



Church of Jesus Christ

Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

NEWSLETTER

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Nyhagen evening



News & Notes

Thanksgiving activities

Several special activities are planned for the Thanksgiving season.

The annual branch Thanksgiving dinner will be held Sunday, Nov. 23, following the Sunday morning services.

Valle Smith will have a sign up sheet for what to bring for the dinner.

There are also some ways to make Thanksgiving better for others in the community. See the reminder on page 17 for details.

JCRB Fall Conference

The fall national conference of the Joint Conference of Restoration Branches was held at the Independence Branch in Independence, MO, October 9-12.

The conference focused on strengthening and supporting families. Several of the presentations will be available on the conference website.

The only official business of the conference was to pass a resolution that will allow some restructuring of the organization at the general conference in

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KEEPING THE SABBATH

Priest Jim Barber
Bethany, MO
October 5, 2014

As a Call to Worship Brother Sherman Phipps read Doctrine & Covenants 10:1-3: *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 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.*

Brother Phipps shared: Jim Barber is going to speak today but he told me I could have a few minutes. One of our focuses this morning is to participate in the communion. We're told in the scriptures to do that early in the service but I wanted to say just a couple of things before we proceed with that in hopes of helping us focus and pay attention to repentance. Along with that, because repentance is critical, is to understand this morning as we reach out and partake of the body and the blood of Christ that this really has an effect in our lives. It should not be just something we do routinely because it happens to be the first Sunday of the month.

If we do repent and reach out in humility recognizing what this is that Christ has done for us, then it doesn't

matter what the effects are of any of our sins, the things that we have done before that we are not happy or proud of or that are not in harmony with God's will. Those things can be removed from us. They no longer need to be burdens to us.

I hope that we can feel by the Spirit this morning the need to repent and then understand by that same Spirit God's forgiveness and His beckoning to us to go on and to try and be His people. I am hopeful this morning that we can forgive one another and also that we can forgive ourselves so that nothing will stand between us and the Lord and what He wants to do for us.

I want to read first to you from Moroni 10:27, 28-29. *And again I would exhort you, that ye would come unto Christ, and lay hold upon every good gift and touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing. Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in no wise deny the power of God. And again, if ye, by the grace of God, are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father, unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy without spot.* That's our privilege here this morning if we come before Him repentantly.

I am going to read another scripture to you from Psalms 103:8-18 just to remind you again that as you come here this morning and participate humbly and repentantly to remember this. *The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide; neither will he keep his anger forever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven*

is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

As we reach out this morning let's remember our need to repent, let's remember His mercy, let's remember the covenant that we've made with Him and truly renew it here this morning that we might always have His Spirit to be with us.

Good morning. I chose a topic this morning that might be a little bit controversial. I want you to know that I'm not being judgmental of anyone. In fact, I'm probably one of the worst offenders. I want to talk this morning about observing the Sabbath day.

It's seems like the society that we live in today really doesn't give a hoot about the Sabbath day, and I'm saying it pretty plainly. I'd like to start with a scripture from Mosiah 7:116-118. *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day, the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea and all that in them is: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.*

I went back and read the first chapter of Genesis where it was talking about



the creation and all that God created. If you read that and stop and think, I would be tired at the end of six days and He needed to rest.

This morning hopefully we're going to talk a little bit about what that actually means. We just renewed our covenant to obey God's commandments. Observing the Sabbath day is one of the commandments.

I wanted to talk a little bit about a guy named Abinadi in the Book of Mormon. He went into the land of the Lamanites and was preaching to the people of King Noah who were living in that land. He was basically telling them the gospel of Christ, talking about faith, repentance and baptism for the remission of sins. One of the main things he was talking about was repentance.

The people were pretty wicked and some of them didn't like what he was saying so they went to King Noah and eventually Abinadi was taken before the king. He started preaching to King Noah the same thing that he had been preaching to the people. I think King Noah actually kind of wanted to believe him but yet all of the people that were around him didn't want Abinadi to continue to speak. In fact, they wanted to put him to death.

Well, there was one individual who heard Abinadi speak and believed. His name was Alma. When Alma found out that they were going to put Abinadi to death, he went before the king and begged the king not to put Abinadi to death but he did not avail. The only result was that Alma had to flee the city to preserve his life.

As the story goes Abinadi actually was put to death. He was beaten and then burned but Alma began to preach to the people and converted a lot of them. He formed a church. I'd like to read what he said to his people found in Mosiah 9:52-58. He's talking to the people that he converted and the priests that he had ordained. *And he commanded them that they should teach nothing save it were the things which he had taught, and which had been spoken by the mouth of the holy prophets. Yea, even he commanded them that they should preach nothing save it were*

repentance and faith on the Lord, who had redeemed his people. And he commanded them that there should be no contention one with another, but that they should look forward with one eye, having one faith and one baptism; having their hearts knit together in unity and in love, one towards another. And thus he commanded them to preach. And thus they became the children of God. And he commanded them that they should observe the Sabbath day, and keep it holy, and also every day they should give thanks to the Lord their God. And he also commanded them that the priests, whom he had ordained, should labor with their own hands for their support; And there was one day in every week that was set apart that they should gather themselves together to teach the people, and to worship the Lord their God, and also as often as it was in their power, to assemble themselves together.

We need to continually expand our understanding of how God wants us to keep the Sabbath. How we keep the Sabbath says something about us. God wants us to learn about our character, what we are going to do with this commandment. In Exodus 31 it talks about the Sabbath being an identifying sign of God's people between them and Him.

As we serve Him on this day there is something special we can learn about the Sabbath. In the last few decades the observance of the Sabbath has become watered down. People treat it as simply another day rather than a special day. People do not get involved in preparing for it and looking forward to it.

I don't know whether any of you noticed the Hy-Vee ad a couple of weeks ago. I just couldn't help but notice what it said. If you did your grocery shopping on Sunday and spent \$25.00 you would earn 15 cents a gallon on your Fuel Saver Card. If you spent \$50.00 you would get 20 cents gallon off and if you spent \$75.00 you would get 25 cents a gallon off of your gas. If that isn't enticing people to go to the grocery store on Sunday what is it?

I guess you could look at this a different way. If you went to the grocery store and spent \$75.00 on Sunday you

could get .25/gallon off the cost of your gas and you could give that savings to the church but I'm not sure that's the way it would happen.

I think a couple of months ago I heard on the radio that now we have a law, I don't know if it's nationwide or in Missouri, but you can buy a motorcycle on Sunday. I didn't know you couldn't buy a motorcycle on Sunday but why do we have to make a law to allow us to buy a motorcycle on Sunday? There again our society is trying to get us away from observing the Sabbath Day.

I put down what I think are four primary principles in Sabbath keeping. First, the commandment tells us not to work. Maybe this means not to make a productive increase from working or receiving pay. However, there are certain jobs that we have to do on the Sabbath day. I have cattle that I have to take care of. That's my stewardship. I have to go out and feed them and make sure that they are all right. There are emergency crews that have to work. The hospitals, nursing homes, ambulances and fire departments have to be open. I'm not sure that's it saying not to do anything at all



Jim Barber



on Sundays.

I think in the Doctrine and Covenants it says we should let nothing go to waste on Sundays. There have been a few times that I have had hay down that I couldn't quite get all done on Saturday and it was supposed to rain on Monday. Now I had to make a choice. Do I go out and bale it on Sunday afternoon? That's a choice that I have to make to save my hay because if it rains on Monday the hay will probably be wasted. I think we have to look at each individual instance and determine what to do. I think we need to pray about all things before we make those choices.

It tells us to rest on Sunday. I don't think that means that we stay in bed all day. I think we have to change the approach of the day-to-day work schedule where we go and work and are on the run all the time. I think the scriptures are telling us that we need to stop and relax and enjoy the day, whatever that might be. Hopefully it will be attending church and fellowshiping with everyone else. It could also be visiting family members, the sick in the hospital or going to the nursing home and visiting there. Or, it could be reading the scriptures or maybe even listening to some good music. It needs to be something that relaxes you and takes your mind off the day-to-day tasks.

We are told to assemble with others for worship. We need to unite together. It is a part of Christianity. A big part of keeping God's law has to do with involvement with God's people on a regular basis. Leviticus 23:3 says keeping the Sabbath is a holy convocation. It is like an official summons to worship. When we receive a summons to appear before a court or judge, we probably should be there.

I can relate the story of one of my neighbors who was selected for jury duty. At that time he was milking cows. He was supposed to be at the courthouse at 9 a.m. He was about 15 minutes late. He said that the judge was not very happy with him. He said the judge said, 'When I say 9 o'clock, I mean 9 o'clock.' The neighbor replied that he was milking his cows and had things to do. The judge replied, 'I don't care. When I say 9

o'clock I mean 9 o'clock.' Now God isn't quite that way. I am sure that He would like for us all to be here on time but He's not going to cut us down like the judge cut my neighbor down. Thankfully we have a merciful God. If we ask for repentance and forgiveness then He will do that.

