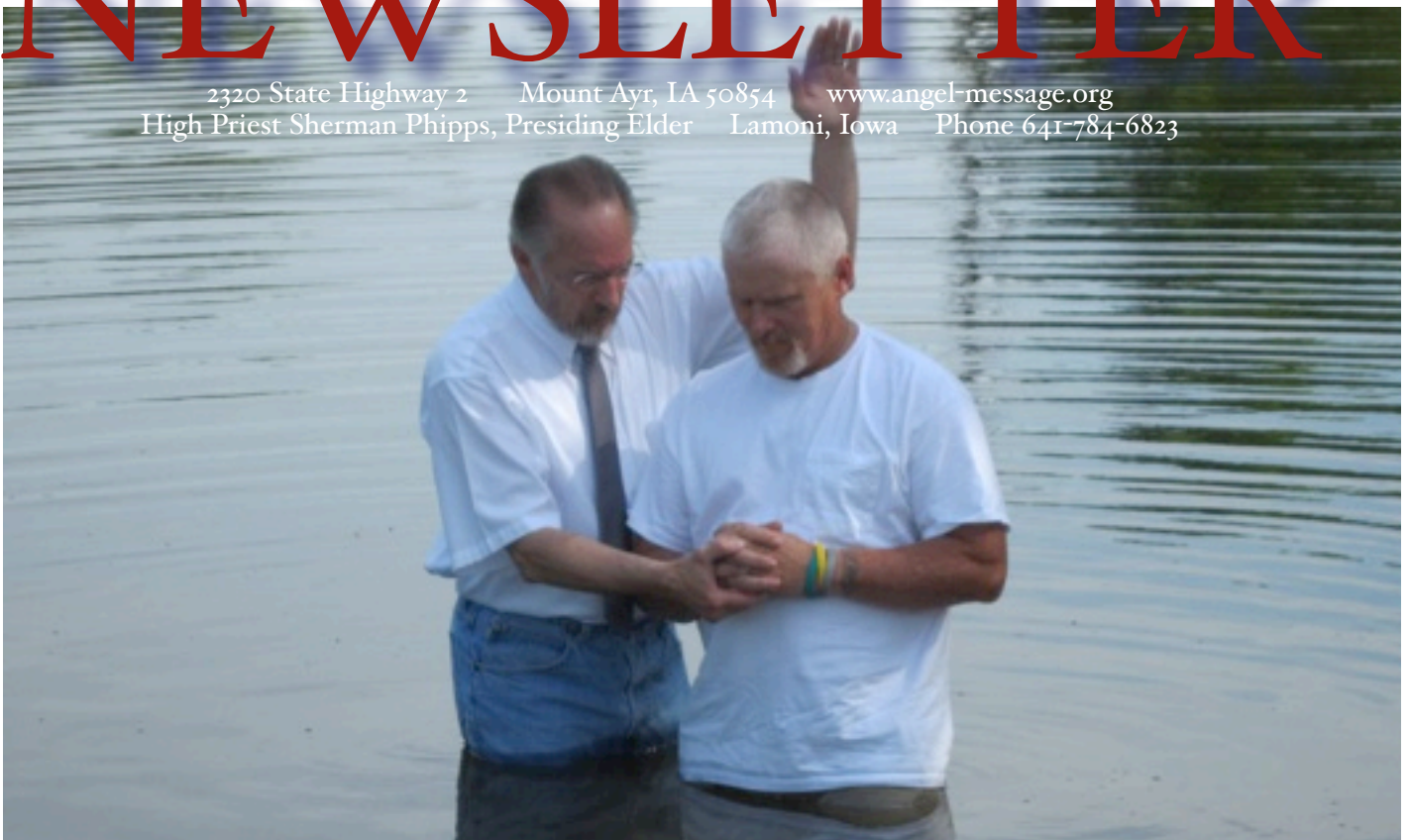


Church of Jesus Christ Mount Ayr Restoration Branch



NEWSLETTER

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News & **Notes**

Kingdom Added To By 3

The Evening of June 19th the congregation joined in the baptisms of Jennifer Rowland's husband *Bob* & their son, *Ryder* & the baptism of *Joshua Jordison*, son of Michael and Julia. Following the baptisms by water in Ron & Di Smith's pond, the three were confirmed by the Melchisidek Priesthood.

Behold the Savior

Another successful Missionary Family Reunion was held at Graceland University the end of June with approximately 39 from MARB joining the 285 youth and adults who attended.

Sixty-Eight Years Strong

George & Eunice Myers will be celebrating their 68th wedding anniversary this month on July 18th. Congratulations George & Eunice!

Congratulations Jared

Congratulations to Jared Beck, who recently passed his Medical Boards and is continuing on in pursuit of his medical career.

Bittersweet Farewell

This month, Sister Jan Jordison has moved to Independence. We will miss her and wish her well as she gathers to the Centerplace to be with her family.

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Are You Jesus?

Anonymous - Shared by Rodney Bastow

'Excuse me, Are you Jesus?'

A few years ago a group of salesmen went to a regional sales convention in Chicago. They had assured their wives that they would be home in plenty of time for Friday night's dinner. In their rush, with tickets and briefcases, one of these salesmen inadvertently kicked over a table which held a display of apples. Apples flew everywhere. Without stopping or looking back, they all managed to reach the plane in time for their nearly-missed boarding.

ALL BUT ONE!!! He paused, took a deep breath, got in touch with his feelings, and experienced a twinge of compassion for the girl whose apple stand had been overturned.

He told his buddies to go on without him, waved good-bye, told one of them to call his wife when they arrived at their home destination and explain his taking a later flight. Then he returned to the terminal where the apples were all over the terminal floor.

He was glad he did.

The 16-year-old girl was totally blind! She was softly crying, tears running down her cheeks in frustration, and at the same time helplessly groping for her spilled produce as the crowd swirled about her; no one stopping and no one to care for her plight.

The salesman knelt on the floor with her, gathered up the apples, put them back on the table and helped organize her display. As he did this, he noticed that many of them had become battered and bruised; these he set aside in another basket.

When he had finished, he pulled out his wallet and said to the girl, "Here, please take this \$40 for the damage we did. Are you okay?" She nodded through her tears.. He continued on with, "I hope we didn't spoil your day too badly."

As the salesman started to walk away, the bewildered blind girl called out to him, "Mister...." He paused and turned to look back into those blind eyes. She continued, "Are you Jesus?"

He stopped in mid-stride, and he wondered. Then slowly he made his way to catch the later flight with that question burning and bouncing about in his soul: "Are you Jesus?" Do people mistake you for Jesus? That's our destiny, is it not? To be so much like Jesus that people cannot tell the difference as we live and interact with a world that is blind to His love, life and grace.

