



# Church of Jesus Christ

*Mount Ayr Restoration Branch*

# NEWSLETTER

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## He is risen!

### News & Notes

#### Easter Activities

We have a busy group of activities planned leading up to Easter.

On Sunday, April 23, we will have an Easter breakfast at 9 a.m. before the morning Easter service.

The week leading up to Easter the Breakfast With the Master series was held at the First Christian Church in Mount Ayr.

Alan Smith shared the ministry of Monday with Pastor Mike Maddy

from the Baptist-Presbyterian Church. The series continues through Saturday morning.

On Sunday, April 16, many from the branch stayed in Mount Ayr for a pot-luck lunch and then helped pack food for people overseas at the Baptist-Presbyterian Church. The branch contributed funds to purchase the food as well as manpower to help package the food.

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# HAVE YOU SEEN JESUS?

**Elder Michael Jordison  
Lamoni, IA  
March 9, 2014**

As a scripture to open the service High Priest Rob Rolfe used Deuteronomy 11:1, 13-15. *Therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, always. And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full.*

I want to continue with where Rob left off with the scripture verse in a way. It's back a chapter. And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good? (Deuteronomy 10:12-13)

I want to share for my opening scripture a hymn that was given through inspiration of the Spirit back in 1913.

*Hark, ye Saints, unto your Savior;  
Heed the counsel I impart.  
Promise rich with heavenly favor  
Now awaits the pure in heart.*

*I now hold in reservation  
For my children in this place,  
Blessing choice, with exaltation,  
Healing, tongues, inspired grace.*

*I'd exhort all of my children,  
While in service in my name,  
Quietude is ever needful,  
Loud confusion I disdain.*

*Angels may withdraw their presence,  
And the Spirit you may grieve,  
Should you fail to show this reverence  
As you enter, as you leave.*

*For my house is one of order,  
Source of blessing, joy and rest;  
From this storehouse rich in garner,  
Willing reapers are refreshed.*

*Here the holy angels gather,  
Thoughts and deeds and prayers record.  
Would you have your heavenly Father  
Note a thoughtless deed or word?*

*Let my people be more prayerful,  
Fast more frequent in my name  
With your children be more careful;  
Some the gospel will proclaim.*

*Tithing, offerings, consecration,  
Source of blessing, peace, and joy;  
These are precepts of salvation  
All my children should employ.*

*I have blessed each toiling reaper  
Sent to gather in the sheaves;  
Future toiling shall be sweeter,  
Blessed with Spirit's grace and ease.*

*After you have gleaned the vineyard,  
With your loved ones you shall rest,  
Where the power of sin and discord  
Cannot enter or molest.*

This morning on the way to church I had my daughter read to me from Doctrine and Covenants Section 10. I hadn't thought about this section in a while but it came to me this morning. To give you the context of this section it was given in 1829 so this is prior to the

official organization of the church. The preface says that it was addressed to Joseph Smith Jr.'s brother Hyrum. Though it is addressed to Hyrum I think that in some way it's addressed to each one of us and though Hyrum hadn't been called to the priesthood at this point, I think it speaks to those of us in the priesthood perhaps who are maybe lacking in some respects with our ministry.

*A great and marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men. Behold, I am God, and give heed to my word, which is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, to the dividing asunder of both joints and marrow; therefore, give heed unto my word. Behold, the field is white already to harvest, therefore, whoso desireth to reap, let him thrust in his sickle with his might, (and I might add with her might) and reap while the day lasts, that he may treasure up for his soul everlasting salvation in the kingdom of God; yea, whosoever will thrust in his sickle and reap, the same is called of God; therefore, if you will ask of me, you shall receive; if you will knock, it shall be opened unto you. Now as you have asked, behold, I say unto you, Keep my commandments, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion. Seek not for riches, but for wisdom, and, behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich; behold, he that hath eternal life is rich. Verily, verily I say unto you, Even as you desire of me, so shall it be done unto you; and, if you desire you shall be the means of doing much good in this generation. Say nothing but repentance unto this generation. Keep my commandments, and assist to bring forth my work according to my commandments, and you shall be blessed. Behold, thou hast a gift, or thou shalt have a gift if thou wilt desire of me in faith, with an honest heart, be-*



living in the power of Jesus Christ, or in my power which speaketh unto thee; for, behold, it is I that speak; behold, I am the light which shineth in darkness, and by my power I give these words unto thee. And now, verily, verily I say unto thee, Put thy trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good; yea, to do justly, to walk humbly, to judge righteously; and this is my Spirit. Verily, verily I say unto you, I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind, which shall fill your soul with joy, and then shall ye know, or by this shall you know, all things whatsoever you desire of me, which is pertaining unto things of righteousness, in faith believing in me that you shall receive. Behold, I command you, that you need not suppose that you are called to preach until you are called: wait a little longer, until you shall have my word, my rock, my church, and my gospel, that you may know of a surety my doctrine; and then, behold, according to your desires, yea, even according to your faith, shall it be done unto you. Keep my commandments; hold your peace; appeal unto my Spirit; yea, cleave unto me with all your heart, that you may assist in bringing to light those things of which have been spoken; yea, the translation of my work; be patient until you shall accomplish it. Behold, this is your work, to keep my commandments; yea, with all your might, mind, and strength; seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit, and my word; yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men; but now hold your peace; study my word which hath gone forth among the children of men, and also study my word which shall come forth among the children of men, or that which is now translating; yea, until you have obtained all which I shall grant unto the children of men in this generation; and then shall all things be added thereunto. Behold, thou art Hyrum, my son; seek the kingdom of God, and all things shall be added according to that which is just. Build upon my rock, which is my gospel; deny not the spirit of revelation, nor the spirit of prophecy, for woe unto him that denieth these things; therefore, treasure up in

your hearts until the time which is in my wisdom that you shall go forth: behold, I speak unto all who have good desires, and have thrust in their sickles to reap. Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I am the life and the light of the world. I am the same who came unto my own, and my own received me not; but verily, verily I say unto you, that as many as receive me, them will I give power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on my name. Amen. I wanted to share that scripture with you this morning after I was directed to it because I believe that there are some in this congregation who have a great work to do whether in new capacities or perhaps in capacities that they are already called to be faithful in.

I'm not sure how my sermon is going to go this morning. I don't like to read my sermons. I don't think that's what I'm called to do but what I do want to share with you this morning stems a little bit from our congregational retreat that we had last weekend. We had the opportunity to mingle among ourselves and ask each other questions about the gospel and about experiences we've each had.

One of those questions was, 'Have you seen Jesus?' I've seen Jesus. I've had experiences with Him. I've had dreams. I've had visions. Have you seen Jesus? You can't have a relationship with somebody that you haven't met. You can't have a relationship with somebody that you don't know. For a lot of years I was that somebody that didn't know Jesus.

I listened to Brother Oakman's sermon on the crucifixion last night as I was cleaning. He asked the question, 'Do you know Jesus or do you just know something about Him?' Ask yourself that. Do you know Jesus or do you just know something about Him? Do you know the stories in the scriptures? Are they just stories to you about people that have lived in the past? Is Jesus somebody that just lived in the past or is He someone who is living with you now? If Jesus was up here today what would He say to you?

