



Church of Jesus Christ Mount Ayr Restoration Branch



NEWSLETTER

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News & Notes

Breakfast with the Master

Our congregation helped host an Easter Week ecumenical breakfast held at the 1st Christian Church in Mt. Ayr. Brother Alan Smith gave a very inspired sermon, "A Tale of Two Psalms". He outlined both Psalms 22 and 118, touching on the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy by King David realized explicitly in the week prior to Christ's death and resurrection.

Resurrection Service

Sunday April 8th the congregation will

celebrate our Risen Lord starting with an Easter Brunch at 9:00 AM. The morning service will include testimonies of seeing the Risen Lord. Come share in the celebration of His resurrection!

JCRB Conference

The 2012 JCRB General Conference will be held April 15-22 at The Gathering Place in Independence, Mo. Congregational delegates are Cheryl Phipps, Lynda Rolfe and Milo Burnett. Alternates are Alan Smith & Ron Smith

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Recall Notice

Submitted by Jim & Linda Barber - Bethany, Missouri

The Maker of all human beings (GOD) is recalling all units manufactured, regardless of make or year, due to a serious defect in the primary and central component of the heart. This is due to a malfunction in the original prototype units code named Adam and Eve, resulting in the reproduction of the same defect in all subsequent units. This defect has been identified as "Sub sequential Internal Non-morality," more commonly known as S.I.N., as it is primarily expressed.

Some of the symptoms include:

Loss of direction - Foul vocal emissions - Amnesia of origin - Lack of peace and joy - Selfish or violent behavior - Depression or confusion - Fearfulness - Idolatry -Rebellion

The Manufacturer, who is neither liable nor at fault for this defect, is providing factory-authorized repair and service free of charge to correct this defect. The Repair Technician, JESUS, has most generously offered to bear the entire burden of the staggering cost of these repairs. There is no additional fee required.

To connect for service & repair use: P-R-A-Y-E-R.

Once connected, please upload your burden of SIN through the REPENTANCE procedure.

Next, download ATONEMENT from the Repair Technician, Jesus, into the heart component.

No matter how big or small the SIN defect is, Jesus will replace it with:
Love - Joy - Peace - Patience - Kindness - Goodness - Faithfulness - Gentleness - Self control

Please see the operating manual, known as The B.I.B.L.E. (Best Instructions Before Leaving Earth) for further details on the use of these fixes.

WARNING: Continuing to operate the human being unit without correction of the Sin defect voids any manufacturer warranties and exposes the unit to dangers and problems too numerous to list. Ultimately resulting in the human unit being permanently impounded. For immediate & free emergency service, call on Jesus.

DANGER: The human being units not responding to this recall action will have to be scrapped to the furnace. The SIN defect will not be permitted to enter Heaven in order to prevent contamination of that facility. Thank you for your attention!

P.S. Please assist, whenever possible, by notifying other units of this important recall notice. For continuous maintenance & extra protection you may contact the Father any time by "Knee mail"!

ARE YOU OBEDIENT TO THE TRUTH?



High Priest Robert A. Rolfe
Lamoni, Iowa
March 4, 2012

Elder Gordon Winkler presided over the Communion Service. He read Mosiah 11:187-188 as a scripture reading. This is part of what is recorded by Alma. As you recall Alma and the sons of Mosiah had been journeying around the country speaking against the church. Alma had a visitation from an angel and then, if you recall, he spent some time in silence and couldn't move. After people fasted and prayed over him for two days he was revived. This is what he says at the conclusion of that experience. *And the Lord said unto me, Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men, and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again; Yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters; and thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in no wise inherit the kingdom of God.*

Rob Rolfe shared: Several weeks ago in our class we were studying from the book of Jarom in the Book of Mormon. Jarom 1:6, 7 says this, *Behold, it is expedient that much should be done among*



this people, because of the hardness of their hearts, and the deafness of their ears, and the blindness of their minds, and the stiffness of their necks; Nevertheless, God is exceeding merciful unto them, and has not as yet swept them off from the face of the land. Now physically I feel like that's talking about me because I just went to get new glasses, got my hearing aids fixed, went to the cardiologist for a heart checkup, and went to see about getting my knee redone. Do you remember the first pair of glasses you had and being able to see things that you couldn't see before. That happened when I got my hearing aids. My wife had told me that I couldn't hear but, of course, she's my wife and you don't listen to your wife. Any way I got these hearing aids and we went for a walk. I thought I was going to go deaf from the sounds. It happened to be in the spring and the robins and the redwing blackbirds were singing. It was almost overwhelming. There was just so much noise.

This time of year we are looking forward to that happening again. When you step outside now you don't hear a lot of singing but in a week or two when the birds start coming back, you can step outside in the morning and it's beautiful to hear the birds singing. I noticed that the Grand River is melted off and the water is running downstream now. Most of the ponds have melted. I see green grass growing in our yard. It won't be long before the jonquils and the tulips start coming up. I've seen the geese coming back. In fact some of them were sitting on the ice this morning as we went by this one pond. Not too long ago I went to Kansas City and there were a couple thousand geese in the sky. Apparently they had already come back to that area. It seems like they appear instantaneously, almost by magic. When Diane (Anderson) was playing this morning it was kind of like the sound of the birds again, each singing their own melody.

I've noticed too as I drive along that there are a lot of new calves in the fields. I have been thinking that it's kind of strange that these calves are being born when the weather's nice instead of when it's freezing and raining. Sometimes these calves are dumped in a ditch full of water by their mothers. The farmer then has to go out and wallow around and get them so they don't freeze to death. I remember Dick Ballantyne telling me he had three calves in his pickup with the heater running full

blast to dry them out so that they would survive. How many of you would put three calves in your pickup for an hour? Rodney (Bastow) says he would. When you think about how much those are worth if they live and how much if they're dead, providing a little heat doesn't seem so bad.

It seems like in the springtime the air is so much fresher. I like the air here because it still has oxygen in it. Having some of the health problems that I do I notice when the oxygen content goes down. As you head toward Kansas City, I can smell the air. If you go to the area North of Denver where my girls live and go up in the mountains, you can see it, this layer of rusty air going right over the top of the city. It's pretty obvious that the air is polluted when you can see it. Where I grew up the weatherman would tell what percentage of the bean crop was going to be destroyed by the air pollution. You kind of take that for granted until they start putting it on the evening news that your air is killing you.

I've noticed that the buds on the trees are already beginning to swell, particularly on the soft woods. There is the promise that before long they will bud out. When Lynda and I got married was about the time that doctors started letting husbands into the delivery rooms. Back in the good old days the husband's job was to boil water. I don't know if they ever used the water but boiling it kept them busy. Nowadays doctors actually let the husbands into the delivery room. I remember when Alana was born the doctor just wrapped her in a towel and handed her to me. When she was first handed to me I thought something was wrong with her. She was gray. I think the doctor read my mind because he told me that she would turn pink in a minute. It was true. All of a sudden she was pink. I guess something happens when you start breathing on your own. The oxygen gets into your skin from the blood and causes your skin to turn pink.

Jesus used this example of being born to talk about how to get into the kingdom of God. In fact, He said if you weren't born again you wouldn't see the kingdom or you couldn't enter the kingdom of God. This idea of being born has to be more than just a physical thing. We're talking about something spiritual that is happening to us. When the scriptures talk about hardness of hearts, deafness of ears, blindness of eyes and stiffness of necks;

that's physically been me for thirty years.

How do you enter the kingdom of God? Nicodemus asked that question and he was one of the experts. So if the experts of the law ask the question it's probably a good question. You might ask why Nicodemus was even interested. After all he was rich. He had power, position and influence. Even though he was a member of the ruling body or the church of that day in Israel, he still felt like something was missing in his life. That's why he was asking the question. Do you feel like there's anything missing in your life? If there is you might consider Jesus' call even as Nicodemus that you must be born again and if you're not born again you need to be going to Jesus to ask Him what you must do to enter the kingdom of God. Jesus was talking about being baptized of the water and the spirit. Most of us in this room have been baptized of the water but have we been baptized of the spirit. If there's anything missing in the restoration today it's that absence of that Pentecostal experience where people have great experiences with the Holy Spirit. When the Kirtland Temple was built the spirit there was so strong that the neighbors reported that it burned down because they could see the fire. How many of you have been to a service in recent years where the spirit was so strong, you felt the place was on fire? It would be great if that was our current situation. We can say that we've had that baptism of the spirit, but we have not been truly born again until the love of Jesus Christ can be seen in our faces, particularly by those who we live with on a regular basis.