If we claim to know Him, we should live, walk and act as He would. Knowing Him is more than simply quoting Scripture and going to church. It's actually living the Word as life unfolds day to day.

You are the apple of His eye even though we, too, have been bruised by a fall. He stopped what He was doing and picked up you and me on a hill called Calvary and paid in full for our damaged fruit.

ARE YOU JESUS?



Priest Rodney Bastow

Mount Ayr, Iowa

June 5, 2011

Michael Jordison presided over the service with the reading of Lamentations 3:1-25. Communion was then served, followed by music sung by Alan Smith and Michael. Rodney then read scripture from Matthew 25: 32-41:

When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he shall sit upon the throne of his glory; And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth sheep from the goats; the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. And he shall sit upon his throne, and the twelve apostles with him. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee; or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in; or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have



done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

I have appreciated Michael's direction this morning. I am pleased to be here. I am pleased for this opportunity. There have been a lot of thoughts that have gone through my mind as I prepared for today. As many of you can imagine, there have been a lot of different emotions my wife and I have felt in the past several weeks. I hope, and my prayer this morning is that I have followed the Lord's direction as I have come up with these words and that if you find any value here all the praise and glory should go to our heavenly father. I think I mentioned the last time I spoke that I was about to run out of readings to use. Kathleen Myers was here that time and told me she would take care of me. She has quite frequently sent me readings or devotionals. I really appreciate this and I'm very grateful to her. One that she sent me recently I would like to use today. It's called, Excuse Me, Are You Jesus?

One reason that story means so much to me is because I had something similar happen to me once. When I was in first grade we had a noon recess that lasted about a half hour. We would come out of the big school building and there was a driveway we walked on to the playground. About a block away stood the Ag building. The Ag boys would be coming to lunch as we went to recess. One day when I was coming out this giant man called D.C. Simpson ran right over me and sent me flying. I was all scraped up and crying. D.C. stopped and picked me up, cleaned me up, and he dried my tears. He asked me if I was ok. That night when I got home the family could see that I had been roughed up and asked what happened. I related this experience to them. They asked if I was sure it was D.C. Simpson. That doesn't sound like him. After that experience I saw something different in him than what other people saw. Maybe it was a coincidence, but years later D.C.'s son Tim came to school at Kellerton, where I was teaching. He had some trouble at Mt.Ayr, and for some reason came to school over there. We became close. One day I was called into the office and told there had been a death in the family. I started to console Tim, thinking it was his grandpa. I told him it was ok and that he had lived a good life. He told me I didn't understand---it was his dad. I felt

really bad that I hadn't brought Tim the comfort that he needed after what his father had done for me. I think Tim forgave me.

Sometimes we get knocked down in life. Sometimes we get left with bumps and bruises. Sometimes they don't show. Sometimes life doesn't seem fair. It can come in a lot of different ways. It can be a family matter, because of work, because of school, because of an injury, because of an illness, because we lost someone dear to us, because of a flood or tornado. Sometimes we need someone to stop and take a moment to let us know that they care---someone to ask if we're doing all right---someone to give us a sympathizing word or touch. Are you Jesus? Are you trying to be like him? Do people see Jesus in you?

I know I'm not doing a very good job of this. I went to a funeral a few weeks ago for Lela Rinehart. I doubt if many of you know her. She was a regular when we went to the other church. Lela and Homer were very good people---very nice and pleasant---always had a smile and seemed to be happy. They raised three sons that were very much like them---very good boys who have done well in life. They were always happy people. As I was going to the meal afterward one of the church members told me she was so glad I was here because Lela thought so much of me. It was nice hearing that, but it made me feel so guilty because I had done so little for her. Just the week before she died they had celebrated 75 years together. I wish so much that I had done something to let her know how important they were to me. I need to do a better job to let people know I care for them and the love I have for them. I need to make sure that the members of this church family are doing all right. I need to lend a hand or ear. I need to get Ed and I going on our priesthood visits to be in the homes to make sure things are going ok. We are fortunate to have the church family we have---one who cares for us and is there when we need them. We have really realized that and we appreciate it so much. Our youngest son lives in Warrensburg, Missouri, and he has expressed interest lately in wanting to find a church congregation close that he can be a part of. He wants a church family and he is starting to see a need for that in his life. I wish he could find a group like we have---a group that he can be with and who will care for him.

Two prayer meetings ago Rob asked us what memories we had of people who have made a difference in our lives. For me it's a lot of people. A couple weeks ago I went to the old church because I saw that Randy Drake was speaking. Randy was like a little brother to me. He was five years younger and he was always really quiet. He would have needed a microphone, unlike me, because he wasn't outspoken. I was interested in what he would have to say. I knew he had been called to the priesthood. I was very proud of him. He did a very nice job talking about fruit of the vine. He gave a very good message that day. He was totally different than the Randy I remembered growing up. He did assert himself and was very outspoken. I was glad I went to that service. There weren't many people there, but they were the ones who watched me grow up. I felt a lot of love because they knew me when I was younger and they still loved me anyway. After the service I was talking to some of them and one of them mentioned that each time he went to church he thought of my mother. Mom and so many others who went there made such a big difference in my life and in the lives of so many others who went there. I could see Jesus in their lives because of the way they lived. They didn't tell me what to do---they showed me what to do. They didn't tell me the kind of life I should live. They just lived it by their kindness and the way they treated me in their Christ-like way. They influenced me to want to be a follower of Jesus and to try to be more like him. I would imagine most of you have people who watched you grow up and influenced you to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Will the next generation coming up see Jesus in us? Will they want to be a follower of Jesus because of our influence? Before I get away from my other family I need to do more to stay in touch with them. I need to visit them, call them, or occasionally go there to church so I can stay in touch.