Take just a second to think about that. What would He say to you because

I have a feeling if Christ were standing up here He would speak to the entire congregation but at the same time He would be talking to each one of us. I don't know how He does that. What would He say to you? Do you know what He would say to you? I have a feeling that many of us know what He would say but we might not want to admit it.

There's a story here from the book of Mark 10:15-21. *And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? None is good but one, that is God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery; Do not kill; Do not steal; Do not bear false witness; Defraud not; Honor thy father and mother. And the man answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, (I really like this part) and said unto him, One thing thou lackest; Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And the man was sad at that saying, and went away grieved; for he had great possessions.*



Michael Jordison



I don't know if you have thought about this but it never occurred to me before when Jesus said, 'Take up thy cross' this was way before He was crucified. Have you considered that? I hadn't. There must have been a theme in His teachings all the way up leading to Calgary about this taking up thy cross. This man knew about God. The scripture said that he had kept all the commandments from his youth. He recognized that there was something special about Jesus but he didn't know Jesus. I think that's why Jesus said why are you calling me good. You are saying good master but why are you calling me good because you don't really know me. You can't know me until you do the one thing that you lack. You know all of these things, the Ten Commandments that I've given unto Moses and all of those things that you say that you keep. You have done those but you are still lacking the one thing.

Imagine that this morning Jesus is standing up here and you ask Him the question, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? Would Jesus respond to you and say, Why callest thou me good? None is good but one and that is God. Do you know the commandments? Have you been keeping them? How would you respond? Have you kept all of those from your youth? Let's just pretend that you can say I've kept them all the way from my youth and Jesus responds, 'One thing that thou lackest, one thing. Give up all that you hold dear in this world and take up the cross and follow me.' Can you imagine Jesus saying that to you?

What is the baggage that you and I have that keeps us from taking up our cross and following Christ? I have a feeling and it's not just the youth in here, I have a feeling it's all of us that are so distracted by the things around us, the things that we want to do that we enjoy that we know we really probably shouldn't. Maybe those things that we enjoy aren't so bad. Maybe they are OK but everything that we do takes time away from other things that we could be doing.

When I watch TV for instance I'm taking time away from the time that I

could be studying the scriptures or I'm taking a way time that I could be going to visit my sick relative or friend or time that I could be praying, times that I could be working for the kingdom. TV is just one small example. That's something that some of us struggle with. I am not talking about TV today. I'm just throwing that out there as an example.

In the story *Pilgrim's Progress* there is a young man named Christian. Christian is on a journey and has this burden on his back that is so heavy it just weighs him down. He can barely handle it. He can hardly stand up under the weight. Finally he gets to the cross. As he is looking up at the cross and embracing that and the love of God shining upon him that pack begins to slip from his back and falls to the ground. All of a sudden as a broken man under the shadow of the cross his burden has been lifted.

**I** think that was what Jesus was telling this ruler that had come to Him. If you want to follow me you've got to let go of that baggage. You've got to let go of that burden. That burden comes in many forms and shapes, sizes for each one of us. It's more than just the burden of sin when we commit to follow Jesus and are baptized. That burden we carry with us many times through our life after baptism that holds us back. So, if we want to follow Christ and do what He says, we've got to let go of that. We've got to shed ourselves of those unnecessary things in our life that distract us and that take up all of our time in following and serving Him.

I'm going to ask you a question. I want you to be honest with yourself. What is the most important thing in your life? Think about it. What is the most important thing in your life? Don't try to answer it with what you think it should be. What is it that takes up your time and not just your time because we have lots of things that are necessary for us to spend time on. What takes up your energy? What do you focus and think about? Is that the most important thing in your life? Should it be? No for many of us we spend a lot of energy on other things and those become more

important to us than the gospel of Jesus Christ. They become more important to us than taking up our cross and following Jesus.

Jesus knows you and Jesus knows me. Do you think He's going to be fooled when we come up to Him and ask what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life. What's He going to tell you to give up? For that young man it was to sell all of his riches and give to the poor. What would He tell you to give up? Is he going to tell you to stop murdering? Is He going to tell you to stop stealing? Is He going to tell you to stop bearing false witness? Is he going to tell us those things? Probably not because I don't think you are doing those things but He is going to speak to you individually. He knows you. He created you, each one of you. He sees you at all times. He sees each one of us.

Sometimes you think that the guy standing up here with the suit and tie must be doing things right. You wives know better but we all fall short of the glory of God at times. Our life is a marathon. It's not a sprint. We are called to endure unto the end and that's why He offers forgiveness to us at every turn because we need it and He knows that. That's why I love that part of the scripture where it says, and Jesus beholding him loved him. Even though the young man didn't know it, He still loved him. He loves you and He loves me even though we don't always act like we know Him.

The hard part of the story is that we have to learn to give up things before we can hope to follow Him. We can come to Him with those burdens but if we're going to follow Him we cannot take them with us. Unless we're able to make room to give Him the number one priority in our lives we cannot hope to follow and we cannot really expect to inherit eternal life because that's where He is going. It's hard to do something without seeing the end of where you want to be, without having a recognizable goal. I found this quote by Aristotle that I really like. He was a Greek philosopher and scientist. He said, "The soul never thinks without an image."

I'll get back to that here in a minute.



We must find ways to present ourselves to Jesus Christ. Romans 12:1-2 says, *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God is.*

To be able to present our lives before God means that we are going to have to clean them up. If someone of importance to you were to come over to your house or to your room would you leave things lying around to clutter the place or would you clean things up first? If Jesus is going to come into your heart are you going to leave things lying around cluttering up your heart? The scripture goes way beyond just tidying up those things in our life but you have to start somewhere. We have to begin to recognize that who we are on the inside will determine what we are on the outside. We cannot present ourselves to Christ and be in His service unless we make room by giving less importance to those things that are not of value to His kingdom.

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

*thee in; or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. (Matthew 25:32-42)*

Every day there are opportunities for each one of us to minister for Jesus Christ for the sake of the gospel. It may be just a kind word or an uplifting gesture to somebody or it may be going to visit someone that you don't really want to visit or maybe traveling somewhere that you don't want to travel. If we are not ministering for the sake of others we are not feeding our own soul and we're not ministering for the Lord Jesus Christ.

**W**hat else must we do but open ourselves up to the teaching of the scriptures. *But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. And all scripture given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Timothy 3:14-17)*

How do you know that when you read the scriptures that they are true? How do you know? Honestly think about this. If you were born into another religion like Islam how would you know that the Christian scriptures are true because you've been taught all your life that the Koran and the teachings of Mohammed are the right way. So, how do you know really that these scriptures that we have are true? We have to read them and study them and test them. We have to try them. Just like any good scientist would do for an experiment. He'd test out the promises. He'd find out whether or not those things actually occurred when the Lord promised a bless-

ing. That's how we do that.

