

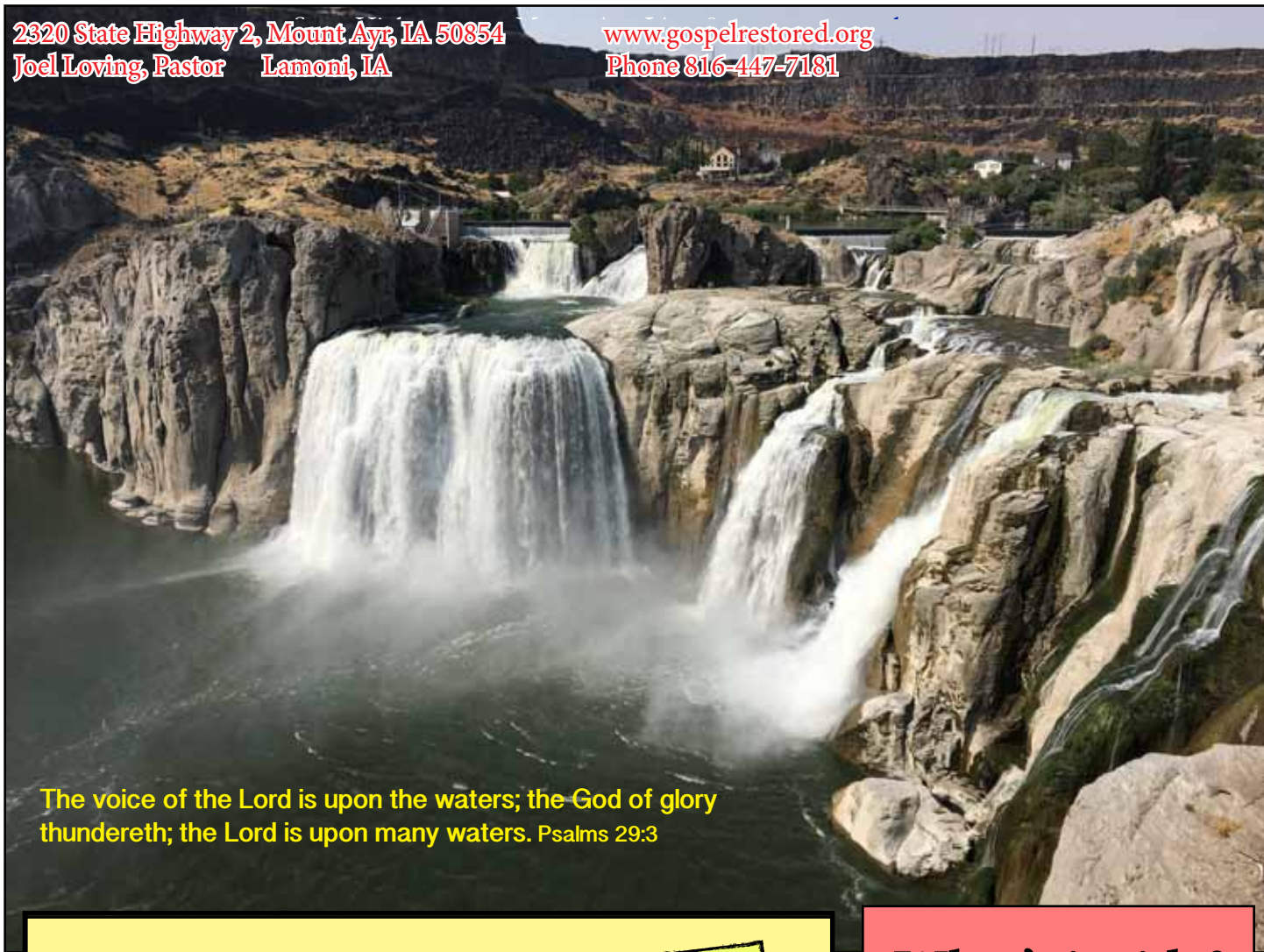
Church of Jesus Christ

Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

NEWSLETTER

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The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thundereth; the Lord is upon many waters. Psalms 29:3

News & Notes

Business meeting set

the annual business meeting for the branch to elect its officers will be held Sunday, Sept. 10, at 9:45 a.m.