We are here to fellowship. Hebrews 10:25 says we need to be gathering ourselves together so much more as we see the coming of Christ approaching. We are here to learn from the sermons, the classes and the other members. It is very important that we gather together to help and encourage our brothers and sisters and to allow them to encourage us. We can also receive prayer updates and find ways in which we can serve one another.

I think proper Sabbath observance allows us to develop a personal relationship with the human and spiritual family of God. As we strive to observe the Sabbath I think we need to keep in mind that we need to be spiritually motivated and that we need to call upon God's Spirit to lead us and to guide us. Part of keeping the Sabbath is reverencing God's sanctuary. Leviticus 19:30 says that includes the way we dress and get to church on time and quietly wait for God's Spirit. I think when we come to church we need to come in reverently. We need to take time to allow God's Spirit to enter into our lives and our hearts so that we will be prepared.

In Exodus 20:8 it says, *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.* Maybe this means that we need to keep the Sabbath in mind all during the week. If we are thinking about the Sabbath then we will make some of the preparations that are needed. Instead of running for six days and coming to an abrupt stop all of a sudden when the sun goes down, we can take the opportunity to begin to switch gears early enough to think about what we are going to do and the preparations we are going to make.

Observing the Sabbath should not be a burden. It liberates man from meeting God. It is a day of joy. It is a day of delight. We delight in the Lord. Our thinking begins to shift to wor-

shipping God and finding enjoyment through and in Him and in what He provides both spiritually and physically. There are some positive things that can happen if we observe the Sabbath.

In Isaiah 58:13-14 it says, *If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father . . .*

Another thing we can do on the Sabbath is to read the scriptures and to pray. I have already mentioned that we can visit family members and nursing homes. The Sabbath might be a good time to spend with your family talking about the things that are going on in their lives and yours. We must keep the Sabbath holy because our salvation depends on it. I hope we can bring these basic principles back to Sabbath keeping and allow them to make our Sabbath day most enjoyable and most delightful.

I received an email last week that I thought was pretty good. I think it kind of fits in with what I said. In closing I'd like to share that with you also.

God's Masterpiece

By Cathy Irvin

Have you ever sat and really looked at God's handiwork? Isn't it amazing? You can see the starlit sky at night. The stars seem to shine like diamonds. Or have you ever watched the heavens at dawn when it looks like a blazing orange canvas? Even when stormy days come, filled with gray skies and torrents of rainfall, and winds sway the trees like they are dancing, it is a sight to see the wonders of God's artistic hand.

I couldn't help from daydreaming the other day as I gazed out my window. I watched the lightening and heard the thunder. The rain was so heavy you could hardly see the shapes of the trees. The Creator of the universe created all that artwork. Our minds are captivated at the wonders of God's creation. Flow-



ers bounce back after torrents of rain. Birds and squirrels even sit in the trees as if to watch what is happening around them. Yet in all this beautiful scenery there is something greater.

His greatest masterpiece is you and me. Wow! When the Lord created the heavens and the earth, He rested and said all that He made was good. Yet, something was missing... us. So He made man in the image and likeness of Himself. Man and woman were created to have fellowship with God. We weren't the afterthought in creation. We were the special finishing touches. He longs for the day when he shall gather His children and we shall be with Him for all eternity.

The Lord dropped a thought in my heart. He loves us so much he chose not to live without us at the beginning of creation nor when He went to the cross! We are His greatest work of art, so valuable that He says we are the apples of His eye.

For thus saith the Lord of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. He says we are His workmanship (Zechariah 2:8).

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).

Next time you look in the mirror,

see what God sees and cherish your time on this earth. Take time to tell Him how much you love Him and all He has done for you. Try not to take life for granted, but rather value it. I see the tiny newborn baby who looks for someone to hold it and take care of it. I am glad that their mother chose not to abort them. Then I think of the sick and elderly people, and how they look to the Lord to help them.

The point I am trying to make is that you are the most prized possession God has. You are His masterpiece. What matters most to Him is you. He loves you.



THE BEATITUDES

Elder Steven Smith
Lamoni, Iowa
October 12, 2014

Today I would like to go over the beatitudes with you. Each one starts with the word blessed. Six words in the Bible are translated as blessed. In the beatitudes, the Greek word used was (Mak-ar-ee-os) The word Mak-ar-ee-os, is the proliferative form of makar (supremely blessed, fortunate, well off, blessed, happy). This is far beyond our concept of blessed today. There are other levels of being blessed in the scriptures, that we also translate as simply "blessed". Today I wish to express to you how Jesus said you can become supremely happy or ultimately fortunate...how to be blessed.

Step one: Belief

Matthew 5:3 says *Blessed are they who shall believe on me; and again, more blessed are they who shall believe on your words, when ye shall testify that ye have seen me and that I am.*

Modern progressive thinkers are demonstrating an intolerance of Christianity. It is no longer acceptable to invoke God in public meetings, or places. A recent article noted that doctors on the front lines of Ebola were often motivated by their Christian faith which

insidiously spreads. Their conclusion was that the spread of Christianity was a greater threat than Ebola and we should require a separation of church and medicine.

Do you believe in God? How deeply do you believe in God? King Benjamin described how in Mosiah 2:13-17:

Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things both in heaven and in earth;

Believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth;

Believe that man doth not comprehend all things which the Lord can comprehend.

And again: Believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you:

And now, if you believe all these things, see that ye do them.

God gave us promises so we could be partakers of the divine nature and know him. If you believe in God...really believe, you will keep his commandments and seek out his promises.

Mosiah 1: 55-58 says *And behold, all that he requires of you, is to keep his commandments; and he has promised you that if ye would keep his commandments,*

ye should prosper in the land;

And he never doth vary from that which he hath said; therefore, if ye do keep his commandments, he doth bless you, and prosper you.

And now, in the first place, he hath created you, and granted unto you your lives, for which ye are indebted unto him.

And secondly: he doth require that ye should do as he hath commanded you, for which if ye do, he doth immediately bless you; and therefore, he hath paid you.

As you believe (a great form of faith) in God's word, you seek out God's promises then plant his word in your life, so he blesses you and finally your faith grows.

Step 2: Be humble and be baptized for remission of sins

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

The idea of being humble, although often bantered around, is quickly losing ground in our society to being proud and assertive and controlling.

The idea that baptism is necessary is being attacked from within Christi-



anity itself. Baptism has been degraded in meaning to joining a club. Some say it is not necessary..but it is. Baptism is a covenant to keep God's commands and his covenant to give his Spirit.

Alma 5: 25-27 says *Therefore come and be baptized unto repentance, that ye may be washed from your sins, that ye may have faith on the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, who is mighty to save and to cleanse from all unrighteousness;*

Yea, I say unto you, Come and fear not, and lay aside every sin, which easily doth beset you, which doth bind you down to destruction;

Yea, come and go forth, and shew unto your God that ye are willing to repent of your sins, and enter into a covenant with him to keep his commandments, and witness it unto him this day, by going into the waters of baptism;

Step 3: Beg...petition

Matthew 5:5 says *Yea, blessed are the "poor in spirit" who come unto me; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

"Poor in spirit" is a Hebrew idiom. (ptochos- Pto Khos, literal adjective describing one who crouches and cowers, thus beggarly/ poor.)

If you crouch properly, you are accepting that the person you are petitioning has the physical ability to cut off your head, and are putting yourself at their mercy.... You accept that you are a beggar. A beggar is usually poor...thus the word for crouching or cowering became an idiom to mean one that is poor.

If it is the Spirit that you are seeking (begging for the spirit, or poor in spirit), we know that the spirit blesses us when we keep God's commandments.

And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. 1 John 3:24

If we are keeping his commandments (as promised in step #2, Baptism) and continually turning to Christ to beg for his Spirit, seeking first to have that Spirit with us always, then the kingdom is ours.

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Romans 14:17

Step 4: Take comfort...choose joy

Matthew 5:6 says *And again, blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.*

We find that when life happens, causing us to mourn...when our sin results in unhappiness...when others sins cause us to be unhappy...when where we are is not where we want to be... comfort is available, if we choose it and then accept it. We have the choice to be happy or unhappy in every circumstance. God wants us to choose the way of comfort; the way of joy.

Step 5: Let go

Matthew 5:7 says *And blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.* The word "meek" comes from Greek idiom of myssessthai or literally "to blow the nose." This refers to what we call the Valsalva maneuver today.

The valsalva maneuver occurs when we take a big breath, close the throat, do a belly scrunch, creating pressure in the abdomen and also the lungs, then release the pressure through the nose as in a sneeze or a blow. We have a sneeze reflex when we come into the sun from a dark room. If you stand outside of a theatre after the show is over on a bright afternoon, you will observe that some of the people sneeze. Eight to 10 percent of those who sneeze will also turn around and go back to the bathroom.

This idiom refers to the release of pressure. This term morphs with the Norse concepts of "mjukr" soft/ gentle thru middle English meoc- courteous or indulgent to others This leads to another Greek work used meaning meek or (praus {prah-ooce'}... humble, meek, gentle), that is translated as meek.

We know that we are to have mercy on others. We are also to have mercy on ourselves. When we learn to release the pressure...give it up...turn it over to Christ...repent, we grow to become humble, gentle, soft, indulgent to others, we become meek... a quality that allows us to inherit the earth

We know that many desire in that last day to be taken in what they call the rapture. The meek, however, inherit the earth and will be gathered with the angels.