Scripture has to be consistent and it has to be able to be verified through experience and through testing. For those of you budding young scientists I encourage you to test the scriptures.

If two people came up to you and told you about the moon everything that they knew about the moon, who would you believe more? Your fifth grade science teacher or Neil Armstrong? Do you know who Neil Armstrong is? He was the first man on the moon as far as we know. Do you suppose Neil knew something about the moon? He was there. He stepped down on it. If it came down to it would you believe somebody that's actually been there and experienced it more than somebody that just kind of knows what they've read. I think I would tend to believe somebody that's actually been there and experienced it. It's the same with the scriptures.

If you are going to testify to somebody and you're going to share something with them, then you need to have an investment in the scriptures. You need to be able to not just know what it says but to understand it and understand it by experience which means you are going to have to test out the promises. You're going to have to know because you can't fool God. He's going to know what you know when you meet Him and hopefully before then.

Another thing that we must do is to learn the value of earnest prayer for our lives and the stewardship that we have been given. *Yea, humble yourselves, and continue in prayer unto him; cry unto him when ye are in your fields; yea, over all your flocks; cry unto him in your houses, yea, over all your household, both morning, mid-day, and evening; yea, cry unto him against the power of your enemies; yea, cry unto him against the devil, who is an enemy to all righteousness. Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them: cry over the flocks of your fields, that they may increase. But this is not all: ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness; Yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your wel-*



fare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you. (Alma 16:219-222)

Have you learned the importance of prayer? Many of us have but maybe you haven't. Maybe you haven't tested your prayers out the way that you'd really like to. That goes back to experience. The more experience that we have with the Spirit then the better our testimony is going to be, the more sure the more solid. Our prayer has to begin with humility for all that we have is a gift from God. All that we are is determined by what we do with what God has given to us.

Prayer is a two way conversation with God. Did you know that? For a long way I thought it was just a one way. I just told God whatever I thought and whatever I needed and He would be up there listening but the truth is prayer is two-way. God is communicating with us as we communicate with him. If we are going to prayer in the Spirit we have to be able to hear the Spirit and we have to listen in our prayer because He will teach us what to pray. He will show us the things that we need to be praying for and He'll open up our understanding and our minds. I don't know if many of you have had this experience when you've prayed. I hope you have but has God revealed things to you in the midst of prayer, not just in the midst of studying but in the midst of prayer. It's a fantastic experience and God wants that for each one of us. Do you ever think that Jesus prayed for something that didn't happen?

We must glean from the testimony of others the workings of the Spirit. I know that many of us do that and we do that every Wednesday night in our prayer services. We share and we listen and we understand how God has moved and worked in other people's lives. Hopefully we take from that and build upon that in our own lives. The example that I would share is that one time I was listening to Steve De Vera talk about praying for something that was lost and God answered his prayer. The next time I lost something I remembered that testimony and I prayed for what I'd lost and I found it almost immediately. The Lord led me right to it.

Wow that was really neat! I was sharing my experience with a co-worker. A few days later he came up to me and said, 'Mike, I've got something I want to tell you. I lost this thing the other day and I remembered your testimony and so I prayed about it and I found it. Pretty exciting and it magnifies and just builds from there. We have to share our testimonies and our experiences. We need to share one so that others can learn and gain understanding and insight but also so that we can shore up our faith.

**W**hat I want to share with you this morning goes beyond what's written on the paper and goes beyond what's even written in the scriptures. These are just words on paper. Everything that we have is a gift from God. Our testimonies are a gift from God. Our blessings are a gift from God. Our families, the vehicles we drive, our jobs are all gifts from God. I don't always use my gifts from God in the way that He would like for me to do. In fact I probably don't use them the way that He would like me to even half the time. What I can tell you though is that I have a testimony of Jesus Christ. I was studying the scriptures one day. This was shortly before we started coming to Mount Ayr. I got ahold of Ron and Delbert Smith's The Kingdom Way pamphlet and was going through the scriptures trying to find the promises and learn something about this Jesus Christ who I grew up knowing something about and I wanted to find out for myself. Really what is faith? We're supposed to have faith. What is repentance? We're supposed to repent and baptism, what is that? Really what's the gospel? I was an adult and I couldn't answer those questions so I started searching the scriptures. I'd write down what is faith and I'd write down all things about faith I could find. I was just going to put them together and hopefully I'd learn something.

In the process of that experience I saw darkness. Everything was dark and in the midst of that dark expanse I saw a single point of light. That light grew and began to be brighter and brighter. Through that experience I began to see that at the center of that point of bright-

ness and light was a cross where the Savior was hanging upon it. My mind was quickened and I was given to understand the power of that cross, that all things in existence that were and are and ever will be are by the power of that cross. All that would be possible in my life and the lives of my children and my children's children and so on would be because of the power of that cross where Christ sacrificed Himself and everything in this universe, everything in existence is by the power of not just that cross but by the sacrifice of God for His children.

As I began to grow in my understanding and study of the scriptures, I began to understand. We know what DNA is. DNA is the blue print to create a living organism or a person. You can take a strand of DNA, just a little tiny bit of it, and you can recreate that whole person. When Christ gets ahold of you, He gives to you a piece of His DNA and every experience and every relationship and everything that you learn and that you have and that you are that's focused upon Jesus Christ is because of that DNA that grows.

We each have the potential and the power to understand the things of God once we grow to maturity and to the point where we can understand that. In this physical life that we're in now that is finite but there's going to come a time when our bodies are going to be poofed away and we're going to be changed and we're going to be given the capacity for more understanding but it begins with that testimony that first testimony of Jesus Christ in our lives and it grows. Just as in the dream of Daniel where he saw the stone that was cut out of mountain without hands that rolled down and filled the whole earth that testimony is going to fill our lives and fill our souls until we're fully consumed and we're made in the image of Jesus Christ. That's my testimony. That once He gets ahold of you He's not going to let go but you have to make a conscious choice to nurture that and to grow that and develop it.





# REPENTANCE

**Seventy Ron Smith**  
**Lamoni, IA**

**March 16, 2014**

*Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Isaiah 1:16-20*

**R**epentance is a lot like weight loss: We don't need it when we are born, we don't think we need it when we are young, and when we get old enough to know that we need it, it seems impossible, and most of us would try just about anything rather than actually do it.

Now, I can talk about weight loss, because I have clearly lost weight, but there is always the danger that if I start talking about repentance, that you will see the hypocrisy in me. But again, the analogy with weight loss still holds: even if we haven't lost all the weight that we need to lose, we still need to talk about it.

My experience with weight loss began last June 6. My doctor ragged on me for about an hour because I had not lost any weight in the last year. I told him that I knew I needed to do some walking and other exercise, and that I planned to start shortly. He looked at me and said (not quite this nicely) "You can do all the exercise you want, but unless you change the input, there is not going to be any significant weight loss." He finally got me to start thinking that I really needed to change the way I ate. Maybe the extra bowl of ice cream that I would eat in the evening was not useful, and maybe I really should cut down on

the amount of extra carbohydrates that I was ingesting every day.