That night at the prayer meeting Gordon had a testimony that has stayed with me. I have asked Gordon to share that with us again. Gordon then got up and related the following:

We had an employee celebration at the hospital and Mr. Steve Siemens came and spoke. He had a message of celebrating the positive things in life. Sometimes in the hospital situation we don't always see the positive things. This was inspirational



and sometimes humorous for my employees to hear. This was a true story that he was a part of. He was traveling back to Des Moines from a speaking engagement in Chicago when he stopped at the Iowa City or Coralville exit to get gas. After getting gas he was getting back on Interstate 80 when he noticed a young man standing on the entrance ramp with his thumb up looking for a ride. He was very unkept. Not something Steve usually does, but he stopped and picked him up and asked where he was headed. The young man answered Des Moines. He asked if he was going to see family. He said he didn't have any. He asked if he was going to see a friend, but he replied no. He asked where he was going to stay, but he said he didn't know and not to worry about him. Steve realized he was troubled and didn't want to have a conversation so they drove the rest of the way in silence. Just outside of Des Moines Steve asked where he wanted to go and the man said just to drop him off any place because he would find somewhere to go. Steve was very uncomfortable so he decided to take him home with him. His wife fixed him a meal, gave him a bed, and washed his clothes. The next morning Steve took him back out to interstate 80. The man still didn't say much. Steve gave him three things—a fifty-dollar bill, the key to his house, and his business card. He told him he hoped this money got him where he was going; if you ever need a place to call home here's a key to my house; my business card has my address and phone number; call anytime collect and find your way back here. The man got out of the car and left. When he got home and told his wife what he had done and she immediately called to get the locks changed on the house. Years went by and Steve got a letter in the mail from Dallas, Texas. He didn't recognize the name. When he opened it, it said—You may not remember me but I was a 16-year-old runaway boy in Iowa. I never forgot what you did for me. Please find enclosed with this letter the \$50 you gave me, the key to my house, and my business card with the phone and address. You can call me anytime and you can stay in my house anytime you're in Dallas.

Rod states, "Which side do you think Steve would be on—right or left? Sometimes we need someone to give us a ride, feed us, and give us a place we can go

back to. Sometimes we get off the path to Jesus that we are on, and we need someone to remind us to get us going in the right direction again."

My oldest son is like that right now. Steve Smith told him by divine inspiration that he needed to submit himself to the Lord. If he would do that the Lord would have a great work for him to do. He needs to get rid of the anger and the hatred that is ruining his life and to become more like Jesus. We need to do what we can do to help him get on the right path, the right direction, so he can fulfill the purpose God has for him. We may have things we need to change in our lives so we are on the right path, so that we can fulfill the purpose God has for us.

Another story that fits in with the others that I've read to you today is a story that Jesus told. It's from Luke, the 10th chapter. *And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master; what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? How readeest thou? And he answering,*

"Sometimes we get off the path to Jesus that we are on, and we need someone to remind us to get us going in the right direction again."

said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, and who is my neighbor? And Jesus answering, said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his raiment and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance, there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side of the way. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked upon him, and passed by on the other side of the way; for they desired in their hearts that it might not be known that they had seen him. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him. And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow, when he departed, he took money, and gave to the

host, and said unto him, Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Who now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him who fell among the thieves? And he said, He who showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go and do likewise.

What was the purpose of Jesus telling us that story? I think it doesn't matter what we have or what we know. We are to reach out to those around us to help those in need and to treat them how Jesus treats us.

I read a devotion on repentance this week that I would like to share with you.

Repentance is one of the most positive of all words. John the Baptist centered his preaching on repentance. Jesus also preached repentance, commanding his disciples to do likewise. The angel predicted that the Messiah would save his people from their sins. The requirement for this salvation would be repentance.

To repent means to stop going one direction, to turn around completely, and to go the opposite way. Repentance involves a dramatic and decisive change of course. God urges us to repent when the path we are taking leads to destruction. Repentance will save us from disastrous consequences! What a wonderful word! How comforting that the Creator loves us enough to warn us of impending danger!

Our problem is that we think of repentance as something negative. When we recognize our sin, we prefer to rededicate our lives to God. We may even tell others we have resolved to be more faithful to God than we were before we failed him. Yet the Bible does not speak of rededicating oneself. It speaks of repentance! Repentance indicates a decisive change, not merely a wishful resolution. We have not repented if we continue in our sin!

Repentance involves a radical change of heart and mind by which we agree with God's evaluation of our sin and wish to take specific action to align ourselves with his will. A desire to change is not repentance. Repentance is always an absolute response to God's word. The evidence of repentance is not words of resolve, but a changed life.

Sherman and I talked recently about wanting a certain spiritual gift. He said we



could have that gift if we were living how God wants us to live. We both agreed we're not quite there yet.

Today is the day when we can make that change in our life to get us headed in that direction. Now is the time—this is the place.

From Galatians: *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden. Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

Thank you.



A MARB Hello to David, Christy, Bridge, Lydia and Lilliah King from Owen Sound, Ontario Canada. 

THE KINGDOM IS YOURS UNTIL I COME!



Seventy Ron Smith
Lamoni, Iowa
June 12, 2011

The scripture I have chosen today is II Peter 1:1-11.

Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ; Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue; Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; And to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; And to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these

things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Thank you, Cunningham family, for your music this morning. We are so blessed to have you all with us and to share with you in the ways that we have. We've felt the spirit as you have ministered to us in song, in word, and in presence, and we are glad to have you here.

Bob, you have no idea how hard it is to stand up here and speak. There are some things you do that come pretty easily. If I was to give you a lecture on infinity, that would be pretty easy to do. But to know that every word that I say is going to get written down in a newsletter and get broadcast all over the world is pretty scary. But it is a pleasure to have the opportunity to share with you a little bit about the great and precious promises the Lord has made to us. Peter introduces his letter by saying he is "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ."

I learned something about Peter as I was reading through the Endowment Series from Brother Oakman. He made some comments about the apostleship of Peter and what Jesus saw in him that got me started thinking about the topic for today. Andrew was Peter's brother. Andrew was a believer in John the Baptist's ministry. John the Baptist had announced Jesus, and Andrew thought, "Wow! Here is the Messiah," or something to that effect. So he went and grabbed his brother and brought Simon to see Jesus saying, "we found the Messiah, come see Him." In the first chapter of John, in the 42nd verse, we read "And [Andrew] brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jonas, thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a seer, or a stone."

It hadn't occurred to me before that Jesus told Simon the very first time He saw him that he was going to be called a stone. "Petros" is a Greek word for stone and the name "Peter" comes from that root. Much



later—in Matthew 16, when Peter had the revelation that Jesus was the Christ, the son of God—that is when Jesus said that Peter finally was a stone. Brother Oakman makes the comment that in the Inspired Version in John’s record, it says he would be called Cephas which is by interpretation a seer or a stone. All of the versions of the Bible talk about a stone but in the Inspired Version it talks about the fact that Jesus saw in Peter the seer. That was a reference to the Urim and Thumim. The Urim and Thumim were some stones that God had prepared. The High Priest would look through them once a year to find the revelation of God there. Of course the Urim and Thumim was used by Joseph Smith, Jr. when he was translating the Book of Mormon. He looked into the stones and saw the translation of the Book of Mormon. Basically, the Urim and Thumim were stones that you looked through to see the revelation of God.