Step 6: Be ravenous for righteousness

And blessed are all they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost. Matthew 5:8

My dogs are opportunistic carnivores. They will gorge and then eat anything else available or offered, and even hunting for moths and grasshoppers, and chewing on grass. Their ancestors, the wolves might take down large game, if the opportunity presents itself, and all would gorge.

Until the opportunity to take down another prey animal came along, they would opportunistically eat whenever possible to hold them over until the next big kill. My dogs truly hunger and thirst after food.

We are to hunger and thirst after righteousness...becoming ravenous, so we are filled with the Holy Ghost.

We are also told in the prayer over the bread, that if we take Christ's name, remember him, keep his commands, that we will have the Holy Ghost. These two scriptures combined create a pathway to possessing the Holy Ghost. Be baptized, remember whose you are, and keep his commands -- ravenously, like you cannot get enough -- and you will be filled with the Holy Ghost.

Step 7: Be merciful

And blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.

In this case, you grow what you sow. You get what you give. Already you have learned to release your sins and be merciful to yourself, by accepting the forgiveness of Jesus... Now is the time to be merciful to others

If you are merciful, you will obtain mercy from others and God.

So if another's sin affects you, how do you respond in mercy. You do not ignore them and their sin...that does no one any good. I have made songs and sermons out of just this question, but let me summarize for you. You pray for them (pointer finger up)...You forgive them (middle finger up)... You love them (4th finger up)... And you grab the teachable moments (tiny finger up).

Wouldn't it be great if we all had



mercy on ourselves and for each other? That is what Jesus wants.

Step 8: Be pure in heart

And blessed are all the pure in heart; for they shall see God. Matthew 5:10

When Aristotle first started to categorize things in a new discipline called science, it was believed that the heart was the center from which our emotions emanated. Many years later (during the reign of King James of Bible fame), Harvey actually demonstrated on live animals and humans, that blood circulated and the heart was a pump to move it around the body. We now refer to the heart as a metaphor for an emotional center.

A broken heart is therefore not a heart attack. A broken heart is an emotional hurt with sorrow that occurs when we face the consequence of our sin or others sins. Healing of the heart causes scars, unless you give the sin to Jesus. He will renew your heart but only, if you will turn it over to him.

The frequency of turning your broken heart to Jesus, causes you to grow closer to him. As you keep his commands and statutes, your heart grows to be perfect. As you love others, the heart softens. As you grow close toward atonement with God and Jesus, your heart becomes pure.

It is the pure in heart that will see God in all things. It is the pure in heart that will live in Zion, where God walks. It is the pure in heart that will dwell with God. It is the pure in heart that will see God.

Step 9: Be one

And blessed are all the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God. Matthew 5:11

Peacemakers is the translation of the word eirenoipios (i-ray-nee-kos ...eirene-to join...poieo- poy-eh-o- to make or do cause, commit, perform)..

The peacemakers are the ones that cause a joining or an identity as one. God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost have different functions, manifestations, and forms, but are one. We have been given "marriage" as a laboratory to learn how two people can become one, then form a oneness with children. Unfortunately about 50 percent of people entering

marriage, cannot figure out how to become one.

God also gave us the church to understand the concept of becoming one with each other, so we can become one with the groom, Jesus. It is our human tendency to separate rather than to join to become one. Peace and becoming one requires Jesus to intervene, which has already been done.

It may also require you to help to put those at odds together. When we learn to become peacemakers, we will be known as the children of God.

Step 10: Incessantly pursue

Blessed are all they that are persecuted for my name's sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

In Matthew 5:12 persecuted is translated from deo-oke'-tace. Deo-oke-tace means to persecute, to pursue, follow after, or press toward. The interesting thing is that dioktes refers to the one pursuing, not the pursued. We are to incessantly pursue Jesus name.

Step 11: Realize God's side wins

And blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Matthew 5:13

For ye shall have great joy, and be exceeding glad; for great shall be your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Matthew 5:14

Reville is translated from the greek word, oneidizo...on-i-did'-zo (to rail at, chide, taunt, cast teeth into, suffer reproach, revile /upbraid)

Persecute is translated from deoko (dee-o'-ko...to flee, pursuit,ensue follow after, to persecute you, given to, suffer persecution, press toward) This is the other side from Matthew 5:12 where you were the pursuer, but now you are the pursued or persecuted.

So even when you are doing what God wants you to do, others may do bad things to you... and hurt you....and hound you... and say hurtful things about you. They will not accept your mercy or your efforts to make peace. Through all of this you may choose happiness, because you are now with the prophets, and you will be rewarded.

You see God has already won, so no matter what happens, you can choose happiness.

Summary

Here is the formula to being supremely happy as abridged by Steve (which is probably why I have not been called upon to write scripture).

To be supremely happy:

1. Believe.
2. Be humble and baptized...get rid of your sins.
3. Unabashedly beg for the Spirit... to enter the Kingdom
4. Bad happens...choose comfort
5. Let go...the stress of sin will kill ya
6. Ravenously pursue righteousness to get the Holy Ghost
7. Be merciful (pray for, forgive, love, and teach)
8. Let Jesus purify your heart
9. Be one
9. Incessantly pursue Jesus cause (the kingdom)
10. Choose joy, even when others sins hurts you...God's side wins in the end.

Happiness does not just happen... Happiness is a choice.. you can choose it...so do it.



Steven Smith



LESSONS FROM JONAH

High Priest Alan Smith
Mount Ayr, Iowa
October 19, 2014

I'd like to talk about the story of Jonah this morning for two reasons. One is that we were able to see the musical "Jonah" at the Sight and Sound Theater in Branson, MO, this summer. It was an amazing production. There was a huge ship that covered the stage and in the storm scene waves battered it and lightning flashed. There was an underwater scene in blacklight. Fish and sharks swam through the coral on stage as people manipulated puppets to look like fish swimming. Then there was a huge whale that came floating out over the audience and swam around. Jonah was slipping down through the "water" with bubbles around him until the whale went up to grab him. There was wonderful music. Maybe sometime we should take the time to watch the musical on DVD. It wouldn't be quite as exciting as seeing it, but you would still enjoy it I'm sure.

Another part of the reason I want to share this story is the experience I had as I watched the production that I will talk about a little later as we go along this morning. But the first thing I want to do is share the story with you as it is recorded in the book of Jonah. It really doesn't have an end. It ends with a question.

Some people say that the story of Jonah is a story or an allegory. You have to discount the testimony of Jesus if you go that way, however. A couple of places in the scripture it recounts one of the times Jesus was dealing with people who were seeking a sign.

Mark 8:12 says *Verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be give unto this generation, save the sign of the prophet Jonah; for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so likewise shall the Son of Man be buried in the bowels of the earth.*

In other words, Jonah's experience

of coming forth after three days and three nights in the fish was a type and shadow for Jesus experience in being in the grave for three days before his resurrection.

Here's the story:

Jonah was a prophet from Gath-hepher who was well liked in his time. The Lord and spoken to him and the prophecy that he brought was that the land of Israel from the entering of Hamath to the Dead Sea would be returned during the reign of king Jeroboam II. And it happened.

Unlike the prophets who come and said, repent, repent and were rejected and even stoned, Jonah had good news in his prophecy. He prophesied a good thing and it happened. Then a number of years passed since his first prophecy when Jonah received the word of the Lord again.

One day the word of the Lord came unto Jonah.

"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me." Now Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian empire. Assyria and Israel were mortal enemies. In the play it said that Jonah's father had been killed by the Assyrians. I haven't found that that fact was scriptural, but this may be from other Jewish historical writings about Jonah and his story.

Jonah had a problem. That was the last place he wanted to go and try to bring people to God. And it was personal if his father had been killed. He didn't like the Ninevites.

He didn't want to go because he was afraid that if he did, they might respond and be spared, and that was the last thing he wanted to happen. He also might have been afraid of what their response might be too. He wasn't wanting to meet the end of other prophets to brought messages to people who didn't want to hear them.

So Jonah decided to arise and go as the Lord had told him -- but not to Nineveh. He wanted to head in the

opposite direction to get as far from Nineveh as he could.

He chose Tarshish, an island from which it would be hard to obey the call to travel. He goes to the seaport of Joppa and pays his way to travel on a ship to Tarshish -- trying to flee the presence of the Lord. It would be hard to get there from that far away. The scriptures say that he wanted to flee from the presence of the Lord.

The Lord sends a great tempest, it says -- making it very possible that the ship would be torn to pieces.

The mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and throw the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it and make the ship higher in the water.

During all this commotion, Jonah was down in the ship and was fast asleep, if you can imagine that.

So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.

The ship's crew had all been calling upon their gods for help. They wanted him to help by at least calling on his.

The ship crew finally cast lots to find out who was causing the evil of the storm to come upon them. Who was the "Jonah" as we now would call someone causing our problems with God. The lot fell to Jonah.

So they asked Jonah, who must have been hiding his identity for whose cause the evil had upon them. What's your occupation? Where do you come from? What is your country? Of what people are you?)