I have some questions for you this morning. Are you filled with righteousness, peace and joy? Can the love of Jesus Christ be seen in your face? In your daily lives do you express the confidence that Jesus is with you? Too often the answers to all these questions are no. Remember that being born again for most of us is a process not a moment. Some of you may have noticed this. My wife notices my faults better than some of the rest of you. On one occasion I preached a sermon here and on the way home she told me that I had a lot of nerve talking about that. What she was referring to was that she could see just a slight blemish or two in my life that I had not overcome. I told her that if I only preached about the sin that I had overcome I wouldn't have much sermon material.



Sometimes I'm not the righteous person that I'd like to be. I notice that when I sin, I hurt others, but probably myself most of all. If I am doing this then you, as my home congregation don't receive the ministry to which you are entitled. I have noticed that those times when I have become more righteous the spirit of God fills my soul and I'm able to be a more effective minister to you and to others.

The simple fact is, God wants us to enter His kingdom. This is not an academic exercise. He wants us to be in the kingdom. There is just one way to enter His kingdom and that is you have to be born again. When you are born again you rid sin from your life. Martin Luther was not particularly a righteous person. I make that judgment because while he was working on some of his theology he was starving a guy to death in prison with whom he disagreed. Martin Luther even said that you had to repent and repent and repent. When you are doing that you are returning to the **water of repentance**. If you were going to be baptized this morning right now would you be thinking of the sin in your life? Would you be thinking of the covenant that you might be making with your Lord and what you were going to do to honor that covenant and keep it as you go into the waters of baptism?

We have this meal here that we eat at least once a month. We're commanded to eat it often. I don't know that it says how many times we're supposed to do this it just says that we're to do it often. I think more than any of us know that this meal helps us in our quest to be a righteous people. It's not intended to make us righteous or to do anything to us in the sense that it's some kind of a talisman that if you rub it on your body or wave it over you that suddenly you are going to be good and righteous and without sin. But it does help us to go through this process of being born of the spirit over and over. I can tell you this; that if you come here and don't take any thought about it; you don't make any repentance in your life and you just merely reach forth your hand and take that bread and that wine out of habit, you are wasting your time.

What's the biggest sin that Mount Ayr has? Let's get right down to the brass tacks. Consider this, the biggest sin that we have is not believing that Jesus is with us every day. If we believed that, really believed that, what a difference that would

be making in our lives. That includes even those times when bad things happen to us. Most of the time when bad things happen to us, we think that it must be something that we did wrong. It may not even occur to us that the reason something bad happens is because God wants us to learn something from that, not that He's being a little vindictive gremlin, but that it is His will for us. Let me give you a few examples here in terms of how this attitude works.

You know the story of how the angel Gabriel came to Mary and told her that she was going to have a child. What if she said after Joseph said that they had to go to Bethlehem, I'm too pregnant to be going to Bethlehem and particularly on a donkey. It's too far. I'm too hot. I'm too tired. It's a stupid law and I'm going to use the tax money for something else. Some of you have had pregnant wives. You know that sometimes they don't want to be cooperative and ride on a donkey all the way to Bethlehem which was about seventy miles. Can you imagine riding on

“Consider this, the biggest sin that we have is not believing that Jesus is with us every day.”

a donkey when you are nine months pregnant? That doesn't sound like a fun thing to me. This decree of Caesar Augustus probably was the only thing that would make them do that. As a result even though that wasn't a good thing, it did compel them to be in the spot where they needed to be, to fulfill the prophesy that was given several hundred years earlier that Bethlehem was where the son of God was to be born.

Consider this. Let's say that you're Joseph, son of Jacob, and things aren't going so well. What if he were to have said; what kind of a family do I have anyway? They beat me up. They throw me in a pit. They sell me into slavery. I spent years in a dungeon and now I'm supposed to be nice to them when they show up. Now would any kind of a just God allow this to happen to me? I don't ever want to speak to my family again and if I do I want to give them what they deserve. I don't want to be nice to them. They deserve anything and everything I can give them. In fact, because Joseph was one of those that had been born again, he knew what the truth was. The truth was

that all those bad things that happened to him allowed God to use him as an instrument to save his entire family from death and the Egyptian people as well. Joseph was obedient to the truth. I don't know if we worry about discovering the truth. I am talking about a capital T kind of truth. Jesus said, you will know the truth and the truth will make you free. He also said, I am the way, the truth and the life. There are those that say there is no absolute truth. If you say there is no truth, and that is true, then the statement is false. Isn't it? Do you see where that can lead you if you're rationalizing where there is such a thing as truth? There are some who will tell you that truth is only relative to the age in which you live and it can change. What's true today might not be true tomorrow. That's not a new thought either. In fact, when Pilate examined Jesus and Jesus said, "I am the truth", Pilate responded, what is truth? If you make yourself a god, then truth doesn't make any difference to you. But if there is such a thing as God's law, how can you change the law if you're not the lawgiver? Can we change the law because we don't like it? God makes the law so if we're not law doers than we can't be law changers. We have many, many scriptures that say that the Son of Man tells us that He is the truth.

God is not a man, (thank goodness) that He should lie neither the Son of Man that He should repent. Hath He said and shall He not do it or hath He spoken and shall He not make it good. This comes out of the Torah and not out of the New Testament. Getting back to Mt. Ayr's sin, we don't really believe that God is with us every day. Would we be grumbling and grouching around if we believed God was with us; if we believed we had Jesus standing next to us. I don't think we probably would be doing those things. We wouldn't be grumbling about the guy that just cut us off in traffic or the one who's sitting there yakking on the cell phone when the light turns green.

Today, in terms of the commitment you have made and the covenant you are remembering here this morning, how many of you would like to be burned alive for your faith or beheaded or destroyed by beast or pick some other horrible death for truth without a capital T. Would you be willing to do any of those things if truth was not relevant or that its not really true anyway? It was true last year but it's not



true this year. How many of you would be willing to be out giving your lives spreading the gospel for a man that simply had his own truth which was relevant only to the day in which he lived? Would you have any interest in committing your lives to do that? Christianity was spread and is being spread today not by super human ministers in mega churches with umpteen degrees but by ordinary people. Those people who have been born again and had the spirit of God in their lives; that know what the kingdom is because they live it; people who had asked and received Jesus Christ in their hearts and lives and souls. The martyrs of the past had joy in their hearts even though bad things were happening. I can't imagine anybody looking forward to a horrible death. If you knew you were going to be fed to lions in the Coliseum in the morning would you look forward to that? Probably not, unless you were really an idiot. I can't imagine anybody looking forward to that but these martyrs had enough of the spirit of God in their hearts that they would be singing hymns before the lions were turned loose.

You can say that you don't deserve the bad that is happening to you. That's really our problem in life when our expectations go beyond what we're really entitled to. There's a quote from Stephen Hawking a physicist who is quadriplegic. I understand that he uses a pencil in his teeth to type on a computer. Think what kind of life that would be. Someone asked him once how he could be so happy and upbeat considering the shape he was in. His answer was, *if your expectations are zero, everything that happens is great. It's a blessing.* It's only when you suddenly think I deserve better than this, I'm not getting what I deserve, that you become unhappy. If you look at it the other way and say everything I am getting is a blessing there isn't a problem.

Our Master didn't deserve to be led away to His death either. After all He was innocent. His trial was illegal. The witnesses lied. The judges didn't do their duty. There wasn't any justice to any of it but He died anyway. Being willing, when He suffered that sacrifice, He saved all the rest of us from death. Can you say to Jesus this morning, "Jesus, I desire in my heart to enter your kingdom. I want to be filled with your spirit so that I have righteousness, peace and joy in my life every day." Wouldn't that be a good prayer to be offering every morning as we

get up so that we could truly be born again as the scriptures have called us to be? May God bless you in that search to be a member of His kingdom.

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WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU DOING FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE?



