



Church of Jesus Christ Mount Ayr Restoration Branch



NEWSLETTER

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*For Unto Us A
Child Is Born*

News &

Notes

Thanksgiving Dinner

Over fifty gathered together in thanksgiving to God for His generous bounty and blessings. Thank you to Sue Beck, Valle Smith and all those who helped make the day so special.

Christmas Caroling

On Sunday, December 18th at 5:00 PM the congregation will gather at Ron Smith's to caravan to several homes in the area to spread Christmas Cheer. Dress warm as we Carol our friends and return for hot soup and sandwiches.

Handel's Messiah

The Remnant Church will perform selections from the famous Messiah Oratorio, December 18th at 6:00 PM at The Gathering Place in Independence. All are invited.

Christmas Day Service

There will be no early worship or classes. The Christmas Service will begin at 11:00.

New Year's Eve Party

The New Year's Eve Party will be held Sunday, December 31st. Time TBA later.

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GOD IS A GOD OF MIRACLES



Elder Gordon Winkler
Mt. Ayr, Iowa
November 6, 2011

Brother Michael Jordison used Psalms 119:33-40 as a call to worship. *Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it to the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way. Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear. Turn away my reproach which I fear; for thy judgments are good. Behold, I have longed after thy precepts; quicken me in thy righteousness.*

“It’s really good to be here this morning. October was an eventful month for us and our schedule was just atrocious. I missed a lot of opportunities to share with you and to worship with you so I am glad to be back and have this opportunity this morning.

“I’d like to begin this morning by reading to you the 117th Psalm which is very short. *‘Oh praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise him all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us; and the truth of the Lord endureth forever.*

Praise ye the Lord.’

“This morning that’s what I want to do. I want to have opportunity to praise the Lord, to share with you of His great, merciful kindness. I am going to testify this morning of some of the marvelous things that have occurred in our family and church family and hopefully you will then see God’s great, merciful kindness and the truth of God that endureth forever.

“I want to testify that God is a God of miracles. That He hears and answers our prayers, not always in a way that we would expect but always in His time and in accordance with His plans. I want to testify also that God knows our hearts’ desires. The scriptures are full of miracles that God has performed. You could come up with a long list of them. I think about the parting of the Red Sea and the nation of Israel being released from Egypt and crossing through the Red Sea and Pharaoh’s army being drowned in that Red Sea. What a miracle!

“I think of the whole story of Lehi and his family and Israel and his family- and how they were directed to leave Jerusalem and go out into the wilderness. They were there for years and years but the Lord directed them finally to the shore and taught them how to build a ship, how to gather food, how to have light and warmth and saw them across the great sea to a land of promise. What a miracle!

“Lots of other miracles have taken place in the Bible and the other scriptures. Some are pertaining to Jesus Christ in whose name we have gathered in this day. Some of Jesus miracles included the casting out of devils, the feeding of the multitude, and giving sight to the blind man. Those miracles still happen today. We need to recognize those in our lives.”

Let Us Love One Another

“I want to start out this morning by sharing with you my favorite scripture, from 1st John 4:7-8, *‘Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.’*

“That scripture came to me again this morning as I was making preparation to share today. Those thoughts that I had been working on earlier didn’t seem to ring true to what I should be sharing this morning so I started over.

“We shared in prayer service at Alan and Valle’s house a few weeks ago.

Michael Jordison was in charge and as we sat around the circle, I couldn’t help but look around the room and see the demonstrated love that we have for one another in the way that we share in prayers and the ways that we support each other in testimonies. So at the risk of leaving somebody out because I know we pray for each other all the time, I want to share some of what I saw as I looked around that room.

“I was sitting next to Rodney (Bastow) and so Rodney and Debbie came to my mind. I thought about how many times we have prayed for Rodney and Debbie’s farm, their crops and their cattle but more than that I remember how often we’ve prayed for their sons and for their family to stay close to the Lord. We’ve prayed for Brock to find jobs, for Jowett and the struggle that has engulfed him and doesn’t allow him to serve the Lord the way that he has potential to serve the Lord. We have prayed for Patrick and his family.

“Rob (Rolfe) was sitting there on the other side of Rodney and I thought about the number of times we’ve prayed for Rob and his health and his ability to continue to provide leadership for us, to be in touch with the Lord as he leads us through this time of separation from all the souls that would gather together who at one time called themselves Restoration Saints.

“George Knotts was there. I remember how many times we’ve prayed for George for his trips to KU as he does his Jayhawk painting and sculptures and for the financial rewards that are needed for his family, but more than that I am always impressed that he asks for a prayer of opportunity that he can share the gospel of Jesus Christ with somebody that he would meet at KU.

“We’ve prayed for Steve and Elaina (Smith), Steve for work and Elaina for her restored health and for the parenting that they have had to involve themselves in with Steve’s boys and Tyler. We’ve prayed for Ed and Diane (Anderson), for their children and their family, and for Ed’s work. We’ve prayed for countless members in our congregation for comfort for the loss of loved ones.

“We’ve prayed for Julie and Michael (Jordison), about his job, about strengthening their relationship one with another, about their family. You know I look at Julie and think what a great responsibility she accepts to be a mother, a wife and a teacher for her children and just



how great her love is for her family.

“We’ve prayed for Alan and Valle and their family. We’ve prayed for Alan most recently with his health and for the sale of his newspaper business.

“I remember praying for Sherman and Cheryl (Phipps). At the request of Cheryl I remember praying for their daughter Jennifer (Rowland) and her husband Bob and their family that she might return again to church and return back to the spirit that is necessary to bring them closer to God. We’ve experienced Bob’s baptism and the rest of the family growing closer to God. We’ve prayed for Cheryl’s health for her cancer. We’ve prayed for Kyle and his cancer.

“We prayed for Cathy and Norman (Nelson) also for health, for loneliness that they might be blessed and they have been.

“In all this it’s an expression that we have love for one another. We need to recognize that that love comes from God because He is the source of love. As we express that love of God one to another it’s an expression that we know God.

“Cede (Ron and Di Smith’s granddaughter) was at that prayer service. My thoughts have really been about Cede lately. My heart goes out to her. You know I grew up in a family with the same set of parents. I grew up in the same house. I never moved once in my life. I had the same brother and the same sisters, same walk to school back and forth every day. I had a very stable life. Unfortunately for Cede she hasn’t. But Cede I wish for you that you continue to believe in God, believe that He loves you and choose the path that will keep you close to Him. Your decisions have not been easy and yet there are many who love you but none that love you as much as your Heavenly Father. He will be your protector and your guide if you will just allow Him to come into your life. You can rely on Him any time, any place and in any set of circumstances you find yourself in. You know we are all frail and there’s only that strength that comes from our Heavenly Father. God’s merciful kindness is toward us all and His strength endureth forever. Love is of God and if we love one another we show that we know God.”