Now he gave me some very bad advice about how to lose weight. He told me to read the book "Wheat Belly," the premise of which is that we should not use any wheat because it has been genetically modified too much, and that omitting it from our diet would help us be healthier and lose weight. I knew that wasn't right because the Lord told us in the Word of Wisdom, that he made wheat for man, to be the staff of life.

He also said he knew the evil designs in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days. God knew that bio-engineers were going to alter the wheat. In spite of that, he said that his plan was for the weakest of all who could be called saints in the latter days. And he gave some pretty powerful promises along with the instructions. He said we could run and not be weary, walk and not faint, and receive wisdom and hidden treasures of knowledge. All my life I have wanted to receive those promises, so I decided not to follow my doctor's advice to avoid wheat. However, I did decide to change the way I ate. I cut out desserts and extra carbohydrates. I ate whole wheat cereal for breakfast, and 100% whole wheat bread each day (although I cut down from two pieces of toast to one piece most of the time) and I lost 55 pounds over the next six months. So that has been a good thing. I am healthier for it, and I think I will be able to share with my family for a while longer because of it.

But I did not come here to talk about weight loss. I came to talk about repentance. I started off in the scripture reading today with one of the best scriptural definitions of repentance, found in the book of Isaiah. Repentance means ceasing to evil, and learning to do well. The word "repent" is a Latin word which literally means to "think again." The prefix "re" means "again," and "pent" has to do with thinking, like the Span-

ish verb "pensar" which means to think.

I would like to tell you the story of a lady who repented. Her name is Hulda Simba. She lives in western Kenya. She and her husband were tailors. They made clothes. And they landed a contract with the Kenya government to make uniforms for the Kenya police or military. Because of that contract, they became very wealthy. And as their wealth grew, they began to attend parties with the rich and famous in Kenya, and they began to drink and to use drugs. Pretty soon their drug use overcame them, and they lost their contract. And once they lost their contract, they lost their wealth and their friends and they were alone.

Hulda and her husband got into drug trafficking. They enlisted their whole family in their illegal activities, and even used their young son to smuggle drugs across the border. They went about as low as humans can go on this earth and still be alive. Every morning the routine was: get up, look for drugs and alcohol, find money to pay for it, get high, and sleep it off. That was how they lived each day.

Now Hulda happens to be Eric Odida's aunt, whom most of you know. Eric was very concerned that Hulda's family not be lost. He began to come to Hulda's house and talk to one of her sons about the gospel. He came again and again and again. He could not talk to Hulda because she would not listen, but he could talk to her son, and she would hear the conversations.

Hulda's son responded to the gospel and was baptized, and later on, Hulda also responded to the gospel. Her testimony is that when she went down into the water, she said, "I died. And when I came out of the water, I was a new person." The drug use, the alcoholism, and all of those things stopped. And immediately, she began to be a new person.

As of this date, she has shared the gospel with all of her family. The son



who first responded became a priesthood member. He preached a sermon about eternal life and life after death. The next day, he was killed when his bicycle was hit by a matatu (a public transportation vehicle). In that memorial service, every one in his family testified of how blessed they had been because of the change that the gospel had brought into their lives. Now that is repentance.

There is some good news when we talk about repentance. Isaiah says, *“though your sins be as scarlet, yet they shall be as white as snow.”* Every major religion talks about the problem of sin and what to do with it, but only Jesus Christ says that he will take the sin in your life and though it be as scarlet, make it white as snow. The good news is that we can look forward. We can have forgiveness. And it does not matter what we have done in the past. But the scriptures are clear, that unless we repent, we cannot have forgiveness. Jesus will not save us in our sins. But he will save us from our sins if we let him.

The Lord promises to help us, but each of us has to do the rethinking—the repenting for themselves. It is kind of like weight loss. You can get help and encouragement, but the commitment to change the input has to be done by each and every one of us. It is not just a matter of doing the exercises. It is not just a matter of going to church. It is not just a matter of saying the words.

Remember how Jesus talked about repentance. He said, *“The law says not to kill, but I say that if you get angry with your brother, you are in danger.”* [Matt. 5:23,24 paraphrased]. It is true that killing someone is wrong, but it is the input that is the real problem. What are you thinking about all the time? If you live life being angry with your brother, the damage to your soul is as great as if you had killed him. It is the input that is the real problem. You have to rethink the matter. You must stop thinking ill of each other. The scripture says *“whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just; whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue,*

*and if there be any praise, think on these things... and the God of peace will be with you.”* [Phillipians 4:8,9]. It is the input to your thoughts that holds the key.

Jesus said, *“The law says not to commit adultery. But I say that if you look on a woman to lust after her, you have already committed adultery in your heart.”* [Matt. 5:29-30 paraphrased] Yes, it is wrong to commit adultery, but the problem is what is in your heart. It is the input that does the damage. How many of us sit around and watch adulterous sitcoms and movies all night and don't think twice about it? We think that is entertainment, and we go along with the society that says it just depends on what people want to do. If people consent to adultery and fornication, then they are OK. But Jesus says they are not OK. We need to repent!

**K**ing Benjamin tells us, that there are many way to sin, and that we need to watch our thoughts and our words and rethink those if we are to live. *“I can not tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin: for there are divers ways and means, even so many, that I can not number them. But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe to keep the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not.”* [Mosiah 2:48-50]

People have always had problems with repentance. Listen to the sixth chapter of Micah, and see if it does not apply to our day.

*“Hear ye now what the Lord saith; Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice. Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel. O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me. For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before*

*thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord.”*

Perhaps you remember the story of Balak from Numbers 22 and 23. Balak was afraid of the people of Israel, and tried to hire Balaam the prophet to curse them, thinking that if Balaam would curse them, that they could be defeated. So Balak sent ambassadors to Balaam with gifts and promises of promotion if he would just curse Israel. Balaam replied that he could only say what the Lord wanted him to say. But Balak persisted until finally Balaam said that he would come.

As he was riding his donkey to meet Balak, the donkey refused to go. Balaam started beating it until the donkey asked him why. Then Balaam's eyes were open to see the angel of the Lord standing before them with a sword. The angel told Balaam that he would have been killed if the donkey had not balked. Balaam promised the angel that he would say only what God told him to say, and ended up giving Israel a blessing instead of a cursing. But then he told Balak that all he needed to do to destroy Israel was to get their sons to marry his daughters. And then Israel would start to worship his gods. And that is what happened.

*“Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? “*

How are we going to come before the Lord? Is it because we give a lot of offerings? Is it because we say the right things? Is it enough to have prayers in the morning or evening? How are we going to come before the Lord?

*“He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”*

Those words are powerful words,





and they are as true today as the day that Micah first penned them. The world does not tell us to walk humbly before God. The world says to look out for number one. You are the only one who will take care of you. Do the things that feel good. Do the things that bring pleasure. Do the things that amass wealth. The world says it doesn't matter if you do justly. It says the only important thing is to look after yourself.

*"The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name; hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it."*

Do you know what the shepherd's rod is for? You reach out and give a little whack to keep the sheep in line. The Lord says to hear the rod, and listen to God who has appointed it.