Seventy George Knotts
Lamoni, Iowa
March 11, 2012

As a Call to Worship Seventy Ron Smith read 11 Chronicles 7:14. *If my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*

George Knotts shared that the scripture that he wanted to share as a scripture reading was, *Jesus wept.* (John 11:35) That's the shortest one in the scriptures, isn't it? Now there is another scripture that I would like to read because I don't want to depress you with that one. *The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel.* (Mark 1:13)

There is another scripture in the Book

of Mormon, 3rd Nephi 7:34-36, that says, *And thus commandeth the Father that I should say unto you, At that day when the Gentiles shall sin against my gospel, and shall reject the fullness of my gospel, and shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations, and above all the people of the whole earth, and shall be filled with all manner of lyings, and of deceits, and of mischiefs, and all manner of hypocrisy, and murders, and priestcrafts, and whoredoms, and of secret abominations; And if they shall do all these things, and shall reject the fullness of my gospel, behold, saith the Father, I will bring the fullness of my gospel from among them; And then will I remember my covenant which I have made unto my people, O house of Israel, and I will bring my gospel unto them.* What do you think about that? It says we've been warned and forewarned and we'd better behave. I wonder how the Lord approves of what we are doing now. He hasn't called a prophet to look over us. He hasn't brought very many messages to our group. How are we doing?

I used to get a call from a friend of mine in Des Moines. When I answered the phone I would hear this voice saying, 'What on earth are you doing for heaven's sake?' That's like eternal judgment right there on the phone. That question might be something we can ask ourselves.

I was delighted yesterday with a little girl at the Pine Box Derby racing tournament. I had helped my granddaughter so I was there with her. This little girl brought over my granddaughter and introduced her to me. She told my granddaughter that she wanted her to meet me. I was really surprised. My granddaughter of course said that I was her grandfather. The other girl's parents got a chuckle out of that.

The Community of Christ had their witnessing convention last weekend. It went early in the morning until late at night. I went over about 3 in the afternoon to hear what they had to say. As I went in and sat down, I heard my name being mentioned. It was Sandy Crandel. She had been asked to think of one word that was the reason why she had joined the church. She answered, 'grace.' She was asked to tell more. She said that George Knotts' family took her in and treated her kindly. She felt so loved that she wanted to be a member. The man in charge of the meeting asked Sandy if she and I had



coordinated her comment and my coming before the meeting. We don't know what is going to be taking place in our lives. We need to live just one day at a time and see what happens to us. What on earth are you doing for heaven's sake? (Pause)

I have something I'd like to read to you about humility which we've have been talking about in class.

"Humility is the truth about ourselves. Only when a box is empty can it be filled. If one is not humble enough to receive from God then he receives nothing. The humble man has God to call upon. The proud man has only his own ego that has collapsed. Only submission of the self to something higher than self can cure despair. For such humility empties the soul of both pride and self-judgment making room for the influx of divine truth and love. He that humbles himself shall be exalted and he that exalts himself shall be humbled. One test of our true humility is our attitude towards praise. Anyone who loves publicity is proud, is seeking to be justified before men. A humble man reflects all praise to God."

I learned something from Jimmy Dougherty. One time I was with him at a reunion at Stewartville, MO where he provided a beautiful ministry. When they would tell him what a great job he had done, he would say, 'The Lord blessed us didn't He?' Wasn't that a wonderful expression? He didn't take credit for himself, he reflected to the Lord.

I was awakened early Saturday morning and wrote down seven pages of notes about ways the Lord has blessed me over the last several years. If I run out of something to say I will pull out these seven pages of notes.

About 1970 I came across the book Prison to Praise. I have shared that with most of you here. That book taught me the difference between thanking God and praising Him. There's a lot of difference. If I would get up here and thank Steve Smith for helping me out that's different than praising him for being enthusiastic for the Lord and about his work.

In the early 60's I came across two books. One of them was How to Live Like a King's Kid by Harold Hill. It is a very faith-building book. This man taught me to turn my life over to the Lord one day at a time and thank Him for what happened to me regardless of how it appeared. He gave

some good examples in his life about how that happens. He was kind of an engineer and would be called on to solve a problem. It would take months and months to solve the problem normally, to check out what was wrong, but he would ask God to help him. God would direct him and he would solve the problem in a day. Over and over again he kept bearing his testimony about how he was blessed doing that. I started trying that out. He had something he called the Baltimore experiment. He had this all written out and people would sign it saying they were going to turn their life over to the Lord today and would thank Him for what happens in their life regardless of how it appears. When you turn your life over to Him, He's in charge. He is running things so you start thanking Him for how it appears. It won't always appear logical to you but if you can thank Him anyway in spite of how it appears, it will turn out well.

A book I read called God's Smuggler by Brother Andrew was a faith-building book. I saw these books about these men's daring faith before I went under appointment in 1966. At the time I was in training with fourteen men going through the School of the Restoration and I didn't see that faith among these men. In the book God's Smuggler they were getting Bibles through the Iron Curtain to where God wanted them. Brother Andrew drove a Volkswagen which he got before he even had a license. The man who owned the car was told by the Lord to give Brother Andrew the key to the car. *Crossing "closed" borders, he prayed, "Lord, in my luggage I have Scripture I want to take to Your children. When You were on earth, You made blind eyes see. Now, I pray, make seeing eyes blind. Do not let the guards see those things You do not want them to see." And they never did.* When you read a whole book full of testimonies like that it gets your attention. That's like Joseph Smith. The angel appeared to him on September 22nd. The next year he appeared to him on September 22nd. The next year he appeared to him on September 22nd. That would make a believer out of you, wouldn't it? Brother Andrew trusted the Lord over and over and over again. If you get a chance to read that book, please do. I recommend it strongly.

How many of you have heard of the book The Cross and the Switchblade by David Wilkerson? That touched me so much that I couldn't read a certain part of

it. I had to call my son in and have him finish this part because I couldn't keep reading. If I remember right this part is where this boy, Dave Wilkerson, was sent to a new school. Of course the other students were going to try this new kid out and his father told him what to do. He said, Remember this quotation, 'not by might nor by power but by my Spirit saith the Lord.' He did that and this guy walked around him and he wasn't afraid. He kept quoting this to himself, 'not by might nor by power but by my Spirit saith the Lord.' The kid that was a bully went back to school and said don't mess with that guy. He's tough so Dave didn't have any more problems at school because he had trusted the Lord literally and the Lord literally helped him. I was reading these two books at the same time, God's Smuggler and The Cross and the Switchblade. It had a real impact on me when I read these testimonies over and over. I would recommend that you read faith-building books.

Another faith-building book that I really appreciate and have mentioned several times is God Calling by A.J. Russell. If anyone in this room gets God Calling and doesn't like it, I will pay for it tax and all. Do you know how many of these I have bought over 40 years? Zero, that's it.

I had a meeting with Roger Yarrington. He was my former roommate at KU. He ended up being the editor of the Herald and also assisted the First Presidency. I felt impressed that we should meet and talk about our lives after KU. We were meeting at a Perkins Restaurant. A lady came and stood right beside us and told me how much she appreciated *What's Your Heart's Desire*, a study in fasting and prayer which I had introduced to her. She said when she started doing that her life turned around and she was blessed. Here she was bearing her testimony to Roger who hadn't taken it so well from me. He had thought that this was just George's idea and wouldn't work.

I mentioned a friend we had in common. I said this man taught us at the School of the Restoration and told us in class that he didn't believe anybody who said they had a spiritual dream. He said it was likely they had eaten cabbage before they went to bed. He told us in class later that he had had a spiritual dream where he and his wife saw their son and they prayed the rest of the night. He came to class and



told us that, Roger. He didn't believe that at all either. I don't know if my visit with him did any good but he knows more about it now than all of us do because he has gone on to the other side. You just have to trust the Lord and see what happens one day at a time.

I was the director of the Graphic Arts Center at Oklahoma State University for five years and I got to know the Chancellor. When the government closed some of the departments, mine was one they cut back on. I guess I was so efficient in my department I got it where it could be run without me so they eliminated my position and had one of the people who was working for me take over. I mentioned that to the Chancellor and told him that I wanted a Letter of Recommendation from him for another position. He told me that he would but that he had something to tell me. He said, 'You don't know what your future holds but you know who holds your future.' He wrote a recommendation and I got the job. Before that I had sent out 24 resumes and had gotten no response back. A lot of places were cutting back on positions. When this man sent the Letter of Recommendation I got the job. When I went to Oklahoma Electric Coop I was able to cut the budget 19% twice. That's a big cut and saving of money but there was a man on the board who wanted my job and so they decided to cut back on expenses. They cut my job and a lady's job. When I went to see my supervisor I was praising God for all things. You know when you lose your job you're not normally supposed to be praising God for that. He said, 'You know you're sure taking this well.' He said the lady who was also cut wanted to sue them and here I was thanking God for what's opening up before me. I told him that I didn't know what was opening up before me but that something good was going to happen.