An Adoption Miracle

“We just had a huge miracle in our family this October. It’s been shared with most of you at some level or another but I’d like to take the opportunity to share that

blessing that occurred in the life of our daughter Melissa and her husband Aaron and the miracle of their son Joshua who is now one month old. Melissa and Aaron’s hearts’ desire was to be parents. They tried for several years to become parents with the assistance of much of the medical knowledge that’s available and yet weren’t able to conceive and have a child. We made that a matter of prayer, Melissa and Aaron, Linda and I and Aaron’s parents Winn and Marilyn Ballantyne and our families. Alan Smith shared in an administration praying for a miracle that they would be able to have a child but that prayer wasn’t answered in the way we had expected it to be.

“They made the decision to investigate adoption. Melissa spent a lot of time looking at adoptive services both foreign and domestic and the huge process that adoption involves. They made a decision to begin that process. They contacted an agency that they felt comfortable with, a process that they thought would be fair and set aside the resources that it would take to accomplish that foregoing other things that they had thought would be of interest in their lives. It took a lot to get through the adoptive process. They had home visits with social workers. They had referrals that had to be made. They had profiles that

scared and excited. She said to me that they had to make a decision in 24 hours. They were going to send them information on the child but she wanted to know how they would know if this was the right child, the right baby. I assured her that she would know. She’s a good decision maker and they had been praying about this and would be led to know the answer to that question. She called me back after they had received the information on the child, the medical history and the circumstances around the child. She said, “Dad, the birth mother’s name is Melissa Ann.” That’s the same as Melissa’s name. So she found that to be the answer to her question.

There are many other blessings in this story. Melissa works full time and Aaron is a medical student at the University of Iowa. Those schedules don’t really allow them to just stop what they are doing and leave right away under normal circumstances but Melissa’s direct supervisor is an adoptive parent and she told Melissa just to go and they would figure out what needed to be done at work and cover her work load. Aaron left Iowa City in the middle of one of his rotations which he’ll have to make up but the school allowed him to leave. He came back to Des Moines and then they left and came down to Mt. Ayr. They left in the middle

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had to be developed. They had all kinds of things that were required of them. In the end of that process a profile was developed. The profile then was to be placed on the adoption service’s website and made available for birth mothers or guardians that would be able to then look through and select who might be appropriate adoptive parents. They were told that that process would take four to six months and that most birth mothers make that decision somewhere in the fourth or fifth month so then they would have another four months to make preparation for the child. That was their thought process. That was the scenario they were prepared for.

“Their profile went online on a Tuesday and on Friday afternoon Melissa called and she said, “Dad, the adoptive service called us and there’s a baby.” She was just full of joy and emotion, both

of the evening and got to Mt. Ayr about 9:30 pm. They had a whole packet of information that had been emailed to them that they had to read and sign off on and part of it had to be notarized. Melissa called and asked me if I could contact my secretary who is a notary and so I did and Mitzi said it didn’t matter what time they got to Mt. Ayr they were just to go over to her house and she would notarize the papers.

“They then left for Kansas City to spend the night with Aaron’s parents. What a blessing that was to have a place to stay. Otherwise it would have been a financial hardship on them to have to stay in a hotel. Also, what a blessing it was to have Linda be with her to share the sleepless nights that Melissa has had being a single parent. They thought the adoptive process would happen nearer the end of the year. Aaron is in Texas right now at San



Antonio completing another medical rotation. He was not able to get out of that one so Melissa has had to start motherhood by herself. She had support in Kansas City from Marilyn and Winn for a week and then she was at our place. Linda has been helping to get her set up and established back in Des Moines.

“Well, you know what? It’s a wonderful story. It’s a miracle but I need to step over to the birth mother’s side because there’s a miracle that happened there also. The birth mother has a tragic story. She reported to an emergency room in St. Louis, MO with a stroke. She is only 27 or 28 years old. It was at that time that they discovered she was pregnant. She hadn’t conveyed that information to any of her family. She was estranged from her mother and they hadn’t been together so here is this young lady in the emergency room who can’t make decisions for her own care. A cousin was asked to step in and to be in the role of a durable medical power of attorney for the birth mother. Kelly’s is a wonderful story. I think what a great responsibility it is to come into that kind of a situation, to make decisions about the health of one person and the life of a growing infant.

“Kelly made it a matter of prayer. He prayed about what he should do and when the decision was made that they would put the child up for adoption, he prayed about whom to entrust this little life to. When a social worker asked Kelly how he made the decision in selecting Melissa and Aaron from all the profiles that were available, he said, “It was divine intervention.” He talked about seeing their profile and reading about how close their families were. He read about both Winn and I being lay ministers in our churches. He pieced together that parents that were lay ministers and families that were that close must have some relationship to the restoration gospel, the gospel that he had been introduced to years before. He made the decision that that was the life he wanted this young infant to be a part of.

“God is a God of miracles. He knows our heart’s desire. He hears our prayers and answers them as only someone that can see the whole world can. He answered the prayers of Kelly in the situation he was in on the birth mother’s side and fulfilled the prayers of Melissa and Aaron on this side. God cares for each one of us with such great love that He gave His only begotten son, Jesus Christ, that whosoever

believed in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. That is the love and the promise that we share in this morning. I am going to read from the book of Romans chapter 6 verses 4 and 5. *‘Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.’*

“We are asked today to remember the great, merciful kindness and the love that God has for us. We do that by being willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ by always remembering Him daily, hourly at our school, at our work. We also do that by keeping His commandments. I’ve had the great opportunity to hold Joshua and feed him. Sometimes it wasn’t always easy because he likes to put his hands up in front of his face. As I was feeding him, I remembered Lynda Rolfe singing a song. I think the song is entitled, “On Eagle’s Wings.” I could hear Lynda singing the song and the one line that came to my mind was the line that said, “He will hold you in the palm of His hand.” Here I am holding Joshua in my arms holding him with my strength and thinking about how our God holds us in the palm of His hand with His strength. I looked down at him in my arms and he drew me closer to God. I understand more of God’s love. As I fed Joshua it was clear to me how dependent upon me he was for his strength, for his nourishment, and how we are dependent upon God for our strength and our nourishment. I desire for Joshua to grow and become a man of God. God desires the same of me and of you, His sons and daughters.