What was it that Jesus saw in Peter when he said, in Matthew 16:14-19, “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 (without any other prompting) 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.” Jesus is saying to Peter that you have this gift of the revelation of who I am, and it is this revelation—this—rock, on which I am going to build my church.

Of course, even after Jesus gave him the name, Peter didn’t turn out to be, at that point, the stone on which Jesus saw He was going to build a church. When things got really tough and Jesus was arrested, Peter denied Him. He denied Him not once, but three times. He swore he did not know Jesus. He swore, he cursed and said I’ve never seen this man.

But Jesus had seen in Peter something, from their very first meeting. The very first time. Jesus saw more in Peter than just that this was a man who would deny Him. Jesus saw in Peter the revelation. This is the man who can share the revelation that I am the Christ. Jesus told Peter that from the very beginning.

I am wondering this morning if you have had your encounter with Jesus. Maybe you are just here because your dad said you had to come. But maybe you came because you wanted to have an encounter with Jesus. What does Jesus see in you? Does He see the rock that is going to be the revelation to mankind that Jesus is the Christ? Does He see the stone that was prepared by God for the revelation of Himself? Does He see it in spite of the fact that you might be one who would stand and curse and deny that Jesus is the Christ? Does He see it in me in the hesitancy I have? In the ways that I fall down so many times? What does Jesus see in me?

According to brother Oakman, the mark of the apostleship of Peter was the fact that He had this revelation. Brother Oakman says there are many apostles in the church, and if there were only twelve of them we would be in really bad shape. He says that apostleship has to do with the revelation that Jesus is the Christ. We have been blessed in this congregation with many who have the revelation that Jesus is the Christ.

Some have seen Him and have born testimony of that. Norman Nelson has seen Him and has born testimony of that. Lynda Rolfe has seen Him and has born testimony of that. My father saw Him and bore testimony of that. I believe in that testimony. I have never had any problem believing that. I have seen the things Jesus has done in people’s lives and that has convinced me that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God. There are many in this congregation who have the testimony and bear it with firmness and conviction that Jesus is the Christ.

According to brother Oakman, that is what apostleship is all about, those who have that testimony and can bear it to the world. I Peter 1:1-2 “Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ; Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.”

One of the mysteries of this world is that we are not just skin and bones, we are not just the physical part of us that we understand. We are also spiritual. The call God has given to us is to recognize the spiritual universe around us and within us. And to recognize that God can and does

work with us, and His Spirit works with people. We need to recognize God in His creation.

There are lots of people who believe that the purpose of this life is to get to the next one. And that somehow we are supposed to shed this one as fast as we can to get there, and to leave behind the physical and all of this world. But when I listen to Jesus’ prayer, I don’t find Him saying, “Lord, please help me to die quickly so I can get into heaven.” That is not what He said. Rather, He said to pray, “Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.” Notice He is not asking us to get out of here so that we can get to heaven. He is asking us to pray that His kingdom will come here to the earth, so we can be part of it. He wants us to be part of that spiritual universe, even in our physical form. That is His hope for the world: When Zion is here, we will have physical form and express the spiritual universe in our physical form. He wants us to be one spiritually even in our physical presence. Sometimes we think that is a little far from where we are, but Peter tells us this can be done if we take those “exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” (II Peter 1:4) So once we are baptized and we have the hands laid on our heads so we can have the Spirit with us, what is the point of all that? The point is that having escaped the world through lust, we can now take on the divine nature.

So what are some of those great and precious promises? I have made many lists of great and precious promises. Those of you who know me know I have done that. So let’s talk about some of them.

Samuel and Tanner are studying the scriptures with Sherman. One of those great and precious promises I have talked about many times is the promise of the testimony of Jesus that comes out of the scriptures. Whether you are doing it now or want to do it in the future, if you want to have the testimony that Jesus is the Christ, you can start with the promise in Moroni 10:3-5.

“when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of



Adam, even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts. And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; And if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things."

This promise says you can have a knowledge of the truth of all things if you will take the words of the Book of Mormon, read them, and ask if these things are not true. If you will do that, Jesus says, "I will manifest the truth of it unto you by the power of the Holy Ghost, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things."

This is a powerful, powerful promise that we can take to become partakers of the divine nature.

Another promise that the Lord gives to us is the promise that we can live by faith. One of the best places to read that is from Alma 16:149-152.

"Now as I said concerning faith-that it was not a perfect knowledge, even so it is with my words. Ye can not know of their surety at first, unto perfection, any more than faith is a perfect knowledge. But behold, if ye will awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith; yea, even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words."

Alma is saying that you don't have to believe all the scriptures at once, but if you just have a desire to believe, that is where to start. Then make place for a portion of His words. You don't have to start with all of them. Start with a portion. Start somewhere. Start. That is the desire to believe.

He says, if you make a place for a portion of my words and put them in your heart, I am going to liken this to a seed. You don't know if a seed is good before you plant it. We planted several seeds and some of them came up and some of them didn't. Some of them the cats scratched out. He says, you don't know if that seed is good before you plant it, but you plant it. Why? Because you believe it is a good seed.

If you make place for a portion of My words, even like you plant those seeds, then it is going to swell and grow. When it pops through the ground and starts to grow, you are going to know it was a good seed. When it gets big and bears fruit, your faith will have been changed into knowledge. Then you can make place for more of My words. This is a way that anyone can start to have faith. By faith we can begin to put the word into our lives and start partaking of those gifts God has given to us.

One of the great and precious promises of the scriptures is from James 1: 5&6. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." That was the promise Joseph Smith read as a young boy 14 years old. Can you imagine being 14 years old? Some of you can, you are pretty close. It's been a long time for me. Some times 14 year old boys can understand things that some of us adults have trouble with. Will God really answer? Will He really let me

"God would like to see in you the kind of person who can ask whatever you need and it will be done."

know and give me wisdom if I don't have wisdom? Can He do that? Joseph read that scripture and he said never had any scripture come into his mind with more force than that one. He knew if he would ask, God would answer his prayer. He did ask and he had his vision in which he saw God and actually talked with Him and asked the question that was burning on his mind.

We have the promise that when we begin to partake of the spirit of God we are connected in to things that have happened since the very beginning of the world. At the very beginning, Adam was taught the gospel and was baptized. That is what the Inspired Version says. It says we have the opportunity to be hooked in with all that has happened from the very beginning of time if we will. We can have that wisdom if we ask God and believe that He will answer. This is one of the great and precious promises God has given.