I went home and in the Herald they were asking for somebody to do the graphics and produce TV spots. I took this back and showed it to him and told him that I was going to make contact with those people. Bill Dodd who was in charge of that program for the church, hired me to help him. People told him that for the amount of money we had we couldn't even do 19 radio spots much less TV spots. We would get up in the morning and fast and ask God to guide us and He did. We did the 19 TV spots and used the Park College

facilities. We asked different songwriters around the Centerplace area to write us a theme song, a one-minute theme song to lead into the segment. We called the program, *He Cares* with a logo of Jesus. Each person I asked couldn't limit themselves to one minute. They wrote a whole song. We built the TV spots on the format of the poor man's 700 Club. Seventy Bill Dodds would interview people and ask them what their life was like before they met Christ and they would tell him. Each time we would pray before the program. Everybody was at ease and it came across very well. They would tell Bill what their life had been like and then he would ask them how they found Christ. They would tell him and he would then ask them what their life was like after they had found Christ. In between each testimony we would have the original songs that the songwriters we had contacted had written. (Blessed again)

While we were in Iowa I got together with the fellow who would call and ask me, What are you doing for heaven's sake, and we would talk about projects. He found out that there was a witnessing area

"What are you doing for heaven's sake?"

at the Iowa State Fair. We left home without purse or script. I don't know if you've ever tried this or not but when you go out of the house without anything in your pockets it's like going out of the house in your pajamas. If you are used to having things in your pockets, you feel really empty. I walked out to the Fairgrounds from where we lived. I got thirsty while I was walking along. I went by a guy washing his car and asked him if I could have a drink. He said sure and gave me a drink of water. I went a little bit further and a car pulled up beside me and asked if I knew how to get to the Iowa State Fair and I said sure it's straight ahead but I'm going out there too. Could I ride out there with you so they gave me a ride. George Orr had a car lot not too far from the fairgrounds. His wife and sister were there and I went in and told them about my project of witnessing at the state fair. One of the ladies told me to take the money to get into the fair. I told her 'no' that the Lord would help me get into the fair. I went down to the fair and there was a man who didn't have any legs sitting by the entry. I told him that I didn't have any

money but what I had I would give him. I gave him the tract called, *I Will Build My Church*. He looked at me a little strangely but he took it. I went back to George Orr's and the lady told me again to take the money so I did. I thought the Lord would open the door for me to get into the fair in a different way but that hadn't happened so I took her money.

We went all over the fairgrounds looking and nobody was interested in anything like what I was talking about, sharing the gospel. I found out there was a place under the grandstand, second floor up that had a bunch of people there from different churches. I asked them how they had gotten in there. They said it didn't cost anything but you had to remember one thing you couldn't gather a crowd while you were in there.

The next year we contacted Seventy Bob Taylor and he managed to get everything out there that we needed. We put up a big display about the size of that chalkboard over there. It showed a timeline of the beginning of time down to now and we would talk about the gospel there. We had the principal of having a cup of cold water. It's hard to find cold water on the fairgrounds because they charge you for everything. We had a pitcher and would give people cold water. They would come up and drink and look the timeline over. It was in fine print so they had to get pretty close to read it. Bill Howard was there who had the gift of talking about the Book of Mormon. He would talk kind of quiet but he was enthusiastic about it and people would gather around him. Pretty soon there would be a big crowd gathered around him. We would have to close that crowd down and they would go away and then he'd start talking again. He had this gift of talking enthusiastically about the Book of Mormon and people would gather around him.

When Bill went away to Graceland he would come back and be spiritually confused. He would wonder about things so I would talk to him and get him straightened out so his faith was solid again. He did this about three times and finally asked me what I thought he should do. I thought of all the things I could tell this young man that he could do to keep his mind centered on the Lord but I finally told him to fast two meals a week. That is involved in *What's Your Heart's Desire*. He did that and ended up being elected



president of the student body at Graceland. He couldn't have been elected president of his dorm room before because he was so confused.

When we went to Oklahoma State University we were in charge of the Liahona Group. We had about 20 kids in the group which is quite a few. First we met in the Student Union and introduced *What's Your Heart's Desire*, which involves fasting, studying scripture, and being willing to do what you find. The next few weeks we were getting the breakfasts but we weren't eating them. We didn't have time to eat because there were so many testimonies happening. We then met in the new library building. There was a room that we could meet in before school started. The students would come and tell the faith experience they had had that week. It was beautiful. Sometimes they would have a 25 cent miracle, sometimes something greater to share. Good things were happening to these college students.

Then when Seventy T. Ed Barlow had a Campaign for Christ in the Auditorium, he asked us to come to his area where he was gathering in from and we would have Witnessing Weekends. I counted up and there were 3000 hours of our students in that Liahona Group leaving OSU and going up there and spending a Witnessing Weekend, going around testifying. We felt that that was probably the strongest Liahona Group in the church at that time because they were getting things done.

The other day I was asked over the phone if I would do a Jayhawk for the music department at KU. I had done a Jayhawk who was conducting and they thought that was a good symbol for music. I asked them what size they wanted and they said they wanted double size. When it is something special I charge more so I charged them \$400.00. When I made it I thought I should make another one and make it even better so I did that. Then I decided to do another one and make it even better. I sent these three Jayhawks down to them and told them to pick the one they wanted which they did. I told them if they took the other two I would charge the normal price of \$60.00 each. She told me that they would take all three of them. I felt blessed and thanked the Lord.

I would like to call your attention to benefits. The reason why my name got mentioned in John White's talk with Sandy Crandel was she was talking about grace. She was saved by grace. When it came

time for a break after sitting there listening for three hours, I had John come over and told him that if someone had had an objection to anything about the gospel you could counter it with a benefit. People are interested in benefits rather than features so benefits are very critical, very important in sharing the gospel.

Resentment is a stumbling block to the Kingdom. We need to recognize that holding on to it is very expensive. It's like driving a car with the brakes on. That's just not practical is it? Yet we have resentments in our homes that build up in us. Make a list of 100 good things about the person that you resent. I was at a youth camp where Bob Taylor was in charge. The campers would know what was going to be happening more than the staff. It was frustrating us and we resented it. We were told to write down 100 good things about Bob Taylor. I got to 75 which is more than you would think. Since you are not completely perfect let the other person be imperfect also. Only by pride, cometh contention. It's our ego that gets hurt. Forgive them and you'll be forgiven. "Communication is the beginning of understanding. Understanding is the beginning of caring. Caring is the beginning of love. Love is the beginning of everything."

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



"We must help one another, and the Great Spirit will help us both. Because one suffers and does not deserve it is no reason he shall suffer always. We may live to see it right yet. If we do not, our children will."

-Pottawattamie Chief, Pied Riche, speaking to the Saints who left Nauvoo after Joseph and Hyrum were murdered. The Pottawattamie Nation had similarly been persecuted and driven out of Michigan.

GREAT CAN BE OUR JOY!



Elder Michael Jordison
Lamoni, Iowa
March 18, 2012

And so great was the faith of Enoch, that he led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them, and he spake the word of the Lord, and the earth trembled, and the mountains fled, even according to his command. And the rivers of water were turned out of their course, and the roar of the lions was heard out of the wilderness. And all nations feared greatly, so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him. There also came up a land out of the depths of the sea; and so great was the fear of the enemies of the people of God, that they fled and stood afar off, and went upon the land which came up out of the depths of the sea. And the giants of the land also stood afar off; and there went forth a curse upon all the people which fought against God. And from that time forth, there were wars, and bloodshed among them; but the Lord came and dwelt with his people, and they dwelt in righteousness. And the fear of the Lord was upon all nations, so great was the glory of the Lord which was upon his people. And the Lord blessed the land, and they were blessed upon the mountains, and upon the high places, and did flourish. And the Lord called his people, Zion, because they were of one heart and of one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there were no poor among them. And



Enoch continued his preaching in righteousness unto the people of God. And it came to pass in his days, that he built a city that was called the city of Holiness, even Zion. And it came to pass, that Enoch talked with the Lord, and he said unto the Lord, Surely, Zion shall dwell in safety forever. But the Lord said unto Enoch, Zion have I blessed, but the residue of the people have I cursed. And it came to pass, that the Lord showed unto Enoch all the inhabitants of the earth, and he beheld, and lo! Zion in process of time was taken up into heaven. And the Lord said unto Enoch, Behold mine (Genesis 7:15-27)

