



Church of Jesus Christ *Mount Ayr Restoration Branch*

NEWSLETTER

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News & Notes

2011 JCRB Conference

The JCRB National Conference was held October 6-8 at the Gathering Place Conference Center, in Independence.

Retirement Reception

Brother Rob Rolfe retired after serving Lamoni for 21 years as City Attorney. He was honored on September 25th with a reception by the City. Congratulations Rob & Lynda.

It's FALL!!



The annual congregational hayride and wiener roast is set for October 16th. Meet at Jim & Linda Barber's home at 3:00 PM.

Restoration Preaching

Saints are invited to a preaching service sponsored jointly by the JCRB and the Remnant Church. Sundays at 6:00 PM with High Priest Roger Gault on Oct. 23rd and Patriarch Carl Vun Cannon Jr. on Oct. 30th. The services will be held at The Gathering Place in Independence.

Armed & Harmless

Fourteen gathered in fellowship at Ed & Diane Anderson's to shoot clay pigeons. Adrian Rolfe worked hard to keep everyone safe while having fun. Diane kept everyone warm with hot chili and homemade apple crisp. Mmmmm...!!!

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Pastoral Considerations

by Sherman Phipps

I have been reading the Doctrine and Covenants recently – for the third time in the last year or so. Each time I read it I am amazed when I consider what it would be like to have been a participant in the early restoration. Joseph, the prophet, having been truly called of God, was able like every prophet to go to the Lord and inquire of him when there were questions of every type. The Lord was revealing himself and his truth to Joseph on a regular basis, sometimes on multiple occasions in any given month or even week.

I am just as amazed when I consider how little we (beginning in the 1820s to the present) have done with what we have been given in latter day scripture (D & C, Book of Mormon and Inspired Version). It seems that we are more inclined to sit around and analyze what we have been given than to apply it. Oh, I know there are those who will say that it is necessary to analyze before going forward in order to be sure we proceed properly. But, what if we could learn to share our views and go forward, if necessary, in several different directions, while remaining supportive of one another in prayer and in our hearts. Then we could simply watch and see which direction(s) produce good fruit for the Kingdom – without letting pride get in our way making us defensive or determined to somehow prove ourselves right. Instead of defending a position just because it is the one we have adopted, we should be willing to look at the fruit and taste of it. The scriptures make it clear that only a good tree can bring forth good fruit. (3rd Nephi 6:13-35)

I am sure there are those who would think this a foolish suggestion. I mean, what if we have people going in several directions at once? We could end up scattered and separated into several different groups. Sort of like, oh yes, like we are anyhow! So why not quit defending our own ways and join together to see if any of what we have been doing has borne fruit. Which part of the vineyard is worth pruning and digging about and preserving? (Jacob 3:31-153)

There might be those who complain that my suggestion could also result in wasting a lot of time. I would suggest that we have wasted centuries insisting on our own way and not loving and supporting one another as the scriptures tell us to do even though we may have different views on some matters. If only we would learn to obey the commandments. Not this doctrine or that doctrine, but God's commandments: love one another, be humble, repent, defer to our brother, be patient, have only one God (the great I AM) and acknowledge Him in all things, etc. When will we submit ourselves unto God and let Him lead us? It is, after all, His work and not ours that we are supposed to be engaged in.

Section 64 of the Doctrine and Covenants was to have been the last section of the Book of Commandments as originally intended to be printed. The type had been set as far as “the blood of Ephraim” in paragraph 7b when a mob destroyed the press at Independence, MO. I wonder how many, if any, at that time recognized that the destruction of the press was in fact a fulfillment of the very words being printed in D & C 64:7a, b. I also wonder how many of God's words are being fulfilled

Continued on back page...

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM



Seventy Ron Smith

Lamoni, Iowa

September 4, 2011

Good morning. It's a pleasure to be home again and it's especially nice to have Cede with us. I can't tell you what a joy that's been to have her around. This is going to be her first communion service for a number of years and we're glad that she's here with us.

I thought I'd like to try and do something that maybe would be a little bit special for the communion service this morning. We're going to use some music and some scriptures, and hopefully it will be something that will bring joy to your souls. As we've been fasting this last week and trying to follow the guidelines I've found it really kind of difficult to not ask for something in my prayers and to just say thank you. Di has done a really good job of finding ways to thank the Lord for the blessing instead of asking for the blessing. I have been trying to take the clue from her but I still find myself asking for things instead of just thanking Him. I think I've done more thanksgiving and praise than usual and it's been a good experience.

I'd like to talk about the gospel of the kingdom this morning and just to get us started I'll read from Matthew 24:32. *And again, this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end*



come, or the destruction of the wicked. This was Jesus talking to His disciples and telling about the signs of His coming and of the end times. He said, *this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world.* It's been my privilege and blessing to have an opportunity to share the gospel of the kingdom in many, many places and this morning I would like to share it with you and to maybe help us get a good perspective on that gospel of the kingdom.

Jesus taught that the purpose of his ministry was to share the gospel of the kingdom. In Luke 4:43 He tells the people in a little village who want Him to stay that *I must preach the gospel of the kingdom to other cities also, for therefore am I sent.* When He taught us how to pray He taught us to say, *Thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* He didn't ask us to pray, Lord, help me to die really quickly so that I can get in your kingdom. He asked us to pray Thy kingdom come. I want it to be here. I want it to be part of your life and that's the invitation that the gospel of the kingdom has for each and every one. You can be part of the kingdom here on this earth. You can be part of it now. As we understand that gospel of the kingdom we understand that *the kingdom is not meat and drink but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.* (Romans 14:17)

A Light Goes On

In class this morning Alan asked if there was ever a time when we found great joy in finding a scripture. I shared a little bit about when Dad (Delbert Smith) and I were discovering the scriptures about the kingdom and discovering what we'd been reading all the time and putting it together. We had an outline much like the one that we have used for many years since, but we didn't have "seek ye first the kingdom of God" connected with the other scriptures as well because we didn't know what the kingdom of God was. When I found Romans 14:17 it was just like a light went on and I wanted to tell everybody about it. It put everything together for us and was a neat experience.

My brother Steve has written a song about the gospel of the kingdom. Most of you know this but it's on the back of your bulletin if you'd like to turn it over and we'll sing it.

Come on and tell me about the gospel of the kingdom I want to hear it again.

Last time I heard it I was with family and friends .

And we were talkin' to the Lord and braggin' on Jesus

and singin' some fine melodies

So come on and bring that gospel of the kingdom to me.

Come on and tell me about the gospel of the kingdom I want to hear it again.

How God who made me wants to be my friend,

And I can mark off time with the secrets He tells me

To rejoice in fulfilled prophecy

So come on and bring that gospel of the kingdom to me.

Come on and tell me about the gospel of the kingdom I want to hear it again.

God's made a bunch of promises He'll honor to the end

If I will do what He asks He's bound to bless me

And add to my testimony

So come on and bring that gospel of the kingdom to me.

Come on and tell me about the gospel of the kingdom I want to hear it again.