God would like to see in you the kind of person who can ask whatever you need

and it will be done. Mormon 4: 84 is a good place to find that. "Behold I say unto you, that whoso believeth in Christ, doubting nothing, whatsoever he shall ask the Father in the name of Christ, it shall be granted him; and this promise is unto all, even unto the ends of the earth." Who does that leave out? This promise is unto all, even unto the ends of the earth.

There are some promises I don't have any problems believing. Some of those great and precious promises I have all kinds of faith in. This one, I wish with all my heart I could believe in and I could know for sure.

He says, starting down in verse 88, "And whosoever shall believe in my name, doubting nothing, unto him will I confirm all my words, even unto the ends of the earth. And now behold, who can stand against the works of the Lord? Who can deny his sayings?" I've always said, not me! I can't stand against the works of the Lord. I won't deny His sayings. But do I in my actions deny His works? Do I deny what He has seen in me? Am I like Peter? Can I stand there and curse and say, well, I really never really knew this guy. I don't really believe these words. I don't really want to put them into my life at this time. Maybe later.

Who can stand against the works of the Lord? Who can deny His sayings?

When God created you, He created you good. He expects good out of you. He created you as that stone, that living stone, that is going to receive the revelation of Jesus Christ in your life. Yet who can deny His sayings?

Verse 90: "Who will rise up against the almighty power of the Lord? Who will despise the works of the Lord?" Is it I?

Verses 91-94: "Behold, all ye who are despisers of the works of the Lord, for ye shall wonder and perish. O then despise not, and wonder not, but hearken unto the words of the Lord, and ask the Father in the name of Jesus for what things soever ye shall stand in need. Doubt not, but be believing, and begin as in times of old, and come unto the Lord with all your heart, and work out your own salvation with fear and trembling before him. Be wise in the days of your probation; strip yourselves of all uncleanness; ask not, that ye may consume it on your lusts, but ask with a firmness unshaken, that ye will yield to no temptation, but that ye will serve the true and living God." Sometimes I have found



that people hesitate to ask the Lord because they say, we are not supposed to tempt the Lord. He says to ask for whatever you need. "Ask for whatsoever thing ye shall stand in need." But don't ask so that you can consume it one your own lusts. "But ask, with a firmness unshaken that ye will yield to no temptation but to serve the true and living God."

I often think of a time I was lost, trying to find the Hills of Peace reunion grounds up on the border between Saskatchewan and Alberta, Canada. It was late at night, and I was looking for a sign. I knew there was one. It was just a little tiny thing that said "Hills of Peace." The campground was out in the middle of a 10 square mile community pasture with just a bulldozed road at the time. I didn't know exactly where to look. Boy, when I saw that sign, I was so happy, because I knew I was on the right road. But what would have happened if I had stopped and grabbed the sign and put it in my car? I can ask for a sign to consume on my own lusts, or I can ask for a sign to show me where to go. Jesus says, as long as you ask for the sign to show you the right way to go, that is fine. . "Ask for whatsoever thing ye shall stand in need. But ask, with a firmness unshaken that ye will yield to no temptation but to serve the true and living God."

There are so many great and precious promises in the scriptures. These are the things He says will bring us to the divine nature. And put that divine nature in us.

Before I close, I would like to go back just for a couple of minutes to the scripture we read at the beginning. Once we have the great and precious promises, Peter says to "add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; And to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness." I don't know what of those things you need most in your lives. Perhaps it is patience. Perhaps it is knowledge. At any rate, Peter continues by saying, "And to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." Of all the things we need, the most important is brotherly kindness and charity. He says, "For if these things be in

you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins... brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." This is the way that we are to live in this world, to be part of the Kingdom of God, to be the living stones that can catch the revelation that Jesus is the Christ, and can share that with the world. We are to be the stones Jesus saw in us when He first saw us.

What does He see in you today? Can you open your eyes to the possibility of God within you? Can you open your eyes to the possibility of God within your brothers and sisters? Will it allow you to have the kind of charity and the kind of love that He is asking us to be filled with? If so, an entrance is measured abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of God.

I'd like to close with the admonition in Doctrine and Covenants 34: 6 that I believe is given to the church in our day as in no other day. I was asked the other night if there were one scripture that would give advice and encouragement for the church today. D&C 34:6 was the one. "Keep all the commandments and covenants by which ye are bound, and I will cause the heavens to shake for your good, and Satan shall tremble, and Zion shall rejoice upon the hills, and flourish; and Israel shall be saved in mine own due time. And by the keys which I have given shall they be led, and no more be confounded at all. Lift up your hearts and be glad; your redemption draweth nigh. Fear not, little flock, the kingdom is yours until I come. Behold, I come quickly. Even so. Amen."

If we can keep the covenants and commandments He has given, we can be part of that Kingdom. "The kingdom is yours until I come." The opportunity to live and to see God's Spirit working in us and working in others and bringing us together, that's what God wants for us. He doesn't want us to leave this life but be part of this life and to live with the Spirit

of God always in us. That's the great and precious promise. If we will do that, He says it won't be long "until I come. Behold, I come quickly. Even so. Amen." May God bless you.



WILL YOU "FIND" YOUR SALVATION?



High Priest Robert Rolfe
Lamoni, Iowa
June 19, 2011

My Scripture reading for this morning comes from the 13th Chapter of 2nd Nephi, starting with the 12th verse and continuing on through the 17th verse:

"And he said unto the children of men, Follow thou me. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, can we follow Jesus, save we shall be willing to keep the commandments of the Father? And the Father said, Repent ye, repent ye, and be baptized in the name of my beloved Son. And also, the voice of the Son came unto me, saying, He that is baptized in my name, to him will the Father give the Holy Ghost, like unto me; wherefore, follow me, and do the things which ye have seen me do. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I know that if ye shall

The Fourth of July, declared a national holiday in 1941 was first celebrated on the White House lawn in 1801. The first Independence Day was celebrated on July 8, 1776 when the ringing of the Liberty Bell from Independence Hall summoned the Philadelphia citizens to gather for the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence.