“I’d like to conclude this morning with a scripture from 1st Peter 1:24-25; 2:1-2. *‘For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; But the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.’*



WALKING WITH THE RESURRECTED JESUS



High Priest Robert Rolfe
Lamoni, Iowa
November 13, 2011

After the crucifixion, several women went to the tomb, and instead of finding Jesus' body, found angels who told them He was not there, but risen. The women quickly told these things to the apostles. The record goes on to say: I'm going to read from **Luke 24:11-34**, please join with me.

‘Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulcher and went in, and he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves; and he departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass. And behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem three-score furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that while they communed together, and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden, or covered, that they could not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these which ye have one with another, as ye walk and are sad?’

And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, Art thou a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them,



What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel. And besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done; Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, who were early at the sepulcher; And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. And certain of them who were with us, went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said; but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went; and he made as though he would have gone farther. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he was taken up out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and those who were with them, Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things they saw and heard in the way, and how he was known to them, in breaking of bread.'

"It is my intention to emphasize a different part of the scripture lesson I read today. Usually, this text is used for an Easter sermon. I'm not minimizing the events that we now call the "Good News" or gospel, but I have been wondering, for those who believe in the law and the prophets; What Old Testament Scripture(s) prophesy the coming of Yeshua Hamashiach, or the Messiah? Jesus called his disciples, fools and slow of heart for

not recognizing the unfolding of those very prophesies. We would say today, "they just didn't get it"! Mark 16:14 expresses it more strongly. He... 'upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.' To upbraid, means to 'twist up' or reproach. Literally to 'cast in the teeth' or throw back as a person something he has said or done. We would be more likely to say 'I just got chewed out'.

"Jesus has been resurrected. His dead body has 'come back to life'. The promise is that our bodies will also be resurrected. I've been thinking, what is the resurrected Jesus like? Is He the same as Jesus was before he died? Does He still have compassion? Does He still care about us? Is He still concerned with our needs? What are the differences between Jesus **the man**, and Jesus **the resurrected Lord**? Obviously, one difference is, as shown by the account in John and the disciples in Luke, he can shield himself from being recognized. The three Nephites also have the power to show themselves unto whoever they wish. (3 Nephi 13:39-42). Mark says, 'After that, he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked and went into the country'. (Mark 16:11) What that means is not explained. Whatever it means, let us this morning listen to their conversation as the resurrected Jesus walks with the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

"The resurrected Jesus still walks with men. Note it was Jesus that drew near to them, not that they drew near Jesus. These disciples were suffering from the greatest tragedy they had ever experienced. This was a dark, dark day. They just couldn't understand why Jesus, who had done such mighty miracles, was dead. Why didn't he save himself? He had raised Lazarus from the dead. Why couldn't He do the same thing for himself? We thought He was the Messiah. What is going to happen to us now? Jesus said he came to seek and to save that which was lost. (Luke 19:10) These men **were lost** that day.

"But the resurrected Jesus was still seeking their fellowship and communion. He wanted them to be thinking about what had happened. But He wanted them to have faith; to have faith in Him and the Scriptures. But He acted like He didn't know about anything that had happened. 'And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these which ye have

one with another, as ye walk and are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, Art thou a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things?' (Luke 24:17-19) I love this part. **What things!** He knew exactly what they were talking about.

"There are writers who spend a lot of time talking about why they didn't recognize Him. About how the crucifixion changed his appearance etc, etc. I don't believe that at all. If God doesn't want you to know he is present and walking with you, you will not know it. There are numerous examples in the Scriptures that illustrate this; Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Mary Magdalene, the Three Nephites, the woman at the well. Jesus told the Samaritan woman that 'true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.' (John. 4:25)

"We are just like Peter and Mary and John, or, looking at it from the other point of view, they are just like us. What was the problem? The problem from their point of view was Jesus was dead. Some of them had watched him die. Some had helped with the burying. The obvious problem was he was gone and was not coming back; or so they thought. Cleopas presents the problem. The problem is, they think that Jesus is dead. Jesus had clearly told them what was going to happen, but they never understood what he said! All three of the gospel writers relate essentially the same account from 'Jesus own mouth'. Let's continue to use Luke in this regard: 'Then he took the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man, shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on. And they shall scourge and put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them; neither remembered they the things which were spoken.' (Luke 18:31-34)

"What was the Savior like after he was resurrected? First of all, He still wanted to have fellowship with them! He also wants to have fellowship with us. He Cared about their Problems! And He cares about our problems! Because he cared, Jesus refused to allow them to continue in their



sadness. He did something about it. What did he do? He taught them the Scriptures. I'll go back to this idea in a moment.

"While they were not all standing there at the time, all of their hopes and dreams died when they saw the Savior die on Calvary. They later heard the report of the women who had passed along the angels' message that He was alive, but they just couldn't believe it! They couldn't get past the thoughts of the flesh to be able see the things of the Spirit.

"What was the problem from God's point of view? The problem wasn't that Jesus had died. The problem was that His disciples didn't believe that He was alive! In verses 21-24 we find the disciples saying, *'But we trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel. And besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done; Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, who were early at the sepulcher; And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. And certain of them who were with us, went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said; but him they saw not.'*

"They who had walked with him and talked with him, some for three years, were guilty of unbelief. But we are also guilty of unbelief. Remember that! This wasn't a bunch of unsaved men who were doubting the power of God to resurrect their Master... this was His disciples. WE ARE LIKE THEM TODAY! And in that respect, we must admit that our witness to a world of unbelief would be more effective if we didn't go around acting like God is dead!

"This was a day of rejoicing, and they were retreating!

"This was a day of triumph, but they were trembling!

"This was a day for singing and shouting, but they were sad!

"To His disciples, and to others, it appeared to be the end of everything to do with Jesus. But death could not hold Him! A tomb of stone could not imprison the Son of God! Three days had passed when two women came and found the stone had been rolled away, and the tomb was empty! They find two angels with the message that *'...He is not here, but is risen...'* What a message! He lives! We do not worship a dead God! Jesus is alive forevermore!!"

He Expounded in All the Scriptures

"I said that Jesus refused to allow them to continue in their sadness. It is important for us to avoid sadness and despair. We cannot function under those circumstances. Or at least, function very well. The resurrected Jesus did something about it. What did he do? He taught them the Scriptures. We need to look to the Scriptures for answers to our problems. This is particularly true when we are sad and think there is no way out. What scriptures specifically did the resurrected Jesus teach them? The account doesn't say. It does say He began at Moses and all the prophets, and expounded all the scriptures concerning himself.