And Enoch beheld the Son of Man ascend up unto the Father; and he called unto the Lord, saying, Wilt thou not come again upon the earth? for inasmuch as thou art God, and I know thee, and thou hast sworn unto me, and commanded me that I should ask in the name of thine Only Begotten; thou hast made me, and given unto me a right to thy throne, and not of myself, but through thine own grace; and wherefore I ask thee if thou wilt not come again on the earth? And the Lord said unto Enoch, As I live, even so will I come in the last days, in the days of wickedness and vengeance, to fulfill the oath which I made unto you concerning the children of Noah. And the day shall come that the earth shall rest. But before that day the heavens shall be darkened, and a veil of darkness shall cover the earth; and the heavens shall shake, and also the earth. And great tribulations shall be among the children of men, but my people will I preserve; and righteousness will I send down out of heaven, and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men. And righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine own elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare; an holy city, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion; a New Jerusalem. (Genesis 7:66-70)

And I will establish my covenant with you, which I made unto Enoch, concerning the remnants of your posterity. And God made a covenant with Noah, and said, This shall be the token of the covenant I make

between me and you, and for every living creature with you, for perpetual generations; I will set my bow in the cloud; and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember my covenant, which I have made between me and you, for every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant, which I made unto thy father Enoch; that, when men should keep all my commandments, Zion should again come on the earth, the city of Enoch which I have caught up unto myself. And this is mine everlasting covenant, that when thy posterity shall embrace the truth, and look upward, then shall Zion look downward, and all the heavens shall shake with gladness, and the earth shall tremble with joy; And the general assembly of the church of the firstborn shall come down out of heaven, and possess the earth, and shall have place until the end come. And this is mine everlasting covenant, which I made with thy father Enoch. (Genesis 9:17-23)

Good morning, Saints. I have been praying that you receive what you need this morning. There have been times that my preparatory prayers were that I perceive the words that I should share. But I have tried to slightly change the focus of my prayers as I believe that it is more important that each of you receive something of value to you personally. Perhaps it's merely a small change in perspective I suppose, but it's one where the focus of my prayer is not for me, but instead for you.

I spent yesterday in Bethany, Missouri at a Taekwondo Tournament sponsored by my school. If you've never been to a martial arts tournament you may or may not feel like you've missed out on something, but there are many good things that can be taken from it. Taekwondo literally means: "foot, hand way", or "the way of the foot and hand". Quite simply, it is a discipline of mastering how to effectively focus your energy and mind to control your actions. The great Masters of the Art teach that Taekwondo is a "way of life". To put it into terms that relate to the

Gospel of Christ you might say that it could be compared to Faith. Faith in Christ is a discipline that is a "way of life" for a Christian - it is a focus of both mind and energy which controls our actions. When our faith is not focused properly our actions begin to waver in our effort to serve our Lord.

Now some of you might not fully appreciate watching a bunch of folks you don't know break boards and spar with each other for medals, and I can understand that. However, for me, I have learned quite a few things over the last 5 and a half years that I have helped me grow to the point that I can appreciate people I don't know (as well as those I do) compete in this discipline.

Yesterday I had the enjoyment of helping judge the mini-peewee division - the 8-10 year olds. What I enjoy - is watching these youngsters, most of which have been training only a relatively short time, match up against their peers. In a tournament, students compete against one another according to their rank, or belt color. This helps to ensure that they are matched against someone who has been training for about the same amount of time. As I watched each group, I saw how the abilities and techniques advanced with each higher level of student. With higher ranks came new combinations of techniques and more often greater intensity.

I was a part of the inaugural Taekwondo class in Lamoni. Though we had roughly 40 students in that first class only 5 of us are still actively training. The rest have quit for other pursuits. But now I have the benefit of watching new students come along who are working their way up through the ranks. I thoroughly enjoy seeing them progress in their abilities as they make their way through these various levels. Some really struggle with particular kinds of board breaks, but night after night they keep on trying until that one day when they finally succeed. Everyone is happy for them, because we have all struggled in our own ways with something. Sometimes they are surprised that they broke it. Though Taekwondo is a personal discipline -I can only control what I do- there is a camaraderie between the whole class where everyone wants to encourage and build each other up. It is something that I thoroughly enjoy about the art. I wish that encouragement was mirrored more explicitly in the rest of life.



Though we all are on the same journey from birth to death, we are at various levels and have our own unique struggles. Wouldn't it be so much grander if we would spend more time encouraging one another; building each other up instead of focusing on negative things, or upon momentary failures?!

When we finished with the youngsters, I had the opportunity to judge the Sr. Women's Black belt sparring. Now this was a little more intense. At the Black belt level there is usually quite a bit more contact. In the final match it came down to two young ladies who both were very aggressive in their quest to win the title, and secure the grand champion trophy for Women's Sparring. Now with the lower ranks, and especially the youth, points are scored though there is still 4 to 8 inches between the strike and the legal zones of the opponent. But with Black Belts there should be a maximum of light uniform contact on the legal zones (without full contact). Now these two ladies were going above and beyond with their strikes, in the which one received a couple of punches to the face (not a legal target). After some discussion with a very passionate parent the match continued in which the other competitor was kicked in the throat and knocked to the ground for about 5 minutes. The match ended up going into two overtimes with a final sudden death round before the winner was determined. I have seen the men's division have that much intensity, but not the women's. It was a very stark contrast between the youth and the women's sparring. I share more about this later.

Now Julia (Jordison) went to the Women's Retreat, along with some of you last weekend. She shared with me that during one of the classes there was some discussion of some different things that those who attended were feeling or going through the week prior to coming to the retreat. Do you remember what some of those things shared were?

Irritated – Stressed – Anger – Resentment – Impatience – Jealousy – Hate – Selfishness – Tired Overwhelmed – Fearful – Depression – Hopelessness – Unloved – Unappreciated – Worthlessness

I also understand that you learned where those things were coming from. None of them come from Christ. Now, we

have all struggled with those kinds of things at one time or another in our lives. These negative experiences come stronger whenever we are about to do something of worth to our souls for the Kingdom. Whenever the devil is threatened by you walking away from him – such as going to a Women's retreat where you will focus on righteous things – he is going to ramp up his attacks on you with the intention of diverting your attention or causing you to change your mind about going in the first place. He doesn't want us to take our focus off of him or his ways. The more we fall into his snares the more powerful that he feels. It's obvious that he is afraid - afraid of losing his power. And that's his goal-ultimate power for himself. He is going to

“Wouldn't it be so much grander if we would spend more time encouraging one another; building each other up instead of focusing on negative things, or upon momentary failures?”

throw everything at you to make you continue to feed off of his negative energy so that he can feel stronger. But the truth is, that when he is feeling stronger you (and I) are going to start feeling weaker.

But if one is *at peace*, are any of those things that the ladies felt prior to the retreat (Irritated – Stressed – Unloved – Depression, etc.), things that you should feel? No, Jesus – the Prince of Peace – said “peace I leave with you”. The Spirit of Jesus Christ is what all of us are to “put on” and use as our armor against the those fiery darts of the devil. *“Learn that he (or she) that doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his (or her) reward – peace in this life, and eternal life in the world to come.”* (D&C 59:c)

When we prepare for a spiritual event we often feel anger or irritation. We're not feeling peace are we? We are not putting ON Jesus Christ. If we want peace, we will have to **do** the works of righteousness, which is to put on Christ.

Now, this very weekend there is another retreat going on, a Priesthood retreat. And since most all of our Priesthood are gone I can talk about them. (There is one advantage to being left behind.) I have a couple of questions for you.

How important is the Priesthood do you think? Pretty important? Yes, it is very important

I'd like to use a couple of examples to illustrate this.

When Joseph Smith, Jr. was twenty years old he was visited by the angel Moroni (Sept 21, 1826) who quoted the 4th chapter of the book of Malachi verse 5. However he didn't quote it the way it reads in our scriptures. He said it in a different way. The scripture says, *“Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.”* The angel said it this way, *“Behold I will reveal unto you the priesthood by the hand of Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord”.*

Did you hear the difference between the two? It is important to understand that the establishment or revelation of the priesthood is just as important to the restoration movement as the Book of Mormon is.

If we skip through Church history a bit we find an exchange between Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Lord about Isaiah 52. Two of the questions that were asked, “What is meant by the command in Isaiah, fifty-second chapter, first verse, which saith, “Put on thy strength, O Zion”? And what people had Isaiah reference to?