His testimony was:

I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and dry land.

The crew asks:

Why have you brought these problems upon us?

Jonah told them that he was fleeing the presence of the Lord.



So they asked Jonah what they should do with him that the sea might be calm, for the storm continued to rage.

“And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.”

You might think that the crew would respond right away and just toss Jonah overboard. But they didn't. The scriptures tell us they rowed the boat as strongly as they could, but still couldn't overcome the storm.

When they couldn't save the ship themselves, they cried unto the Lord, and said, *We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood; for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee.*

So they took up Jonah, and cast him into the sea. And the scripture say the sea ceased from its raging.

So what was the reaction of the men to all this.

Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows.

The scriptures say that all things can be used for good, and the Lord was able to bring the crew to him, in the miracle of the storm being calmed.

We know what happened to Jonah:

“Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.”

The word translated “fish” here and “whale” in Mark could also be translated “sea creature.” The exact kind of “big fish” isn't indicated.

But Jonah has an experience of salvation that he shares with the readers of his book.

And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.

For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about; all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.

Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.

Jonah came to the realization that even the depths of the sea was not too far away to remember God and call on him. The description of his experience is very interesting to me.

The waters compassed me about, even to the soul; the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head.

I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me forever; yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God.

And here's the heart of the testimony.

When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.

He says others may not believe it, but I have a testimony that this is true.

They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.

But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord.

I wonder if it took Jonah three days to come around to call out to the Lord, because the next thing the scripture says is:

The Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

Once he was ashore the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time and he was told:

Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

So this time Jonah responded posi-

tively.

He arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey from where he was released, the scriptures day.

So Jonah went -- when he came to Nineveh he prophesied

Nineveh will be overthrown in 40 days if you don't repent.

To his surprise, the people of Nineveh responded positively to his call.

The king arose from his throne, laid he robe aside, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. The people from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth with him.

The king proclaimed a degree that neither man nor beast were to eat or drink water. Even the beasts were covered with sackcloth.

And this was the king's message:

“Yea, let them turn everyone from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell, if we will repent, and turn unto God, but he will turn away from us his fierce anger, that we perish not?”

And what was God's response to their true repentance?

And God saw their works that they turned from their evil way and repented; and God turned away the evil that he had said he would bring upon them.

You would think that Jonah would be happy that the people responded to his message and repented. But he was not. No. He was displeased and angry.





Jonah wanted justice for the way that the Assyrians had dealt with Israel. Now not only was he angry with the Ninevites, he was angry with God. Isn't that how our anger grows sometimes. We get angry with something and work and that spills over in some fashion in the way we treat our family when we come home. Anger tends to multiply in our lives.

And he prayed unto the lord, and said, I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.

Jonah is saying: That's why I ran away in the first place. I was afraid that you would relent and not destroy these people who deserve to be destroyed.

But he went further.

Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live.

What was God's response?

Then said the Lord, do think it is good to be angry at this?

If he'd been Dr. Phil he might have said, How is anger working for you?"

So after prophesying and seeing the people start to repent, Jonah went to the east side of the city and set up camp where he could see what would become of the city. He didn't want to stay there in case the city was destroyed, and he still hoped that God would destroy it.

God continued to try to teach Jonah the lesson he had wanted him to learn all along.

God prepared a gourd (or leafy shrub) that grew up to shade his camp to "deliver him from his grief." He wanted to help Jonah a long a bit. And Jonah was glad for the shade. Exceedingly glad.

But after giving the blessing, God took it away again with a worm that destroyed the vine.

So Jonah was sitting there in the heat. After being glad that the shade had come, he was even more angry when it was taken away. So there is Jonah, sitting out there alone. God caused a strong east wind to blow. It was burning up. Jonah baked in the sun and got

depressed again.

He fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live.

So God asked Jonah another question.

Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? Is it good to be angry for my blessing? Something you didn't work for at all?

And Jonah said, *I do well to be angry, even unto death.*

The God asks Jonah the question that ends the book of Jonah that we don't get Jonah's answer to.

Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night.

You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. You are just concerned about yourself. Aren't you being selfish?

And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?"

That's all we hear of Jonah. It ends in a question of whether Jonah will be able to love God's people like he is being called to do. If he will accept the fact that God loves the Ninevites as much as he loves Jonah. God saved Jonah, now he wants to save the Ninevites too.

I wonder what Jonah's answer was.

I hope his heart grew wide enough like Enoch's to understand the love God had for Ninevites. It's one of the questions we will have to wait to get answered on the other side I guess.

But it's a question for us as well. Will be allow what others have done to us keep us from remembering that God loves each of these other people as much as he loves us.

I'd like for us to look at some lessons we can learn from Jonah's experience.

Lesson 1: The Lord calls us to arise and go to our Ninevehs.

Have you ever felt the Lord was

calling you to do something you didn't want to do or go somewhere you didn't want to go? To an uncomfortable situation?

Do you have someone in your life that you feel has done you wrong and you sure would like justice to put them in their place?

What if God called you and said, "Go and warn them and help them learn to repent so I can save them."

That's basically what Jesus has told us. Here's what he said about our enemies.

But behold I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you. 3 Nephi 5:90

What the Lord requires from us is not always easy -- in fact, because of the way we are -- if often isn't easy.

But maybe it's not an enemy that he is calling you to go to. Maybe it's just someone you wouldn't be comfortable being around -- or someone you wouldn't want to be seen with.

Kind of like when Jesus went among publicans and sinners and let a woman with a bad reputation wash his feet with her tears?

Can you understand why Jonah would want to run the other way, hoping that the justice part of the prophesy would happen instead of the mercy part?

But it all comes down to what God says about dealing with those who have hurt us.

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, who trespass against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses. Matthew 6:16

It's pretty simple. If we don't have mercy and forgive others, the Lord says then we will be judged with the same judgement and we will get justice instead of mercy.

The Lord was calling Jonah to go to the Ninevites as much for Jonah as he was for the Ninevites. Jonah had to learn the lesson of love.

I don't know about you, but I would like mercy instead of justice when I



stand before the judgement bar.

Jesus calls on us to arise and go to our Ninevehs, whatever they may be -- to teach us how to love others.

Now I'd like to share my testimony from the experience at the musical that I mentioned at the beginning of the sermon.

I've shared with the experience of speaking for the Lord to Kyle Chown in an earlier sermon. I've been reminded of several things from that experience. One of them is that to be the messenger for the Lord doesn't always mean that you completely understand the message. When I spoke for the Lord and challenged Kyle to arise and go forth I was thinking that those words were referring to the times Jesus healed people of their physical afflictions and sent them on their way. I didn't realize that the call to arise and go forth was also given in another context in the scriptures.

After Kyle died I was praying for understanding for the experience I had had, believing that it was the spirit of God that had prompted the words and not understanding the outcome for Kyle.

When the musical came to its final number "Arise and Go" I was flooded with the spirit again. For the first time in my life that I remember, I heard an audible voice speak. I heard the words "arise and go" and understood that this was the context in which they were meant. That Kyle was being called to arise and go to a place the Lord had prepared for him, his Nineveh, a place he wasn't ready to go at that time.

I had told Kyle after the service that "the battle is won." The context of those words was explained in understanding that washed over me as the words of Paul to Timothy:

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith;

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. 2 Timothy 4:6-8

It was such an powerful experience for me that the tears just flowed. I couldn't share what had happened in any detail as we left the theater but I shared the experience a few days later with several people I felt should know.

As I thought about the call to arise and go to my Ninevehs, I realized that there have been many times when I have been called to uncomfortable situations to try and provide ministry. In those situations where I am convinced that I have little to offer, I have found the spirit of the Lord providing the ministry in great power. It is my testimony that when we respond to the call to go to our Ninevehs, the Lord will bless us. We can bring great ministry, and we will grow ourselves from taking the risk.

We are called to arise and go wherever he calls us.

Lesson 2: We can't hide from God.

Can we hide from the Lord? Jonah found that running away to Tarshish and even being in the depths of the sea didn't get him away from God's site.

Have you had moments when you wanted to hide from God?

The psalmist David talked about this in Psalm 139:7-14

Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

For thou hast possessed my reins; thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

We can't hide and we can't hide the

things we do. Everything we do is a testimony of one kind or another. We have to make a choice of what kind of testimony we are going to give. What we do does make a difference for his kingdom, no matter how we want to fool ourselves that it doesn't. We just need to remember that as we make the decisions of our lives.

Lesson 3: No matter where we are, we can call on God and he will come to our aid.

Remember Jonah's prayer. He's sinking to the bottom of the ocean, seaweed is closing over him, he's plunging to the depths. Then he remembers to call on God and is saved.

Remember the experience of Alma when the Lord confronts him and he understands that he is rebelling. He calls out in depths of despair and the Lord changes his outlook immediately.

And it came to pass that as I was thus racked with torment, while I was harrowed up by the memory of my many sins, behold, I remembered also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people, concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins



Alan Smith



of the world.

Now as my mind caught hold upon this thought, I cried within my heart, O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me, who art in the gall of bitterness, and art encircled about by the everlasting chains of death.