"I'm not going to 'expound all the Scriptures' in the Old Testament about Christ, but I would like to draw your attention to a few of them. Some of the references are plain and some are more obscure. The ones I will be using are more plain; at least so to me. Let's start with Genesis 3:21 *'And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed (seed of the serpent) and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.'* Did Satan have children in a biological sense? Not that I'm aware of. How can a woman have seed? Biology 101 teaches it is the male that has seed, not the female. What then is being said in this scripture? I prefer to let the scriptures answer the question. Jesus referred to the Pharisees and Sadducees as a *'generation of vipers'*, (Matthew 3:7; 23:33) and being the *'sons of the devil'*. (John 8:44) The seed of the woman is referenced in several places. In Matthew 1:20-21, Joseph is told Mary being with child was a fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14 and Luke 1:30-35. For those who object to even the possibility of a virgin birth, let me ask you; what is the possibility of a dead person coming back to life after being dead several days.

"What about Moses himself? Moses is considered to be a prophet by more than just the Jews. Did he prophesy about the Messiah? In several places! Look at Genesis 26:4 and 49:10; Numbers 21:8-9 and Deuteronomy 18:18-19. I don't have time to read all of them aloud this morning. Some of these prophesies are in our Christmas Music, like Isaiah 9:6-7 *'For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God,*

The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there is no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.' This is a short list of possible scriptures that Jesus quoted.

"There are many scriptures that relate to the crucifixion of our Lord. Isaiah 50:6 states *'I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.'* Chapter 53 of Isaiah is so obviously about Christ that some groups removed it from their Bibles. Or how about Psalm 22: 14-18? *'I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.'*

"Let's look also at Daniel 9:25 *'Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.'*

"As Jesus was talking they drew *'nigh unto the village'*. Jesus acted like He was going to go further. His disciples pressed Him to stay, saying in effect, it's late, stay with us for our evening meal. Remember, I said it is **always** Jesus who draws nigh unto us. Often we think we are the ones who make contact with the Master. We use terms like 'I found Christ' but in reality it is Christ who found us'. The resurrected Christ still draws near us. He is still concerned about us. It is simply because He loves us so much. I heard a phrase quite a while ago and it speaks to me. The phrase is that 'God loves us so much He has our picture on His refrigerator'.

"But Most of All, the resurrected Christ Sets Our Hearts on Fire!

"These men needed their hearts rekindled. Once they had expected great things from Christ, but now they just said nice things about Him. Once they had



expected Him to perform great miracles, but now they doubted His resurrection. Once they were thrilled with the power and presence of Christ, but now they were chilled by their own unbelief.

“Note what Jesus did in the rest of the story. The resurrected Christ didn't leave them to solve their own problems with their hopes and expectations. What did He do? He took them to the Word and taught them. He showed them how all the prophets testified of him. He opened their eyes that they might know Him. Then Jesus took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them... I believe they saw the wounds in His hands. *‘Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?’* (Luke 24:32) Their hearts were set afire!

“With their hearts on fire, they were changed men! It changed their direction. They hurried back to Jerusalem. It changed their message - no longer did they moan about His death - they proclaimed that He was alive! It changed their attitude completely! Note in Acts 4:13, the Pharisees noticed the difference in the disciples. These disciples were not educated in a seminary; they were not trained as leaders; but their hearts were now on fire. Their Jesus had resurrected himself.

“Jesus Christ is alive! Do you know Him as your Savior? Have you placed your trust in Him? Jesus shed His blood as the price for your sin. If you don't know Him turn to the Scriptures; pray, over and over that Jesus would come into your life. Won't you today receive Him as Lord and Savior?”

“Saints, are your hearts on fire for God? Or have you allowed your unbelief to quench that fire? Remember what Jesus said about being lukewarm! (Revelation 3:16) He wants us hot or cold. Realize this morning, that these Books proclaim that we serve a living Savior and nothing shall separate us from His love! Don't allow circumstances or disappointments, problems in your home or job or church to cause you to fret and worry as if God were dead! Get back into the Scriptures! Turn around! Ignite, or Re-Ignite your fire! Go tell someone that Jesus is alive!”



JESUS LOVES THE LITTLE CHILDREN



*Elder Michael Jordison
Lamoni, Iowa*

November 20, 2011

Good morning everyone. I would like to continue with Sherman's Call to Worship scripture reading. (D & C 59:5b) There is another part to that scripture that we often overlook in reading what he recited to us. This is from Section 59 verse 5C. *‘Behold, this is according to the law and the prophets: wherefore trouble me no more concerning this matter, but learn that he who doeth the works of righteousness, shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come.’*

“The equivalency there is that those who do works of righteousness receive the reward of temporal & spiritual peace in this world, but more importantly: eternal life in the world to come. Also, from the book of Mosiah, the 1st chapter starting with verse 119: *‘For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been, from the fall of Adam, and will be, for ever and ever; But if he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man, and becometh a saint, through the atonement of Christ, the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father. And moreover, I say unto you, that the time shall come, when the knowledge of a*

Savior shall spread throughout every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. And behold, when that time cometh, none shall be found blameless before God, except it be little children, only through repentance and faith on the name of the Lord God Omnipotent.’

“I want you all to know that I have been a disobedient child in the eyes of our God. I have to question, why is it God continues to bless me? Why am I deserving of His graciousness and kindness? If I would recite to you all the ways I have been disobedient we may be here a long time. If I were to be specific I'm sure many of you would be shocked or embarrassed for me. I have to turn the tables and ask you how you would feel if you were called upon to recite all the moments and times you were disobedient as well. It's not something any of us would care to do. There will come a time when the books will be opened and all the deeds which have been done by men in their mortal frame will be read and open to see. As we stand before God it's at those times we are going to wish that the very rocks and mountains could tumble down upon us and cover us because of our shamefulness before him. I suppose that's a good thing that we would feel shame because it means we have a conscience.

“Something happened to me yesterday that shifted my focus a little. It shook me up. I never understood what it was like to be a parent until I had children. I understood some things, but I didn't fully comprehend what being a parent was like. And I didn't fully understand what being a child was like until I became a parent. The same could be said that nobody knows what it's like to lose a child until they've gone through that. Yesterday I had a close call where I could have very easily lost one of my children. Although I don't have to go through the pain and emotions of what that might have been like, that experience was very real to me - the reality of the situation—even more when I realized it was my own stupidity that could have caused it. To think how precious we are to our Lord as His children. I consider my own, how precious and dear they are to me. I wouldn't want anything bad to happen to them. Sometimes we wonder why God let's bad things happen on this earth. We look at our kids and think we don't want them to go through any bad experiences or pain and misery or consequences of sin. We want to shield



and protect them. Why would God put us in an environment where we have the potential to incur pain and suffering?