I want to have His spirit when I remember Him

And I adopt His name as a child of His

To keep commands that set me free.

So come on and bring that gospel of the kingdom to me.

Come on and tell me about the gospel of the kingdom I want to hear it again.

Last time I heard it I was with family and friends

And we were talkin' to the Lord and braggin' on Jesus

and singin' some fine melodies.

So come on and bring that gospel of the kingdom to me.

That sounded really good. I'd like to share some of the scriptures that go with that song just to remind you of the gospel of the kingdom and what it means. The first one was the one that I read already from Matthew the 24th chapter because this gospel of the kingdom is the key to God's plan for the earth and His plan for salvation. There are many, many churches in the world that talk about our spiritual salvation and that God's plan is just to have us go to heaven and be with Him forever. But God's plan in the restored

gospel is to have His kingdom here on the earth! We are to be on the earth with God, and the nations of the earth shall become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ. That kingdom will have no end and His will will be done on the earth. You know if the will of God were done on the earth there wouldn't be any wars, there wouldn't be any people beating their wives, there wouldn't be any of the wickedness and things that go on in this world because His will is that those things don't happen. But God is not going to do it by force. He invites us into the kingdom and He asks us to come and share freely of the waters of life.

The song we sang says, *Come on and tell me about the gospel of the kingdom I want to hear it again. Last time I heard it I was with family and friends, and we were talking to the Lord and braggin on Jesus and singing some fine melodies.* Do you know when that happened last? Well it happened just a minute ago. We were with family and friends and talking to the Lord (praying) and bragging on Jesus (sharing our testimonies). We do that on Wednesday nights and we do it on Sunday nights and Sunday mornings. We come together and meet together often.

In Moroni 6:6-9 it says it this way. *And the church did meet together oft, to fast and to pray, and to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls: and they did meet together oft to partake of bread and wine, in remembrance of the Lord Jesus; And they were strict to observe that there should be no iniquity among them; and whoso was found to commit iniquity, and three witnesses of the church did condemned them before the elders; And if they repented not, and confessed not, their names were blotted out, and they were not numbered among the people of Christ; but as oft as they repented, and sought forgiveness, with real intent, they were forgiven. And their meetings were conducted by the church, after the manner of the workings of the Spirit, and by the power of the Holy Ghost; for as the power of the Holy Ghost led them whether to preach or exhort, or to pray, or to supplicate, or to sing, even so it was done.*

I really appreciate that description. I think that sometimes our services have come close to that when we are together on our Sunday nights and the Lord leads us to sing or to pray or to share testimonies. I really appreciate the opportunity that we have to be with our church family and to



share in those ways.

God Wants to be My Friend

The first verse of the song says *Come on and tell me about the gospel of the kingdom I want to hear it again. How God who made me wants to be my friend.* As I consider that it was God who made me, the scripture that pops into mind is the eighth Psalm. For me it's one of those marvelous amazing ones. *O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens... When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?* (1, 3-4) God who made us, God who made the universe and all the vast, vast immensity of space, what is man that thou art mindful of him?

On the first day of my calculus class I tell my kids that there's nothing that's either good or bad in this world but everything is a compound in one and that includes calculus. Calculus can be used for good and it can be used for bad. I share with them about Voyager II, a spacecraft which was launched in 1977. I tell my class how calculus was used to determine the trajectory. The spacecraft was aimed so that it would come close to Jupiter two years after its launch. The idea was that the gravity of Jupiter would speed it up and at the right time they fired up the booster rockets so Voyager II wouldn't fall into Jupiter but kept on going. Jupiter's gravity worked like a slingshot and slung it towards Saturn, which it reached after another two years. They did the same thing with Saturn and used the gravity of Saturn to speed it up and sling it out some more. After twelve years it was within 41 miles of its intended target, 3000 miles off the surface of Neptune. Voyager II is still going after 34 years. It is traveling 33,000 miles per hour (fast enough to go 1 and 1/3 time around the earth each hour) and still sending back information to earth. In about two more years it's going to be outside of the solar system.

All of that space is just our solar system, just the one star we call our sun. And not only is there the sun but there are billions of stars like it all throughout our galaxy. Not only is there our milky way galaxy but there are billions of galaxies all over the universe. With the Hubble telescope they've done some serious

counting of the stars. If you took every square inch of the earth's surface and divided it by the number of stars there would be about 88,000 stars per square inch and that's the ones that we can see in the visible universe. *What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?*

But the song reminds us that the God who made us wants to be our friend. Jesus told His disciples in John 15:14-16. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit; and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.* That's the kind of relationship that God would like to have.

“The commandments are full of promises and they will all be fulfilled.”

Now in our particular part of society we are not used to having servants in our houses but there are parts of our society where there are servants in the house. When I went to places in Africa where there are servants, it was really surprising to me to find the attitude that people took towards servants. A lot of them treat servants like a piece of furniture and they are just there to be used and are more like a coffee table than a person. If you decide you want to put your feet up on it you do. If you decide you want to sit on it you do. I'm using an analogy here but the Master doesn't tell his servant what he's planning. Rather, the master just says what to do and the servant does it. There's no question about it. They just do it but Jesus tells us, *Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit; and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

He's trying to tell us that if we would keep His commandments that we would know the things that He's going to do. He

wants to have us be a part of that. He wants to have our prayers be a part of shaping the things that are done in the world that whatever we ask would be done. Wouldn't that be a wonderful kind of relationship to have with Him? Is it worth doing the things that He says? Is it worth forgiving our fellowman? Is it worth letting nothing stand between us and others and the work He's called us to do in order to have that kind of relationship? That's what He's calling us to do. That's what the kingdom is about when we are obeying the commands of the King so that we can be His friends.

God has called us to be His friends and the song says, I can mark off time with the secrets He tells me to rejoice in fulfilled prophecy. Doctrine and Covenants 1:7 says, *Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled.* The scriptures are full of the prophecies that God has given. And the prophecies will come to pass—they will all be fulfilled. As we learn the prophecies, we will be amazed at their fulfillment.

God is Bound By His Word

The next verse says, *God's made a bunch of promises He'll honor to the end if I will do what He asks He's bound to bless me and add to my testimony.* This refers to Doctrine and Covenants 81:3. It says, *And again, I say unto you, I give unto you a new commandment, that you may understand my will concerning you, or in other words, I give unto you directions how you may act before me, that it may turn to you for your salvation.* Notice how He wants to be our friend here. He's saying I am going to give you a commandment and if you will keep this commandment you'll know what to do. It will give you direction in your life. It will help you to know what He wants for you. So here it is. Are you ready? *I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say, but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.* So where's the commandment there? What He's telling you that will help you is that if you'll do what He says then He's bound to keep the promises that He's made. The commandments are full of promises and they will all be fulfilled. He says, *I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say.* I have given my word and my word will not fail. Though everybody else fails around you God will not disappoint you. He says



He is bound to do what He says He will do but when you don't do what He says, you have no promise. It doesn't say I am not going to bless you if you don't do what I say, but if you don't do what I say you don't have the promise that the blessing will always be there.

