

# Church of Jesus Christ

## Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

# NEWSLETTER

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*Resurrection Sunday  
He Is Risen!*

A full house of 75 people were on hand for the Resurrection Sunday service in Mount Ayr this year. See more pictures on page 16.



## News & Notes

### Men's lunch

The monthly men's lunch will be held Saturday, April 9, at Pizza Hut in Lamoni.

### JCRB Conference

The annual Joint Council of Restoration Branches general conference will be held April 10-16 in Independence, MO.

The branch will have delegates participating at the conference this year, which will have a focus theme on mis-

sionary outreach.

Feel free to tune on the internet at the JCRB website to follow webcasts of the events of the week if you cannot attend at [conferenceofbranches.org](http://conferenceofbranches.org)

### Easter activities

Special activities were held in March leading up to Easter Sunday March 27.

The community Breakfast With The Master series was held again at the First Christian Church in Mount Ayr Mon-

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# AMAZING GRACE

## Priest Rodney Bastow Mount Ayr, Iowa March 6, 2016

Brother Jim Barber chose as a Call to Worship Doctrine & Covenants 119:5a-b. *And the Spirit saith further: Contention is unseemly; therefore, cease to contend respecting the sacrament and the time of administering it; for whether it be upon the first Lord's day of every month, or upon the Lord's day of every week, if it be administered by the officers of the church with sincerity of heart and in purity of purpose, and be partaken of in remembrance of Jesus Christ and in willingness to take upon them his name by them who partake, it is acceptable to God.* I hope we have come this morning leaving our worldly cares, our worldly trials behind us and that we've come with a sincerity of heart that we might be renewed through our covenant that we made with Christ.

**M**y scripture is taken from Luke 18:10-14. *Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself; God, I thank thee that I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers; or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess. But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other; for every one who exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he who humbleth himself, shall be exalted.*

For some reason that I don't quite understand I've been given the opportunity to speak to you today. I know that I'm not worthy to do this but because God loves me and because He loves all of you He will forgive my sins and help me to overcome my weaknesses to be able to stand before you. He will bless us with His Holy Spirit and we will be able to be uplifted and inspired to continue

the work that He has for us to do. This is my prayer that we may give God all the praise and all the glory.

It's been quite a week for us. Usually the weeks that I preach are pretty busy and this hasn't been the exception. Monday Debbie and I, Alan and Valle and Joel went to the State Girls Basketball Tournament to see the Mount Ayr girls play basketball. It was a fun time. Unfortunately the girls lost but they did play hard and the game was close. They had a chance to win it and we thought it was going to happen but it didn't.

I don't know if you have ever gone to an event with Alan or not. Alan is kind of like Sherm at one of these events. Here's this soft-spoken man who you rarely ever hear even raise his voice much at all. He's just real humble but boy you get him to a basketball game and he gets into it. He really gets on the officials. He really gets into the game and it's fun to watch him.

It was fun for Debbie because 50 years ago she was playing up there in the State Tournament. I don't know if she played but she was there. It brought back a lot of memories for her remembering what it was like to be out there on the floor. I think at times watching from the stands it was like she was on the bench again, yelling at the girls to do this or that.

Tuesday we worked cows. This can sometimes be an adventure too. This time we were doing something different. We were freeze branding them and I didn't know how it was all going to work out. Joel came over that day to see what was going on, to see how we did things. It was a cold windy day and I'm sure he got pretty chilled.

Before we went out I showed him my collections that I have in the house which I enjoyed doing. I was telling him about my farm and where all the land is located. He said, 'Wow, you are really blessed.' He's right. I am blessed with all the things that I have. God has really blessed me and I'm really fortunate to have these blessings. We were blessed to

have Joel there that day because the day really went well. There was probably a few grumblings. Nobody said I was perfect.

I got a little confused when we were doing the branding. I usually use an ear tag in the cow's ear. That's where I put the number for the brand. For some reason I got a year ahead of myself and said, 'No, don't use 4s use 5s.' I don't think I heard a cross word all day long. A lot of times when I work cattle that can be unusual for me because the cattle get stressed and sometimes working with the family I can get overly excited. That didn't happen. It showed Joel a little bit about what my life was like. I'll get him more involved next time.

Wednesday Debbie and I took Jowett on a trip to Atlantic. This was a stressful day for us. I think all of us were a bit on edge. I hadn't planned on going. I figured I would need to go home to do chores but fortunately I got the chores accomplished and I was able to go with them and do the driving. Otherwise I think the day could have been a lot worse. There was a lot of prayer involved that day. By the end of the day we felt that we had really been blessed and we were glad that things had gone as well as they had.

Thursday I subbed up here at school in the morning. That went well and I got to do some teaching of math which I always enjoy. Unfortunately, by this time of the year the upper math classes have progressed too far for me. Luckily they were taking a test so I didn't have to feel inadequate there. I feel blessed to have the opportunity to be able to substitute teach.

The last two days have been good days too. It's just been Debbie and me basically doing the chores and things have gone well. The cows haven't gotten out and we haven't started any fires that have gotten away from us. We were able to enjoy watching the Girls State Tournament on TV. Deb had her scrapbook out in front of her looking at all the memories she has of 50 years ago.



Through this week I was asked what I was going to talk about today. Last Sunday Jim even asked me what I was talking about and I didn't have a clue. One night as I was studying and preparing for today the song Amazing Grace came to me. I love that song. One of the verses says, "I once was lost but now am found." Sometimes I'm lost. Sometimes I do things I know I shouldn't do. Sometimes I'm not the husband that I should be or the father or the priesthood member.

I don't know if you know much about the background to this song, Amazing Grace. It was written by John Newton back in the 1700s. This John Newton was a real scoundrel. His dad had been a minister. One thing I read about him was that he could use the foulest language of any person that this ship captain had ever known. He had some adventures where he was saved and he felt like God had a reason for doing that. He preached about that. He gave up the life he had been living and decided to serve God. He became a minister and did things that God wanted him to do.

This song was written as part of a sermon that he preached. He said that his sermon that day focused on the necessity to express one's gratefulness for God's guidance. That God is involved in the daily lives of Christians though they may not be aware of it and that patience for deliverance from the daily trials of life that's warranted and the glories of eternity await. He saw himself as a sinner who perhaps had been chosen undeservedly and he was humbled by it.

"According to Newton unconverted sinners were blinded by the God of this world until mercy came to us, not only undeserved but undesired. Our hearts endeavor to shut Him out until He overcame us by the power of His grace." I like what he said there. Isn't it amazing that in 1773 that someone had that kind of a revelation? That God had been working in their lives and that He had saved them for the glory of heaven.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost but now am found,

Was blind but now I see.

In that verse Newton had taken from Luke the 15th chapter three parables about stories of people who had lost something, something that had been very valuable to them. Do you remember those stories? There was a story about a shepherd who lost one of his sheep, a woman who lost a coin, and a man who had lost his son-the prodigal son who left his home and family for bright lights and loose living. Each of these stories tells the anguish these people experienced in having lost something and each story ended with a peculiar phrase. The shepherd says, 'Rejoice with me I have found my lost sheep.' The woman says, 'Rejoice with me I have found my lost coin.' The father of the prodigal son says, 'We had to celebrate and be glad because the brother of yours was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found.'

**T**he sheep, the coin and the son had all been lost and now they were found. Jesus was using these stories to tell about how God seeks and saves the lost. There's an oddity about the stories. There's a difference between the three. In two of the stories the shepherd goes, leaves the 99 sheep to find the one that is lost. The woman had 10 coins and looks until she finds the one that she has lost. What did the father who had lost his son do? Did he go search? Did he go looking for his son or did he wait for his son to come home? In the first two stories God is shown searching for that which was lost but in the third story the father is shown waiting and eagerly watching for the moment his wayward son changes his mind.