“Why did God put Adam and Eve in the garden as a grown man and woman? Why didn’t he create them as children? They were in a perfect environment—everything was pure and clean the way he had created it. Adam and Eve were both pure and clean as he created them in that perfect environment. Why didn’t he put them in their as little children? I think that if He had placed them there as children many would look at that account in the scriptures and believe that children are sinful. They would have laid original sin upon the heads of children. Our restoration scriptures teach us that children are clean and pure - without sin until they reach the age of accountability. Have you reached the age of accountability? Do you know right from wrong? Do you understand the consequences of sin? I do and I’m sure you do as well. In the account of Christ to the Nephites from 3 Nephi chapter 8 verse 12 we find this: *‘And it came to pass that he commanded that their little children should be brought. So they brought their little children and sat them down on the ground roundabout him. Jesus stood in the midst of the multitude and the multitude gave way until they had all been brought to him. And it came to pass that when they had all been brought and Jesus stood in the midst that he commanded the multitude that they should kneel down upon the ground.*

And it came to pass that when they had knelt down upon the ground Jesus groaned within himself and saith, Father, I am troubled because of the wickedness of the people of the house of Israel. When he had said these words he also knelt upon the earth. He prayed to the Father and the things he prayed cannot be written and the multitude bear record which heard him and after this manner do they bear record saying, the eye hath never seen neither those great and marvelous things that we have both seen and heard Jesus speak. No one could conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the father.

And it came to pass that when Jesus had made an end of praying unto the father he arose. But so great was the joy of the multitude that they were overcome. And it came to pass that Jesus spake unto them and bade them arise. And they arose from

the earth and he sayeth unto them, blessed are ye because of your faith. Now behold my joy is full. When he had said these words he wept and the multitude bear record of it.

And he took their little children one by one and blessed them, and prayed unto the father for them. When he had done this he wept again and he spake unto the multitude and said unto them behold, your little ones. As they cast their eyes to heaven they saw the heavens open and angels descending out of heaven as it were in the midst of fire, and they came down and encircled those little ones about. They were encircled about with fire and the angels did administer to them. The multitude did see and hear and bear record. And they know that their record is true for they, all of them, did see and hear, every man for himself, and they were a number about two thousand and five hundred souls, and they did consist of men, women, and children.’

“What struck me about this passage was that Jesus called for all of the children to be brought before he prayed. His prayer was *‘Father, I am troubled because of the wickedness of the house of Israel’*. Why did he call for the children to be a part of that experience? He could have said His prayer without the children being gathered together. I think he was trying to show the multitude how important children are and what they mean to him. It was if He beheld the disobedience of the house of Israel and saw the consequences which would be answered upon the heads of their children. And His compassion for their innocence was overwhelming to Him. As we read this passage we see that the angels descend out of heaven in the midst of fire and which encircles the little children. When we were baptized into the church of Jesus Christ we received a special promise, a blessing called the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is given to every Saint. The Holy Ghost is represented by fire which cleanses, and makes pure, makes us holy, and leads us into all truth. The Holy Ghost is the indwelling of God within us. And here we find that indwelling of God, as represented by fire, encircling the children for whom He has such great compassion and love.

“What are the attributes of little children? Michael asked for responses from the congregation: They are teachable, believing, trusting, selfish, dependent, honest, forgiving, impulsive, and resilient.)

Do you remember, in the New Testament, when Jesus and His disciples were gathered together and the young children came up to Jesus? The disciples tried to pull them away, and what did Jesus do? He rebuked them and said *for of such is the kingdom of heaven*. If we want to inherit the kingdom of heaven what do we have to be? As little children. Just like the song Jesus Loves the Little Children—all the children of the world—red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight.

How Do You Measure Up?

“As I considered what to share with you this morning there were a lot of things that I wanted to touch upon—the wonderful heritage of our nation and the establishment of Thanksgiving as a holiday, etc. I went to the Lord and asked Him what I can offer this morning? I can’t offer you anything of myself that would be of value. Sherman and I have had several discussions lately. I’ve shared my frustrations with our congregation, not that I’m frustrated with individuals but I feel like we’re not really moving forward. I asked him if he would do me a favor. In my company we have employee evaluations where your direct supervisor will meet one on one with you and share things in which you are excelling in and also areas where you are deficient.

“I asked Sherman if he would consider giving me an evaluation of where I am spiritually in my work for the Lord. Sometimes we don’t get an honest assessment when we evaluate ourselves. Maybe you’re different. I think though that it’s good when you can get an objective assessment. We don’t like to do that to each other in the church it seems. We don’t like to tell people when they are deficient in certain areas. (At least when it comes to those we’re close to.) We don’t want to offend anyone. Ron Smith has on more than one occasion mentioned a suggested ‘lost’ line from Jesus’ sermon on the mount adding, ‘blessed are those who don’t take offense’. I appreciate that perspective. We need to be a little more thick-skinned. We should want to be critically evaluated to see where we measure up to. If we are failing to serve the Lord to our full potential then shouldn’t we willingly undergo some direction as to how we may improve?

“In context of that this morning as I considered what to share and what I could



offer, I feel strongly that the Lord is calling us to be as little children. He wants to teach us. He wants us to ask questions—to be inquisitive. I think everyone is familiar with the parable of the sewer found in three of the gospels. It was a story that the multitude didn't really understand. If you will look in the book of Mark (chapter 4) it says that the disciples and some who were with him came up to him and said, 'what do you mean by these things?' Jesus said, 'Unto *you* it is given to know the mysteries of heaven.' It is given to those who are inquisitive like little children to know the mysteries.

"Sometimes I feel like I don't want to know the answer. I'd rather not ask the question because if I get an answer I'm going to be held accountable for living it. Maybe I want to do something that's not in harmony with God's will so it's just easier to avoid talking to God about that. That's not what God wants us to do. He wants us to be humble, submissive, meek, patient, full of love, and willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon us. For me that last one is the hardest. I don't want to go through anything difficult.

"Brothers and sisters, I implore you to step back a moment in your lives and find some time to sit back and critically look at your lives and ask yourselves if you're in God's will. Are you doing what He's asked you to do? As I think about our congregation not moving forward like I think we should, I really need to be looking at Michael Jordison because I know I'm evidently not doing the things that I need to be doing on a regular basis. I'm continuing to be like a lot of other people and avoiding certain areas of the gospel because it's easier to do what I want to do. I would like for us as a congregation to seriously consider where we are individually and maybe together we can begin to make some steps forward for the gospel of the kingdom. As that scripture said in section 59 we need to '*learn that he who doeth works of righteousness shall receive their reward, even peace in this world and eternal life in the world to come*'. (D & C 59:5c)



GOD'S WANTS TO GIVE US MIRACLES



High Priest Sherman Phipps
Lamoni, Iowa
Given at Zion's Witness
Congregation in
Independence, Missouri
August 2011

I want to read a couple of short scriptures to you this morning. The first is from Alma 16, then from Alma 17 and last from Mosiah 1. This is Alma speaking. *And seeing that the hearts of the people began to wax hard, and that they began to be offended because of the strictness of the word, his heart was exceeding sorrowful; Therefore, he caused that his sons should be gathered together that he might give unto them every one his charge, separately, concerning the things pertaining unto righteousness. (Alma 16:259-260) . . . for I do know that whosoever shall put their trust in God, shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions, and shall be lifted up at the last day. (Alma 17:3) And moreover, I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; And if they hold out faithful to the end, they are received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of never ending happiness. (Mosiah 1:88-90)*

"I wanted to tell you up front if you get anything out of what's said here today, it will be because of the Spirit of the Lord and not from anything that I say. Always when I stand in front of a group of God's people I am reminded of my own nothingness. I have my wife Cheryl, my daughter Jackie, and my sister Jan (Jordison) with me here today. I'm grateful to Jan for being here today because it tells me that she didn't move to Independence to get away from me.