Folks, we are coming to days when the things of this world are going to fail. The Lord has been very clear on this point and has said it over and over and over, But He also says if we do what He says we'll have the promise but if we don't do what He says He's not bound and we won't have the promise. Being part of His kingdom has to do with partaking of His promises and having the promised blessings that are attached to His commandments, knowing that He's bound to keep His word when we do what He says.

The song reminds us that God will add to our testimony. John 5:40 is relevant in that regard. Jesus tells His disciples, *Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me.* We can have the testimony of Jesus both in our lives and to share as we search the scriptures. That means that we have to turn off the TV once in a while and open up the scriptures. It means that we have to spend some time in fasting and prayer and searching those scriptures so that we can have the testimony of Jesus in our life. It means that we have to order our lives around the good word.

We spend all our life determining what our lives are like. We make choices every day. We're like pieces of clay that get to mold ourselves. We make choices that determine what's going to happen to us and what we're going to be like. We don't always determine everything that's going to happen to us. That's not what I mean. A lot of other people are out there making choices too and their pieces of clay bump against our pieces of clay and chip off some of the corners sometime and do some things that we might not like. But we determine, in a large part, what we're going to be by the choices that we make every day. We can choose to do things that just make us feel good but we need to know that the natural man is an enemy to God and always will be and always has been. If we determine to make our choices based on what feels good rather than on the spirit of God and what the scriptures say and what the promises are then we'll end up not being part of the kingdom of God.

We won't have the promises that he's made. All of us, myself included, have to deal with that every day, that the choices that we make determine what we are going to be. The things that we choose to think about, the things that we read, the things that we watch, the things that we say are the things that determine who we are.

In the final analysis we're told that there's going to be a perfect remembrance of everything that we've ever done or thought or said and every word is going to be accounted for. We'll see it all and then the question is what will we feel like then when we're standing in front of God and we can't hide anything. It's only if we've come to Christ and only if we put our trust in Him and let His blood take away our sins that we can even hope to stand at the last day. So He's going to add to our testimony as we do that.

His Spirit To Always Be With Us

Come on and tell me about the gospel of the kingdom I want to hear it again. I want to have His spirit when I remember Him and I adopt His name as a child of His to keep commands that set me free so come on and bring that gospel of the kingdom to me. This verse is taken almost directly from Moroni 4:4 which is the prayer on the bread or Doctrine and Covenants 17:22d if you prefer to look it up there. This is the prayer that Jesus gave on the bread when He blessed it. It's something to have recorded the prayer that Jesus gave and it says *they administered it according to the commandment of Christ; wherefore we know the manner to be true; and the elder or priest did administer it.* (Moroni 4:2) Here's what Jesus said in that prayer, *O God, the eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God the eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him, and keep his commandments which he has given them, that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.* (Moroni 4:4)

This is the covenant that we make when we partake of the bread today which we will do in just a few moments. We witness that we are willing to take His name and always remember Him and to keep His commandments. If we'll do those things He'll give us His spirit to be

with us always. We can call on that gift of the spirit whenever we need it to show us the truth, to lead us in the paths of righteousness, to do those things which bring comfort and joy and peace to our lives and all of the love that we so desperately are looking for.

That's what the kingdom is all about, folks, and the communion service is at the heart of the kingdom. This is what we do when we partake of the communion. We take His name, or, as the song says, *I adopt His name as a child of His.* Then we promise to keep his commandments (*to keep commands that set me free*). We also promise to remember Him always so that we can always have his Spirit to be with us (*I want to have His spirit when I remember Him*). Would you like to have His spirit with you – always? We can. That's what this communion service is about and that's the joy that He brings.

So, with that I would like to have us sing one more song. This is a song again about the communion and that's why I asked that we could share this before the communion. This song follows the scripture in Moroni 4.

Chorus:

(We'll) Take His name, Remember Him,
Keep all His commandments.
That we may always have His Spirit
blessing us.

Kneeling down with the church, Praying to
the Father
Asking Him in Jesus name, To bless and
sanctify.

Chorus

Eat this bread remembering the body that
was broken.
Eat this bread witnessing that we are
willing to--

Chorus

Drink this wine remembering the blood
that was shed for us.
Drink this wine witnessing that we
remember Him.

Chorus

You say you love the Lord your God with
all your heart and soul.
You say you love the Lord your God with
all your mind and strength. So—



Chorus

That is the gospel of the kingdom.
May God bless you as we partake of this
communion.



Haste! Fulfill My Will
Inspired message given through R.E.
Burgess at Conference
April 18, 1930

Hearken unto me, my people,
Saith the Lord your God today,
Hear ye now this admonition
Which my Spirit to you doth say.

I have spoken through my prophets
Telling of the days to come,
When my judgments will be poured out
Without measure; fail shall none.

Pestilence and also famine,
Wind and rain my wrath shall show,
Lightning and the awful thunder
Spread destruction here below.

I've set for you a task, my people,
Before you stands an open door;
Enter ye the task to accomplish,
Zion beckons; hast ye more.

Then ye shall behold my city,
Fair and glorious as the sun,
Rise in her celestial beauty,
Haste! fulfill my will; be one.

**A MARB
Hello to
Carnie &
Joyce
Anderson.**

JUST P U S H



Priest Jim Barber
Bethany, Missouri
September 11, 2011

As a scripture reading Brother Barber used Matthew 18:15-34. *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. Again, I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, that they may not ask amiss, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Then came Peter to him and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus said unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times; but, until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, who would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him who owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and*

payment to be made. And the servant besought him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. The servant, therefore, fell down and worshipped him. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants which owed him a hundred pence; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant! I forgave thee all that debt; because thou desiredst me; shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Forgive Us As WE Forgive Others

I looked up on the internet the word forgiveness. This is from Wikipedia the free encyclopedia so it's got to be good. *Forgiveness is typically defined as the process of concluding resentment, indignation or anger as a result of a perceived offense, difference or mistake, or ceasing to demand punishment or restitution.* Sometimes it's kind of hard to forgive some people but it's a must. The scripture that I read I broke into three different parts. The first part talked about if your brother has offended you, you are supposed to go to him and discuss it with him and tell him that you need to work things out. If he accepts that then the scriptures says you have gained a brother. In other words, he is with you and he could be a part of God's kingdom. If he doesn't accept that then you are supposed to take one or two other people with you and again try to work it out. If he still is not responsive to that then you are supposed to take it to the church. I guess what it is saying really is that you are supposed to do all that you can to make restitution with this person. Then it's in God's hands. We can't judge that person. God is the one



who deals out the judgment but you have done your part. You have done everything in your power to make restitution to that person.

The second part talks about when Peter asked the question, *Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus said not seven times but seventy times seven.* Quite a while back at prayer service Cheryl was talking about something that she has problems with and I have that same problem. I am sure God's forgiven me 490 times plus so what do you do? Are you supposed to just quit. I don't think so.