Theologians through the ages have struggled with the question how much influence or choice people have in their salvation. Certain theologians have gone so far as to say they have no choice in their salvation, that God does it all. He chooses who will be saved and who will go to hell and we don't have a say in the matter. Now you might believe that if Jesus had only told the story about the good shepherd and the woman with the coins. The sheep didn't have any choice and the coin was just going to lay there

on the floor. If these were the only stories told by Jesus you might come to believe that we play no role in our salvation. God seeks us and picks us up and like the sheep and the coin we have little choice in the matter.

But then Jesus tells us the story about the prodigal son leaving and the father sitting at home. The prodigal son returned because he decided to. If that had been the only story that Jesus had told about being lost you might come to believe that your salvation depends upon you. He told all three stories so that we would realize that God is actively involved in seeking us for our salvation. God isn't going to force us to become Christians. We have to make that choice ourselves. We're not sheep. We're not coins. We're men and women created in the image of God.

What we're focusing on is the part that God plays in seeking and saving people. *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; Of sin,*



Rodney Bastow



because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and they see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. (John 16:7-12)

According to Jesus one of the purposes of the Spirit was to seek and save the lost by convincing them of certain things: first that the Spirit makes people uncomfortable with their sins, second He makes them feel the need of God's righteousness in their lives, and finally, the Spirit makes them sense the urgency to make a decision that there's a judgment day coming. I think that's true because when I do something wrong, when I do something that takes me away from God I feel uncomfortable. I feel really uncomfortable until I get myself right with God again.

I'm reading a book called "Fundamentals" by F. Henry Edwards. I have a friend who has asked me about our church and wants to know more about what we believe. He's not willing just to take my word for it. He's been asking me to find a book that he can read and study. I think this book on fundamentals would be a good one for him to read.

As I was preparing for today I studied a chapter on the forgiveness of sin. It was interesting to me that in this chapter he said that repentance isn't easy for us and forgiveness isn't easy for God. Why isn't repentance easy for us? What's so difficult about that? I think the reason that it's so difficult is we don't think we've done anything wrong. Usually when we do something we feel like we can justify it. 'Well that wasn't so bad.' Or, 'I needed to do that.' Or some other excuse. But sin is sin isn't it? When we do something wrong we should repent of that.

Forgiveness isn't easy for God when He thinks we're just going to go out and do the same thing again. He can't forgive us until we've given up that sin that we're doing. We have to change before He can forgive us. We have to hate our sin and hate the way that we're living and what we are doing.

I found a poem in Psalms 51 that reads a little bit like this. *Have mercy*

*upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me. (1-3) Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. (10-13)*

**T**his morning when you reached for the bread and the wine what were you thinking? Were you thinking about forgiveness? Were you thinking about changing your life and being a different person? Jesus wants us to repent. He wants us to draw ourselves close to His Holy Spirit again. He wants us to continue to be part of His Kingdom. In the parables about the lost coin and the lost sheep Jesus talks about how great is His joy when just one sinner repents and comes back to Him.

I have a reading that kind of sums up what I wanted to say today.

#### All That I Ask

He said, "I love you." I asked, "How can that be?"

How can you find time to know and love me?

There are others more worthy of your attention.

I'm just a poor sinner, hardly worth a mention."

He said, "I created you. You are mine.

I've known everything about you since the beginning of time.

I love you as if you were my only child.

You are my special one," and with this he smiled.

I said, "Yes Lord, I know you love me,

But I'm so unworthy to be loved by thee.

I don't do as I should, I don't watch

what I say,

And I'm not always as kind as I could be each day.

How can I show you how much I love you?

How can I let others know you love them too?

How can I thank you for blessings each day?

What can I do Lord? What can I say?"

He said, "Child by example others will know,

Of how I work in your life, my love through you will show.

Pray to me daily, read my sacred words,

Follow my example, and do your good works."

As my heart filled with joy and my eyes filled with tears,

I praised my Lord Jesus for being so near.

I whispered in prayer, "I accept my task"

He gently replied, "This is all that I ask."





# WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

**Elder Steven Smith**  
**Lamoni, Iowa**  
**March 13, 2016**

*(To begin his sermon, Steven Smith shared a dream he had with the branch. Then he introduced Josh Jordison, who helped him throughout the service by reading the scriptures with clarity and conviction.)*

Today I am led to expound, by unifying the scriptures on the topic of what the “church” is. My limitation of time will cut many of the scriptures down to sound bites, so I invite you to study it out in faith. It’s fine to do that. Prove whether I am crazy or led by the Holy Ghost.

I have asked Josh Jordison to assist me by reading the scriptures for me. Your proper reaction to him will be to pray for his success, as he is nervous and uncomfortable with public speaking. If he stumbles, your second job is to forgive him instantaneously. The third reaction is to let your eyes grin with enthusiasm and love, like the poor, handsome people of my dream, when you make eye contact, and finally when it is over, confirm the Spirit he carries. If you cannot remember all that, just go up to him, pop your fist open so the fingers are extended quickly, and say PFLT.... he will understand your support.

God’s church must be nourished by the Holy Ghost. We confuse our understanding as we use the term “church to describe other things as well.

Any group can be called a “church”.

The buildings that we gather in are called a “church”.

Legally, the organizers and administrators create a “church”.

As a spoiler alert, I will assert today that God’s church only exists with the Holy Spirit, flowing through it and feeding the individuals within it always... or it ceases to be God’s church.

**Faith, Repentance, Forgiveness, the Spirit, and the Church**

*Mosiah 11:101 “For there was nothing preached in all the churches except it were repentance and faith in God.”*

*We ask ourselves, how does promoting faith and repentance maintain the Spirit? When you have faith to believe to the point that you try out a command, (repent), you will be spiritually healed (or forgiven), so you may be further blessed with and by the Spirit. Getting ahead of myself, let me emphasize, that the forgiveness or spiritual healing is necessary for us to use the Holy Spirit to bear its fruit, and give its gifts. God has given us our agency, so will not force us to be forgiven. We must repent first, but with repentance, comes forgiveness.*

*DC 3:16a-b “Behold, this is my doctrine: Whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church; whosoever declareth more or less than this, the same is not of me, but is against me; therefore, he is not of my church.”*

*Repenting to foster forgiveness and the Holy Spirit’s blessing is the habit of the people called God’s church.*

**Baptism, Laying on of Hands, the Lord’s Supper, the Spirit and the Church**

*Mosiah 11:129-130 “For behold, this is my church: whosoever is baptized, shall be baptized unto repentance.*

*And whosoever ye receive, shall believe in my name; and him will I freely forgive:”*

*Ok. If you are baptized to repentance, believe or have faith and God forgives you, and we have defined forgiveness as Spiritual healing, you are securely in God’s church. Then comes the cleansing by the Spirit.*

*Moroni 6:4 “And after they had been received in baptism, and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost, they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ,”*

*Our baptism is a covenant and the key for us to know how to keep his Spirit to remain within us. It also marks the time that we have been forgiven and blessed by the Spirit. This is what we re-covenant for when we partake of the Lords supper on*

*a regular basis throughout our life in the church.*

*Moroni 4:4 O God, the eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God the eternal Father, that they are*

*1) willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and*

*2) always remember him, and*

*3) keep his commandments which he has given them,*

*4) (Promise) that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.*

Laying down our lives in baptism is our universal signature to the baptismal contract for God’s Spirit to be with us. The laying on of hands is God’s signature to the baptismal covenant... a signature of the Spirit that blesses us. If we renege, or simply want to renew our vow, we can remember through participation in the Lord’s Supper.