"I'm conflicted here this morning because I don't know which way to go. I love to share the experiences that I've had with the Lord. He's been very, very good to my family and me. At the same time I am always reminded of the scriptures that say to preach nothing but repentance. Surely even though I am amongst good people here this morning, we still need to repent. We need to give some real consideration to where we're at. As I got ready to stand up here this morning I remembered that after all these years I'm still a little uncomfortable being up here. I'd much rather open the door to everyone that comes in and out or maybe wait on you at the table. Those kinds of things I enjoy but standing and speaking always makes me a little uncomfortable for the simple reason that I understand that my words are of no real value to you unless they come by the power of the Holy Spirit.

"As I stood up here I was reminded that I was ordained to the priesthood when I was 14. I preached a couple of times when I was 14 not quite 15. They had me speak in the evening when there were just a few of the faithful there but the thing that struck me about that was that that was about 54 years ago. I wonder what I have accomplished in 54 years. Then I look out here and think maybe we should all be asking ourselves that question. What have we accomplished for the Lord?

"I don't know how many of you know me. I know a few of you do. My job is such that I talk in front of people every day. I spent years trying to be persuasive but when I stand up here it's a whole different thing. The only thing I'm concerned about as I stand here this morning is that you be persuaded to turn to Jesus Christ, to give every part of your life to Him and to know that if you do that even as the scriptures that I read this morning say, He will support you in your trials, in your troubles and your afflictions, and you will be lifted up at the last day.



Even in the midst of your trials and tribulations you will be blessed and happy. Now that doesn't always mean that you will be grateful for your tribulations and troubles although perhaps we should be always grateful for whatever the Lord requires of us.

"I started to mention earlier one of the things that I love to do, of course, is to share how the Lord has worked in my life. I know some of you have heard this, particularly those in my family, but I was reminded of this and prompted to share this with you when Brother Tom (Beem) was teaching his class. He was talking about how important the message of the Book of Mormon is and how important it is that as a body of people we acknowledge that the Book of Mormon is true and that Joseph Smith was a prophet. In fact what Joseph Smith Jr. did was at the direction of the Lord and for the restoration of the gospel for the sake of the souls of men. I know some of you have heard this before but I just wanted to share with you that at least in my family we know that this is true. Not because we're smart or anything but because the Lord bore witness of this first to my father and then to others in the family."

The Scriptures Are A Miracle

"My father, when he was 20, could not read. This was in the early 40's. I suppose that wasn't that uncommon. He went into the army during World War II, which was just getting started up good as far as our country was concerned. He and my mother got married shortly after he went into the service so my mother went with him to some of the bases where he was stationed before he went overseas. One of the things my parents tried to do every night was read something from the scriptures. Since my Dad couldn't read that meant my Mother read to him. Then there came a point where my Mother had to return to her parents and my Father was left on his own. He wanted very much to be able to read the scriptures because he had a lot of questions. Some of them were very simple like whether there is a God or not. He wondered about the truth of the Book of Mormon and about Joseph Smith. He was concerned about whether he would

come back from the war alive because I had just been born shortly before this time. Since my Mother was not there to read the scriptures to him he began to pray and ask the Lord some of these questions. He prayed and asked the Lord if He was real and what he should do with respect to raising his children if he was allowed to return from the war. He remembered the scripture that my Mother had read to him 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.* He decided he would do this and picked up the Doctrine and Covenants and began to read. The Spirit came over him and he was given to know every word, how to read and what it means. He said it was just like having a dictionary there.

"The thoughts of the good food on this base kept entering his mind but he was having such a great experience reading, understanding and gaining knowledge that he decided to skip dinner and continue reading. He said he would stop reading every once in a while to pray as questions came to his mind. He read the Doctrine and Covenants all the way through and when night came and lights were supposed to be out, he went to the furnace room where he could turn the light on and continue reading. When morning came he returned to the barracks. He continued this for three days and three nights. During this time in addition to the Doctrine and Covenants, he read Inez Smith Davis' 'Story of the Church,' and read through the Book of Mormon until he came to Moroni 7:27-42. Then the worst fear he had ever felt in his life came over him and he was engulfed in a dark cloud. He was very afraid and prayed for God to take away this awful cloud of darkness and fear.

"He looked upward and saw a pillar of light. It was about a block away and was descending toward him. When it came near he saw that it was a personage which stood about three feet off the ground and reached its outstretched hands to his face. The message the angel gave him was that now that he had seen an angel he could

believe there was a God. He was given to know that Joseph Smith was a prophet and that the things that he had been reading were true. He was told that the Book of Mormon was a true history of God's dealings with the people on this continent. The angel also told him to raise his children up, teaching them about God's church and that he should teach them to keep God's commandments and serve Him to the best of his ability. After this experience of reading for three days and nights, he fell asleep. When he awoke the next day he grabbed his scriptures to see if he could still read. He could. The gift was never taken from him. He was able to read the rest of his life. The ability to read was a gift from the Lord and not learned.

"So, as I stand before you this morning I know that the work of the restoration is true. I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet and I know that this Book of a Mormon is a true history. Now why is that important? Well, you know there have been a lot of things transpire in the last twenty or thirty years that tend to discourage some people but we **must not** be discouraged. We must not give up in our efforts to hold Christ up to the world as the light of the world. We cannot give up on our efforts to share the message of Christ as it is simplified and made plain in the Book of Mormon as well as in the other scriptures. We cannot lose sight of our goal that has to do with bringing Christ to the knowledge of our brothers and sisters but also has to do with the establishment of Zion. Zion is a real thing. It is and it will be. We have to be firm and faithful in our testimony and when I say that, a lot of times our testimony is not our words but how we live. In fact, that's probably our greater testimony. I look at my own life and it causes me a lot of concern sometimes. I guess one of the things I'd like to ask you to do here this morning is to look at your lives. Now we're back to that repentance thing again."