Sometimes we are like concrete. Concrete is a very hard substance, and it is really useful. We have some concrete on our driveway. But it has some cat prints in it. How did they come to be there? When the concrete was still wet, the animal walked on it. And the prints are there permanently. Sometimes we think we are in the right place, doing the right things, so we why shouldn't we be able to think whatever we want to think? Why can't we do in our minds whatever we want to do? We are going to the right church; we are meeting with the right people. What we think about is nobody's business but ours. Right?

Wrong! The answer is that we are like wet concrete. We may be in the right forms, but we are not cured yet. And when we dry out, whatever little tracks were running about on the wet concrete are sure to still be there. We have to learn to think in ways of righteousness so that when we are set in our ways, the evil will not be present. "Hear the rod, and who hath appointed it." The scripture continues:

*"Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable? Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights?"*

You know how the scales were in the time of Micah? Suppose you wanted to buy five pounds of flour. The

store clerk would hang two pans from a bar that was supported in the middle. In one pan you put five one-pound weights. Then he would put flour on the other until the two pans balance. If he was crooked, he could shave a tenth of a pound off of each weight. Then instead of five pounds of flour, you would only have four and one half pounds when the pans balanced.

That is what the scripture calls "deceitful weights." Do you think that when you appear before the judgment bar of God, that you will get to choose which bag of weights with which the Lord will weigh you? Will he weigh you with deceitful weights so that you can sneak through? No. The scripture says that we will have a "perfect remembrance" of all that we have done.

*"Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights? For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth."*

**F**olks, we are rich. Compared to anyone that Micah was talking to, we are very rich. Are we full of violence? Have we spoken lies? Is our tongue deceitful? What about little white lies, you know, the small ones? We lie to each other quite a bit. I have been watching a TV show called "Lie to Me" in which the main character can tell when people are lying by watching their faces make micro-expressions.

They show these expressions on the faces of all kinds of politicians and famous people to add credibility to the series. It is fascinating, and deals with the fact that we often lie to each other. Micah is saying that we cannot be lying to one another and still be pure.

*"Therefore also will I make thee sick in smiting thee, in making thee desolate because of thy sin. Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied; and thy casting down shall be in the midst of thee; and thou shalt take hold, but shalt not deliver; and that which thou deliverest will I give up to the sword. Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine."*

*For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels; that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof a hissing; therefore ye shall bear the reproach of my people."*

Omri was the guy who built Samaria. And of course the temple at Samaria had idols. This scripture speaks to me as we talk about repentance, because God has showed us what is good. It is to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God.

In the latter day scripture, the Lord has showed us what we need to do. And I think if we would put these into practice, that it would help us to rethink what we are doing. In DC 58:6c-i we read:

*"it is not meet that I should command in all things, for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward. Verily I say, Men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; for the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good, they shall in nowise lose their*



Ron Smith



reward. But he that doeth not anything until he is commanded, and receiveth a commandment with doubtful heart, and keepeth it with slothfulness, the same is damned. Who am I that made man, saith the Lord, that will hold him guiltless that obeys not my commandments? Who am I, saith the Lord, that have promised and have not fulfilled? I command and a man obeys not, I revoke and they receive not the blessing; then they say in their hearts, This is not the work of the Lord, for his promises are not fulfilled. But woe unto such, for their reward lurketh beneath, and not from above.”

Are you young folks anxiously engaged in a good cause? Are you old people anxiously engaged in a good cause? It's not good enough to just not kill somebody. It's not enough to just refrain from fornication and adultery and doing bad things. The Lord's command is to do something positive with your life, and bring to pass much righteousness. The Lord says the power is in you! You have the power, but you have to change the input if you are going to use it. Do something. If you do good, you won't lose your reward.

It is true that “*all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.*” That is because of our sins. But the Lord promises that “*though our sins be as scarlet, yet they shall be white as snow.*” Jesus can take care of the bad stuff that you have done. But you must repent, and be anxiously engaged in a good cause. If we are not living according to the way the Lord said to live, then repent, rethink what you are doing, and become anxiously engaged in a good cause today.

From DC 59:2a-3a: “*Wherefore I give unto them a commandment, saying thus: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy might, mind, and strength; and in the name of Jesus Christ thou shalt serve him. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Thou shalt not steal; neither commit adultery, nor kill, nor do anything like unto it. Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things. Thou shalt offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in righteousness; even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou*

*shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day; for verily this is a day appointed unto thee to rest from thy labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High; nevertheless thy vows shall be offered up in righteousness on all days, and at all times; but remember that on this, the Lord's day, thou shalt offer thine oblations, and thy sacraments, unto the Most High, confessing thy sins unto thy brethren, and before the Lord. And on this day thou shalt do none other thing, only let thy food be prepared with singleness of heart, that thy fasting may be perfect; or in other words, that thy joy may be full.*”

God tells us we need to change the input: Spend one day each week thinking about God rather than ourselves. What are you going to think about the rest of this day? Can we do something about this? Yes we can. But it is like weight loss. It is not good enough just to hear someone talk about it. At some point each of us needs to say, “OK, I will do it now.” The hardest part of weight loss for me was deciding to do it. Once I decided to do it, I could go to all those pot lucks and just avoid the dessert table. I could watch you all eat and say, “that looks good, that looks good, but I am not going to eat it because I can't afford that right now.” Keeping the Sabbath holy is important if you are going to change the input to your lives. “Do no other thing on my holy day.” That is something that we can do something about. But we have to rethink it. We have to decide that is what we are going to do.

I cannot tell you all the ways that you can repent. But I did an interesting calculation that I would like to share with you. How many of you enjoyed the coming of spring two days ago? It doesn't look like spring today, but the nice thing about living in Iowa is that you get to enjoy the coming of spring over and over and over each year. We all enjoy the warmth. Do you know where the warmth comes from? It comes from the sun, of course. Now the sun gives off energy, but it requires mass to do that. That is, the sun is burning up and losing its mass every day so that we can have warmth.

Do you know how much mass the sun is losing every day? Well, I didn't either. So I looked up the luminosity of the sun. According to wolframAlpha.com, the energy output of the sun is 3.846 x 10<sup>26</sup> Watts. Now this is a big number. If you multiply by the number 36000 of seconds in a day, you will get the total number of Joules of Energy the sun supplies each day. If you divide the Energy by the velocity of light squared, you get the amount of mass converted to energy each day. I juggled a few units and got 3.7 x 10<sup>11</sup> metric tons of mass that the sun is giving off every day. That is three times the volume of all the oil produced in the world since 1850.

Some day the sun is going to burn out. That is called sacrifice. And this is a principle of life. God gave up his life, that we might live. If we are going to be like him, we have to have sacrifice in our life. We have to do many things of our own free will to bring to pass much righteousness. That requires something of us. That requires us to change the way that we think. It means that we need to change the input so that the output can be like him. If we will do that, the promises are wonderful. We can live with him. But we need to learn to live sacrificially.