July 2011



Sunday Schedule

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	29	30
31						

DATE	July 3rd	July 10th	July 17th	July 24th	July 31st	August 7th
SPEAKING	Steve Smith	Steve Cunningham	Ray Setter	Michael Jordison	Sharing Service	Gordon Winkler
PRESIDING	Sherman Phipps	George Knotts	Gordon Winkler	Alan Smith	Michael Jordison	Steve Smith
PIANIST	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke
SPECIAL MUSIC	Yvonne Galusha	Kathleen Myers	Lynda Rolfe	Michael Jordison	Sharing Service	Sue Beck
FAMILY DEVOTIONS	Michael Jordison	Sherman Phipps	Rob Rolfe	Bob Rowland	Alan Smith	Ron Smith
GREETERS	Ron Smith	Steve Smith	Gordon Winkler	Ed Anderson	Rodney Bastow	Sue Beck
Custodians	Rob Rolfe	Alan Smith	Ron Smith	Jim Barber	Ed Anderson	Rodney Bastow
SUNDAY EVENING	Bob Rowland	Ron Smith	Steve Smith	Rob Rolfe	Bob Rowland	Ron Smith

Wednesday Prayer Service Schedule

DATE	July 6th	July 13th	July 20th	July 27th	August 3rd
LOCATION	Norman Nelson	Gordon Winkler	Rob Rolfe	Alan Smith	Ron Smith
PRESIDING	Sherman Phipps	Rodney Bastow	Alan Smith	Rob Rolfe	Ben Anderson

Special Events & Activities

Sunday, July 3rd: Priesthood Meeting at 8:30AM - Potluck following Communion service

Sunday, July 10th: All Priesthood Meeting at 5:00PM - Ron Smith's home

Saturday July 16th: Guest Ministry from Brothers Ray Setter & Dan Worthington from Holden, Missouri. Fellowship Saturday 7 PM at Sherman Phipps home to share testimonies with them.

Sunday, July 17th: Potluck following the service

Sunday, July 31st: SHARING SERVICE - everyone share their talents - let Presider Michael Jordison know what your offering is.

Birthday's this month: United States of America (4), Gordon Winkler (15), Sherman Phipps (16), Devon Cunningham (17), Elaina Smith (19), David Houston (20), Susie Cunningham (22), Steven Smith (24)

Anniversary's this month: Alan & Denise Elefson (7), George & Eunice Myers (18), David & Teana Cowley (20), Steve & Susie Cunningham (25)



follow the Son with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of your sins, witnessing unto the Father; that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ, by baptism; yea, by following your Lord and your Savior down into the water; according to his word; behold, then shall ye receive the Holy Ghost; Yea, then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost; and then can ye speak with the tongue of angels, and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel."

Following the special music by the Barber family, Brother Rolfe began his message dealing with the topic of salvation. The branch was planning a baptismal service for the evening in which 3 of our number were to be baptized.

A few years ago, I prepared a Will for a client. During our discussion she told me she was an agnostic. I then asked her what it would take to make her a believer. She couldn't answer the question. What is your answer to the question, "what would it take to make you a believer"? For some, the answer is sought when the person is facing death. Death is the ultimate reality. All of us die. We may not think about death when we are young, but as we age and start losing members of our families, those with whom we work, or watch tragedy on the news, death becomes more and more a subject to consider.

What happens after we die? Is death the end of our consciousness? Is that part of us that we think of as "me" separate from our bodies? Is there a God? What is God like? What does he expect of us, if anything? Is there a heaven? Is there a hell? If God is love, as I've been told, would he send anyone to hell to burn forever and ever? I believe there is a God and what we do in this life has eternal significance of how we spend our lives after we die.

In I Timothy 2:3-4 we find this message: *"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who is willing to have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth which is in Christ Jesus, who is the Only Begotten Son of*

God, and ordained to be a Mediator between God and man; who is one God, and hath power over all men. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

I am reading the scripture text this morning believing that it means what it says. God is willing for all men (and women) to be saved. The fact that He is willing to save all men, does not mean that all men are going to be saved. If God was making a decree, then all men would be saved, in the same way that He said, Let there be light and there was light. The text does not say that, nor does it infer such to be the case. I believe if God wanted Paul to say that, he was perfectly capable of doing so. While is God is willing to save all men, the terrible truth of the matter, from even a casual reading of the Scriptures, is that some men, because of their sin and the fact they have rejected the Holy One of Israel, will go into everlasting punishment. The symbols of this truth are reflected in the scriptural accounts of the sheep versus the goats; tares versus the wheat; chaff to be blown away and the corn to be preserved. There is a dreadful and horrible Hell in contrast to the wonderful heaven.

God is willing to have all men be saved. How is it they are to be saved? First, they must come to a knowledge of the truth. Being saved and coming to a knowledge of the Truth are inexorably connected. The text states, *"our Savior; who is willing to have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth which is in Christ Jesus"*. The everlasting covenant says when "we embrace the truth", certain things will happen. One of those things is the enjoyment of salvation with God. Why does God not save everyone? I do not know. God and I have a relationship in which I am on a need to know basis. Who am I to demand explanations from God about why he does what he does. The horrible reality is, that not all will be saved.

I believe and have faith in the scriptures that it is by a knowledge of the Truth that men are saved. Notice that the stress is on the article. It is the Truth, and not every truth. Knowing the truth about lots of things is a good thing, but we do not receive salvation from that kind of truth. For example, there are some things you can learn about a cat, only by picking it up by the tail. This is the truth, but this kind of

truth is inferior to The Truth that brings salvation to our souls. Most men know they are going to die some day. This is also the truth. Do they receive salvation from believing that truth? No, they do not! Recognition that, without the Lord Jesus Christ in my life, I am lost forever and have no hope, is finding Truth that can lead to salvation. How I might react to that truth determines whether I can be saved. If we recognize our need of salvation, then we start to inquire of how our salvation can occur.

Last week Lynda and I drove to Dallas, Texas. Near our destination, I saw a billboard that said, "Are you going to Hell?" It was about 100 degrees at the time, and I thought perhaps if we kept going that same direction, Hell might be just south of Dallas. We used a small box called a GPS to find our location. It was great. We drove right to the church, even though we had never been there. Even in a metroplex of about 8 million people, we didn't get lost. But many, many people are lost; irretrievably lost. Why is it that I say that "without the Lord Jesus Christ in my life, I am lost forever and have no hope".

The answer is simple. God also has a GPS to help us when we are lost. Have you ever used God's GPS? GPS stands for God's Plan of Salvation. Alma's son, Corianton, had lost his way. Corianton was a member of the priesthood who left his priesthood and did some things Alma called, "most abominable". I'd not going to talk about what he did, I'm going to talk about one part of Corianton's concerns. He couldn't see how a just God could put a soul in Hell and misery for eternity. (Alma 19:81) Alma, in answering his questions, explained God's plan of salvation. This plan includes these elements:

1. God's Plan of salvation which includes the atonement
2. God's Plan of mercy
3. God's Plan of restoration

What is God's endgame? In other words, what is His ultimate purpose for all of mankind. (By the way, when I use the word man or mankind, I am speaking of both men and women. Gen 1:29 states, *"And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him; male and female created I them"*. Man includes male and female. Females are also created in the image of Jesus Christ.) God wants all mankind to



prepare themselves in such a way that they can live in His presence throughout eternity. A time will come when the veil between God and man will disappear and we will all see God face to face. We had better be ready when that day comes. But, back to God's Plan.