All three parts, are a part of a contract that all signatories can understand, that transcends culture, language or literacy. From the very beginning of one’s existence in the church, the ordinances are placed to build a continuum of the Holy Spirit within each cell of the body, or each individual in the Church. We can only enter the church with the Spirit. We only remain his church with his Spirit. We must share with each other his Spirit, its fruit, and its gifts, or it goes away.

**Meeting and functioning with the Spirit as the Church**

Whenever we meet together, we are to recognize and learn to coordinate our functioning with the spirit.

*Moroni 6:9 “And their meetings were conducted by the church, after the manner of the workings of the Spirit, and by the power of the Holy Ghost; for as the power of the Holy Ghost led them whether to preach or exhort, or to pray, or to supplicate, or to sing, even so it was done.”*

*Priesthood are called and ordained*



by the Holy Spirit.

*DC 24:2c And thou shalt be ordained under his hand to expound Scriptures, and to exhort the church, according as it shall be given thee by my Spirit; for he shall lay his hands upon thee, and thou shalt receive the Holy Ghost, and thy time shall be given to writing, and to learning much.*

It is the Holy Spirit that blesses us in all of the ordinances, including laying on of hands for the prayer over the sick.

*James 5:14-15 "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."*

The physically sick need to be granted forgiveness. Remember that forgiveness is spiritual healing. Once healed to spiritual things, the Spirit can reconnect us to God who heals broken bodies and hearts.

All that we do, God has instituted within the church to focus us to learn to function with and embrace the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit, we lose our identity as His church.

### **TEWA (Thoughts, Emotions, Words, and Actions) Change with the Spirit**

Remember TEWA? The acronym for our thoughts, emotions, words, and actions. Changing our TEWA, allows forgiveness or spiritual healing so we can work with the Spirit to enhance our TEWA.

With the Spirit, we are promised that thoughts and actions change.

*Alma 12:113 And a portion of that Spirit dwelleth in me, which giveth me knowledge, and also power, according to my faith and desires which are in God.*

With the Spirit, our emotions and actions change as we manifest the fruit of the Spirit.

*Galatians 5:22-25 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."*

**U**nder the influence of the Spirit, our thoughts, emotions, words & actions all change.

*Moroni 10:5-12 And if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things.*

*And whatsoever thing is good, is just and true; wherefore, nothing that is good denieth the Christ, but acknowledgeth that he is.*

*And ye may know that he is, by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore I would exhort you, that ye deny not the power of God; for he worketh by power, according to the faith of the children of men, the same to-day and to-morrow, and for ever.*

*And again I exhort you, my brethren, that ye deny not the gifts of God, for they are many; and they come from the same God.*

*And there are different ways that these gifts are administered; but it is the same God who worketh all in all; and they are given by the manifestations of the Spirit of God unto men, to profit them.*

*For behold, to one is given by the Spirit of God, that he may teach the word of wisdom; and to another, that he may teach the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; and to another exceeding great faith; and to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit.*

*And again, to another, that he may work mighty miracles; and again, to another, that he may prophesy concerning all things; and again, to another, the beholding of angels and ministering spirits; and again, to another, all kinds of tongues; and again, to another, the interpretation of languages and of divers kinds of tongues.*

*And all these gifts come by the Spirit of Christ; and they come unto every man severally, according as he will.*

These spiritual gifts will be sought out by individuals in his church to feed each other.

*1 Corinthians 14:12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual*

*gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.*

In fact, we have the choice in our actions to reflect the Holy Spirit. In this case, it was the newbees who choose to follow the Spirit.

*Alma 3:95 "Yea, will ye persist in the persecutions of your brethren, who humble themselves, and do walk after the holy order of God, wherewith they have been brought into this church, having been sanctified by the Holy Spirit; and they do bring forth works which are meet for repentance;"*

Again, If we change TEWA, the spirit heals us, then enhances our TEWA beyond what we can do ourselves..

### **Priesthood Administration and the Spirit**

Of necessity, there are those who guide and administer the church by the permission of the people and the guidance of the Holy Ghost. The function of the priesthood is to "feed" the church the particulars that cause them to reflect the Holy Ghost.

*Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

*1 Corinthians 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*

### **Sin, rejecting the Spirit and the Church**

People who neglect to repent (a choice called sin), unfortunately, repel the Spirit.

*D&C 18:2k wherefore, I command you again to repent, lest I humble you by my almighty power, and that you confess your sins, lest you suffer these punishments of which I have spoken, of which in the smallest, yea, even in the least degree, you have tasted at the time I withdrew my Spirit.*

The church is to help each other through sin, identifying and encouraging repentance, which allows forgiveness (the spiritual healing by the Holy Spirit) to build a stronger more spirit filled church.



If you are aware that I am in sin, Your job is to partner with the Spirit to encourage my repentance. Don't be like the publican and belittle me for my sin.

My father told of a driver who had seen a car go over the 20 foot embankment into the boggy ditch on a subzero Saskatchewan afternoon. The inebriated driver clumsily got out of the car, staggered and fell, then noticed he was being watched. The driver who had stopped to help, said: "Don't you know better than to drive in the ditch? You idiot. Don't you know that you could get stuck down there and freeze to death? You must be a third generation lunatic. Get out of the ditch, now." Then he drove away knowing that he had helped to point out the problem. The second driver, got the driver up to his car, and drove him to the closest gas station with a tow truck.

Which helper would motivate you? On the other hand, don't ignore my sin and hope I do better. (Sin is a habit that makes it harder to connect with the Spirit.) Your responsibility is to confront me with the happiness that can be mine as I discard the things that we identify make me unhappy. The job of the church is to insure that I am touched by the Holy Ghost.

We nullify the existence of God's church, when:

- 1) we ignore sin and therefore do not foster repentance
  - 2) we promote physical prosperity, over the Spiritual, or
  - 3) we as a people eliminate our dependance on the Holy Ghost
- This is prophesied of us, in the Book of Mormon.

*2 Nephi 11:90-92 And the Gentiles are lifted up in the pride of their eyes, and have stumbled, because of the greatness of their stumbling block, that they have built up many churches;*

*Nevertheless they put down the power and the miracles of God, and preach up unto themselves, their own wisdom, and their own learning, that they may get gain, and grind upon the face of the poor;*

*And there are many churches built up which cause envyings, and strifes, and malice;*

The book of Mormon also tells of a time when this happened.

*Helaman 2:58 And because of their iniquity, the church had begun to dwindle; and they began to disbelieve in the spirit of prophecy, and in the spirit of revelation; and the judgments of God did stare them in the face.*

When the Holy Ghost is eliminated from the equation, or even minimized, often by the pride, dissidence, disbelief, and disobedience of the people, we are left with a spiritless (dead) body without purpose, and the people will disband. All we, as a church can offer others, is a personal relationship with the Spirit that changes their thoughts, emotions, words, and actions. If the church fades, new administrators may arise along with their "churches" and splintering will occur. If we are to unite, we must do so within the Spirit.

**T**he church is made of two components -- the people with the Holy Spirit and the administrators coordinating and communicating with that same Holy Spirit.

The administrators have the duty to function under the Spirit to run the church.

*Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power in the church but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God.*

There are divisions of labor and different gifts that each of the priesthood offer.