Are We Too Comfortable?

"I don't know about you but when I look at my life closely I realize that there are a lot of things to repent of. You know it's pretty easy to go along and think that I'm not doing anything too bad. I don't

*"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."
Isaiah 9:6*



smoke or drink or swear. I even quit watching TV several years ago because I think it's very difficult to stay focused on Christ even just watching the commercials. The Lord has been very good to my family. I can go along and think that everything is pretty good at my place. That's not always true. We deal with things too just like everybody else. I have a grandson who has cancer. I see he's on the prayer list and I appreciate your prayers. I think he's doing very well. The Lord's been very good to him, his family and us. We had a grandson who was in Afghanistan along the border with Pakistan. That was a concern that I carried on my heart but he has come home and so once again we're blessed. What I started to say was that some days it's pretty easy to think, well the Lord must be fairly happy with me. He's been pretty good to me. He's very good to me, my family and all of us in different ways as He tries to lead us along and get us to the point where we can see and understand our need for repentance and humility. His kindness and long suffering with us should not lead us to believe we are "o.k."

"I don't know quite how to say what I wanted to say this morning because I'm afraid all of us may go home from here and still be kind of comfortable with where we're at. We should not be too comfortable with where we're at. All of the things that have been prophesied in the scriptures are in the process of taking place and they're going to be fulfilled and that's going to change everything about our world and our lives. We're not going to be able to depend anymore on the things that we have depended on in the past which has been, unfortunately, on ourselves and the ways of man. If we're not in some kind of a relationship with the Lord where He can speak with us and we can hear Him we're going to be lost. If we don't really determine to come out of world and to come away from Babylon and not touch the unclean things of Babylon in our lives and do it now, we won't have anything to lean on or depend on. Satan is engaged in a real war with the Saints of God. He wants to destroy us. He wants to destroy God's people and, of course, as people, men and women of the flesh, we cannot fight that battle alone. However, the Lord stands ready and has already sent forth his angels to sustain and uphold those who will look to Him and depend upon Him, those who will obey His commandments.

When I go back and read through the scriptures, I see that over and over the Lord has tried to work with His people, for centuries, to try to get them to obey His commandments so He would be free to work in their lives to accomplish His will.

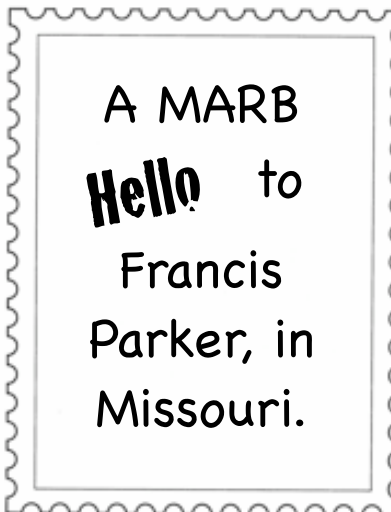
"I am tempted here this morning to jump back and forth a little because when I think about the Lord accomplishing His will in our lives, I am reminded again how powerful He is and how I've seen Him work in my family and the lives of those around me. I know from experience that the Lord can move you from one place to another geographically if He needs to. He's not bound by the things we're bound by. He's not bound by time or space. He has the power to heal and He does that. I liked what Brother Tom said in his class this morning about how we need to understand that He has this power but it's His power, not ours and we don't make the determination about what He's going to do in each case. Ours is to be faithful and to accept whatever He asks of us and to understand that in the end those who are faithful will have great joy and this never ending happiness that I read about earlier. He never changes. He never varies. He stands available to us today as He has in every age. You read all the stories in the scriptures about Daniel and Lehi and Nephi in prison surrounded by fire as well as other stories. He stands ready to do those same things for His people today if they will put their faith in Him and not in the arm of flesh. He calls unto us again to come out of the world and be different than the people around us and show in our lives that we really believe in Him. There's a scripture that I like that I would like to share. Doctrine and Covenants, Section

59:5b says, *'and in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments.'*

"If we could learn to truly obey His commandments, not just give lip service, but to obey them and to confess God in all things whether it be difficult or easy then we could be sure that His wrath would not be kindled against us and we would not be an offense to Him. What more could we hope for than to know that we are not an offense to God.

"I may be saying these things to the wrong group of people but I have been very impressed lately with how lightly we have treated the words of God. I had the privilege of going to a couple of reunions this summer. Of course one of the things I think that everyone who goes to reunion hopes for is that you hear the word of God. That there will be those conditions that will allow God to speak to us. I was really impressed as I went to these two reunions this year that God wants to speak to His people but He's being somewhat kind to us in not speaking any more to us than He does because we have treated so lightly what He's told us in the past. We need to get really serious about studying His word, not dissecting it but just reading it, studying it and praying about it and let the Lord teach us what He wants us to know about the things He's already given us. It's not a good thing for us to keep asking to receive His word and then ignoring it. We need to take what we have and abide by it and then trust that He will continue to give us what we need to know.

"As I stand here this morning I have a lot of testimonies that I could share with you but I'm also thinking that many of you have testimonies that you could share and do share. You know God's love in your life. He's been very generous and gracious to us all. What do we do with that love? How do we respond to Him? We say God is love and we know He is but I wonder if those who come to our congregations feel that love. I hope so because if they don't they might think that God is not in our midst. I don't know how it is in this congregation since this is the first time I've been here so I am certainly not casting stones at anyone. I am just asking the question. First of all do we reach out to others so that there are people coming to our congregation, new people, and if they do come do they find God's love here?





"If my wife were up here she would probably bear a testimony about how she first came into contact with the gospel when she was 16. Her twin sister was dating a young man who was RLDS. She started going to church with him particularly on Sunday nights to Zion's League and she wanted Cheryl to go with her but Cheryl wanted nothing to do with it. She resisted going with her sister for quite a while even though her sister asked her every week until finally the Spirit worked with her. She finally decided to go with her sister rather than stay home by herself because there were only the two of them and they were very close. She reasoned that if she didn't like it she didn't need to go back. She could tell you that the thing that really drew her in was the love that she felt there. So, one of the things I would encourage you to do here today is to continue loving the people around you. Don't judge them, that's up to God. Just love them and let them feel God's presence through you and, of course that can only happen if He is, in fact, present in us.