And now behold, when I thought this, I could remember my pains nor more; yea, I was harrowed by by the memory of my sins no more.

And O, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain; yea, I say unto you, my son, that there could be nothing so exquisite and so bitter as were my pains.

Yea, and again I say unto you, my son, that on the other hand, there can be nothing so exquisite and sweet as was my joy. Alma 17: 10-19

Lesson 4: Our attitude makes a big difference in our life.

What would have been the difference in Jonah if he had been sitting outside the city just praying that the people would respond and change their ways? Would he have been so depressed? Would he keep asking to die? Would he faint?

The thing was, the prophecy was meant to help Jonah as much as it was the Ninevites. If Jonah continued to keep that deep anger and hatred for those people in his heart, his reward was in danger.

When we are depressed and feeling unloved, is it because we are focusing on ourselves like Jonah was? Does it make a difference if we start to focus outside ourselves.

It makes a difference when we change our view from “no one loves me” and “God doesn’t love me” to “whom can I love?” “What can I do that his love may be made known.”

And it’s a process to change. Jonah called on the Lord and was saved. But all of a sudden he wasn’t perfect. That one experience didn’t change his heart in other ways. His capacity to love still needed to be expanded.

Lesson 5: The same question of the Lord at the end of Jonah is the same to us.

Can we look at the world and all the problems in it and think that God wants people to get what they deserve? Or are we listening to see where the Lord is calling us to make a difference in the lives of people around us.

Let my word be preached to the bruised and brokenhearted as well as those who are enmeshed in sin, longing to repent and follow me. Let the truths of my gospel be proclaimed as widely and as far as the dedication of the Saints, especially through the exercise of their temporal stewardship, will allow. My Spirit is reaching out to numerous souls even now and there are many who will respond if you, my people, will bear affirmative tes-

timony of my love and my desires for all to come unto me. Be steadfast and trust in the instructions which have been given for your guidance. I will be with you and strengthen you for the tasks that lie ahead if you will continue to be faithful and commit yourselves without reservation to the building of my kingdom. Doctrine and Covenants 153:9

I hope we can learn from Jonah

Lesson 1: The Lord calls us to arise and go to our Ninevehs.

Lesson 2: We can’t hide from God.

Lesson 3: No matter where we are, we can call on God and he will come to our aid.

Lesson 4: Our attitude makes a big difference in our life.

Lesson 5: The same question of the Lord at the end of Jonah is the same to us.

Are we going to focus on ourselves and our own anger. Or are we willing to take on the challenges the Lord has for us to move out and make a difference in the world.

The call to us today as it was in the days of Jonah:

Arise and go forth -- the kingdom awaits a people who will respond.

I’ll end with question just like the book of Jonah: What will your response be? What will my response be? I hope it will be to seek an Enoch experience in our capacity to love.



FELLOWSHIP AND SERVICE



October fellowship and service events for the branch included a trap shoot at Ed and Diane Anderson’s home and roofing work at the home of Jim and Bonnie Majors.



HAVING COMPASSION

Elder Gordon Winkler
Mount Ayr, IA
October 26, 2014

As a Call to Worship Brother Jim Barber read Omni 1:46-47 from the Book of Mormon. *And now, my beloved brethren, I would that ye should come unto Christ, who is the Holy One of Israel, and partake of his salvation, and the power of his redemption. Yea, come unto him, and offer your whole souls as an offering unto him, and continue in fasting and praying, and endure to the end; and as the Lord liveth, ye will be saved.*

The scripture reading that I have selected this morning to focus our worship on comes from the 2nd Book of Corinthians 1:3-7. This is Paul's second letter to the church and the saints at Corinth. I've selected to read this from a different translation of the Bible than we usually use. My reason in doing so is that there's a one word difference. This scripture in the Inspired Version or the King James Version uses the word "mercies" and this other interpretation of the Bible called The New International Bible uses the word "compassion."

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

I want to consider this morning the meaning of compassion. How is com-

passion defined? Who taught about compassion? Who showed compassion? Is compassion important for us to understand, and if so, why? I give you this up front so that it will help you find your way through my sometimes convoluted thought process. I hope that you will find at the end of our time together a further understanding of compassion and appreciation for our Lord Jesus who spent His time on earth and teaching us to love and to have compassion.

I've had several experiences over the last few weeks that have drawn my attention to this word, this topic or this lifestyle of compassion. Once a quarter,



so four times a year at work, I hold employee informational meetings. We begin the meetings by going over what the acronym for our hospital culture stands for.

Our acronym is I CARE which stands for integrity, compassion, attitude, respect and excellence. I usually ask an employee if they can recite that but I stand so there's a poster right behind me so they can read it. At least it makes me feel like everybody has bought in to that culture. The last time we held our ICARE meeting which was in September, it occurred to me that compassion in our acronym needs to be something

we're working to instill in the organization. If we say we have compassion in the organization it must be observed by those that come into the hospital, that means that individual employees need to understand and exemplify compassion. If my expectation is that our employees understand and exemplify compassion then I need to understand and exemplify compassion too.

Even as recently as last Wednesday night's prayer service Rodney Bastow who was in charge had chosen as one of the songs we sang 'Come Ye Apart.' I have to tell you when we get together on Wednesday nights with everybody

that can sing it's just amazing what we sound like together. In that hymn I again had this confirming thought that we needed to consider the meaning of compassion. I'm not a music history major and I probably have no business trying to analyze the words in any hymn, but in this hymn (Hymn #79 in Hymns of the Saints), I want you to think about verses one and four. Verse one says, "Come ye apart!" It is the Lord who calls us,' and verse four begins with "He knoweth how for us to have compassion."

In trying to analyze the beginnings of those two verses I came up with this, that compassion is

attainable for each one of us and that the Lord Jesus knows how for us to have it. He is our teacher. Jesus again is the Master or the Rabbi in this case so if compassion is attainable for us and Jesus knows how for us to have it, He must be teaching it in the scriptures. Today I would like to talk about what is found in the scriptures pertaining to compassion. That was the second experience that prompted me to focus on compassion.

The third came as I was attending the annual Iowa Hospital Association meetings. The keynote speaker was Allison Massari. The program for the week listed Allison's presentation as



“The Fire Within” and stated that, “she shines light on how compassion is a critical healing tool and how going the extra mile can make all the difference to a person who is suffering.” Allison was an amazing speaker. She was very dynamic, very passionate in the way she presented her story. I’m sorry that you are not going to get that replicated experience this morning nor can I give you the whole story because she spoke for almost two hours.

This is kind of a synopsis, quick summary of Allison’s story. Allison is an artist and during her presentation she had graphics of her artwork in the background. They were beautiful paintings. That ties into Allison’s story because Allison was coming back from an art supply store one day after buying art supplies and was in a head-on collision entrapped in her mangled car. The car caught on fire and was engulfed in flames because of the flammability of the art supplies that she had in the vehicle.

There were many people at this accident site but because of the fire and the heat no one tried to help her as she pounded on the window and yelled for help. Finally, she said that a man named Roger rushed in, broke the glass and pulled her through the window and extinguished the flames that covered her.

She was not expected to live. She had third degree burns over the majority of her body. She went through years of health issues, skin grafts that didn’t take and had to be replaced, lots of therapy, lots of ER visits and psychiatric help and counseling in order for her to recover from her situation. You would not know it to see and hear her. The lady is just a wonderful person and makes a very good impression on you. That’s kind of the quick story but she had lots of antidotes about the care that she received from people in the hospital, friends, people that she didn’t know that heard of her and showed compassion towards her.

These are the lessons that she left me with from her life experience. She said, ‘Compassion heals the places that medicine cannot touch.’ Again, compassion heals the places that medicine

cannot touch. “Loneliness is a powerful emotion but compassion overcomes loneliness.” “Pain and joy exist side by side.” Through her experience of the pain of recovering from third degree burns she found that there were times where she could see joy in her life even in those worst days that she had so she says that pain and joy exist side by side. “Happiness and suffering co-exist. Choose joy. Force happiness.” Fourth, she explained this as she described a situation where she had come into the emergency room one evening. She was taken there by her parents who noticed that she had started to have these big bulges on her skin again all over her body. What was happening was that the skin grafts were being rejected. They called her physician and he said to take her to the emergency room immediately.

The doctor wanted the bulges exposed as much as possible. He didn’t want them compressed or covered with her clothing. When she arrived at the emergency room she said that she never gave any thought to what her appearance was like but a nurse at the reception said, ‘How could you come in here looking like that?’ in front of all the other people in the room. She took Allison to a room off by herself because she didn’t think that the others in the room would be comfortable seeing Allison. She sat alone in this room and said, “It dawned on me I am a grotesque person. Everybody must look at me differently than I look at myself.” From that experience she came up with this as one of her other lessons. “Forgiveness and compassion are the balm for unkindness.” Finally, one of her other lessons was, “I will forever be ready to be kind and loving. I will have compassion.” That’s her experience. That’s her story in a very concise form.