We hope you will be thinking about who you would like to have serve the branch in the many aspects of our ministry.

This is a great opportunity to step up to serve as well. Just let someone know

you are willing to serve in an area, and they can nominate you at the meeting.

Branch retreat

A branch retreat to learn more about the ministry of the Aaronic priesthood will be held beginning at 6 p.m. Friday, Sept. 20.

Jim Noland from Independence,
Continued on back page

What's inside?

News and Notes	Page 1
“Forgive One Another”	
Rob Rolfe	Page 2
“Being Faithful”	
Sherm Phipps	Page 4
“Connection of Faith”	
Gordon Winkler	Page 8
“The Four Seeds”	
Joel Loving.....	Page 10
September Schedule	Page 16-17
Birthdays/Anniversaries..	Page 3, 7



FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER

High Priest Rob Rolfe
Lamoni, Iowa
August 6, 2017

A Wyoming rancher was fixing fence at the back of his ranch, knowing a big blizzard was coming. When he finished, he jumped into his pickup, but it wouldn't start. He said, 'Lord, you know I haven't been much at praying, but if you don't help me, I'm dead.' The pickup didn't start and he froze to death. When he reached the pearly gates, he said, 'I'm not complaining, but I sure would like to know why you didn't start my pickup.' The angel said, 'Was that you? We hadn't heard from you for so long we started a pickup in South Dakota.' Does God ever forget who we are? No he does not.

Isaiah 49:14-16 says, *But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.---Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.* What vivid imagery! Isaiah was a master of writing. Do any of you ladies here that had children think you could forget a child that you were nursing? God, through Isaiah, said you could forget. But, we are dramatically assured that God will not forget Zion. How so? Zion is engraved on the palms of God's hands. Every time He looks at hands He is reminded of Zion.

I want you to know that I am 887 months old today. Probably that is why my memory isn't as good as it used to be. I remember a few years ago that Lynda and I were talking and she told me she thought she was starting early onset Alzheimer's. When I asked her why, she told me she had forgotten three

really important things that day.

I told her she wasn't going into early onset Alzheimer's. She then asked me why? I then told her about all of the flowers at our house. She knew their names, whether they should be in the sun or shade; whether they needed to be trimmed or left alone; what to use for fertilizer. At Graceland University she has all of the different kinds of clay and glazes, which have to be fired at specific temperatures. She hasn't forgotten any of that. AND what is more, I told her, you have never forgotten a single thing that I've done wrong.

She smiled and then said, "I keep those items in a separate file." Where is the Alzheimers?

I can remember one evening when it was so icy at my house, I had to pull myself up the steps by holding on to the railings. I walked into the house and made a proclamation. "Don't anyone use those steps, they are too icy." I locked the door as a safeguard. Within an hour, I forgot about that, unlocked the door, stepped out of the house, and then flew through the air as I crashed on the cement at the bottom of the stairs. I remembered as I was flying through the air, hearing my "proclamation." Fortunately, I was younger then. But I still felt like Wiley Coyote after I fell off the cliff. I felt like my body was cracking and ready to fall apart.

Why do we forget things? Or in some cases, remember things? When anything is fed into our system by one or more of our senses, our brains either immediately forget it, or store it, in short term or long term memories. Let's call them brain CD's. Forgetting is an all too common part of daily life. Sometimes these memory slips are simple and fairly innocuous, such as forgetting to return a phone call. Other times, forgetting can be much more dire and even have serious consequences, such as an eye wit-

ness forgetting important details about a crime.

Why do we forget? From forgetting where you left your keys or other things, to forgetting to return a phone call, memory failures are an almost daily occurrence. But the truth is, forgetting is beneficial. From the time you open your eyes in the morning, all kinds of data is being fed to your brain by your senses. Thank God that most of it is immediately deleted and not stored. These are the details that we don't need to, nor want to, remember. But forgetting is so common that you probably rely on numerous methods to help you remember important information such as jotting down notes in a daily planner or scheduling important events on your phone's calendar.

As you are frantically searching for your missing car keys, it may seem that that the information about where you left them is permanently gone from your memory. However, forgetting is generally not about actually losing or erasing this information from your long-term memory. Forgetting typically involves a failure in memory retrieval. While the information is somewhere in your long-term memory, you are not able to actually retrieve and remember it.