“*Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.*”  
*Praise the Lord.*





# THE LOVE OF CHRIST

**Priest**

**Ed Anderson**

**Lamoni, IA**

**March 23, 2014**

As a Call to Worship Brother Sherman Phipps read Doctrine & Covenants 63:7b; 62:3b; and 85:12e-f. *But unto him that keepeth my commandments, I will give the mysteries of my kingdom, and the same shall be in him a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life. These things remain with you to do according to judgment and the directions of the Spirit. Behold, the kingdom is yours. And, behold, and lo, I am with the faithful always. The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not; nevertheless, the day shall come when you shall comprehend even God; being quickened in him, and by him. Then shall ye know that ye have seen me, that I am, and that I am the true light that is in you, and that you are in me, otherwise ye could not abound.*

Brother Ed Anderson read 1 John 3:16, 18 for his scripture. *Hereby perceive we the love of Christ, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue only; but in deed and in truth.*

It's great to be here this morning and share with fellow Saints and to testify of His goodness and grace. Let's go back to the scripture that I just read 1 John 3:16. The first part of the scripture reads *Hereby perceive we the love of Christ.* What does perceive mean? Steve Smith said it was to observe and understand what you were observing. If we perceive it we are aware of what's going on so this scripture is leading us in how we're going to know the love of Christ.

How are we going to see the love of Christ? The scripture goes on and says because he laid down his life for

us. The love of Christ is that He laid His life down for us. What does that mean? Is it just simply that He came and lived and died?

What did Christ do to lay His life down for us? What was the first thing that He did? He left the realms of glory, didn't He? He separated Himself from His Father. That's part of laying His life down. The conversation in Heaven before He came is recorded in Genesis 3:2-3. *And he came before me, saying, Behold I, send me, I will be thy Son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore, give me thine honor. But behold, my beloved Son, which was my beloved and chosen from the beginning, said unto me: Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever.* Christ is saying He was subjecting His will to His Father because Jesus was following the will of the Father. As we get further into the sermon this morning we'll see a little bit more of that.

What other things did Christ do to lay His life down? Did He go to all the parties and all the high class social gatherings and hobnob with the leaders of the Israelites. No, He didn't value the things of the world. It wasn't about acquiring things for Him. He wasn't concerned with how many pieces of gold He had or how many suits of clothes He had or sandals. He wasn't concerned with how His hair looked or even what He ate for that matter.

In living this lifestyle His mission and His ministry shunned the glory of this world. He didn't want to be the leader of the Israelites or the ruler of the world. He came to do the ministry of His Father, to subject His will to the Father's will. In laying down His life He allowed Himself to be persecuted, mocked, spit upon, and ultimately He was given a crown of thorns and raised upon a cross. Christ chose to lay down His will and His desires and do the will of the Father who was in heaven.

In His ministry Christ pointed out

certain things. He was guided by what the prophets said and by what was written. Jesus went up into the wilderness to be with God. He had fasted 40 days and 40 nights and was hungry. When the tempter came to Him he said, *If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.* Christ's response was, *It is written,* (again Christ was subjecting Himself to what had been written and following the prophets and all of the predictions of what was to come) *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

Then Jesus was set upon the pinnacle of the temple and the devil came to Him and said, *If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written,* (even satan is using it is written part) *He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.* Jesus response again was, *It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

*And again, Jesus was in the Spirit, and it taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. And the devil came unto him again, and said, All these things will I give unto thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then said Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* (Matthew 4:3-10)

Jesus had a hard time convincing His disciples who He was and what He was about. Matthew 16:22-26 gives an account of His effort to tell His disciples who He was. *From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and Scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter (not believing that these things could ever happen) took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be*



done unto thee. Christ's response was, *Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offense unto me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. And now for a man to take up his cross, is to deny himself all ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and keep my commandments.*

Toward the end of His earthly life when Christ was about ready to enter Jerusalem Matthew 21:1-4 records this, *And when Jesus drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and they were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find a colt tied; loose it, and bring it unto me; and if any shall say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of it; and straightway he will send it. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet. Christ was very much aware of what was going on and the fulfillment of the prophecies. He might have wanted to ride a horse into the village instead of a colt but He didn't to fulfill the prophecy that said, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy king cometh unto thee, and he is meek, and he is sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass. He was making His will synonymous with the will of God.*

In the Garden of Gethsemane what was Jesus prayer? . . . *Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.* (Mark 14:40) When they came to arrest Him after He was betrayed Matthew records in 26:48-52, *Then came they and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. And behold, one of them which were with Jesus, stretched out his hand and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into its place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? He had*

the power to pray to the Father that He would send twelve legions of angels but would that have fulfilled the prophecies and promises of the scriptures that had been given regarding Christ.

Again He submitted Himself to the will of the Father. Through the ages people have been submitting their will to the Father. These people are my heroes. People seem to be drawn to people who are rich, have things, look nice, drive nice cars, and are socially acceptable. That's not always the people that we should be drawn to.

**D**oes anyone remember Gideon in the Book of Mormon? Does anyone remember King Noah? Noah was unrighteous and is the one who ran Alma out basically. In the end there was a rift and Gideon chased King Noah up to the tower near the temple and was about to slay him when Noah looked around and said, 'The Lamanites are coming' so Gideon spared King Noah's life.

Also Gideon had some dealings with the people of Limhi recorded in Mosiah 10:5-12. *Now it came to pass that Gideon went forth and stood before the king, and said unto him, Now O king, thou hast hitherto hearkened unto my words many times when we have been contending with our brethren, the Lamanites. And now O king, if thou hast not found me to be an unprofitable servant, or if thou hast hitherto listened to my words in any degree, and they have been of service to thee, even so I desire that thou wouldst listen to my words at this time, and I will be thy servant, and deliver this people out of bondage. And the king granted unto him that he might speak. And Gideon said unto him, Behold the back pass through the back wall, on the back side of the city. The Lamanites, or the guards of the Lamanites, by night, are drunken; therefore let us send a proclamation among all this people, that they gather together their flocks and herds, that they may drive them into the wilderness by night. And I will go according to thy command, and pay the last tribute of wine to the Lamanites, and they will be drunken; and we will pass through the secret pass on the left of their camp, when they are drunken and asleep;*

*Thus we will depart with our women and our children, our flocks and our herds, into the wilderness; and we will travel around the land of Shilom. And it came to pass that the king hearkened unto the words of Gideon.*

Is that the last time that we hear of Gideon in the Book of Mormon? There was a man in the first year of the reign of the Judges whose name was Nehor. He was on the way to preach to those who believed on his word, *he met a man who belonged to the church of God, yea, even one of their teachers; And he began to contend with him sharply, that he might lead away the people of the church; but the man withstood him, admonishing him with the words of God. Now the name of the man was Gideon; and it was he who was an instrument in the hands of God, in delivering the people of Limhi out of bondage. Now because Gideon withstood him with the words of God, he was wroth with Gideon, and drew his sword and began to smite him. Now Gideon being stricken with many years therefore he was not able to withstand his blows, therefore he was slain by the*



Ed Anderson



sword. (Alma 1:10-14) The service of Gideon through the years in subjecting himself to the will of God resulted in his death.