If we turn to Mosiah 11:137-141 it says, *Therefore I say unto you, Go; and whosoever transgresseth against me, him shall ye judge according to the sins which he has committed; And if he confess his sins before thee and me, and repenteth in the sincerity of his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also; Yea, and as often as my people repent, will I forgive them their trespasses against me. And ye shall also forgive one another your trespasses: for verily I say unto you, He that forgiveth not his neighbor's trespasses, when he says that he repents, the same hath brought himself under condemnation. Now I say unto you, Go; and whosoever will not repent of his sins, the same shall not be numbered among my people: and this shall be observed from this time forward.* I think as long as we keep asking God for forgiveness, He will forgive us. It's when we quit asking that we are in trouble.

The third part of the scripture that I read talked about the Lord going to one of his servants and telling him that he owed him 10,000 talents and the servant couldn't pay him. The Lord said that he was going to have everything that the servant owned sold to make restitution but the servant begged him and said he if he would just be patient with him he would make payment in due time. The Lord was moved and had compassion and forgave him and told him that he didn't owe anything but then what did the servant do? He turned right around and went to one of his fellow servants and said that he owed him a 100 pence. He choked him and almost killed him. Then the fellow servant begged forgiveness just like this servant had done to the Lord and told him that in due time he would pay him but he wouldn't do it and cast him into prison until the debt was paid. Then the Lord came back to the other servant and

asked him why he hadn't had compassion on his fellow servant as the Lord had had compassion on him. So the Lord turned this servant over to the tormentors and threw him in prison until the debt was paid. We are servants of God and He forgives us therefore aren't we supposed to forgive those who are in debt to us or those who offend us?

I am sure some of you kids probably know this story but I'd like to read Luke 19:2-10 for you if I may. *And behold, there was a man named Zaccheus, who was chief among the publicans; and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus, who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him; for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when the disciples saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner. And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by unjust means, I restore fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham; For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

Zaccheus recognized that he was a sinner and he wanted to make restitution. The people who knew Zaccheus actually kind of condemned Jesus because He went and had dinner with a man who was a sinner but Jesus knew what was in Zaccheus' heart. He knew that he wanted to repent and therefore, Jesus told him that he was forgiven. Jesus was willing to forgive him and allow him to come into the kingdom.

Philippians 2:1-11 says, *If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; Who, being in the form of*

God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

It says that we are to be like minded, like unto Jesus Christ. Jesus had love. He had compassion for His fellow servants. He wanted us to be of one mind not lifting ourselves up nor making ourselves better than someone else. We are to look at someone else's life and help lift them up, to humble ourselves and put them above us. Jesus came to this earth as a man so that He could walk and talk with each one of us and live a life that would guide us and direct us to His kingdom. He was able to overcome the temptations that Satan put upon Him. We are to be like Him.

A Broken Heart and Contrite Spirit

Third Nephi 4 tells about the time of Christ's crucifixion when there was a great darkness, a lot of earthquakes and all kinds of disasters that happened on this continent. After three days of darkness, the people heard a voice out of the darkness and this is what the voice told them, *And many great destructions have I caused to come upon this land, and upon this people, because of their wickedness and their abominations. O all ye that are spared, because ye were more righteous than they, will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you? Yea, verily I say unto you, If ye will come unto me, ye shall have eternal life. Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come, him will I receive; and blessed are those who come unto me. Behold I am Jesus Christ, the son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. I was with the Father from the beginning. I am in the Father, and the Father in me; and in me hath the Father glorified his name. I came unto my own, and my own received me not. And the scriptures, concerning my coming, are fulfilled. And as many as have received me,*



to them have I given to become the sons of God; and even so will I to as many as shall believe on my name, for behold, by me redemption cometh, and in me is the Law of Moses fulfilled. I am the light and the life of the world. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. And ye shall offer up unto me no more the shedding of blood; yea, your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away, for I will accept none of your sacrifices and your burnt offerings; and ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost, even as the Lamanites, because of their faith in me, at the time of their conversion, were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and they knew it not. Behold, I have come unto the world to bring redemption unto the world, to save the world from sin: therefore whoso repenteth and cometh unto me as a little child, him will I receive; for of such is the kingdom of God. Behold, for such I have laid down my life, and have taken it up again; therefore repent, and come unto me ye ends of the earth, and be saved. And now behold, it came to pass that all the people of the land did hear these sayings; and did witness of it. And after these sayings there was silence in the land for the space of many hours; for so great was

“We are to look at someone else’s life and help lift them up, to humble ourselves and put them above us.”

the astonishment of the people that they did cease lamenting and howling for the loss of their kindred which had been slain, therefore there was silence in all the land for the space of many hours. And it came to pass that there came a voice again unto the people, and all the people did hear, and did witness of it saying, O ye people of these great cities which have fallen, who are descendants of Jacob; yea, who are of the house of Israel, O, ye people of the house of Israel, how oft have I gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and have nourished you. And again, how oft would I have gathered you, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings; yea, O ye people of the house of Israel, who have fallen; Yea, O ye people of the house of Israel; ye that dwell at Jerusalem, as ye that have fallen; yea, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen

gathereth her chickens, and ye would not. O ye house of Israel, whom I have spared, how oft will I gather you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, if ye will repent and return unto me with full purpose of heart. But if not, O house of Israel, the places of your dwellings shall become desolate, until the time of the fulfilling of the covenant to your fathers. And now it came to pass that after the people had heard these words, behold they began to weep and howl again, because of the loss of their kindred and friends. And it came to pass that thus did the three days pass away. (40-61)

Christ told the people that He no longer wanted them to make blood sacrifices because He was the ultimate sacrifice and He had made that sacrifice. Their sacrifice was a broken heart and a contrite spirit. That’s a very humbling experience to come before God and admit that we are weak and have sinned and ask God to forgive us. But God is always there and He will always listen to us. He wants to gather us together to be one body and He will do this if we are willing to follow His commandments.

Another scripture in the Doctrine and Covenants 64:2a-e says, *I will be merciful unto you, for I have given unto you the kingdom; and the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom, shall not be taken from my servant Joseph Smith, Jr., through the means I have appointed, while he liveth, inasmuch as he obeyeth mine ordinances. There are those who have sought occasion against him without cause; nevertheless he has sinned, but verily I say unto you, I, the Lord, forgiveth sins unto those who confess their sins before me, and ask forgiveness, who have not sinned unto death. My disciples, in days of old, sought occasion against one another, and forgave not one another in their hearts, and for this evil they were afflicted, and sorely chastened; wherefore I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses, standeth condemned before the Lord, for there remaineth in him the greater sin. I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men; and ye ought to say in your hearts, Let God judge between me and thee, and reward thee according to thy deeds.* Evidently there were a lot of people that were looking at Joseph and saying that he wasn’t the man that he was supposed to be and were trying to condemn him. God told

them that yes Joseph was a sinner and that he had sinned but He also told them that He would forgive any of those who came to Him repentant and we need to do likewise. Again we can’t condemn someone else. We have to forgive them if they ask for forgiveness and if we don’t then we are not fit for God’s kingdom either.