The answer that came from the Lord, “He had reference to those whom God should call in the last days, who should **hold the power of priesthood to bring again Zion**, and the redemption of Israel; and to put on her strength is to put on the authority of the priesthood, which she (Zion) has a right to by lineage; also to **return to that power which she had lost.**” (Church History, Vol. 2, p 138-9)

An endowed priesthood, with the power of God is required before Zion can be brought again upon the earth. I'm not trying to say that priesthood is everything. Priesthood has a vital role in the re-establishment of Zion. And it's not just priesthood by itself, but what the Priesthood has the keys and the power to accomplish.

And the power that this priesthood is to have is the same power that was had



before it was lost on the earth, when Zion fled. The scripture says, that when men shall keep all of God's commandments and look upward, Zion shall again come on earth. What do you suppose that means?

How are we going to get to a point in time when people really keep all of God's commandments? Are we doing it now? Do you suppose that Priesthood has some responsibility here? Would a child learn the rules of civility if no one was there to teach him? Not any more that I would learn quantum physics without some instructor. I'm lucky to just be able to *spell* quantum physics. The power of the priesthood in its fullness has within it the means to instruct the children of God in all things pertaining to righteousness. That's because the priesthood *in its fullness* is an extension of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. When men are ordained – they are set apart for ministry. **They are not given a license to do as they please in whatever office they may be set apart for.** They are called to minister in all things pertaining to righteousness, only as directed by the Spirit, which should be in them. To *hold* priesthood is a calling to be lived up to – each and every moment of one's life.

Once set apart, a priesthood member, when acting in the power of the Spirit, is acting in the stead of Christ. It might be better explained as Christ working through the Priesthood member in any capacity in which he finds himself ministering. It's in this way that the fullness of the priesthood can be manifested, **ONLY** in that Christ is fulfilling His covenants by working though His servant.

We have not experienced the fullness of the priesthood to this degree that allows us to obtain the promise of Genesis 9 – the return of Zion. That is because the priesthood has not been endowed with the power of God to fulfill the covenants for which it has been called to. Though there are varying reasons for this, there is one that I want to share with you about this morning, the example of Enoch's City.

If you look at the time frame within the life of Enoch you would find that when Enoch was called and started preaching, in less than one year he had built a city of holiness. The city of holiness, Zion, was upon the earth for 365 years. There was obviously some learning going on during that time but I think it's important to understand that it only took less than one

year for Zion to be established under the preaching of Enoch. He spoke with the power and authority of God. The mountains moved, the water receded, and the roar of lions was heard in the wilderness. The armies fled from before his word so powerful was it. How long has the restoration been here? 1830 to 2012 has been a lot longer than one year. There is something that we're lacking as a people and as a priesthood. God has timings for everything, and sometimes his timings are merely because he knows we aren't going to follow through with things so he has to set things throughout our timeline so he can still accomplish his purposes. When we fail to act, he has already provided for it to be fulfilled sometime in the future. That is the case for the Restoration and the endowment of His people.

Just as many of the women struggled with hardships and distractions by the devil prior to the retreat last weekend, the priesthood are under a similar attack when they seek to minister. Julia and I have noticed that in our lives historically, tensions and frustrations tend to raise their heads the week before I am scheduled to preach. In fact we have more than once found ourselves reflecting mid-week, "Oh yeah, Michael's preaching on Sunday", when dealing with some exasperating circumstances. Perhaps many of you have seen that happen to you as well. If the devil is going to work to distract us from going to a retreat or preaching, how much more intently do you suppose he is going to try to distract us from becoming an endowed people – armed with truth and righteousness to the point that he becomes bound? Obviously he will be much more vigorous in his assaults there. And a key element to his tactics is to keep the priesthood from developing a relationship with Jesus Christ to the level that they and Christ move as One.

What do you expect from the Priesthood? There are things that we all expect from them. We can read in the scriptures the obligations that they are to serve and honor God, which in turn is a commitment to serve and honor the church as cherished vessels.

What do you need from them? (Answers from the congregation - Spiritual leadership and support)

Do you always receive what you need or expect from them? (Head's shaking

'No'.)

I know that on many occasions I have been upset because I felt that the priesthood were not ministering to me in the ways that I needed. I felt let down, and quite frankly, a bit miffed that they were not (in my eyes) holding up to their responsibilities. I felt that they had taken upon them and oath to serve me but they were not doing it, they were not in tune with the Spirit enough to discern that I needed help. God knew what I needed. Surely he could send one of them to minister to my needs. Sometimes there are times when He either does not or can not use the priesthood and must use other means to provide ministry to fulfill our needs and expectations. It is not my intention though to beat the priesthood up here, but instead to invite you to uphold them.

I know that there have been many times when I have myself have failed to live up to my obligations and not met the needs of this congregation, or what was required from me. And there's a high probability that there will be more times, hopefully not many more.

That is true of all priesthood members. We are all distracted at times and find that we can't minister and be of service to others. There is a real and valid attack on the priesthood. If we, as a congregation are not receiving what we need from them, I think it is because Satan has doubled his efforts to keep them from receiving the pleasing word of God to impart to us; and not just the pleasing word of God, but the real soul searching - life evaluating - honest evaluation - chastisement and admonition that we need to implement in our lives so that we can really keep all of His commandments. I have been upset with the priesthood. Instead of dwelling on that, I need to refocus my energy to start *really* upholding them. My prayers for them need to change. I need to pray that they will be blessed and that somehow in their lives they will be conditioned to hear the spirit of God in plainness and in truth. Things happen through a process. If we have never conditioned ourselves to hear the spirit of God, then why would we expect to hear it? If we place ourselves outside the realm where God can actually work with us, and if we take the priesthood outside that realm, they can't be effective in their ministry. I think our prayers need to be focused that they are kept from sin,



that the Lord will lead them in their own lives that they can become affective ministers so that I can receive all that God has in store for me through the power of the priesthood.

In the scriptures, it says the priesthood has been restored upon this earth to fulfill the covenants which God has made with his children. There is a power associated with that which we need as a people. I shared recently at prayer service that I have been praying to be taught about prayer; ‘Show me in my life what I’m doing that causes me to forget so that I can repent of it.’ That is a more important prayer because I am taking steps to actually exercise my faith in action. God isn’t just going to change it for me—he is going to change me so that I can accept whatever it is he has to give me so that I can in turn pass it on. That’s true for all of us, and especially true for the priesthood.

We do receive ministry from the priesthood. But we need to receive more. That starts with members to withhold priesthood and their calling. They are human beings just like we are. They need to have that hedge of protection about them so they can fully function in the capacity in which they are called. It begins with us as individuals in the congregation. If we are not receiving what we need, then instead of being upset, we need to uphold one another.

Do you struggle with sin? Don’t you suppose that there’s a good chance that the priesthood do to?

Do you succumb to sin sometimes? There’s a good chance that they do also.

Does your life always reflect Jesus Christ? There’s a good chance that theirs doesn’t either.

I have heard lots of prayers on Wednesday nights for those who are sick and those who are undergoing trying times. But I seldom hear a prayer for the priesthood that the Lord would shield them from sin, and lead them to be effective ministers of the Kingdom.

I don’t think that it’s only priesthood that need to be shielded from sin, but if the scriptures teach the importance the priesthood in the establishment of the Kingdom, then I think it behooves us to pray in earnest for them.

Are you praying for the priesthood that their lives will be a reflection of Jesus Christ?

Are you praying that they will be wrought upon by the Holy Ghost to preach, teach and exhort in power?

Are you praying that the priesthood will have the power to heal all manner of sickness as did the Christ?

Are you praying that the priesthood will be given the wisdom to lead this congregation in keeping all the commandments of God?

We should all be praying for these things. And not just now and then, and not just a few. But these prayers should be offered up daily. Just as we need food and water daily, we need an endowed priesthood – our friends and family – the world needs an endowed priesthood to facilitate the return of Zion upon this earth.

“Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. **Give us this day, our daily bread...**”

Last month, Brothers Gordon Winkler and Sherman Phipps read a short drama of one man’s attempt at prayer without a thought about what he was doing. The portion of the Lord’s prayer that teaches us to ask for that which we need “Give us this day, our daily bread...” is a call for us to be praying for those things that we need spiritually. Not only do we need for God to open our understanding, we need to realize that he reveals truth’s also to his servants for our understanding and we need to petition the Lord to reveal His truths every day.

Too many times I believe our prayers are just “fix this, Lord” prayers. “Just take care of the problem so I don’t have to deal with it. But we need to begin to change the way we pray to, “Lord, teach me”, so that we can begin to condition ourselves to avoid those situations and circumstances that need to be “fixed”. Sometimes we need the Lord to intervene in matters that are outside of our control, but there are equally – if not more – times when we need to change what we do or how we do it.