There are so many who have subjected themselves to the will of God but I want to also mention Amulek. Does everyone remember who Amulek was? An angel told Amulek that he was going to meet a man who was a prophet of God. He was told to take Alma into his home and feed him and take care of him.

During Alma's ministry in the City of Ammonihah the people were very unhappy with what he said. They didn't really believe Alma because he was the only one testifying but Amulek added his voice to Alma's. He was risking everything when he said I am Amulek; I am the son of Giddonah, who was the son of Ishmael, who was a descendant of Aminadi:

And it was the same Aminadi who interpreted the writing which was upon the wall of the temple, which was written by the finger of God. And Aminadi was a descendant of Nephi, who was the son of Lehi, who came out of the land of Jerusalem, who was a descendant of Manasseh, who was the son of Joseph, who was sold into Egypt by the hands of his brethren. *And behold, I am also a man of no small reputation among all those who know me; Yea, and behold, I have many kindred and friends, and I have also acquired much riches, by the hand of my industry; Nevertheless, after all this, I never have known much of the ways of the Lord, and his mysteries and marvelous power.*

Amulek was putting everything at risk. He was putting all of his kindred, all of his friends, all of his riches at risk by standing up and adding his testimony to the things which Alma was testifying of. They were boldly testifying of Christ and how the people of Ammonihah needed to repent. Amulek was submitting his will, he was turning his back on the riches of the world and the honor and the glory. He was obviously a man who was respected in the community. How many times do we hear testimonies of people who have done that and have been rejected and run out of town? That's basically what

happened to Amulek. He was forced to leave the area because he submitted his will to the will of God.

A lot of the people who are doing God's will as the scriptures say and laying their lives down for their brothers aren't always the ones that we notice. When I was a kid growing up I had a neighbor who was abused by his dad. His dad had gotten hurt in a car accident and wasn't able to walk so he wasn't able to do his farm work. He manipulated his son so that the son felt indebted to his father and agreed to stay on the farm and do the work. That's something that Christ would have done. He would have stayed. He would have helped.

**T**his son is 59 years old now and has never married. He basically sacrificed his entire life to take care of his dad and the needs of the farm. This is my kind of hero, the ones that subject themselves to the will of God. Even though he's not "Christian" he's doing Christian acts. There's no way in the world that Christ is not going to reward him for the sacrifices which he has made. He has basically sacrificed his whole life for his father. In fact isn't that what we're supposed to do, love our father and mother? Isn't that what he did to the extreme? He sacrificed all of his hopes and dreams to take care of his father.

Again when I was a kid there was a couple in Lamoni that was elderly. They had one child, a girl who was thirty at the time I knew them. Their daughter did not have a high IQ. When the father of this girl died an individual in Lamoni would take the mother and daughter everywhere. Eventually the mother also died and this individual still took the daughter wherever she needed to go. This was done for probably 20 years. He sought no reward. He laid his life down to take care of these people even though others joked about him.

When we believe in Christ we are willing to lay down our life for Him as He laid down His life for us. We are called to love not just in word but in deed and in truth. The only way we can actually say that we believe or that we love is to put our words into action. That's tough to do because we're all busy doing our own thing. To know what is

needed we have to be led by the Spirit and be in tune. We have to prepare by being aware of how He laid down His life for each one of us and not be involved with our own selves.

If all we think about is what we need we're not going to be able to reach out and be sensitive to the people that are really in need like Amulek, Gideon and Christ Himself were. We need to reroute our thinking to be less interested in the world, and less interested in glory, honor and riches. There's only one thing that's not going to go up in a puff of smoke at the end and that's our belief in Christ and the words and the things which we have done in ministry in His name.



## New website

The Mount Ayr Restoration Branch has a new website. We missed renewing the old one domain name -- [angel\\_message.org](http://angel_message.org) -- and so have a new site to visit.

Come to:

[www.gospelrestored.org](http://www.gospelrestored.org) for back copies of the newsletter and other information about what is going on in the branch.

You can share the site with friends who may want to be able to read the current newsletter and past newsletters on line as well.

We are sorry for any confusion for people who have been to the old website location and not found us.



# BRANCH RETREAT

Many members of the Mount Ayr Restoration Branch took part in a retreat at the Jericho Hills Camp at Lucas, IA, the first weekend of the month.

We gathered at the campground Friday evening, got settled, had snacks and visited.

Saturday morning Thoric Smith and Steve Smith led a worship service to start the day.

Then two class sessions were held. Alan Smith taught a class on "Being Ambassadors For Christ." The scripture on which the class was focused was 2 Corinthians 5:20:

*Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

It challenged the branch members

to view them selves as ambassadors for Christ. The roles of an ambassador for the United States and an ambassador for Christ were compared.

Karen Bates then presented a class about making our homes embassies for Christ.

She used the scripture in Doctrine Covenants 85: 36b-c:

*Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing, and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God; that your incomings may be in the name of the Lord; that your outgoings may be in the name of the Lord; that all your salutations may be in the name of the Lord, with uplifted hands unto the*

*Most High.*

She pointed out scriptures that could help families as they try to strengthen their homes to be outposts for Jesus Christ in the world.

After an afternoon of rest, recreation and visiting, a short period for mixer games was held. A mixer about potatoes was held for fun, and then a mixer about testimonies of Jesus found many testimonies that others did not know about.

A movie and campfire closed the evening.

A dedication service and sacrament service was held Sunday morning before we headed back to our homes.

It was a wonderful weekend of worship, fellowship and learning.



Pictures from retreat in Lucas.



# SHARING SERVICE

The final Sunday of March the branch had a sharing service instead of a preaching service. A number of branch members shared music or readings to help us worship.

Steven Smith wrote a song to sing at the service, and several people asked if they could get copies of the words to the song. Here are the words to "I Know That I Have Sinned."

I know that I have sinned;  
which removes me from my Lord.  
Though I conjure grand excuses  
as I wander from his word,  
He extends his arm of mercy,  
and his grace flows to my core  
So I don't have to think that way  
anymore.

Chorus:  
In return he asks for faith  
in each of his commands  
to the point that I repent  
and take a righteous stand  
to remember him in all I think  
and feel and say and do  
In love, forgiving others,  
so they'll have his Spirit too.

I am full of love for all, except  
for those who make me mad.  
I obsess on how to get them back  
to teach them they've been bad.  
Jesus asked to heal my broken heart  
his justice is in store

So I don't have to feel that way any-  
more.

Chorus:

I oft confess to others  
the whole list of all your sins.  
And I sometimes laugh at people,  
who hold their sin within.  
In prayer God asks I tell just him,  
then guide you to His door  
So I don't have to speak that way  
anymore.

Chorus:

My reactions I have justified  
"They're 'small' sins on the whole.  
But they've alienated others --  
they have scarified my soul.  
God said He'd fight my battles,  
if I'd mind my own chores.  
So I don't have to do that stuff  
anymore.