We Must Forgive the Unforgivable

All of you know that this is the tenth anniversary of 9-11. Ten years ago there was a series of attacks on the United States. The September 11th attacks were a series of four coordinated suicide attacks against targets in New York and Washington D.C. On that morning 19 Al Qaeda terrorists hijacked four passenger jets. The hijackers intentionally crashed two planes into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. Both towers collapsed within two hours. Hijackers crashed a third plane into the Pentagon in Arlington, VA. When passengers attempted to take control of the fourth plane, United Airlines Flight 93, it crashed into a field near Shanksville, PA preventing it from reaching its intended target in Washington D.C. Nearly 3000 people died in the attacks. There were a total of 2996 including the nineteen hijackers. The victims included 246 on the four planes from which there were no survivors, 2606 in New York City in the towers and on the ground and 125 at the Pentagon. All of the deaths in the attacks were civilians except for 55 military personnel killed at the Pentagon.

Are we supposed to forgive the hijackers? It’s kind of tough isn’t it? If you had a loved one that was in the Twin Towers and didn’t survive, it would be pretty tough but until we can forgive them, God can’t forgive us. In the scriptures the disciples of old weren’t always forgiving of each other and they suffered because of that. We have to forgive the hijackers. I know it’s difficult and that’s just one instance. There are lots of different times when it’s hard to forgive somebody. I guess I’m kind of reminded too back when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and what we did to the Japanese that lived in this country. We gathered them all up and put them in concentration camps. That wasn’t very forgiving. The Japanese in this country had absolutely nothing to do with the bombing but we didn’t treat them very well. Maybe we learned something



from that because I don't feel that we did that to the Muslims in this country after 9-11. I'll have to admit I have some pretty ill feelings about Muslims but we can't condemn others because of one or two acts.

What about Christ who set the example for us? In Luke 23:35 what did Jesus say, *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.* He was talking about the Roman soldiers and He asked God to forgive them. They didn't treat Jesus very well either but yet He forgave them.

I received an email that I want to share with you.

A man was sleeping one night in his cabin when suddenly his room filled with light and God appeared. The Lord told the man he had work for him to do and showed him a large rock in front of his cabin. The Lord explained that the man was to push against the rock with all his might so this man did day after day for many years. He toiled from sun up to sun down his shoulder set squarely against the cold massive surface of the unmoving rock pushing with all his might. Each night the man returned to his cabin sore and worn out feeling that his whole day had been spent in vain. Since the man was showing discouragement the adversary satan, he always has to enter the picture, decided to enter the picture by placing thoughts into the man's weary mind. He will do it every time. You have been pushing against that rock for a long time and it hasn't moved. Thus he gave the man the impression that the task was impossible and that he was a failure. These thoughts discouraged and disheartened the man. Satan said, 'Why kill yourself over this. Just put in your time giving just the minimum effort and that will be good enough.'

That's what the weary man planned to do but decided to make it a matter of prayer and to take his troubled thoughts to the Lord. 'Lord,' he said, 'I have labored long and hard in your service putting all my strength to do that which you have asked. Yet after all this time I have not even budged that rock by half a millimeter. What is wrong? Why am I failing? The Lord responded compassionately. 'My friend when I asked you to serve me and you accepted I told you that your task was to push against the

rock with all your strength which you have done. Never once did I mention to you that I expected you to move it. Your task was to push and now you come to me with your strength spent thinking that you have failed, but is that really so? Look at yourself. Your arms are strong and muscled. Your back shiny and brown. Your hands are calloused from constant pressure. Your legs have become massive and hard. Through opposition you have grown much and your abilities now surpass that which you use to have. True you haven't moved the rock but your calling was to be obedient to push and to exercise your faith and trust in my wisdom. That you have done. Now I my friend will move the rock.

At times when we hear a word from God we tend to use our own intellect to decipher what He wants when actually what God wants is just simple obedience and faith in Him. When everything seems to go wrong, just P U S H. When the job gets you down, just P U S H. When people don't do as you think they should, just P U S H. When your money is gone and the bills are due, just P U S H. When people just don't understand you just P U S H. Now do you know what P U S H stands for? Pray until something happens.

If we can pass this along to our friends and loved ones it might help them to realize that their efforts are not in vain. Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending. Friends are quiet angels who lift us up to our feet when our wings have trouble remembering how to fly.

May God bless you.



CHRIST'S BRIDE

The following words were given by the Spirit to Bishop Bullard as he was studying on the subject, November, 1911. —Zion's Ensign

I saw a woman pure and fair,
All clad in glory bright;
A tiara rich bedecked her hair,
Of jewels clear as light.

Her raiment pure as whitest snow,
No sun could spot display,
Her face in radiant glories glow,
Shone bright as noontide ray.

Her form symmetrical and strong,
Erect with conscious power,
Had oft withstood earth's crushing wrong
Through persecution's hour.

Her foes, though legion Satan's band,
Now lay beneath her feet;
Their prince was bound by angel hand,
For sin had met defeat.

No glory could her light outshine,
Her clothing was the sun.
Her smile as clear as moon sublime,
Her triumph, victory won.

I looked, there stood at her right hand,
A King, a Prince, her Lord.
He came from Heaven from glory land,
To be in her adored.

His name is Jesus, she his Bride,
The two at last are one;
He clasps her hand with loving pride,
God's well beloved Son.

O Angels praise, ye Seraphs sing,
The church is now complete,
Let Saints their Alleluias ring,
With voices loud and sweet.

Heaven's day has dawned, the feast is spread,
This is Christ's wedding day;
A pledge in newest wine and bread,
No more to part for aye.

(Reprinted in Infallible Proofs by Alvin Knisley, p. 31, 1930)



TURN OR BURN



High Priest Rob Rolfe

Lamoni, Iowa

September 18, 2011

Those of you who follow Iowa football know that at the beginning of the 4th quarter, Iowa had no hope of winning. But they still won. The scripture today deals with the time in our life when we don't have any hope. At that point, the suffering causes us to turn to God for help and relief.

Psalm 88:1-7 O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee; Let my prayer come before thee; incline thine ear unto my cry; For my soul is full of troubles; and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. I am counted with them that go down into the pit; I am as a man that hath no strength; Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more; and they are cut off from thy hand. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. (After receiving a wonderful ministry music from Yvonne Galusha, Brother Rolfe began his sermon.)

Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) is one of two Jewish High Holy Days. The first High Holy Day is Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year). Yom Kippur, also known as the Day of Atonement, falls ten days after Rosh Hashanah, which on our calendar is the 7th-8th of October, 2011. Those two days happen to fall in the

middle of our Fall Conference. Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year for the Jews. Its central themes are atonement and repentance. Jews traditionally observe this holy day with a 25-hour period of fasting and intensive prayer, often spending most of the day in synagogue services.

The sages consciously chose the book of Jonah to be read in the afternoon service, as the Sabbath of Sabbaths, the Day of Atonement, draws to an end. Why Jonah? Jonah is the 5th book of the "minor prophets". But, why read Jonah every year on the holiest day of the year? Because of one the themes found in the Book of Jonah deals with repentance. But there are many other good reasons.