We must start with the rebellion of Adam and Eve. God said, "don't touch this tree, or eat its fruit. If you do, you will die! This was a decree by God. It could not be amended, revoked or altered. As all of you in the sound of my voice have been taught, after Adam and Eve ate the fruit, a curse came on them and the earth, which exists to this day. They died spiritually that day, and died physically later. Were their deaths fair? Were they just? According to the scriptures, from the time they ate the fruit, they and their descendants were forever cut off from the presence of God. Alma notes that "some have wrested the scriptures, and have gone far away because of this thing." If God is just, and I believe he is, how can He keep us from being under this decree of death He pronounced on man in the garden? This is where the plan of redemption or salvation comes in.

Alma explains: "And now remember, my son, if it were not for the plan of redemption, (laying it aside,) as soon as they were dead, their souls were miserable, being cut off from the presence of the Lord. And now there was no means to reclaim men from this fallen state which man had brought upon himself, because of his own disobedience; (Alma 19:92-93) And in verse 95, it states: "Now the work of justice could not be destroyed: if so God would cease to be God."

There is a basic principle that says, if there is no punishment, there is no law. For example, the speed limit on Interstate 35, (in most places in Iowa) is 70 mph. What would happen if there was no penalty for driving faster? If we drove faster, what could the law do? Would it be unjust, to speed, if there was no penalty. It would not! But we know there is a penalty. If we speed and get caught, the penalty is enacted. If there is no penalty, justice would be destroyed. Alma states, more than once, if justice is destroyed, God would cease to be God. So how does God resolve this problem saving those who deserved to die, without violating the principles of justice?

This is where the atonement comes in. Man has sinned. There is no way he can come back into the presence of God. What price is sufficient to redeem man from his

sin of rebellion against God. The price would need to be very high. Higher than any man or group of man could ever pay. God plan of salvation is based on the principle that God himself would come to earth as a man and die to redeem man from this sin. God sacrifices and dies himself to pay for our sin. We call this death of God, the atonement. The atonement removes the curse of original sin and permits us to repent of our sins. When we repent, the mercy of God claims us. Otherwise, justice claims us. Alma explains it this way: "But there is a law given and a punishment affixed, and repentance granted; which repentance, mercy claimeth: otherwise, justice claimeth the creature, and executeth the law, and the law inflicteth the punishment; if not so, the works of justice would be destroyed, and God would cease to be God. But God ceaseth not to be God, and mercy claimeth the penitent, and mercy cometh because of the atonement; and the atonement bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead: and the resurrection of the dead bringeth back men into the presence of God; And thus they are restored into his presence; to be judged according to their works; according to the law and justice; for behold, justice exerciseth all his demands, and also mercy claimeth all which is her own; and thus, none but the truly penitent are saved. What, do ye suppose that mercy can rob justice? I say unto you, Nay; not one whit. If so, God would cease to be God. (Alma 104-107)

In this way, we are able to be restored into the presence of God. If we desired good, and did good, we are restored unto good. If we have desired evil, and did evil, we are restored unto evil.

There are many today that believe Christ's death on the cross has automatically saved all mankind. You cannot benefit from something you don't accept. God has said, "For what doth it profit a man if a gift is bestowed upon him, and he receive not the gift? Behold, he rejoices not in that which is given unto him, neither rejoices in him who is the giver of the gift." (DC 85:7)

There are many today that will tell you that you don't need to be anything to be saved. Jesus did it all. All we have to do is state we claim Jesus to be our Savior. We are saved by making that statement only. We don't need any works to be saved; or so they claim. These statements are only half true, and a half-truth is a lie. If you read all the scriptures, you will find more is required. For example in Mark 16:15 we

find, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." In John 3:16-18 we find, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish; but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He who believeth on him is not condemned; but he who believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the Only Begotten Son of God, which before was preached by the mouth of the holy prophets; for they testified of me."

So what does all this mean? What did Peter teach? In Acts 2: on the day of Pentecost, Peter had preached a powerful sermon under the influence of the Holy Ghost. In response came this question: Acts 2:37] 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." So far, we have belief, repentance, baptism and the Holy Ghost. Did Paul preach the same thing? In Acts 16: Paul and Silas had been beaten and thrown in prison. About midnight they started to sing some hymns. There was an earthquake and the prison was destroyed. The jailer, who knew the penalty if the prisoners were released, started to kill himself, but Paul stopped him. After all the excitement calmed down, the jailer said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. (Acts 16:30-33)

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. What does that mean? Some think it only means mental assent, nothing more. The brother of Jesus clearly states it means much more. He said, "Therefore wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead and cannot save you? Thou believest there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe, and tremble; thou hast made thyself like unto them, not being justified." (James 2:18-19) If we believe the truth, we must act on that belief. Belief in God's truth



requires us to be obedient to the truth. Otherwise, we are simply learning and learning, but never coming to a knowledge of the truth. Believe is more than a thought, it implies acting on the thought. Otherwise, we are equal to devils. Some of Jesus' words on this subject are:

"Yea, blessed are they who shall believe on your words, and come down into the depth of humility, and be baptized in my name; for they shall be visited with fire and the Holy Ghost, and shall receive a remission of their sins." (Mt 5:4)

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel. (Mark 1:13)

Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock, and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand; and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it. (Matthew 7:24-27)

Don't base your salvation on a single scripture. Man should live by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. Living by the truth, or in other words, being obedient to The Truth is how we attain salvation.



BEHOLD THE SAVIOR

High Priest Chuck Perry
Grain Valley, Missouri

June 26, 2011

Given at the Seventy Missionary Family Reunion at Graceland University

Oh, what I would do to have the kind of faith it takes to climb out of this boat I'm in and onto the crashing waves – to step out of my comfort zone, into the realm of the unknown where Jesus is, and he's holding out his hand. But the waves are calling out my name, and they laugh at me, reminding me of all the times I've tried before and failed. The waves, they keep on telling me time and time again, "Boy, you'll never win. You'll never win."

But the Voice of truth tells me a different story. The Voice of Truth says "do not be afraid!" And the Voice of Truth says "This is for My glory". Out of all the voices calling out to me, I will choose to listen and believe the Voice of Truth. ~ Casting Crowns



The weekly theme for our reunion this year is, "Behold the Savior". Throughout the ages, God has revealed his Son to man and has invited him to "Behold!" Speaking of the Messiah who would come in the flesh, Isaiah prophesied, "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!" (Isaiah 40:9). The word, "behold" means to perceive through sight or apprehension. Our common definition of the word "apprehend" means to seize or arrest, but a more applicable definition means to become aware of or to grasp the understanding of something. Thus, the call to "Behold the Savior" is a call to see him, to know him, to understand, and to grasp his true meaning and purpose.