I’d like to share a little about Roger the man that pulled her out of the car that was burning. Roger has his own story. Roger’s wife had died unexpectedly and he was despondent over her death. He quit his executive level job and just kind of made a hermit of himself. When his financial means was running out, he picked up a job working as a security

night watchman. He didn’t have any interaction with anybody. The day that Allison had her accident he was driving to check on a new hire that had started as a security guard also. He just happened to pass by the scene of the accident.

In his mind he thought, “I’ll rush in and see what I can do because if something happens to me, I don’t really care.” So, he rushed in, told her to get back from the window, broke the window and pulled her out. Roger suffered some burns of his own but nothing significant. His motivation for helping her was he didn’t really care what happened to him. He was going to take care of Allison.

Over the time that she was recovering he visited her often. During that visitation he began to change. At one of his visits he said to Allison, “I pulled you out of the car that night but I will never stop pulling you up.” That was a turning point for Roger. He told her that certain pain never goes away, thinking about the death of his wife, the choice is to see that all is beautiful and to have compassion. Roger became a close friend of Allison’s and went on to do many more things. He got his life back together and returned to his profession, not that being a security guard isn’t an important job, but he certainly felt that he had more that he could again offer.

Those are really the three experiences that I have had that prompted me to do some reading and preparing the message this morning on compassion. So, how do you define compassion? I read a lot of different definitions of compassion and they seemed to fall into two categories. This is just an example of those two.

Compassion is a sympathetic consciousness of other’s distress together with a desire to alleviate it. We might think of that as altruism. That you have sympathy for somebody and that you determine that you can offer some help to alleviate their distress. The second definition is the emotion that one feels in response to the suffering of others that motivates a desire to help. Can you hear the difference between those two? One describes a higher level inside of us, an emotional level as opposed to a



sympathy level. As I thought about that I wondered how it related to the scriptures and Jesus.

Jesus talked and preached about love over and over. That's the emotion that I believe is attached to compassion. Jesus embodies for us the very essence of compassion and relational care. He challenges us to forsake our own desires and to act compassionately particularly towards those in need. Jesus assures His listeners in the Sermon on the Mount, 'Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.' In the parable of the Good Samaritan He holds up to His followers the idea of compassionate conduct. Compassion according to Jesus should be extended to all even to the extent of loving one's enemies.

The parable of the Good Samaritan is found in the tenth chapter of Luke and begins about verse 26. I am going to transition to talking about that parable, the Good Samaritan. Beginning in verse 26 it tells of the response to a question asked of Jesus by a Jewish lawyer. *And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?* This lawyer is an expert in the Old Testament law and is an Old Testament scholar.

The question asked of Jesus by this lawyer is, 'What do I have to do to inherit eternal life.' Basically, what he's asking is, 'What must I do to be saved?' When he asked Jesus the question about eternal life, He was asking what Jesus saw as the essential requirements of the law. Much like the rich, young ruler in Matthew he seems to be saying, 'What good thing must I do in order to have eternal life?'

Can you see Jesus smiling as He throws the question back in the lawyer's lap in verse 27. *He said unto him, What is written in the law? How readest thou?* Jesus restrains from giving the man an answer and rather says to him you know the law. What does it say? In verse 28 the lawyer answers Jesus, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.*

In verse 29 Jesus answered, *Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou*

shalt live. Jesus asks a question, the man gives the answer and then Jesus responds by saying good answer. Go do it! That's basically what Jesus is saying. Some are troubled by this answer but I think we need to understand that Jesus is not saying that the man could only be saved by the law. He is reminding the man that the law requires that you keep the law and that you must keep it perfectly. The law must be kept without omissions or failures. To be justified under the law one must be perfect. Jesus wants the lawyer to see that the law cannot save anyone because no one is perfect.

Now the Old Testament lawyer did what lawyers do so well, he was looking for a loophole. In verse 30 it says, *But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, and who is my neighbor?* Why did the lawyer ask this question? Luke says that he wanted to justify himself, that he wanted to make himself seem right in his relationship with God. The lawyer measured himself against both commands and he figured that he met the first one well enough but his keeping of the second one depended upon how you defined neighbor. He was asking who and how much do I have to love? We're often like the lawyer and we try to reduce God's commands to something that we can live with. We would like to believe that loving our neighbor means loving people who love us or at least loving people who are loveable. Loving my neighbor thereby comes to mean do nice things for people who will probably do things nice back to me. That's probably what the lawyer thought too.

The lawyer's original question was what do I have to do to get in, basically. I want to have eternal life. What do I have to do to get in but Jesus answers to tell him what someone who is already in looks like. Like many of us the lawyer knew the right answers but he was totally unprepared for Jesus' story about what compassion looks like in real life.

The journey from Jericho to Jerusalem was a dangerous one. It was steep and treacherous and it was a place where robbers could hide and attack passersby so this was a very believable

story to those who were listening. This story teaches us some basic lessons about compassion.

First, compassion is based on need not worth. In the 31st verse we read, *And Jesus answering, said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his raiment and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.* Our compassion is to be driven not by worth of the recipient but by the need. Jesus says "a certain man." Today we might say some ordinary guy or something to that effect. The man is robbed and wounded and left for dead and needs help in the worst way.

As the unknown victim lay beside the road three individuals, if you remember, came along the way. The first to pass by is introduced in verse 32. *And by chance, there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side of the way.* A priest came down the road but when he saw the man he crossed to the other side, ignored him and continued on his journey. This is one of the most shocking aspects of this parable when Jesus told it because the priest



Gordon Winkler



was considered to be the holiest person there among the Jews. He was taught the scriptures. He was entrusted with offering sacrifices for sin of the people and was allowed further into the temple than regular people were. If anyone was going to reflect the character and nature of God, it should have been the priest.

The second to pass by is introduced in verse 33. *And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked upon him, and passed by on the other side of the way. . .* This is the second person to pass the man on the other side of the road. However, he went over and looked at the man but perhaps it was no more than the current practice of rubbernecking. You know, drive by the accident and turn your head to see what's going on. He too did not feel a need to do anything to help. Like the priest that passed by he too left the injured man by the side of the road.

I think it's important to remember that these two men probably weren't monsters. They were regular folks. Nice ordinary people like you and me trying to do their best to get along in the world in which they lived. Both of these men saw the man but ignored the need. These two religious professionals as we might call them today were caught up in a lifeless religion. They acted like they were religious or they played church but it did not affect the way they lived. Compassion is based on need, not on worth of the recipient and compassion feels something.

In verse 34 it says, *But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him.* It would have been shocking for Jesus to have told the people that this man was helped by just an ordinary man but it is not even a Jew helping a Jew but rather a Samaritan helping a Jew who had been ignored by his fellow Jews. Do you get the relationship there? Given the mutual hatred between Jews and Samaritans, it would have been more likely to have expected the Samaritan to finish the guy off.

Today we call this story the parable of the Good Samaritan. In fact, the very phrase Good Samaritan has become a part of our common language. This

was definitely not a phrase in use by Jews of Jesus time. In fact, they probably couldn't have even considered saying the words "good" and "Samaritan" in the same sentence. The passage says that when he saw him he had compassion. The Samaritan saw the pitiful man lying in agony beside the road and his heart churned within him so that he could not pass by without helping. That's the way compassion affects us. It stirs us, it troubles us, it keeps us awake at night until we do something.

When the Samaritan looked at the suffering man lying half dead on the side of the road, something happened inside of him, something that made it impossible for him to walk away. He didn't decide to help this guy on the basis of how worthy he was, he helped him because the injured man was in need. There is no logical reason for the Samaritan to rearrange his plans or to spend his money to help an enemy in need. Of the people who passed by this injured man, the Samaritan had the least reason to help. He was a no account in his society before this incident and his good deed would not change his status in the community at large after he helped this man. Compassion not only feels something but compassion does something. Not only was the Samaritan's compassion based on need rather than worth of the victim, it caused the Samaritan to feel something so deeply that it had to be expressed in action. He had to do something.

In verse 35 we're told, *And he went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.* He doesn't pass by on the other side. He moves toward the injured man. We must move toward people to express compassion in order to build relationships. It is not something that just mystically happens, it takes a concentrated effort. Often it is not convenient but I don't want you to forget that the Samaritan is moving towards someone who if he was conscious would despise him. He's going to help this man anyway.

Jesus details in a series of six verbs just how active this man's compassion

was. Remember the words in verse 35. He went to him, bandaged his wounds, poured oil and wine into his wounds, put him on his own beast, brought him to an inn and took care of him. In every one of his acts he demonstrated compassion as he responded in a practical, timely and unselfish way. He put him on his own donkey which meant that the Samaritan walked. It is important to recognize that he took the time to care for him. We may not be able to help everyone or help everywhere but we can help somewhere and we can help someone and have a meaningful work of service. Compassion not only does something but compassion also costs something.

Continuing through verse 36 it says, *And on the morrow, when he departed (which meant he stayed the rest of the day and the whole night with this Jew that he found along the side of the road), he took money, and gave to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.*

This man really went the extra mile. He took this man to an inn and saw to it that the innkeeper looked out for his recovering victim. He also promised that he would return and fully reimburse the innkeeper for any additional expenses that he incurred in caring for the man. He left money to take care of this man's needs and he put no limit on the innkeeper as to how much he could spend to take care of this man. He just said that he would be back and he would pay for whatever additional money it took to take care of him.