A Reluctant Prophet

Anyone who has ever attended a Sunday school class knows that Jonah was the man who was eaten alive by a fish and then vomited out three days later. But that's about the extent of most people's understanding of this Old Testament prophet and the book that bears his name. And that's too bad, because Jonah is a Bible character worth knowing and worth reading. You ought to read it over and over. Try to learn new lessons from the reading each time. It is only 4 chapters and it is a "Whale of a Tale". Sorry, but that one is so easy. It's just another fish story; or is it? When it comes right down to it, most of the time, we are like Jonah. We almost always do things the hard way. There are two ways to learn a lesson: the hard way and the easy way. If you will learn from the book of Jonah, you may choose to learn your lessons the easy way.

Even though Jonah and what happened to him are the "story" of the book, he's not really what the book is about. What is it about then? The book is about God; because the lesson in the book deals with God's mercy and compassion upon sinners. If you lived in "Judah", the story of Jonah gives you an attitude adjustment, especially if you, like Jonah, lacked concern for the spiritual welfare of the Gentiles of the world. While the Jewish people of Jonah's day enjoyed being the recipients of God's love and compassion, they resisted the idea that God would be merciful to pagan Gentiles — especially people like the Ninevites who were enemies of Israel. Instead of loving the lost Gentiles of the world, they despised them and longed for God to pour out wrath upon them. The book of Jonah

communicates the eternal truth that since God has a heart of compassion for the heathen, His people should reflect that same attitude by reaching out with the message of salvation to all who are cut off from God — especially those who are blatantly evil in their behavior.

Let's use the actual words of the Bible to tell the story: *Jonah 1: 1-2 Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah, the son of Amittai, (2 Kgs 14:25). Saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.* Jonah was told to go into Ninevah and shout, **"Forty days and Ninevah will be overthrown."** (Turn or Burn!) Jonah was not in the least wanting to go to Ninevah. Why not? God told Jonah to go to Ninevah, the capital of the Assyrian Empire. Many of Jonah's countrymen had experienced the atrocities of those ungodly people. Let's just imagine a Jewish man in New York during World War II hearing God say, "I'm going to bring terrible judgment on Germany. Go to Berlin and tell Nazi Germany to repent." Instead, the Jewish man heads to California and hops a ship to New Zealand!

Jonah refused to obey God's command to bring the Gentiles in the city of Nineveh, God's promise of forgiveness. Perhaps he did not believe them worthy of God's love, nor did he think them capable of repenting. But, he learned his lesson the hard way about God's universal love for all humankind.

His reluctance to go to Nineveh doubtless stemmed partially from his knowledge that the Assyrians would be used as God's instrument for punishing Israel. This prophet, who had been sent to Jeroboam to assure him that his kingdom would prosper, was the same prophet God chose to send to Nineveh to forestall that city's (and thus that nation's) destruction until Assyria could be used to punish Israel in 722 B.C. It is no wonder that the prophet reacted emotionally to his commission.

No other prophet was so strongly Jewish, yet no other prophet's ministry was so strongly directed to a non-Jewish nation. Jonah's writing is also unusual among the prophets. The book is primarily historical narrative. His actual preaching is recorded in only five words in the Hebrew; eight words in most English translations.

Where was Nineveh anyway? Nineveh was one of the oldest and greatest



cities of Mesopotamia. It was founded by Nimrod the great Grandson of Noah! (Gen 10:6-12)! It is one of the oldest cities in the world, excavations date it at approximately 4500 B.C. One of the most important archeological discoveries in Nineveh is from the library of Ashurbanipal which contained over 16,000 cuneiform tablets that included topics such as the history of the flood and of creation along with other historical and religious texts. If you remember your history, Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, at its height from the time of Sennacherib, who assumed the throne in 705 B.C., to its fall in 612 B.C. The city was located on the east bank of the Tigris River opposite Mosul. At the height of its prosperity Nineveh was enclosed by an inner wall of approximately 12 km circuit within which, according to Felix Jones' survey of 1834, more than 175,000 persons could have lived. Jonah's account gives the population of this city as 120,000 souls, who did not know right from wrong.

Some authors have said that Jonah hated Nineveh, and so he responded with anger and indifference. The text does not tell us that until the 4th chapter. I'll get to that, but now, I'm going to continue with the story in the Bible: *Jonah 1:3-17 But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship, and he lay, and was fast asleep. So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not. And they said everyone to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; What is thine occupation? And whence comest thou? What is thy country? And of what people art thou? And he said unto them, I am a Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of*

heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land. Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them. Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? For the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you. Jonah 1:13] Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not; for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. Wherefore they cried unto the Lord, and said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood; for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee. So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea; and the sea ceased from her raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows. Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

He was sure learning his lessons the hard way. What would you do if you were in the belly of a fish because you had disobeyed God? He praised God and prayed to God, and, the fish "vomited out Jonah upon the dry land". Do you remember the scriptures telling us we have our own free will? That didn't seem to be true in this case. Perhaps God's insistence was because of the number of souls that would be lost, if Jonah didn't go.

So God told Jonah the second time, Jonah 3:2 *"Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord."* After a long walk he gave his message. It was short in Hebrew-5 words; 8 words in English—"Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." In short, **TURN OR BURN!** And what was the response? *"So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them."*

There were several miracles in this story.

Jonah was thrown in the ocean and didn't die.

He was swallowed by a fish, and

didn't die.

He preached to the Ninevites and they all repented. 100% of them.

Isn't the last miracle the greatest of all? The people of Nineveh fasted, prayed, mourned as if they had lost a loved one in death. And, they did it from the King to the lowest citizen in the city. I would sure like to see that kind of response to my preaching. What was Jonah's response to the repentance of the entire city? He told God, **just kill me!** Let me read his exact words: *"Jonah 3:10- 4:4 And God saw their works that they turned from their evil way and repented; and God turned away the evil that he had said he would bring upon them. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed unto the lord, and said, I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live. Then said the Lord, Doest thou well to be angry?"*

Why was Jonah angry that God spared Nineveh? Jonathan Swift wrote a verse that may have expressed what Jonah was thinking:

**We are God's chosen few,
All others will be damned;
There is no place in heaven for you,
We can't have heaven crammed.**

Are We Prepared to Share The Gospel?

Jonah, unlike other Hebrew prophets, was called to minister to Gentiles outside the boundaries of Israel. God sent him to preach a message of repentance to the citizens of Nineveh — a people noted for their extreme wickedness. But instead of obeying God, he rebelled by getting on a ship headed in the opposite direction from Nineveh. And the reason for Jonah's blatant disobedience is revealed in the last chapter of the book. He angrily admits that he knew God was gracious and merciful, and therefore was afraid that the Ninevites **would repent** in response to his preaching and escape divine judgment (4:1-2). In other words, Jonah was so desirous for God to pour out His wrath upon these evil Gentiles that he was actually **angry at Him for wanting to bestow mercy upon them!**

Perhaps some of you listening to me today, or perhaps reading this message in



our newsletter may believe that you are different from most of souls living in this world. You think you will be saved, because, after all, you are a good person. The book of Jonah challenges us as believers! Do we know the God of creation? Is His Spirit living within our hearts? Are we prepared to be able at all times to give an account of our faith to ANYONE? Are we prepared to use these eight words to glorify His name? Do we read His Word? Do we do His commandments? Sometimes we want to help God pass judgment on wicked people, demanding immediate punishment. But, the mercies of God are more than we can understand! He has compassion for sinners! Most of the time, we do not.