**March 2014 – rev.**

30	D&C 28:9a-c; D&C 10:10a-d; D&C 36:11a-d; D&C 102:2a-b
31	D&C 103:1-3c; D&C18:7a-e; D&C 137:6a-b

**April 2014**

**“Wherefore the voice of the Lord is unto the ends of the earth, that all that will hear may hear;”  
D&C 1:3a**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Scripture</b>	<b>Thought</b>
1	Sec 1:3	Are we prepared to hear the voice of the Lord?
2	Daniel 10:7-9	Will you be a hearer or will you flee?
3	Deuteronomy 4:11-13	Where do we find the voice of God?
4	Sec 85:17	Are you willing to be the voice?
5	John 10:27-28	Are we his sheep?
6	Sec 45:2	Do we listen for the Lord’s voice?
7	Psalms 1:1	Who are your companions?
8	2 Nephi 11:147-148	Do we hide the counsel of the Lord?
9	2 Nephi 6:59-61	Have we learned to hearken to the Lord’s counsel?
10	1 Nephi 5:232-237	Do we hearken unto the counsel of the Lord?
11	Matthew 22:15-22	Do we try to entangle others for our own purpose?
12	Proverbs 12:5-9	How much bread do you have?
13	Proverbs 1:22-33	Do we listen to the reproof of the Lord?
14	Psalms 33:4-12	How long will our counsel stand?
15	Psalms 14	Are we ashamed of the Lord’s counsel?
16	Proverbs 19:20	Do we hear the counsel?
17	Acts 4:27-33	Do we listen or have predetermined our counsel?
18	Deuteronomy 32:24-29	Are we void of counsel?
19	Jacob 3:12-15	Who is your counsel from?
20	Acts 20:25-29	Have we shared all our counsel?
21	Mark 2:13-15	Christ came for the sinner, not the righteous.
22	Alma 19:81	God gave us a plan to correct our sins.
23	Psalms 25:8	How do you teach a sinner?
24	Proverbs 13:6	What is your relationship to the sinner?
25	1 Peter 4:16-19	Have we left room for the sinner?
26	Proverbs 23:17	Where is your desire?
27	Mosiah 12:1-8	Even the vilest sinner can repent.
28	Mark 3:21-22	Repentance and forgiveness is universal.
29	Luke 6:33	Do you love the sinner?
30	Luke 15:8-10	The return of a sinner should bring joy.





# APRIL 2014

## Sunday Schedule

Date	APRIL 6	APRIL 13	APRIL 20	APRIL 27	MAY 4	
Speaking	Gordon Winkler	Alan Smith	Joel Loving	Sherman Phipps	Ben Anderson	
Presiding	Steve Smith	Ed Anderson	Ron Smith	Ed Anderson	Gordon Winkler	
Pianist	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	
Special Music	Di Smith	Rob Rolfe	Alan Smith	Jim Barber	Di Smith	
Family Devotions	Jim Barbers	Sue Beck	Michael Jordisons	Bob Rowlands	Alan Smiths	
Greeters	Alan Smiths	Steve Smiths	Gordon Winklers	Rodney Bastows	Sue Beck	
Custodians	Bob Rowlands	Alan Smiths	Ed Andersons	Ron Smiths	Jim Barbers	
Sunday Evening	Rob Rolfes	Ron Smiths	Steve Smiths	Rob Rolfes	Ron Smiths	

## Wednesday Night Prayer Service Schedule

Date	APRIL 2	APRIL 9	APRIL 16	APRIL 23	APRIL 30	MAY 7
Location	Ron Smiths	Steve Smiths	Rob Rolfes	Alan Smiths	Ron Smiths	Bob Rowlands
Presiding	Ed Anderson	Sherman Phipps	Steve Smith	Rodney Bastow	Jim Barber	Rob Rolfe

## SPECIAL EVENTS

**Sunday, APRIL 6** - - Communion Service and Potluck

**Sunday, APRIL 13** -- Potluck and food packaging, no evening meeting

**Saturday, APRIL 20** -- 9 A.M. Easter Breakfast

**Sunday, MAY 7** -- 8:30 Priesthood Meeting, Potluck after Communion

**Happy Birthday:** Julia Jordison (19), Aquila Galusha (24), Lynda Rolfe (29) and any others we missed

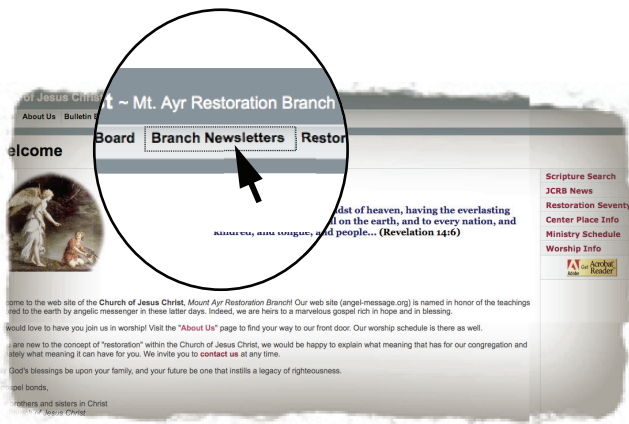
**Happy Anniversary:** George and Beth Knotts (1), Norman and Cathy Nelson (28)



# Church of Jesus Christ Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

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

Have you misplaced your MARB Newsletter?  
Want to read it online or search past issues?  
Visit the Mount Ayr Restoration Branch website at:  
[www.gospelrestored.org](http://www.gospelrestored.org)



## CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST - MT AYR RESTORATION BRANCH

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

# MORE NEWS AND NOTES

### Retreat planned

We will have an archeological dig retreat at Nauvoo, IL on the weekend of June 6-8.

We will take part in an archeological dig on Saturday and share the Sunday service with the Nauvoo branch.

We will be staying in the Nauvoo House and food will be provided.

Let Steven Smith know if you plan to attend.

### Heartland District activity

On the Memorial Day Weekend, there will be a retreat in Nauvoo, IL, along with the opening of the Cornerstone of Zion visitor's center in Nauvoo.

Volunteers who can spend a weekend or a week in Nauvoo acting as hosts at the center are being sought.

Housing is provided in a church-owned trailer near the site.

Contact David Drummond at [ddrummond@yahoo.com](mailto:ddrummond@yahoo.com) to volunteer. Speakers in some of the Heartland District groups are also welcome. next two years.

### Community Sing March 30

The branch participate in the community sing at the United Baptist-Presbyterian Church in Mount Ayr at 6:30 p.m. Sunday, March 30.

We sang two songs at the service

and Steven Smith offered one of his compositions.

We then had a spaghetti supper back at the church.

### JCRB Conference

We sent delegates to the Joint Conference of Restoration Branches conference in Independence, MO, April 6-12.

This conference was different from those of recent years, in that those attending engaged in a visioning process meant to unify us in focus and begin assigning leaders and planning activities the JCRB will be engaged in over the next two years.

Representing the branch were Alan Smith, Cheryl Phipps and George Knotts. They will be happy to report on what went on.