There is nothing more the Samaritan could have done to show his compassion for this man. Compassion costs something and compassion demonstrates our relationship to God. At the conclusion of His story, He asked the lawyer one additional question in verse 37. *Who now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him who fell among the thieves?* The lawyer almost chokes on his words here. He cannot even bring himself to say the word Samaritan. So he responds and says, *He who showed mercy on him. . .* (38) He



couldn't say it was a Samaritan who showed mercy on him.

For the second time Jesus tells this man to do something in order to inherit eternal life when this verse continues with Jesus saying to him, *Go and do likewise.* (38) Why does Jesus say this? Because He realizes that this man will not turn to Him for salvation until he turns from his dependence on doing something to inherit eternal life. The lawyer is left without any of the excuses or the vindication that he wanted. The second question that the lawyer had asked was, who is my neighbor? The question that had been turned on him now by Jesus is what kind of a neighbor am I? What kind of a neighbor am I? Am I the kind

of neighbor that shows compassion?

I'd like to conclude here this morning with sharing a couple of other scriptures. I think these both add to our understanding and the meaning of compassion. The first one is from the book of 1st John 3:16, 17. *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. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

The second scripture is from James 2:16-17. *For if a brother or sister be naked and destitute, and one of you say, Depart in peace, be warmed and filled;*

notwithstanding he give not those things which are needful to the body; what profit is your faith unto such? Even so faith, if it have not works is dead, being alone.

To summarize things compassion is based on need not worth. Compassion feels something. It feels love. It's an emotion. It's about forgiveness. Compassion does something. It has to move us to action. Compassion costs something. We are reminded that everything we have is from God and His goodness unto us and should be shared. Finally, compassion shows our relationship with God. Just as Jesus said to the Jewish lawyer years ago, He is telling us today, show compassion as the Samaritan did.

Go and do likewise.



Thanksgiving, Christmas Child service projects set

The branch is involved in two service projects which will have a deadline of Sunday, Nov. 16. Sandy Crandell is organizing the efforts.

Christmas Child Boxes

Begin packing your Operation Christmas Child boxes soon. The receiving countries for our shoeboxes will be Tanzania, Uganda, India, Belize, Trinidad and Tobago. So probably won't need earmuffs or gloves. This is an outreach project of Samaritan's Purse.

Boxes must be at the church by Nov. 17. There are boxes, labels, and rubber bands available at the church in Mount Ayr. When boxes come in we will try to find a corner in which to stack them to see our progress.

Some of you weren't present when I talked about how to pack the boxes. Here are two links for you to help with your choices for the boxes. There are many links about this project, but I have a few for you below.

<http://www.samaritanspurse.org/article/small-goes-big/> This shows how much can be done by a small group of people. We aren't expecting quite this much this year, but possibilities are endless.

<http://video.samaritanspurse.org/>

pack-a-shoebox-with-uncle-si/ This is a fun video for the guys on packing the boxes.

<http://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/pack-a-shoe-box/> This is a video on packing shoe boxes for the little ones who might want to participate.

Thanksgiving Dinner Bags

These bags are filled with appropriate groceries to help some of our neighbors have a nice Thanksgiving dinner.

The churches of Mount Ayr are partnering again this year with MATURA/Neighborhood Center to provide food items for a Thanksgiving Dinner. These will be collected the same week as the Christmas Child boxes, November 17, so it might be good to start collecting your food items now, perhaps buying an item or two each trip to the grocery store. There is information below on this project. Bags will be available at the church.

We can partner with The Neighborhood Center to give these families the needed food for a Thanksgiving meal with family. This year at least 100 -120 families will request food baskets for Thanksgiving, as well as for Christmas.

This branch has helped in the past to create baskets for our neighbors in the community. We ask you to consider packing a basket for a family this year. Or you could work with another family to pack one, or bring in such food items as you can and they will be used to provide baskets.

If you want to include a recipe it would be fine. As you pack this bag, pray for the families in need who will receive them.

Suggested non-refrigerated items to include in the Thanksgiving food basket:

- Instant Mashed Potatoes
- Turkey gravy/ mix or jar
- Stuffing mix
- Sweet potatoes
- Marshmallows
- Apple juice or cider
- Evaporated milk
- Cranberry sauce
- Corn bread mix or rolls
- Vegetable green beans, etc.
- Pie crust mix
- Pumpkin pie filling
- Other items of your choice

Turkey is provided by MATURA.

Bring bags of food to the church on Sunday, November 17 for distribution on November 22-23.