There are so many things that we have yet to learn. When I started Taekwondo my goal was to become a black belt. I thought that once I became a black belt I would have mastered the art, being “expert martial artist”. What I learned is that

becoming a black belt only made me ready to *begin* to learn the art. All of the preparation in the lowered colored belt levels (learning names, movements, techniques, etc) was to bring me to a point where I could be teachable – as a black belt. A black belt in martial arts is really just the beginning of really learning...

When we put our faith in Christ and learn about His Gospel, we are merely placing ourselves in an environment to be teachable. Most of us by now have learned the basics, but we have not mastered them and are merely squeaking by often without much thought to anything greater in our lives. Could there be something more for us? Are we yet a perfect people? God wants to give us the good things of the kingdom, but if we do not prepare ourselves to receive them then he must retain them to Himself or give them to another people.

If we truly become teachable then we must have those who are not just able – **but capable** – of teaching and instructing in all things pertaining to righteousness. We must pray that those who have been set apart in the capacities of their offices are preserved from sin by the virtue of their own conscious choices – and not only preserved from sin – but wrought upon the power of God unto the delivering of His words for our day and our place, individually and collectively, as we need. Our lives really depend on it.

Now, back to those two young ladies who were sparring so aggressively yesterday. Throughout the match, both ladies had an opportunity to bow out of the match because of the aggressiveness of the other. They both took illegal blows which hurt and they both were brought to tears during the match. But they both kept in there until the end. They each knew the price of what they were competing for and they were willing to endure trials and even some unfairness to reach the goal. Jesus once made the comment that “the children of the world wiser... than the children of the light” (Luke 16:8). If we, who profess His name are willing to submit ourselves willingly to strenuous circumstances for worldly gains, how much more should be willing to for heavenly ones?

Zion, in its beginning, began with one man preaching in righteousness. Moses, was one who also spoke to God face to face. If we can get to that point in our



congregation it's going to spread to the entire body. It is going to grow. Then the covenants will be fulfilled. We will have the great joy of knowing that we were a part of the beginnings of that. I hope that Mt. Ayr can make that claim. We have to be humble and full of joy. Great can be our joy.

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ARE YOU LOST?



Seventy Ronald K. Smith
Lamoni, Iowa
March 25, 2012

Elder Steven Smith opened the worship service with a scripture reading from Psalms 119:169-176. *Let my cry come near before thee, O Lord; give me understanding according to thy word. Let my supplication come before thee; deliver me according to thy word. My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes. My tongue shall speak of thy word; for all thy commandments are righteousness. Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts. I have longed for thy salvation, O Lord; and thy law is my delight. Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee, and let thy judgments help me. I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments.*

I have chosen for a scripture this morning 1 Nephi 3:5, 6 which is talking about Lehi. *And he also spake concerning the prophets, how great a number had testified of these things, concerning this Messiah, of whom he had spoken, or this Redeemer of the world. Wherefore, all mankind were in a lost and in a fallen state, and ever would be, save they should rely on this Redeemer.* The scripture that Steve read for the Call to Worship I'd like to read again because I should have chosen it. (See above)

This morning I'd like to talk about being lost. Have any of you ever experienced being lost? Somehow it makes you feel better if there are other people that have been lost too. I could tell you all kinds of stories about being lost. I've been lost in more places than most people have places. When I was three years old I was in a Katz Drugstore in Minneapolis. Alan was leading me around the place and we thought we could go anywhere we wanted to go. I got in the wrong aisle somehow and got lost. That's been a long time ago and when I go into a big store I still don't want to leave whoever is there because I don't want to be lost again. Now if I am in a Wal-Mart I can walk around the outside until I find something and I'll be OK but I've never completely lost the feeling of being lost.

I went down to a meeting of the Seventy in Oaxaca, Mexico at Frank Frye's place. I thought it would be fun to walk down the street a little bit. I got out the door and looked back to make sure I could get back to where I came from. I couldn't tell one door from another. They all looked the same. There were blocks of them. I thought well I know it's one of these. I knew if I got further than where I could actually see the door I probably wouldn't be able to identify the block, so I didn't go on my walk. I did choose the right place that was Frank's and got back inside. The other guys went downtown and did all kinds of things but not me because I was lost.

I was in Kenya. Doug and I were staying with Pam Odida's sister. We would take the matatu, the local transportation, to a stop and then we had to walk about three-quarters of a mile to the house. There were a couple of turns along the way and any time there are a couple of turns, I'm dead in the water. I was determined that I was going to learn this. We had done it three or four times. I

thought to myself that I had to figure out where to turn so I did my best to remember every turn. When I got back to where we were staying I spent a couple of hours with a piece of paper and pencil. I drew a map of just exactly where we were because I figured if I could draw a map then I could find my way back. After working a couple of hours on it I felt really good about this map. I had it. I had it down. I went to Doug and said, 'Hey, Doug, guess what I did?' I drew this map and I figured out where we are.' He glanced at it for less than 5 seconds and told me that I had the main road going the wrong way. I thought how do you know where the main road goes? So much for my map-making abilities.

I've never had a lot of confidence when it came to finding my way any place. I always thought it would be neat to fly an airplane but I knew that if I got up there and got lost, I'd be in really bad shape so I never could see spending enough money to get my license because I knew I'd get lost.

I've been lost in Iowa City. I went over there for a math conference and parked on the top level of a parking ramp because at the top you could see out to where you were wanting to go. Two days later after the conference I came back to my car. I looked carefully to see which way I was going to get out of town. As I was driving around and around to get out of the parking ramp, I was trying to keep track of which direction was which. When I got down to the bottom there were two lanes of cars. There were quite a few people leaving at the same time, so I couldn't see the exit. I had to choose which lane I was going to get in because one lane went to the right and one to the left after you exited the parking ramp. I chose one and got out of the parking garage and turned onto a one-way street. I spent the next hour driving on one-way streets trying to figure out where I was and how to get out of Iowa City. Like I said I've been lost in more places than most people have places. I tend to be lost all of the time. When the scripture says we are a lost and fallen people, I can really relate.

Now there's an upside to being lost all the time. There really is. I remember how upset my Mom would get when she would get turned around. She would say, 'I've got the sun coming up in the west.' When she couldn't get her bearings she would feel very uncomfortable. I was always amused at that, because I never had my



bearings to begin with.

A few years ago one of my good friends came with a rather expensive compass which he was going to give me. I asked him what I was going to do with a compass because I didn't know how to use one. I couldn't see how a compass would help me find the right path to take. I should have accepted the compass. In a way my refusal to accept it is kind of typical of me and a lot of us who don't want to take a compass when it is offered. We don't see how it's going to help. What I've discovered since that time is that just having a compass doesn't keep one from being lost. You can have a compass and still be lost because a compass doesn't tell you which path you have to take. You still have to decide which path to take. So what does a compass do for you? A compass makes it so that not all the paths look alike. If you have something that is always pointing in one direction, then not every choice looks the same, and you can distinguish one path from another. We still have to make choices about where we're going to go and what we're going to do but the compass distinguishes one path from another.

This came to me this last week as I was trying to deal with the possibility of our granddaughter coming back to live with us. It has been a little tough to know what we should do. When she visited us last time, she let us know that she had decided that she wanted to make all of her own moral choices. She thought she could still believe in God, but that she should make up her own mind about all of the moral things in the world, and that she definitely did not wish to have our input on any of those decisions. So, it has been tough to know exactly how to respond to her demand last week to come live with us. It occurred to me that our granddaughter, like many others in our society, has confused the necessity of each one making their own moral choices with the desire to be their own moral compass. It is true that everybody has to make their own moral choices. That is agency. One of the basic tenets of the gospel is that God has given us our agency. He has given us the right and even the necessity of choosing the things that we're going to do, the choices that we're going to make, the kinds of things that will determine who we are. But in our society, we have virtually made it illegal to share a moral compass. We've made it illegal to post the Ten

Commandments or to worship God or to pray in school. So what we've done is confuse the need to make the moral choices with the need to have a moral compass to help distinguish between right and wrong. Our society tells us that it is not politically correct to say 'this path is better than that path' by acknowledging a moral compass.