"Before I read another scripture I would like to share one more thing with you. When I was in my twenties I went to a youth camp as a counselor. I came to that experience feeling like I was pretty much worthless. I considered myself to be pretty ugly and not as smart as everyone else around me. I just didn't see how the Lord could use me. I got very discouraged. I was called to the priesthood when I was 14 and I really had desires to serve but I didn't see that I had ever done anything really worthwhile. I didn't see that I would ever do anything really worthwhile because in my mind my skills were very limited. During this camp I decided that I should just go home that there was no reason for me to be there. I decided before I went home I should go out in the woods and pray about it. I didn't want to make a big deal out of leaving. I didn't want to get in the car and drive off and have everyone wonder what happened to me so I went out in the woods to pray about it. As I was praying the Spirit of the Lord descended upon me and took my spirit out of my body. I was no longer restricted to my physical form. The Lord showed me how He loved His creation. How He loved every one of His people, and that would be true of every one of you here this morning. Then amazingly enough He showed me how that included

me. I can't express to you in words what He showed me or the feeling that I had. I had been standing praying and when my spirit was returned to my body I was just lying on the ground. I got up and went back to camp. I didn't feel like I looked any better. I knew nothing had changed there. I didn't feel any more gifted or talented than before but the thing I knew, and I hope you can grasp some of this today, was it didn't matter. God had created me in His own image and gave me what He wanted me to have so that I could do what He wanted me to do. It didn't have anything to do with me, it had to do with Him. One of the things that I understood then was that He had given me the ability to love His people. If I never accomplish anything else in my life if I can somehow express His love to the people around me, I will be grateful to Him for allowing me to do that.

"I hope through the power of the Holy Spirit that you will somehow be encouraged today to obey God's word and put your trust completely in Him to understand that you are what He created you to be. That doesn't mean that we are living our lives like we should be, but it means each one of us has the potential if we'll just learn humility and repentance and obedience to be an instrument in His hands in whatever way He needs us to be. It will be unto His honor and glory but it will also allow us back into His presence where we can share in the love that comes only from Him.

"I want to read this scripture in closing. It's from Alma 10:27-30. *'And now my brethren, I wish from the inmost part of my heart, yea, with great anxiety, even unto pain, that ye would hearken unto my words, and cast off your sins, and not procrastinate the day of your repentance; But that ye would humble yourselves before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and watch and pray continually that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear, and thus be led by the Holy Spirit, becoming humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long suffering; having faith on the Lord; Having a hope that ye shall receive eternal life; having the love of God always in your hearts, that ye may be lifted up at the last day, and enter into his rest; And may the Lord grant unto you repentance . . .'* This would be my prayer for you this morning. Never ever give up! He will fulfill

everything He has spoken of and promised."



Merry Christmas Friends!



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 LEADERS

Jennifer Rowland & JulieAnn Smith

SERVICE PROJECTS

Kent Clisby

HISTORIAN

Linda Winkler

NEWSLETTER

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

December 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	DEC 4th	DEC 11th	DEC 18th	DEC 25th	JAN 1st
SPEAKING	Alan Smith	Milo Burnett	Steven Cunningham	Sherman Phipps	Ron Smith
PRESIDING	Gordon Winkler	Alan Smith	Rob Rolfe	Michael Jordison	Steve Smith
PIANIST	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	TBA	Pat Bolingbroke
SPECIAL MUSIC	Jim Barber	Diane Anderson	Galusha Family	Church Choir	S. Cunningham Family
FAMILY DEVOTIONS	Darren Cunningham	Steven Cunningham	Michael Jordison	Norman Nelson	Sherman Phipps
GREETERS	Jordison Family	Knotts Family	Phipps Family	Rowland Family	Rolfe Family
CUSTODIANS	Jim Barber	Rodney Bastow	Michael Jordison	Sherman Phipps	Bob Rowland
SUNDAY EVENING	Rob Rolfe's	Rob Rolfe's	Ron Smith's	Bob Rowland's	TBA



Wednesday Prayer Service Schedule

DATE	DEC 7th	DEC 14th	DEC 21st	DEC 28th	JAN 4th
LOCATION	Alan Smith's	Ron Smith's	Steve Smith's	Gordon Winkler's	Norman Nelson's
PRESIDING	Ron Smith	Steve Smith	Rod Bastow	Ed Anderson	Rob Rolfe



Special Events & Activities

Sunday December 4th: Priesthood Meeting at 8:30AM - Potluck following Communion service

Sunday December 11th: Guest Ministry with Milo Burnett. Potluck following Preaching service

Sunday December 11th: Advent Tea at Liberty Hall from 2-4 PM

Sunday December 18th: Christmas Caroling Party. Meet at Ron & Di's at 5:00PM

December 25th: Christmas Day!

Saturday December 31st: New Year's Eve Party - Time and Location TBD

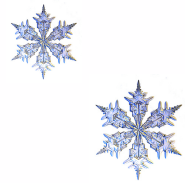
Birthday's this month: Stephanie Cunningham & George Galusha (12), Erika Clisby (15), Cathy Nelson (16), Cheryl Phipps (24), Di Smith (26), Jennifer Rowland (30), Teana Cowley(31)

Anniversary's this month: Rodney & Debbie Bastow (27)



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

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



And it Came to Pass...



When you think of Christmas Shopping do crowded stores, insane sales and grid-lock traffic immediately come to mind? This year, Julia and I took our first (and last) turn at Black Friday shopping. Black Friday is what someone has termed the day after Thanksgiving when all the stores take advantage of second day of Holiday with cleverly marketed sales designed to lure in even the most casual shopper. Over the last few years the hours that the stores open for these sales have been earlier and earlier.

This year Black Friday shopping began at 10 PM on Thursday night for many stores. At midnight the traffic in Independence looked more like rush hour with stop and go grid-lock. Even the Quick Trip, where we stopped for a hot chocolate, was jam packed with so many cars that we had to park alongside the curb.

When we finally made it to the first store a kind lady informed us as she was walking out that if we wanted a shopping cart we'd have to look for one in the parking lot. We should have turned around and went home right then. Inside was a mile-long line with people dressed in

everything from fine furs to pajamas. After we elbowed and banged our way to where the item we looking for was located we found that it was sold out long before. In fact most of the good stuff was already gone. When we did find a couple of items on sale -still in stock- with one look at the ridiculous line we both laughed, abandoned our cart and headed for the door. The trips to the next two stores ended with the same results.

I can't help but wonder what drives people to put up with such crazy shopping conditions all in the name of a "good deal". But what about the good deal of Salvation? You won't find a better bargain that what Christ offers freely. Are we willing to put up with a little adversity and persecution to obtain *this* Gift? Would we drive across town in these conditions to go to church every Sunday? What about to visit the sick or the hungry or the poor? The gift of Christ is Eternal and will never fade or break. Why not take some time this year to push a little harder to not just obtain His Gift, but to give It as well.

Merry Christmas Saints!