*1 Corinthians 12:4-7 "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.*

*And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.*

*And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.*

*But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."*

Despite the differences, all priesthood are to nourish the church by the guidance of his Spirit.

*Acts 20:28 "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."*

**Tree analogy...Administration top, People roots, Spirit sap**

Let me make an analogy between the church and a tree. God's church must have the sap of the Holy Spirit. When the sap disappears, the tree dies. If the sap flows only on Sunday, the tree dies. If the administration outgrows the root, the tree dies...and then it splinters. If we replace the Spirit, even with beautiful bright shinny's, we can still refer to them as churches -- but, with the promise that they will die. Like a body without the Spirit, or a tree without sap. "If the sap don't flow, the tree won't grow."

Can you imagine a landscape full of physically functioning but spiritually dead splintering churches? Wouldn't it be pathetic to see what Jesus wants in a bride, choosing sin rather than repentance. The wages of sin are death. We could be looking at a nation covered with bodies, or churches in their agonal gasps, dying before our eyes. In fact, it has been prophesied

*2 Nephi 12:3 "For it shall come to pass in that day, that the churches which are built up, and not unto the Lord, when the one shall say unto the other, Behold, I, I am the Lord's; and the other shall say, I, I am the Lord's."*



Steven Smith



*Helaman 2:58 And because of their iniquity, the church had begun to dwindle; and they began to disbelieve in the spirit of prophecy, and in the spirit of revelation; and the judgments of God did stare them in the face.*

Our retention of the Spirit as a church, is based on our repentance. We can clean the building, retain the administration, and gather, but if we choose sin rather than repentance, we are not the Lord's church.

A balance of people, administration and the Spirit was found in:

*Acts 9:31 "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."*

Did you hear that? The church was multiplied...not just added to, but multiplied.

### **The Spirit, Church, and the Kingdom**

So we have found that the church is made of people and administrators nourished with the Holy Spirit. What is the result if they work together in a perfect balance?

*Revelations 12:7 And the dragon prevailed not against Michael, neither the child, nor the woman which was the church of God, who had been delivered of her pains, and brought forth the kingdom of our God and his Christ.*

You get it? The church brings forth the Kingdom! Folks, God wants his church to have his Spirit. We are not His unless we are continually nourished by his Spirit. His followers will bear the fruit of the Spirit every day. God wants to give us the kingdom which only

comes as we demonstrate that we are responsible enough to be bound to him by the Holy Spirit.

His followers will have the gifts of the Spirit manifest. If one finds themselves in sin, the righteousness of the others maintain the spirit until the sinner converts to righteousness. These are the features of the Kingdom that the Church will deliver. God is going to win. We can choose to have his Spirit with us always, and build his Kingdom. God promised it. God wants it.

### **Our Response**

**D**o you want it?

If you want it...repent and comply with God's commands...bear the fruit of his Spirit to feed a hungry world. The fruit of a tree does not nourish that tree, it nourishes those around the tree.

*Ephesians 5:9 "(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)"*

If you want it, ask, discover your gift or gifts and celebrate when you find it - then share with the church in humility. Do not be dissuaded.

*D&C 46:5b for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God:*

Do you know what your gift / gifts are?

*Joel 2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions;*

Do you see yourself in this scripture? Let me rephrase and personalize that.

*Joel 2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and (Ryder, Josh ,Elise, and Isabelle) shall prophesy, (Norman ,Rob ,Sherm and I guess even myself) shall dream dreams, and (Matthew, Ryder and Josh) shall see visions;*

*D&C 46:8a And it shall come to pass that he that asketh in spirit shall receive in spirit; that unto some it may be given to have all those gifts...*

If you want it... Knock...Seek spiritual knowledge

If you want it...Seek it out...Live in the Spirit.

Ask! Seek! Knock! Christ's church is simply a political Parliament without God's spirit (boring). Entry of people into the church, starts with a promise to seek the Spirit. Every interaction within the church is to be accompanied by the Spirit. Meetings should be spirit filled. Leaders should have the Spirit. The people should be fed the Spirit. Ordinances are made to boost the Spirit. The focus of the church is to help each member eschew sin through faith and repentance, seeking forgiveness, and being constantly nourished by the Spirit. The Spirit must flow, or the church won't grow.

Finally, if living with this Spirit is the desire of your heart, we have been told:

*Matthew 7:12-13 Say unto them, Ask of God; ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*

*For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and unto him that knocketh, it shall be opened.*







# NOTHING CAN SEPARATE YOU

**Elder Jim Major**  
**Lamoni, IA**  
**March 20, 2016**

Priest Rodney Bastow shared John 12:12-16 as a Call to Worship. *On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna; Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had sent two of his disciples and got a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion; behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. These things understood not his disciples at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.*

**G**ood morning. You are beautiful. Well, if you came this morning thinking you were going to hear a Palm Sunday sermon, I'm sorry. This won't turn out that way. I know how important these holidays and events are, but this morning I was led in a different direction. Part of it has to do with listening to Steve Smith last Sunday share the vision that he had and the scriptures relating to the church and its purpose.

This morning I wanted to go from Steve's sermon and so I am going to repeat Steve's reading from Mosiah 11:101. *For there was nothing preached in all the churches except it were repentance and faith in God.* Repentance and faith in God. I mentioned to Joel Loving last Sunday that I felt the Lord was sharing with me something that was interesting. The Lord said, 'The Church is not the destination but the means to the Kingdom.' The Church is not the destination but the means to the Kingdom. It was provided for us that we may be per-

fectured by the elements and events within that structure we call the Church, by the priesthood that is provided, by the ministry, the scriptures, the Word of God.

You see for some reason we all became sinners. How many sinners are here today? Well, that may not be true. The real sin is thinking that we are separate from God and that is impossible. There is no way that you and I can be separate from God and continue to exist! Would you agree with that? There is absolutely no way.

Now we can think that we're separate from God-and that is the sin, because all the other things that we call sin are nothing but symptoms: Symptoms of the thought that we think we can be separated from God. Sometimes we call lying, cheating, not being good, expressing evil intents rather than good intents sin, but those are the SYMPTOMS that we call sin-they are not the real sin.

God is so so amazing! It's important for us to have an understanding and a relationship with Him, because it will free us from the guilt that we have that makes us feel that we're not good enough. But we are good enough because God only sees us as He created us. He created us perfect and whole and complete. That's an amazing thing. That's what you are.

But it's like we're sleeping right now in a dream, and in this dream we're not who think we are. We come into this world as babies and then from that point on we make up who we are with the assistance of our parents and all of the other elements in the world that affect us, our education, and so on and so forth. Then we end up with who we think we are today. Now it's not that we're necessarily bad. In a sense with the aid of our egos we've created ourselves to be who we think we are today. Unfortunately there is some error in that.

There's some error in the process of my own making.

I want to go to a scripture from the Book of Mormon. It is 3rd Nephi 9:20. *And it came to pass that Jesus departed out of the midst of them, and went a little way off from them and bowed himself to the earth, and he said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast given the Holy Ghost unto these whom I have chosen; and it is because of their belief in me, that I have chosen them out of the world. Father, I pray thee that thou wilt give the Holy Ghost unto all them that shall believe in their words. Father, thou hast given them the Holy Ghost, because they believe in me, and thou seest that they believe in me, because thou hearest them, and they pray unto me; and they pray unto me because I am with them. And now Father, I pray unto thee for them, and also for all those who shall believe on their words, that they may believe in me, that I may be in them as thou, Father, art in me, that we may be one.*

He was so touched by the faith of these people that He asked the Father to bless them with the Holy Ghost that He might be in them as God was in Him that we might be one. He found in these people such a faith that He was able to speak to them things that could not necessarily be recorded. He was able to do things with them, perform miracles. Because of their faith He was able to give a greater expression of Himself even more so than He did to the people over in Jerusalem and around. He was able to extend God more clearly to them.