Apostle Paul makes essentially the same point in I Corinthians 6:11. We want to judge others. God wants to save them. After talking about a whole list of vile sins, he notes: *"And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."* In other words, we were like those sinners, before God sanctified us. Should we not have mercy on our brothers who are doing the same thing we were doing before we received the Grace of God? It is not right for us to judge other people based on our incomplete knowledge. God is the only righteous judge, favoring whom he pleases.

Jonah isn't the only believer who has judged sinners rather than bestowing mercy. For some reason, it is not uncommon for those who have experienced God's grace in salvation to begrudge this same bestowal of grace upon others — especially those who have been cruel and vicious---especially those who have hurt those we love---especially those who think differently than we. If you think that this couldn't possibly be true of you, then you need to consider your attitude towards any notorious sinner. How about Osama Bin Laden? Or any of the terrorists that destroyed the world trade center? Have you ever prayed for the salvation of these men's lost souls, or do you long for them to spend eternity in hell? Or perhaps a little closer to home, has someone ever maliciously hurt you or a loved one, but instead of forgiving them, the desire of your heart was for God to "crush" them for their sin? Do you want them to get "what they deserve". If we won't extend the mercy of personal

forgiveness to those who sin against us, then we certainly don't want God to extend His mercy of forgiveness to them either.

Like Jonah, the bent of our sinful hearts is to prefer God's judgment to His grace. However, God's heart is not like that. As He tells us in Ezekiel 18, He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Instead of desiring their death and judgment, He rejoices over sinners who repent (Luke 15). So eager is God to bestow His salvation upon the lost that He is pictured in the parable of the prodigal son as running, embracing, and kissing the repentant sinner. May God help all of us to cultivate this same heart of mercy for lost sinners.

Converted or Overthrown

What are some of the other truths found in the Book of Jonah? This book has been maligned a great deal by those who simply don't believe in prophesy. They consider the account of Jonah an allegory or symbolic story only. They point out that the idea that someone could survive being inside a fish for 3 days is absurd. I've found several accounts that tell of people actually surviving being swallowed by a whale. Are they true? I do not know. I'll let you see some of those later, if you wish. There are other claims, but even if you met a person that claimed to have survived being swallowed by a whale, would you believe him or her? I do know that Jesus talked of Jonah as a real person. But remember, this book is not about a whale; it is about salvation. It is about repentance, mercy and forgiveness.

If we can't believe such a thing could happen today, how can we believe that it happened to Jonah? Is this idea really absurd? Is this idea more absurd than believing that, by the speaking of a word, an arm could be instantly restored to health, the lame could instantly walk, the blind could instantly see, the deaf could instantly hear, the dead could rise and live again? Does our Lord have the power to raise Jonah from the dead, even if he died inside the whale? Jesus raised 4 people from the dead. This is the good news of Christianity. Death and Hell have lost their sting. Jesus compared himself to the Prophet Jonah, showing that Jonah (Jonas in the New Testament) existed and that the story was historically accurate. Let me read the verses to you: *Matthew 12:34-35 "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be*

given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, ye behold, a greater than Jonas is here."

The fact that Jonah was a real person is also confirmed in 2 Kings 14:23-25. He was a prophet during the reign of Jeroboam II (793-753 B.C.) The name 'Jonah' means 'dove' and it is a little ironic that the prophet manifested nothing of the virtue of his name. He came from a place near Galilee called Gath-hepher. It is also interesting to me that the Pharisees did not remember this when they ridiculed the Lord Jesus Christ; *"Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet"* (John 7:52)

One criticism of the book is that God lied when he said, *"Forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown"*. Why? Because Nineveh wasn't overthrown! Does *God Lie?* God doesn't lie, yet He told Jonah to do something that didn't happen! Some may say, "I thought God couldn't lie. Then why did He say one thing and do other?" The answer lies in the original Hebrew word translated as "**overthrown**", or "Haphak". Haphak does mean overthrown, but it also means **converted** and **changed**. Jonah was shouting a message that could be taken two ways, Nineveh would be '**overthrown**' or Nineveh would be **converted, changed or become totally new**. Most people would think it meant judgment, but God chose the Hebrew word that had multiple meanings. I'll leave it to you as to which meaning God intended. I think he intended both. If Nineveh didn't repent, they would be judged; if they did repent, they would be converted or changed.

Jonah had human weaknesses, just as we do. At this point in his ministry, he was both foolish and selfish. He mistakenly thought he could run away from God. He ignored God's desires and indulged his own prejudice against the people of Nineveh, Israel's fiercest enemies. He thought he knew better than God when it came to the fate of the Ninevites. Remember though, it was not only Jonah who ran away and wished for death. Elijah also did the same thing.

(1 Kings 19:3-4) *"And when he saw*



that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. ”

What are the lessons we can learn from the Book of Jonah today:

While it may appear that we can run or hide from God, we're only fooling ourselves. Our role may not be as dramatic as Jonah's, but we have a duty to God to carry it out to the best of our ability.

God is in control of things, not us. When we choose to disobey him, we should expect bad consequences. From the moment Jonah went his own way, things started to go wrong.

As we pray for forgiveness of our sins, we should remember that God is the God of all mankind, of all the Ninevehs of the world, and man, created in God's image, is obligated to embrace and extend the same compassion that God has for his creation.

We all want God to conform to our personal likes and dislikes. How often we ignore the obedient faith of those who have gone before us (Hebrews 11:36-38)! We think that God owes us a good time, an easy life, and sunshine all the way. Maybe Jonah thought his past ministry as sufficient, but yesterday's obedience does not own tomorrow's blessings. Instead, like David, let us proclaim, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:8.) Anything less than this is a fast boat to disappointment and failure.



IS IN REALLY IN?

Account of Gomer T. Griffeths

Relating an experience he had while preaching in

1877

My talk was on the subject of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. At the close of my discourse, a Presbyterian preacher arose to his feet and asked permission to make a few remarks. I willingly granted his request, inviting him up to the desk. He called the attention of

the audience to the fact that is was very evident that I was uneducated and wholly unfamiliar with the Greek, Hebrew, and Latin languages. He told them that in my use of the incident of Philip baptizing the eunuch in support of immersion, I had laid too much stress upon the word *in* and that this word did not always mean that which I had attributed to it; that in one language it meant *close by*, in a another *near to*, and in another, *beyond*.