To behold something implies a call to action. We cannot truly apprehend Jesus by our passive observation alone. We must actively pursue an ongoing relationship with him. He is always before us, but we must purposefully seek him if we hope to find him.

When the Israelites rebelled against Moses and Moses' God, they were afflicted by fiery serpents that bit them and caused suffering and death. After they had repented of their wickedness, Moses was commanded to lift up the brass serpent in the midst of the people, and when they were bitten by the fiery serpents, they could look upon the brass serpent and be saved. This healing required that they look – that they behold – their salvation. Those who refused to look, suffered and perished.

Throughout history, God has laid before his people the vast horizon of his promises, but the people were required to both see and grasp those blessings. After their reconnaissance mission into the Promised Land, the twelve spies returned to Moses with their findings. Caleb urged, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we" (Numbers 13:27-31). The faithlessness of the people prohibited them from entering into their rest. They could see the Promised Land, but they refused to truly behold it.

Bodies of water have often stood between the Lord's people and the blessings God had prepared for them. After leading the Israelites out of the

bondage of Egypt, Moses stood at the edge of the Red Sea. Facing certain death at the hands of Pharaoh's army, Moses proved the God of Israel and parted the mighty sea. In the famous film "The Ten Commandments," Charlton Heston's Moses declared, "The Lord of Hosts will do battle for us! Behold his mighty hand!" God brought the children of Israel to the place of no escape, so they would know that it was by his hand alone that they were saved. They had no choice but to behold and become witnesses of the power of God.

When the Israelites finally were allowed into the Promised Land, the River Jordan stood between them and their long-awaited rest. Once again, God asked them to behold his mighty hand. As the Levites carried the ark of the covenant into the river, the waters of the Jordan rose up in a great heap, and the Israelites passed over on dry ground. In both of these examples, God asked his children to behold his glory as he demonstrated his power over the elements. He asked them to get out of the boat and trust God to take them where they, themselves, could not go. He asked them to listen and believe that the God behind the Voice of Truth could deliver what he promised.

What is the Voice of Truth? Peter heard that voice when he saw his Lord walking on the water (Matthew 14:20-26). The Voice of Truth said, "Be of good cheer. Behold my glory. Be not afraid. You can do this!" Peter failed in this attempt to exercise faith, but his testimony was later perfected as he lived and died with the apostolic witness of Jesus upon his lips. The Voice of Truth persuaded Peter to rise up and embrace the mantle of the Lord.

The mantle of discipleship is often difficult to bear. Even faithful Elijah had moments of doubt and despair. After fleeing from the threats of Jezebel, Elijah found himself alone, in the wilderness, under a juniper tree. He cried out to God, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers (I Kings 19:4). In his weakness, the voices of doubt and fear sought to dissuade him from God's divine plan, but the Voice of Truth rang clear and unmistakable – "Arise! Go to Damascus. There you will anoint kings over Syria and Judah, and Elisha will be my holy prophet."

Shortly before Elijah was taken into heaven, God sent him to Jordan.

Accompanied by Elisha, he stood before an obstacle that separated him and his divine mission – the River Jordan. Elijah smote the waters of the Jordan with his mantle, and, in an epic demonstration of the power of God, the waters of the river parted as they had done many years before. Elijah and Elisha passed over on dry ground (II Kings 2:8). As Elijah was caught up into heaven on the chariot of fire, his mantle fell at the feet of Elisha. Elisha picked up the mantle and, remembering the great faith of his mentor, smote the very same waters of Jordan and cried, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" (II Kings 2:14). Surely the whispers of doubt and unbelief surrounded Elisha, but he chose to listen and believe the Voice of Truth. Elisha trusted in the God of Israel, and God proved himself faithful.

In March of 1921, a group of Graceland students caught the vision of the kingdom as they attended a series of meetings called "Zion Builders". One of those students penned the words of one of our most-beloved hymns of the Restoration. In clear and certain terms, the hymn proclaims, "Though the task be great that lies before us, we trust in One Divinely Strong. Knowing well, at last, we'll be victorious. We will pray that the time will not be long!"

The mantle of Zion now rests firmly upon our shoulders. This mantle is both a burden and a blessing. It is a burden because it requires every ounce of our strength and faith, but it is a blessing because we know that God will prove himself faithful and sustain us in our trials. It is a burden that we can never lay down, but it is a blessing because we can behold the Promised Land of Zion just over the River Jordan. It is a burden because it seems, at times, more than we can bear, but it is a blessing because the Voice of Truth tells us a different story. The Voice of Truth says "Do not be afraid". The Voice of Truth says, "Zion is for MY glory". Out of all the voices calling out to us, will we choose to listen and believe the Voice of Truth?

Fear not, little flock, the kingdom is yours until I come. Behold, (Look! Understand! Apprehend! Believe!) I come quickly. Even so. Amen. (D&C 34:6d).





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

c/o Cheryl Phipps
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*Ryder Rowland baptized by
Sherman Phipps*



*Josua Jordison baptized by
Michael Jordison.*



CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST - MT AYR RESTORATION BRANCH

JULY 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)

And it Came to Pass...

The Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Do you ever think about it? Can you explain what it is to someone? How is it different than the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, or is it?

Are you obedient to it?

It used to be a common thing in this church to talk about 'obedience to the Gospel'. There have been times when I've questioned what that meant. There have been times in my life when it could be said that my witness sure didn't show any obedience to it.

Books could and have been written about what obedience to the Gospel might mean, but the simple fact of the matter is that obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ begins AND ends with walking through a gate. That gate is baptism.

Last month 3 individuals walked

through that gate determined to be obedient to something other than themselves. Their obedience was to a simple commandment from our Lord, "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins". Because of their obedience they were given a gift to help them continue their journey: the Holy Ghost. This gift is to help them press on to the end of their lives in obedience to the Gospel.

The question that I have to ask myself is, 'Am I using *my* Gift to be obedient to the Gospel? Baptism isn't something that we do once and then move on to something else, but rather it is something that we ARE, and continue to be every day of our lives.

When we live in obedience to the Gospel, we are obedient to God's commandments - baptized, or dead to sin. Try putting the emphasis on BEING baptized and you'll find yourself in obedience to the Gospel... to the end.

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