I am having a hard time trying to share with you. Just give me a minute. Our Heavenly Father, I thank you for this opportunity to share and to be an instrument in your hands and to open my mouth that your voice may be given expression. I understand the importance of being able to bring light to our minds and our understanding so that

we might be able to further the cause of your Kingdom. I see that you can see within us all that is necessary to be the people that will, if we so choose to be, empowered with your Holy Spirit in such a way that miracles are wrought. Not to be showy but because they are necessarily a part of the faith that is being expressed by this people. I thank you, Heavenly Father, for these because they are here because they desire to please you and they desire to come into a greater relationship with you than they have in times past. I thank you for blessing them in that way and enlightening our minds to all that you have provided including the Church which we recognize is not the end of the journey but the beginning where we can receive a ministry of light so that we can be that light that is so necessary to shine in this world at this time. These things I do ask as we share this morning. In Jesus name. Amen.

Jesus goes on to say, *Father, I thank thee that thou hast purified these whom I have chosen, because of their faith. And I pray for them, and also for them who shall believe on their words, that they may be purified in me, through faith on their words, even as they are purified in me. Father, I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me out of the world, because of their faith, that they may be purified in me, that I may be in them as thou, Father, art in me, that we may be one, that I may be glorified in them.* (3rd Nephi 9:28-30)

There is a oneness that we have that we don't necessarily see. It's difficult at times because of the separation that we believe in unfortunately, but also the separation that we live. We live separately and that is somewhat of a deterrent to what it is we're called to accomplish. I believe that's why the gathering is to take place. Because in the gathering comes a greater strength and a greater expression of the gifts, talents and abilities that we all share together. There is one or two among us that have a degree of faith, there may be more. But there are a few of us who have the gift of faith and there is a difference between having the gift of faith and having different degrees of faith.

It speaks of that in my Patriarchal

blessing. It says I was given degrees of faith that would lead me on to the next place where faith gradually moves into knowledge. It is a fact that we need one another.

It has also come to my attention how important obedience is. I was reading in 1st Samuel about his experience with Saul and God's relationship with Saul, and how through Samuel, Saul was told to do some things that were hard. He had to go and totally destroy a people. He didn't totally complete what he was told to do by Samuel.

Sometimes when you are addressing people it's difficult to speak the truth because you don't want to offend anybody. You don't want to hurt anybody's feelings. I find that hard to do because of who I think I am. I am a feeler by nature, and that makes me sensitive to you. I don't want to mislead you, misguide you, hurt you or misdirect you in any way. But the truth is we are not sinners. If we think we are, we can change that misconception. We can do it right now.

**S**ome of us have accepted the Lord, Jesus Christ, and received the baptism of water and of the Holy Ghost. Having done that, you are no longer a sinner unless you continue to think that you are separate from God in any way. It's difficult to deal with some of the symptoms that have to do with that, but we can change the way we think right now this morning. We can decide in our minds that we no longer are a sinner and therefore, we'll dispel the guilt that we have.

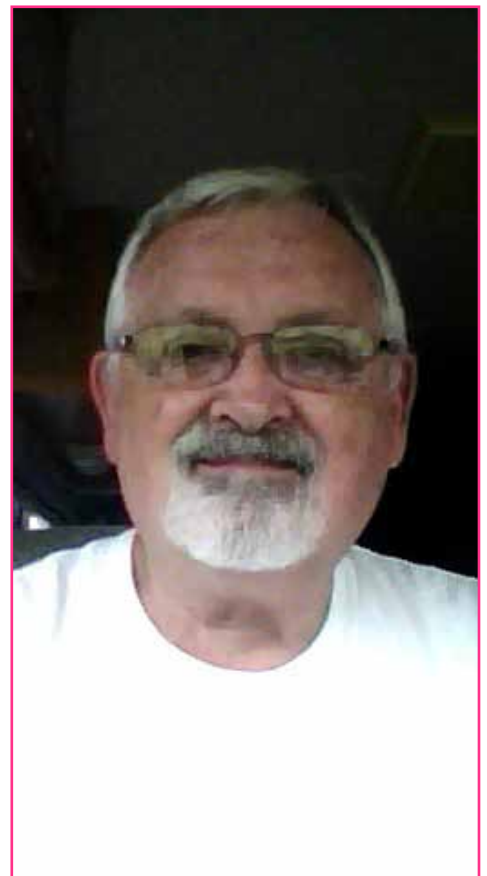
Guilt is a real bugger. I sit at home and feel guilty because I'm not doing what needs to be done at my house. I feel guilty when my neighbor Kent comes over and walks in the door and sees that my house isn't finished. I think in his mind he's thinking, 'What's going on with you? How come you are not finishing your house?' I know Kent would have had my house project done a long time ago. I love Kent. He has been a good friend to me and has helped me and we have built a good relationship. I consider him a brother. That's what happens when we work together.

You have heard me say this be-

fore. There's a certain destiny that if we choose to accept, it will unfold before all of us. There are good things that are going to come to pass because of our faith and our willingness to look past some things in our lives. It's really important for us to come to know one another. To this point I don't know very many of you very well.

I know Kent and I'm kind of getting acquainted with Bob Bell our Chief of Police in Lamoni. I seem to be running into him a lot, and that's a good thing. I'm not running into him in a bad way but a good way. We come together, shake hands and show some concern for one another but I'm concerned that we need to be more vigilant in that, because of what can come from it.

A greater expression and extension of God comes forth from you when we take time to give expression of that relationship. Healings will come and blessings. I'm not just talking about physical healings but also spiritual healings. God has provided everything. We need to open our minds to that. We are not a needy people. We have all that we need.



Jim Major



It's just a matter of bringing it out and in some ways we assist one another in doing that, whether it is the laying on of hands or the holding of hands it matters not. It's the concern and the love. God is love and because He is love we are love and that's all there is. There is only love.

Now you might say, 'Now look at the world!' That's the lack of people-believing that they have to have violence and discord. There's a peace that comes. I'm not talking peace because it's a lack of chaos or war or any of that. There's a peace that God has given us that if we allow ourselves to accept, it goes beyond our understanding. It's the kind of peace that a little boy has holding his father's hand as he goes down the street. It shows that little boy has peace.

When that granddaughter holds onto you there's a peace that she has because you are there and she knows it. There's peace that comes because there's a love that you have for one another that is shared in such a way that you are one. You are one. You are each other's strength, no fear. There's that kind of peace.

These are the things that God wants to bring to our attention, to our minds. This is why He has provided the means for these things to happen. You know we talk about time. The Book of Mormon tells us that we're in a time of probation, a probationary time. But time doesn't have to be any longer than necessary if we can make the choice to accept what God has provided for us all along. He wants us to see what He sees in us. You are whole. You are complete. You are not guilty and you're not sinners. Sometimes we allow our flesh to give expression and that is hard. I don't like it. I get angry because of it and that anger is nothing more than an expression of fear. Fear just means I'm doubting what I know to be true.