Day	Thoughts	Scripture	Where has the Lord sent you?
Are you working with the Lord?			
1	One of the questions that comes to mind is: are you a doer of the word? My wife has commented several times to me that Thanksgiving dinner takes hours to prepare and cleanup but only minutes to eat. On Thanksgiving day, there are doers and feasters. The doer prepares the meal or cleanups up after the meal. A feaster comes to eat and leaves full but never fulfilled. All partook of the feast but not all helped before or after the feast. We all feast on the word of the Lord but do we all help the Lord with the feast? If you are a doer then you must be actively involved in the service of the Lord. Are you a doer or feaster?	James 1:22-25	John 20:21 Sec 60:4a
2	Coaching baseball taught me many things. One lesson was that the bunt is important. The bunt places the defense in a dilemma. Do you defend for the long ball or short ball? Without the bunt, you only need to defend against the long ball, which allows the shortstop to be an extra fielder. With the bunt, the batter sacrifices his chances of making it onto first base for the good of the team. The bunt also forces the shortstop to play in the infield, which helps the long ball hitters. Satan really has no defense for the sacrifice of a gospel bunt. Many Christians are long ball hitters and will not make the sacrifice for the good on the Lord's team. Small sacrifices change the world around you and may bring a greater victory for the Lord.	Matthew 10:33-35 Sec 98:5h-j	Sec 83:12
3	Coaching tee-ball and baseball taught me the difference between talent and coaching. The true coach develops the players and the team. We played a number of teams with more talent than our team. There was a pattern among the teams with talent and poor coaching; they won early in the season and lost late in the season. Teams with good coaching lost early and won late in the season. As Christians, we have a great coach. If we listen to our coach, we will win. Christ will win in the end because He will develop you as a person and a Saint.	Sec 81:4e-g 1 Nephi 7:69	Sec 85:21
4	My experience has been that regular and frequent church attendance is required to keep the Spirit active in my life. Have you ever tried to teach a skill without having mastered or having a good knowledge of the skill? It is hard to teach the gospel without practicing it or having good knowledge of the gospel. It is the meeting often with those who are lead by the Spirit helps in keeping the commandments and increasing and increase your knowledge. It is much harder to help others if you lack the ability and knowledge to live with the Spirit.	3 Nephi 8:53-54 Moroni 6:6-8	Sec 108:12-13 Jeremiah 35:15
5	When a blacksmith is working iron, they know that red to yellow glow color of iron has similar qualities of modeling clay. The iron can be shaped, formed and reformed in hands of the master blacksmith. The blacksmith takes ordinary iron and shapes it to something useful or beautiful. When we glow with the spirit of God then we can be shaped by the Master. The ordinary member can be transformed to something useful or beautiful for the Master.	Alma 3:27-29 3 Nephi 13:49-53	Sec 50:5-6
6	The natural ship floats on the surface of the water. A submarine leaves this natural state and goes under the water. It takes a special person to sail on a submarine because it is not normal to be underwater. Leaving what is natural is more difficult than being in the natural state. The Lord asks us to be more like the submariner and leave the natural man behind. Have you left the natural man behind?	Mosiah 1:117-120 1 Corinthians 2:13-16	Sec 19:10-11 Zechariah 2:1-10
7	I have made many things in blacksmithing. The question is always what is the value? Some items sell for more than I expected and yet some items I can't give away. Each has a value to me both in material and skill. Each soul is of value to God because a single soul may return one soul or thousands of souls.	Sec 16:3c-4a	Matthew 10:32-38
8	I always had an interest in blacksmithing but the times and my talents led me a different direction. I knew I needed a hobby to fill some of the time when I retired. I tried many things for hobbies which failed to take hold. One day my wife pointed out an article about blacksmithing in the paper. The blacksmith was looking for students to carry on the tradition so I pursued blacksmithing. A retired office worker had a talent emerge in blacksmithing. It has brought me and others in contact with people to share the gospel with. How can your talents share the gospel?	Matthew 25:14-30	Jeremiah 42:20-22
9	The office of teacher has a unique role in the church. His role is to see that the church follows the second great commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves. If the outsider does not see our love for each other, what would attract them to the gospel?	Sec 17:11	Jonah 1:1-3
10	When was the last time you studied the words of the communion prayers? In the prayers, what do we witness to? We are also taking on actions to ensure we have the Spirit with us. How would your life change and the church change if we actually took those actions?	Sec 17:22-23	Matthew 5:41-47 3 Nephi 5:85-91
12	One thing you can count on is change in life. It is a natural tendency of man to resist change. God is asking us to change. Not to be a stationary rock in the stream to resist change but to move upstream to the source. Paddling a canoe upstream is more difficult than going with the flow or being anchored. Both going with the flow or being anchored have hidden peril caused by a false sense of security.	1 Corinthians 15:46-54 Alma 3:21-23	1 Chronicles 14:14-17
13	The very concept of God is under attack in today's world. Our only defense is our shield of faith. Our children's defense is also the shield of faith but faith must be taught. Faith is taught by using it daily in our lives. Faith is belief in action. When we act in faith we must place the outcome in God's hand and accept the results.	Psalms 53 Alma 14:99-104	Deuteronomy 1:28-37
14	Each of us is important to the Lord with a mission for the Lord. On what mission/task has the Lord sent you? Do you know where you are to go next? If there was a time to stand back and let others do the work, it has passed. Go forth with faith in God and do his work.		Mosiah 6:5-6
15	We are commissioned to take the gospel to everyone. The ultimate responsibility for this work is the member. The missionary is only an agent of the membership. Each member needs to share the gospel with those around them and support the missionary work in other places with their support.		Sec 40:1
16	How often do we fast and pray for the missionary work? Have you taken actions to prepare yourself for the missionary work? Do you know the judgments on Egypt or Lebanon? These and many more judgments are found in the study of the scriptures.		Exodus 19:3-6
17	How is your hearing? Do you listen for the Lord? I have had and heard a number of testimonies about those who heard but did not listen to the Lord. Does the Lord have to smack us between the eyes to get our attention or is a sweet whisper all that is required?		Mosiah 9:1-16
18	Do you know how to recognize the Holy Spirit when it is present? Much to my surprise, I have discovered many people do not know the presence of the Spirit. It saddens me to know they have not sought that presence or been testified to of the presence. How would you bring someone to this knowledge?		
19	How defensive of the gospel are you? Do you start the discussion by explaining who you aren't? Do you build walls around the gospel? We need to defend the gospel without being defensive. We need to shine with the love of the gospel to all people.		
20	Life presents many hard choices. Some choices appear simple but are much harder and complex in reality. Choosing to follow Christ is one of these choices because it is complex and difficult to do without strings being attached. Many priesthood members have experienced the difficulty of placing the ministry ahead of the family.		
21	Easy decision, do what the Lord says and life is perfect. Don't listen and life is bad. The problem is the measure of a perfect life. Do we measure by worldly standards or the Lord's standards? The worldly cup can never be filled but the Lord's cup runs over.		
22	I was given a task by the Lord, which I did not want to perform. I counseled with a member of the Aaronic priesthood and performed the task. It would have been easier to ignore the task than perform it. In many ways, trying to run away like Jonah would have been easier. Have you performed a difficult task or did you let it fall to the wayside?		
23	I once listened to a motivational speaker who suffered through a horrific accident leaving him crippled and disfigured. His message was "it doesn't matter what happens in life but how you respond to it." He was making a good living off the secular version of the message of Christ. We choose our responses to life's problems and crisis's. We can be happy in the Lord or sad in the world.		
24	God does not send us anywhere without a game plan. It is our responsibility to listen to his plan. God has a plan for each of us if we choose to follow it. Are we dedicated enough to prepare ourselves to listen to His plan? Most problems develop from following our plans. We need to always move forward in the work listening for God's guidance. Only with His plan will we succeed.		
25	God has given us direction to go forth with the work and spread the gospel. Satan has a tremendous grip on the world but God is more powerful. Many people have given their life to testify of God. Do we have the faith to allow God to fight the fight and accept the outcome?		
26	Working for God is like being in any interactive competition. You start with a plan or strategy but need to change or adjust as you interact with the competitor. We start our journey for the Lord but must always remember to consult the Lord for the change or adjustments in the plan for us. We so often tend to wander from the plan; the Lord must always be correcting us.		
27	What are the barriers in your life preventing you from spreading the gospel? Temptations, persecutions, and worldly desires hamper the work of the Lord. Are you working to overcome the barriers in your life so you can be a better servant of the Lord?		
28	How great would it be for all of us to meet in the Kingdom of God! We need to respect the words of God, thus we must go where He leads or sends us. We must seek and hold on to the directions God provides us in all his work. We need to always seek to work for the Lord no matter the task.		
29	Are we a peculiar people or do we blend in well? Can we be easily identified in a crowd? If being a Christian was illegal, would you need to fear arrest when you leave your home? The answer to the third question should be yes. If we are actively engaged in the Lord's work, we will not blend in well and frequently could be identified in a crowd. One of the great compliments and testimonies of the Lord is when people identify you as being different by your conduct.		
30	Abinadi was sent to warn of the wickedness of King Noah at the cost of his life. As a result, Alma learned the truth and converted to Christ. Alma carried the work forth from the testimony of Abinadi. Without the sacrifice of Abinadi, the word of God may have been lost. We know that the work of the Lord will go forth with or without us. Are we willing to sacrifice for the work of the Lord?		

November Daily Scriptures

NOVEMBER 2014

Sunday Schedule

Date	NOV. 2	NOV. 9	NOV. 16	NOV. 23	NOV. 30	DEC. 6
Speaking	Ed Anderson	Steve Smith	Eugene Story	Rob Rolfe	Music Service	
Presiding	Michael Jordison	Rob Rolfe	Jim Barber	Sherman Phipps	Michael Jordison	
Pianist	Bonnie Majors	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Bonnie Majors	
Special Music	Michael Jordison	Sue Beck	Ron Smith	Alan Smith		
Family Devotions	Bob Rowlands	Jim Majorses	Tony Crandells	Rod Bastows	Steve Smiths	
Greeters	Rod Bastows	Sherman Phippses	George Knottses	Joel Lovings	Jim Majorses	
Custodians	Alan Smiths	Bob Rowlands	Rod Bastows	Ron Smiths	Jim Barbers	
Sunday Evening	Bob Rowlands	Ron Smiths	Steve Smiths	Rob Rolfes	Bob Rowlands	

Wednesday Night Prayer Service Schedule

Date	NOV. 5	NOV. 12	NOV. 19	NOV. 26	DEC. 3	
Location	Ron Smiths	Bob Rowlands	Alan Smiths	Steve Smiths	Rob Rolfe	
Presiding	Ron Smith	Gordon Winkler	Ed Anderson	George Knotts	Joel Loving	

SPECIAL EVENTS

Sunday, NOVEMBER 2 -- Priesthood Meeting at 8:30 a.m., Communion Service and Potluck; Youth Group Activity Sunday evening

Sunday, NOVEMBER 16 -- Turn in deadline for Thanksgiving dinner and Operation Christmas Child donations. Youth group Sunday evening.

Sunday, November 23 -- Thanksgiving dinner following the Thanksgiving service.

Happy Birthday: Matt Anderson (2), Jim Barber (6), Joshua Jordison (10), Yvonne Galusha (13), Alan Smith (14), Samuel Jordison (20), Doug Calford (20), Jazmyn Galusha (25) and any others we missed.

Happy Anniversary: Any others we missed.

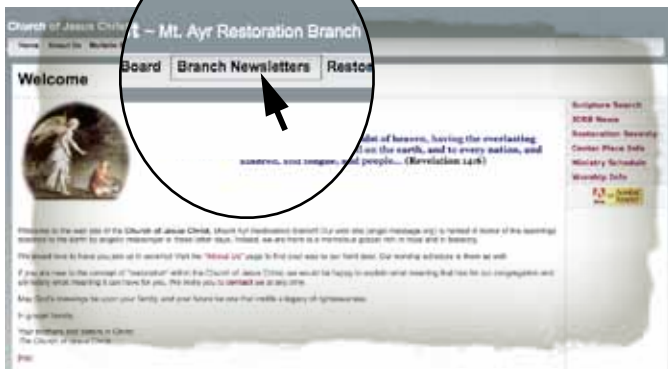


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CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST - MT AYR RESTORATION BRANCH

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

April.

Alan Smith gave a presentation on family-friendly branches and served as the acting secretary for the conference.

Trap shoot

Several members of the branch along with some friends took part in the trap shoot at Ed and Diane Anderson's home north of Lamoni Saturday, Oct. 25.

A number of people brought their shotguns and some shooters had better aim than others in hitting the clay pigeons as they were flung over the backyard at the Andersons.

Service project

Several of the branch members helped Jim and Bonnie Majors work to finish the reroofing of the home they are remodeling in Lamoni.

The volunteers helped build out the roof and put on sheeting so the back quarter of the roof could be finished up.

More help will be offered down the line when it is needed to help with the Majors' project.

Nygagen evening

The branch spent a Sunday evening at the home of Chris and Laurie Nyhagen, who are neighbors of Jim and Lin-day Barber in rural Bethany, MO.

We played volleyball, jumped on trampolines, visited, toured the Nyhagen store, had a wiener roast and a campfire. Thanks for hosting the event, Nyhagens.

Ringgold Singers practice

The Ringgold Singers are beginning their practice again for their annual vocal concert.

The Singers use the church each Thursday night to practice for the event.

Anyone is invited to join in the group. Sue Beck, Kathy White, Rob and Lynda Rolfe and Alan Smith are branch members who take part in the choral group.