The Book of Mormon talks about our need for a moral compass in Lehi's vision. Do you remember the Rod of Iron represented in that vision? The Rod of Iron was the word of God. If you hang on to the iron rod then you will stay in the path. It's not that hanging on to the iron rod will get you to the tree. You still have to move and decide where to go but hanging on to the iron rod while you're moving will help point you in the right direction and will get you to the tree so that you can partake of the fruit of the tree, which is the love of God. We have to have some kind of moral compass.

When I first started teaching we did a winter term where we were doing some mathematics. One of the things that we tried was blindfolding people and having them walk in a straight line. If you are blindfolded and you are trying to walk in a straight line, it just doesn't work. Most people walk in a circle. Our theory was that your stride would be a little bit different in each of your two legs. One stride would be a little longer and so we were trying to figure out how much longer your stride would be to make the size circle that you walked in.

If we look to ourselves for our moral compass then every choice looks the same. I'm going to give some examples here. I may offend somebody but I'm not trying to offend, I'm just picking some examples. Let's say that you are trying to decide whether to get a tattoo or a body piercing some place. If you are your own moral compass then what are the criterion that you would use? Well, you might think about whether it was safe: am I going to die if I get a tattoo? Well, no, you are probably not going to die. Am I going to die if I get a piercing? Well, probably not. So, what criterion would I use? Every choice looks the same. The only difference would be whether or not the tattoo or piercing enhances my standing in the sight of my friends, in the sight of the people that I think are important. That's the only criterion that most people use when they are trying to this kind of

decision.

Now if you had the scriptures as your moral compass then you might say, 'My body is a temple of God.' So now if it's really a temple of God the choice is whether what I am going to do to God's temple will bring glory to God or not. Now some of the choices don't look quite so good. I talked about tattoos and piercings but I might talk about eating. What are we doing to God's temple? God's temple is swelling. It's getting bigger and bigger all the time because of our choices about how we respond. My point is that if you have a moral compass it won't make you go down a certain path, but it can make the paths so they don't all look the same. You can make choices based on the compass.

I don't know if I'm going to be able to share that with my granddaughter or not. I wrote a letter but it's one of those that I may just keep. Hopefully I will have a chance to share something with her. I guess what I'm trying to say here is that it is important to have a moral compass. It is important to be able to distinguish right from wrong. It is important to be able to see what God has said if we're going to partake of the love of God, if we're going to find the path that leads us to eternal life. That's what the scriptures mean when it says that we are lost and fallen. We were created in the image of God. Each one of us was made in the image of God. Our bodies are a temple for the Spirit of God. When our first parents were made they actually walked and talked with God. They had some different experiences than what you and I have had. God set a moral compass for them. He forbade them to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but they said that they wanted to be their own moral compass. They didn't see how that fruit was any different from the rest of it and it might taste good. Satan came and tempted them and they succumbed to that temptation. The scriptures tell us that because of that we have become carnal and sensual and devilish. What that means is that we have become aware of our physical being. Most of our decisions are made based on our physical feeling, our physical nature, ourselves. When we use our own bodies as our criterion for how we make our decisions, then we're lost. Sometimes we don't feel so bad about being lost if there are a whole bunch of other people lost with us but that doesn't keep us from being lost.



April 2012

Sunday Schedule

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THR	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

DATE	April 1st	April 8th	April 15th	April 22nd	April 29th	May 6th
SPEAKING	High Priest Sherman Phipps	Elder Gordon Winkler	Priest Rodney Bastow	High Priest H. Alan Smith	Sharing Service	Elder Gordon Winkler
PRESIDING	High Priest H. Alan Smith	Seventy Ron Smith	Priest Ed Anderson	High Priest Robert Rolfe	Elder Michael Jordison	High Priest Sherman Phipps
PIANIST	Pat Bolingbroke	Becky Starks	Becky Starks	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke
SPECIAL MUSIC	Gable Galusha	Diane Anderson	Anan Smith	Beth Knotts	Everyone Sharing Service	Robert Rolfe
FAMILY DEVOTIONS	Bob Rowland	Alan Smith	Ed Anderson	Alma Hawley & Becky Starks	Ron Smith	Steven Smith
GREETERS	Robert Rolfe	Steven Smith	Jim Barber	Ron Smith	Alan Smith	Ed Anderson
CUSTODIANS	Jim Barber	Rodney Bastow	Michael Jordison	Michael Jordison	Sherman Phipps	Robert Rolfe
SUNDAY EVENING	Bob Rowland	Robert Rolfe	TBD	Ron Smith	Ed Anderson	Norman Nelson

Wednesday Prayer Service Schedule

DATE	April 4th	April 11th	April 18th	April 25th	May 2nd	May 9th
LOCATION	Norman Nelson	Alan Smith	Ron Smith	Robert Rolfe	Ron Smith	TBD
PRESIDING	Elder Gordon Winkler	Elder Steven Smith	Priest Ed Anderson	Seventy Ron Smith	High Priest Sherman Phipps	Elder Michael Jordison

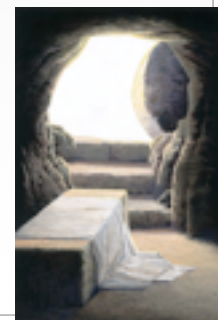


Special Events & Activities

- Sunday April 1st:** Priesthood Meeting at 8:30AM - Potluck following Communion service
- Wednesday April 4th:** Breakfast with the Master - 6:30 AM - 1st Christian Church (Alan Smith speaking)
- April 8th:** Resurrection Day (Easter) - Brunch at 9:00 AM - Sign up sheet at church - All are invited!
- April 15-21st:** JCRB General Conference at the Gathering Place in Independence
- Sunday April 22nd:** Priesthood Meeting at 5:00 PM - Ron Smith residence
- Wednesday April 18th:** Day of Fasting & Prayer

Birthday's this month: (11th) Gloria Slayton; (19th) Julia Jordison; (24th) Aquila Galusha; (29th) Lynda Rolfe

Anniversary's this month: (1st) George & Beth Knotts; (28th) Norman & Cathy Nelson





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

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

God says that if you will hold fast to the iron rod and take His word as your compass then we'll be able to find the path that leads to that wonderful love of God which is portrayed in this vision as the wonderful fruit that is sweet above all that is sweet. That is the thing that Jesus did.

I'd like to share with you a parable of the love of God which was shared with us at the Men's Retreat a week ago. I hope not to spoil it by saying too much afterwards but I do have a few comments. In order to understand this you'll have to understand what the Ironman competition is. The Ironman competition is a race in which people swim for two and a half miles in the ocean. Then they have a 112 mile bike ride and then they go for a 26 mile marathon run. This all takes place in one day. I can't even imagine running from Lamoni to Mount Ayr which is about 20 miles let alone running 26 miles, let alone having biked 112 miles or swum 2 miles before that.

I would like to share a nice story. It's a true story. A son says to his father, 'Dad, would you be willing to run a marathon with me?' The father despite his age and heart disease says, 'Yes.' They run that marathon together. The son asks, 'Dad, can you run another marathon with me' and again the father says, 'Yes.' They run another marathon together. One day the son asks his father, 'Dad, would you please do the Ironman with me.' In case you didn't know the Ironman is the toughest triathlon in existence. Again the father says, 'Yes.'

I don't want to spoil this video by saying too much, but the guys names are Dick and Rick Hoyt, also known as Team Hoyt.

(Watch the video on www.godtube.com/watch/?v=JMEEINNU.) The Team Hoyt story can be found at www.teamhoyt.com.) Rick was born with cerebral palsy. When he was 10 years old, his family was able to purchase a computer system with a synthesized voice, and Rick was able to communicate with his family. In 1977, at the age of 15, Rick became inspired by an article on racing he saw in a magazine. His father Dick Hoyt was not a runner and was nearly 37 years old. After their first race Rick typed on the computer, "Dad, when I'm running, it feels like I'm not handicapped." After their initial five mile run,

Dick began running every day with a bag of cement in the wheelchair because Rick was at school and studying, unable to train with him. Dick was able to improve his fitness so much that even with pushing his son, he was able to obtain a personal record of a 5k in 17 minutes.

When I first saw this video I was thinking what kind of a son would ask his father to do that for him? What kind of a father would do that for his son? I was thinking about my being in the place of the father and then I got to thinking that I don't make a good father like that. But then I thought, I am the son. The scriptures talk about us as being halt and lame and blind and deaf. Yet our Heavenly Father makes the sacrifice for us.

Are you lost today? Let Jesus find you. *Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee, and let thy judgments help me. I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments.* (Psalms 119:176) May God bless you.



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