**T**he potential that is in each of us gives expression to God in such a way that the lives of other people are also awakened to who they truly are, and out of that will come that oneness. In some ways because we come together, and come to the recognition of who we are, and the truth of those things that makes God

more whole. That makes Him more whole. He wants to spend eternity with us but we have to awaken to who we are before we can do that. He's patient. He's waiting for us to come to that realization and begin to think in that way, that our lives are changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye. We don't have to die to be transformed. We just have to choose, and that doesn't need to take a long time. We don't need to wait until we die and cross over and find out what we've been told is true.

That's the gist of my message. The importance to know that the Church isn't the destination but the Kingdom is, and that is where the emphasis should be. That we should be working towards that end, and that just means we have to make a choice. That means considering all the choices that we have made to this point that have brought us here. This consideration has taken a long time for some of us, because we're still in the process of trying to make that choice. Why would we be delaying to make that choice, and come back here next Sunday and be in the same place we were when we came in the door this morning?

We've seen evidence of people who have made the choice in our scriptures. Of course, we've also seen evidence of people who haven't made the choice of accepting the truth of who they are in the scriptures. You are amazing people. The truth is you are amazing people. God has created amazing people. Think about it. That's all I ask. We have a choice to make. Will you be different? I hope so.

Heavenly Father, I thank you that like Jesus said in here, for these that you have provided this day to hear these words. To come to an awareness of the truth of who they are and then desire within their hearts to bring that forth to become something greater than we individually are. We want to be what you've created. I ask your blessing upon this congregation. That you will in these coming days of this week provide them with experience, with opportunity, with blessings that will bring that peace to them that they desire and that you would have them experience. That they

may come closer to you in relationship. I know there are going to be a lot of distractions that will vie for their attentions and try to keep them from making this choice but I pray, Heavenly Father, that you will provide them the sanctuary in their homes, in their places where they abode that they may have the freedom. That your Holy Spirit will speak to them so that when we return here we will be changed, we will be different people. In Jesus name. Amen

**APRIL**

Happy Birthday to Julia Jordison (19), Lynda Rolfe (29) and any others we missed.

**APRIL**

Happy Anniversary to Gero and Beth Knotts (1), Gordon and Linda Winkler (24), Ron and Di Smith (28) and any one we missed.



# HE IS RISEN!

## High Priest Sherman Phipps Lamoni, Iowa

Brother Tony Crandell shared: We welcome you here this morning. If you weren't here earlier, you missed a good breakfast. We had good fellowship. It was good to see everyone here this morning.

Our service today is a little different as we seek to understand and to rejoice over the resurrection of our Lord, Jesus the Christ. Our Call to Worship this morning comes from Matthew 28:1-5. *In the end of the Sabbath day, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, early in the morning, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary to see the sepulcher. And behold, there had been a great earthquake; for two angels of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. And their countenance was like lightning, and their raiment white as snow; and for fear of them the keepers did shake, and became as though they were dead. And the angels answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for we know that ye seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay; and go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead.*

**G**ood morning, everybody. This is great! Well, maybe unless you have to stand up here. I don't know if you could see me up here this morning. I was trying to hold the bulletin and I was too shaky to hold it. I feel a little bit like I did when I preached my first sermon when I was 14. But I am really glad to be here this morning because the thing that brings us together today, the focus of our thoughts I hope, is the greatest thing ever! It's a gift that I certainly can't do justice to this morning.

In my past I've gone and spoken to much larger crowds than this, and I have had to argue in front of the Iowa

Supreme Court but never ever have I had to stand and try to convey something that was any more important than what I want to convey to you this morning.

Of course, we came to talk about the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, our best friend, our elder brother Jesus. I wanted to ask you this morning as we start, probably a silly little question, but what does His resurrection mean to us today? What does it really mean to each one of you, to each one of us? We could talk about how it means that we have eternal life. That's true, but what does it mean to each one of us every day as we go about our lives? What does knowing that we really do have a Savior, that He laid down His life for us, that He was resurrected and that we have eternal life because of that mean to us every day as we relate to those around us?

By the way I wanted to be sure and throw this in too. We talk about how He gave His life for us and we talk about the crucifixion and all that but He really, really gave His life for us in a way that goes way beyond the crucifixion and the resurrection. What I mean by that is from the moment He was born until the moment that they laid Him in the grave and was resurrected, He gave His life for us. He never wavered. We have some record of Satan coming and tempting Him. We know He had to deal with the temptations and vicissitudes of life. He didn't give into that.

I've thought about that sometimes. What would it take for me every day in my relationship with the people around me and with the world to say, 'No I can't participate in that because I represent God?' Could we do it? Christ did. He was saying I represent God as His Only Begotten Son, and I will not submit to temptation or sin. But Jesus did that for us. He gave up all the things that we long for. Think about that for a minute. See if I'm right or not. All the things that we give our lives to for selfish purposes really, He gave all that up for us because if He was to be the eternal sacrifice that

was necessary in order for us to have eternal life. He had to be unblemished as the scriptures said He would be. He couldn't have any sin. He could not let sin into His life.

Do you know how hard that would be to live for 33 or 34 years and never commit a sin, always putting God first and always conducting your life according to what you knew your Heavenly Father wanted for you? It's amazing He could do that but He did it because He loves us and because He was determined from the beginning to keep Himself pure and clean so that He could be that eternal sacrifice that was necessary for us to have eternal life.

Can you imagine the nature of the love that it takes to do that for your fellowmen? I can't and I've had an experience with God's love that was amazing but I still don't think I can really understand how much He loved us in order to be willing to sacrifice His life, not just on the cross but His whole life for us; every day-every moment, for eternity.

As you think about that love and how tremendous and great it is, I hope you'll feel it in your hearts for yourself. I hope the Spirit of God will touch your hearts and let you know that it's true that He loves you. But I also hope that you, as you go about your daily lives, will look at that person next to you whether it's your husband or wife, or person that you work with, whoever and remember, remember that He died for them too. He loves them. He loves all of His children and we need, as we interact with each other, to be alert to that fact that this person is someone that Jesus loves so much that He gave His life for them.

So, what am I willing to do as I interact with them in order not to distract them from what is right and in order to encourage them in what is right. Am I willing to defer my desires, what I want? Am I willing to set aside my pride so that my brothers and sisters can be encouraged to make good choices and to accept this gift of eternal life that has been given to us that we celebrate today?



What would it take for me to set aside my sins for the sake of my brothers and sisters because after all that was the bottom line wasn't it? Isn't that what Jesus preached to all of us was to repent and to humble ourselves and to come unto Him in such a fashion that He could forgive us. That we could be forgiven of our sins through the sacrifice He made for us.

I wonder Tony if this would be a good time for you to play "Who is This Man?" and think about what kind of a man was this who made this sacrifice.

Who Is This Man?

Who is this man born of a virgin

In a manger in Bethlehem?

Who is this man who dwelt among sinners

Healed the blind, the deaf, the dumb, and the lame man?

Who fed five thousand with the lunch of a child

Who was tempted yet never sinned?

And who is this man who spoke with authority

Yet rejected by even his friends?

Who was this man who was accused

When no wrong had he done?

Who was beaten, spit upon, and mocked

For claiming that he was God's son?

And who was this man who carried a cross

Up a hill called the place of the skull?

And who laid down his life to save the world from sin

Who bleed and died for all?

And who was this man who was placed in a tomb

With a stone sealed in front of the door?

And who was this man who rose from the dead

And is alive for evermore?

He is alive for evermore!

His name is Jesus, Redeemer, the Great I AM!

Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

Messiah, Jehovah, counselor and

friend.

The lily of the valley, the broken rose of Sharon

The king of kings and the Lord of Lords

He is Jesus the savior of the world

All hail the power of Jesus name let angels prostate fall.