It being quite true that I had no knowledge of the several languages mentioned, I was very much discouraged at the information advanced by the preacher. Feeling that there was nothing I could say in defense of my position, i arose to close the meeting, and immediately there came to my mind a story I had heard about a German who had gone to a preaching service. The preacher on that occasion presented to his congregation the same argument as did the Presbyterian preacher in replying to me. At the close of the sermon, the German arose and said to the preacher, "Mr. Preacher, I vas so glad I be here tonight; you say that *in* does not always mean to go down into the vater or into anything, but it means to go *close to* or *near by* or *beyond*. Mr. Preacher, I never did believe that Jonah was in the whale's belly, and I vas so glad I vas here tonight, because that fish story always troubled me, but now I see how it vas. Jonah was not in the whale's belly, but *close to*, or *near by*, or on the *outside* of the whale's back. Oh, Mr. Preacher, I vas so glad I vas here tonight because I vas troubled in my mind about the future when I die. i read in the Bible if I vas not good I be cast into hell; now I know I won't go into hell, only *close by* or *beyond* it. Then again, Mr. Preacher, if a man vas good the Bible say he go into the kingdom of heaven, but now I don't know vch way I go, whether it be *close to*, *near by*, or *beyond*."

By the time I finished this story the house was in an uproar, and it took me quite a while to get the audience under control. The Presbyterian preacher got up and went out.

-Saints' Herald, November 23, 1927, pp. 1368-1369



BUSINESS MEETING

September 25, 2011

The congregational Business Meeting was held Sept. 25th with the election of Branch Officers being the chief order of business. High Priest Sherman Phipps was sustained as Pastor for the next year and the following officers were elected:

Stewardship Coordinator:

Cheryl Phipps

Bishop's Agent:

Gordon Winkler

Worship Coordinator:

Jennifer Rowland

Music Director:

Lynda Rolfe

Worship Center:

Sue Beck

Christian Education:

Susie Cunningham

Missionary Coordinator:

Michael Jordison

Caring Coordinator:

Diane Anderson & Pat Bolingbroke

Fellowship Coordinator:

Valle Smith

Service Projects:

Kent Clisby

Secretary/Recorder:

Julia Jordison

Youth Ministry:

Jennifer Rowland & JulieAnn Smith

Priesthood Visiting Coordinators:

Ed Anderson & Rodney Bastow

Historian:

Linda Winkler

Newsletter Committee Chair:

Michael Jordison

Facilities Coordinator:

Jim Barber, Samuel Jordison & Jacob Cunningham

Building Committee:

Bob Rowland

Michael Jordison

Jim Barber

Gordon Winkler

Steve Cunningham

Email Coordinator:

Jan Jordison

Officers are to begin their new duties starting in October. Counselors to the Paster were to be determined later and sustained by the branch.



The Boys have a little fun!



October 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	29
30	31					

Sunday Schedule

DATE	October 2nd	October 9th	October 16th	October 23rd	October 30th	November 6th
SPEAKING	Rodney Bastow	Steve Cunningham	Ted Webb Guest Minister	Norman Nelson	Sharing Service	Gordon Winkler
PRESIDING	Rob Rolfe	Michael Jordison	Sherman Phipps	Ron Smith	Michael Jordison	Alan Smith
PIANIST	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke
SPECIAL MUSIC	Jim Barber	Michael Jordison	Lynda Rolfe	Kathleen Myers	Rob Rolfe	Ron & Di Smith
FAMILY DEVOTIONS	Sherman Phipps	Rob Rolfe	Bob Rowland	Alan Smith	Ron Smith	Steve Smith
GREETERS	Ron Smith	Alan Smith	Steve Smith	Gordon Winkler	Ed Anderson	Rodney Bastow
CUSTODIANS	Jim Barber	Rodney Bastow	Michael Jordison	Sherman Phipps	Rob Rolfe	Bob Rowland
SUNDAY EVENING	Ron Smith	Bob Rowland	Hayride at Barbers	Norman Nelson	Rob Rolfe	Bob Rowland

Wednesday Prayer Service Schedule

DATE	October 5th	October 12th	October 19th	October 26th	November 2nd
LOCATION	JulieAnn Smith	Norman Nelson	Rob Rolfe	Alan Smith	Ron Smith
PRESIDING	Jim Barber	Ron Smith	George Knotts	Michael Jordison	Kent Clisby



Special Events & Activities

Sunday October 2nd: Priesthood Meeting at 8:30AM - Potluck following Communion service

October 6th - October 8th: 2011 JCRB National Conference in Independence, MO

Sunday, October 16th: Guest Minister, Seventy Ted Webb, with Potluck following 11:00 service

Sunday, October 16th: Hayride and Cookout at Jim and Linda Barber's. Come and join in the fun and fellowship. Starts at 3:00 PM

Wednesday October 19: Day of Fasting & Prayer

Youth Activities: Activity planning session November 7th at 5:00 PM before the evening fellowship.

Birthday's this month: Michael Jordison (7), Valle Smith (8), Kathy Akers (11), Eunice Myers (12), Diane Anderson (21), Mary Wilson (21), Linda Barber (23), Kent Clisby (24), George Knotts (29)



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

c/o Cheryl Phipps
15581 270th St
Lamoni, IA 50140



CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST - MT AYR RESTORATION BRANCH

OCTOBER 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)

...Continued from page 2

from day to day in our lives without our recognizing it either 1) because we don't take time to read and know the scriptures, or 2) we use the scriptures as a way of proving that we are right and others are wrong (passing judgment). When will we really use the scriptures to guide us in our daily efforts?

What do you suppose would change in our own lives and the life of the church if we were to focus on the simple truths in D & C 64:7a and 59:5b instead of contending over all the doctrinal issues that seem to keep us separated, scattered and ineffective in our attempts to witness for Christ and assist in building up the cause of

Zion? Go ahead and consider D & C 63:3c; 42:8; 53:3c; 81:3b if you must!

In closing I would ask you to read and remember also the words in Section 58:6g-i and Section 45:1-2e, 5b. May God's words, not mine, fill your hearts and lift you up to fulfill the purpose of your creation.



OFFICERS

PASTOR/PRESIDING ELDER:
High Priest Sherman Phipps
High Priest H. Alan Smith (Counselor)
Elder Gordon Winkler (Counselor)

BISHOP'S AGENT
Elder Gordon Winkler
Cheryl Phipps (Stewardship Coord.)

HOME MINISTRY
Priest Rodney Bastow
Priest Ed Anderson

SECRETARY/RECORDER
Julia Jordison

FELLOWSHIP COORDINATOR
Valle Smith

WORSHIP COORDINATOR
Jennifer Rowland

MUSIC DIRECTOR
Lynda Rolfe

EVANGELISM COORDINATOR
Michael Jordison

YOUTH LEADER
Jennifer Rowland & JulieAnn Smith

SERVICE PROJECTS
Kent Clisby

HISTORIAN
Linda Winkler

NEWSLETTER
Michael Jordison (Editor)
Cheryl Phipps (Circulation)
H. Alan Smith (Publication)

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