Bring forth the royal diadem and crown him Lord of all!

His name is Jesus, Redeemer, the Great I AM!

Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

Messiah, Jehovah, counselor and friend.

The lily of the valley, the broken rose of Sharon

The king of kings and the Lord of Lords

He is Jesus the savior of the world

**A**s I tried to prepare for this morning I went back and read through the four gospels and tried to put together what they tell us in one story. I'm talking about what they tell us about the crucifixion and mostly the resurrection of Christ. There were some things that struck me that I'm going to try to share with you not so much in the way of preaching but just in talking about these things and asking you to consider some of what I think are points that are made that apply to us today as well as reflect the story of the crucifixion and the resurrection.

I think sometimes we treat Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection as a story. We have ideas about what happened but if you go and read the scriptures they're not exactly how the story has been told over and over. For instance, after Christ had been crucified we are told that Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and 'begged the body from Pilate.' Eventually Pilate gave in and ordered that Jesus' body be delivered to Joseph. I've always thought of Joseph as being one of the very faithful people. Here he was a powerful man. He was able to appear in front of Pilate and get Pilate to give him Jesus' body. This wasn't just a guy off the street. I always thought of him as being

a very faithful follower and believer of Christ.

But what did Joseph and Nicodemus do? They took His body and put it in this tomb where no one had yet lain and they prepared Him like they always prepared the bodies of the dead. It says Nicodemus brought 100 pounds of spices with him. They weren't anticipating that He was going to get back up in three days. Then they are the ones who had the rock rolled in front of the tomb. Does that sound like they thought Jesus was going to rise in three days and come out? I don't think so. I think they missed it.

And I think a lot of times I profess to be a believer but my actions don't then convey that I am a believer in what I say. My testimony suffers because what I say and how I live don't always match. Here's Joseph and Nicodemus and they are testifying this is Jesus. This is the Christ and yet they went down and prepared His body as though He was dead like everybody dies. They evidently didn't think He was going to rise in three days because they rolled this stone in front of the tomb. I understand



Sherman Phipps



that the stone probably weighed a couple tons. It's not something you would stick over the hole that your best friend is supposedly going to want to get out of in a couple of days. After Joseph and Nicodemus had prepared the body and rolled the stone over. What did they do? It says that they departed. They went away.

After He was put in the tomb, who was there when He rose? Who really believed? Who was there when the angels rolled the stone away from the tomb and let Him out? Where were all these followers, all these people who said they believed in Him? We know that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there early morning following the Sabbath. I suppose you could make the argument that the reason others weren't there any earlier was because they were abiding by the Sabbath laws and so they were home or where they were supposed to be waiting until the sun started to come up. Then they could legally go down and be there to watch but they weren't there when He rose even though supposedly they had spent all this time with Him and heard Him teaching that He would rise in three days.

I get concerned about us. What do we do? Christ calls us and asks us to do things a certain way and do we say, 'Well, I can't do that. Section so and so says ... so we don't go do it even though the Spirit tells us to because it doesn't quite fit how we think the law is. When are we going to get to the point that we have a relationship with Christ that allows us to be led by the Spirit so that our brothers and sisters are fed and nourished spiritually as they need to be?

When Mary Magdalene and the other Mary got there He was already gone. As I read these stories I kept relating them to my life and wondering what they telling me. How many times has the Lord had to go ahead and move on without me because I wasn't there even though He had told me when to be there? He told me what kind of a person I should be and yet I'm worried about other things, what the law is or what man's going to think, etc. See I'd like to think as I stand up here this morning that if I had been there and knew that Jesus was going to rise in three days that

I'd have been down there watching and waiting no matter what.

But that's not really what my life reflects. It's interesting to me too that the disciples and apostles and all these people who were supposedly His followers didn't seem to understand what He meant when He told them He was going to rise in three days. Yet the Pharisees knew it. They knew He had preached that He was going to rise in three days. That's why they went to Pilate and told him he needed to have the tomb sealed up. If the tomb wasn't sealed the Pharisees were afraid that Jesus' followers would come and take His body and claim that He had risen. If the Pharisees knew what Jesus said about His resurrection why didn't His followers know?

Again, I'm looking at myself and saying, 'Sherman, these things are in here (the three books). We've been taught. Why don't we understand them?' What needs to happen so that the things that God sent and sacrificed His Only Begotten Son for can begin to bear fruit in our lives?

**W**hen Mary Magdalene and the other Mary showed up at the tomb they were met by the angels and told that He wasn't there but that He was risen. They still went back to the apostles, according to the account in John, and reported that somebody had stolen His body. They still didn't get it. So I'm wondering again about myself, and I hope you'll think about this as you go from here. What has to happen for us to understand God's great, great love for us? To understand what would motivate Him to take upon Him flesh and come to the earth and let those that He created crucify Him and to go through all of that that He went through for us.

If we could understand His love for us, than surely we would learn to love our brothers and sisters and our fellowman. We would be just as concerned about them and their souls as we are our own. I think that has to happen somehow.

Another thing I think is interesting, the angels told Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, 'He is risen.' You hear that a lot when you talk about Easter. He is ris-

en but do you know what the rest of that little short statement was that He made to them. The angel said, 'He is risen as He said.' I wonder if there was any sarcasm in that statement? I wonder when He looks at me today and shares things with me, as He tries to do, if He ever says, 'Like I said! Are you not listening?' Because of course I'm not unfortunately. I thought that was interesting that the angel said, 'He is risen as He said.'

One of the reasons I think that's interesting is because to me Easter is about Christ being risen from the dead. But when Christ came up out of that tomb He did not only grant us eternal life and the opportunity for salvation and an eternal existence with Him. He also said, 'Every promise I ever made you is true. Everything I ever told you would happen will happen.' If He could raise Himself from the dead then can He not fulfill every one of His words to us?

What's that mean? Do I believe that Zion will be? Did He not say it? So to me it's a confirmation that everything He's ever told us, everything He's promised us is true. And, that except we accept Him and obey His commandments and follow Him always, not just up until they roll the stone in front of His tomb, unless we truly accept Him and obey His commandments, we're going to be left out when these promises are fulfilled. There can be no turning around and "departing" for us.

I'm not just talking about future promises. I'm talking about what goes on day-to-day in our lives. Do we see Him fulfilling His promise? Do we think to praise Him? I always thought it was interesting in the Easter story when He came into Jerusalem one day and everybody was praising Him and rejoicing. He's the king! Then a couple of days later what happened? I look at my own life and think one day you are praising Him and wanting everybody to know about Him and the next day you are off doing the same thing everybody else is.

Why is that? When will we learn and be able with His help, because we can't do it on our own, to obey His commandments, to repent, to humble ourselves, to be the kind of people that He is willing to grant His Spirit to



so that we can be His people today and eternally.

Next Sunday is going to be Communion. That's our opportunity to come before Him and ask Him to forgive us and to raise us up again. To go forward and to try again to accomplish in our lives what He sent us to accomplish. He said that He created us that we might have joy but day-to-day our responsibility is to try to bring others to that also.

Somehow it's really been on my heart lately about the eternal state of the souls of my brothers and sisters. We talk about these things but how real are they for us? Does it really impact me every day as I go about my business? This idea that these are God's children and He gave His life and was resurrected that they might have eternal life with Him or do I just blow them off? They are just ugly, bad people and I don't want anything to do with them.

Part of my daily life involves being in the courthouse and wandering around seeing all these people just living out their lives in despair and darkness. Who is going to take the gospel to them? Who's going to share this message of Jesus as the Son of God, risen that they might have joy and eternal life?

Back to the story of Jesus' resurrection. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary finally left and went back and told the disciples and the apostles what had happened. I think as I read this story, and somebody can correct me, it seems that the two Marys must have gone to the tomb more than once. At one point Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene and she realized it was Him. This is why I think there is more than one trip there because on that occasion He said, 'Don't touch me. I haven't ascended to my father yet.' But on the other occasion that we have recorded it says they fell down and grabbed His feet.

In any event at some point the Marys knew this was Jesus and that He was risen. They must have been overjoyed. They ran back to the apostles and said, 'He is risen. We have seen Him.' Did they all jump and go, 'All right!' No, they didn't believe the Marys. They still doubted. Particularly we have the story of Thomas who said I won't believe it

until I see Him and can stick my hand in His side and touch where the nails were in His feet and hands.

Before I forget I'll throw this out too. It is interesting that when Jesus visited with His disciples the third time Thomas was there. The way I read the story even before Thomas could get up and approach Christ, Jesus said to Thomas, 'Come, feel the hole in my side, look at the prints in my hands and feet.' He already knew what Thomas had said. It's that way with us. When it's our turn to come back into God's presence, He already knows who we are. He already knows our thoughts and our actions and our deeds. I

should be important for us to realize that. We should be wanting to adjust our thoughts and our actions and deeds every day based on the fact that God knows these things. He understands them. That's why He sent His son because He knew who we are and how weak we are and how prone we are to sin but He paid the ultimate price. He made this eternal sacrifice so that even though we are weak and sinful He could bring us back to Himself and we could spend eternity with Him and not be cast off.

**T**here are so many other things in these four different accounts of this event that when I read them it causes me to look at myself and say, 'What are you doing with your life? Do you really, really acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God? Do you acknowledge the sacrifice that He's made for us, for me? Do we live our lives accordingly or do we just go right on?

In John 16:33 it says before the crucifixion and resurrection, *In the world ye shall have tribulation (Do you know that? Surely you do.); but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. That in me ye might have peace.* So that's kind of the message today. Yes, you're going to have tribulation and trials and you're going to wonder where is God now. You may say that at times but the truth is He did submit Himself to be crucified and He was resurrected and He has overcome the world. We have the opportunity in Him to have peace, day-to-day even as we deal with these tribulations.

If we look to Him we can have peace.

The other thing I wanted to mention to you is that what Jesus did for us in the crucifixion and through His resurrection is so completely consistent with everything else about Him and with His Father's nature. He gave everything and then said there it is, please use it wisely. But He never took our agency away from us. In the Book of Mormon in Mosiah 8:78 it tells us that in spite of all He's done for us we still have the right to say, 'Sorry I'm going to do it my own way.' But if we do then it is for us as though there had been no resurrection. We need to be very alert to that. We need to choose wisely every day to make sure that this great, great gift is not wasted on us and, to the extent we can, to make sure it's not wasted on those around us even though they have their agency too. As I read through these gospels and looked at this record, this historical record which should be very much a part of our lives today, the other question I had was after Jesus was resurrected where did He go? To His Father. Where else? We have a record. If you read these you know He went a bunch of places. He went to hell but He also told the guy on the cross next to Him, 'This day you'll be with me in paradise.' Then the next thing we know He's out wandering around on the road with these fellows who were going to Emmaus. We know He went to other places because we have the Book of Mormon and we know there are other records that we don't have. I'm sure He went to all the nations. He went all over and even though He was doing that He took time to come back to the tomb and visit Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. Then He spent another forty days teaching His apostles. He was everywhere.

This is another thing you always hear quoted about Easter. He looked and said 'It is finished.' He was talking about He had given His life. He'd made the sacrifice but He wasn't done. He's never done with us. He's always there for us, always working trying to draw us back to salvation and eternal life with Him.

My question for you today is, knowing that Jesus was resurrected where do you think you'll find Him? Be alert!



# Resurrection

# Sunday



Some 63 people took part in the breakfast that started the day and 75 attended the morning worship.

Tony and Sandy Crandell had a family worship, Michael Jordison lead singing and Sherm Phipps spoke.





# April 2016 Schedule

Date	April 3	April 10	April 17	April 24	May 1
<b>Speaking</b>	Joel Loving	Tony Crandell	Alan Smith	Michael Jordison	Ed Anderson
<b>Presiding</b>	Gordon Winkler	Ed Anderson	Rob Rolfe	Sherm Phipps	Steve Smith
<b>Pianist</b>	Cheryl Phipps	Bonnie Major	Recorded music - Crandells	Cheryl Phipps	Cheryl Phipps
<b>Music Ministry</b>	Sue Beck	Alan Smith	Jim Barber	Steve Smith	Rob Rolfe
<b>Family Devotions</b>	Alan/Valle Smith	Jim/Bonnie Major	Steve/Elaina Smith	Jordison family	Sherm/Cheryl Phipps
<b>Greeters</b>	Joel/Deni Loving	Jim/Linda Barber	Sherm/Cheryl Phipps	Gordon/Linda Winkler	Alan/Valle Smith
<b>Custodians</b>	Ed/Diane Anderson	Rowland family	Gordon/Linda Winkler	Joel/Deni Loving	Tony/Sandy Crandell
	<b>PRIESTHOOD MEETING 8:30 AM at church</b>		Food for Center		<b>PRIESTHOOD MEETING 8:30 AM at church</b>
	Potluck Dinner following service				Potluck Dinner following service
<b>Sunday Evening</b>	Rowland's	Steve Smith's	Ron Smith's	Rowland's	Steve Smith's
	April 9— Men's lunch @ Pizza Hut				
<b>Wed. Prayer Svc.</b>	April 6	April 13	April 20	April 27	May 4
<b>Location</b>	Ron Smith's	Rob Rolfe's	Rowland's	Steve Smith's	Winkler's
<b>Presiding</b>	Jim Barber	Rod Bastow	Steve Smith	Joel Loving	Ron Smith

General Conference will be held April 10 – 16.

Those giving Presiding Ministry, please share your hymns with the pianist prior to that Sunday:

Call or text Bonnie Major - 515-289-0195 or Cheryl Phipps – 641-442-5570

Thank you!



# Church of Jesus Christ Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

c/o Cheryl Phipps  
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Lamoni, IA 50140

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[www.gospelrestored.org](http://www.gospelrestored.org)



## CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST - MT AYR RESTORATION BRANCH

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

## MORE NEWS AND NOTES

*Continued from front page*

day through Saturday, March 21-26 at 6:30 a.m. each morning.

The Mount Ayr branch participated along with the United Church of Diagonal and the Community of Christ on Thursday, March 24. We helped with greeting and cleanup, Alan Smith spoke, Ron Smith lead group singing and Michael and Isabel Jordison provided special music.

The branch's our annual Resurrection Sunday breakfast was held to start our worship on Sunday, March 27. There are pictures of this event in this month's bulletin.

### Stewardship accounting

Now is the time of year to think about preparing your stewardship accounting for the year as materials are gathered for income taxes.

Tithing statements are available on the JCRB website at [conferenceofbranches.org](http://conferenceofbranches.org). Go to the "Resources" button on the home page, then choose "Bishop's Corner." "Stewardship Forms" are listed and can be downloaded from the site.

What a blessing it would be to have all our members participating by filing a tithing statement this year.

### Food collection Sunday

Remember that the third Sunday each month is the Sunday that we gather food for the food pantry at the Ringgold County MATURA Neighborhood Center.

Last month we had over 170 items to deliver. We continue to be blessed by the response we make to help those in need.