Probably all of you have experienced not being able to recall a name, or something that you know—you know. You try to remember and you can't. But, later on, the name comes to your mind. Where was the information during this period? It was all in your head. You just couldn't access it.

It is interesting to me that my Uncle George had a severe speech impediment. He stuttered terribly. Yet, he could recite tongue twisters flawlessly. Since those days I've learned that our brains sometimes have different areas that perform specific tasks. That is why we can observe a stroke victim that can't



talk be able to sing. In the case of stroke victims they are using a part of their brain that was not damaged. You probably have also noticed that you can remember new facts by repeating them or by using a mnemonic device. The brain keeps passing this information through certain parts of the brain, strengthening the memory, until, after a while it no longer needs to do so.

Sometimes we should forget. It is better for us if we do forget. Have you ever heard the phrase, "forgive and forget?" Can we do both? Is there any reason to do both? Do the Scriptures command us to forgive and forget? No. But there are many Scriptures commanding us to forgive. Forgiveness is a decision we make. We will ourselves to forgive. Is it possible to forgive sins committed against us? In other words, can we simply choose to forget something that is in our memory?

I remember a story about a woman who asked a friend, "Isn't one of your children adopted?" Her friend replied that yes that was true. The first woman then asked, "Which one?" The friend replied, "I don't remember." The first woman again asked, "How can you forget which child was adopted?" The friend replied, "I don't really know, but I remember forgetting." The scriptures tell us that love doesn't keep a record of wrongs. Love doesn't keep track. Does a person that sinned against us deserve to be forgiven? Do we deserve to be forgiven when we ask God for forgiveness? Don't the Scriptures say that if we don't forgive one another, God won't forgive us?

If you can bring yourself to forgive and forget, you are likely to enjoy lower blood pressure, a stronger immune system, and a drop in the stress hormones circulating in your blood, studies suggest. Back pain, stomach problems, and headaches may disappear. And you'll reduce the anger, bitterness, resentment, depression, and other negative emotions that accompany the failure to forgive. In other words, forgiving our enemy is physically good for us.

God knew this. We get the most benefit out of forgiving. Of course, for-

giving is notoriously difficult. "Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea until they have something to forgive," said C.S. Lewis.

Does God know we sometimes have trouble with our memories? I'm sure He does, because He is the one that made us. That is why He told us to meet together often. He told us to eat the bread and wine often. It is expedient that the church meet together often to partake of bread and wine in remembrance of the Lord Jesus. Why are we to meet together often? Because we forget.

What is it that we are supposed to remember by eating the bread and drinking the wine? We are supposed to remember the sacrifice of the Son of God that He suffered for each of us. By doing it often and over and over, it creates a memory CD that won't be erased or forgotten.

In Sec 17:5a-f it says, *Wherefore the almighty God gave his only begotten Son, as it is written in those scriptures which have been given of him: he suffered temptations but gave no heed unto them; he was crucified, died, and rose again the third day; and ascended into heaven to sit down on the right hand of the Father, to reign with almighty power according to the will of the Father, that as many as would believe and be baptized, in his holy name, and endure in faith to the end, should be saved: not only those who believed after he came in the meridian of time in the flesh, but all those from the beginning, even as many as were before he came, who believed in the words of the holy prophets, who spake as they were inspired by the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

It is important to remember this Scripture. Doesn't it tell why we should take the communion often? Doesn't eating the bread and drinking the grape juice remind us of the sacrifice of our Lord?

Pray to God that your spiritual memories will improve, that you will be able to forgive, and maybe even forget those things that are destroying your souls. Choose life. Forgive one another.



Rob Rolfe



September

- 1 -- Rob Rolfe
 - 13 -- Elyse Jordison
 - 15 -- Ron Smith
 - 24 -- Ed Anderson
 - 28 -- Deb Bastow
- and anyone we missed.



BEING FAITHFUL

**High Priest
Sherman Phipps
Lamoni, Iowa
August 13, 2017**

One of the first things I see in the morning is my big nose. The reason that I'm reminded of that this morning is because every time I sing the second verse of this hymn 181, "Spirit of God Descend Upon my Heart," I feel like my nose is probably growing because this verse which says "I ask no dream, no prophet ecstasies, No sudden rending of the veil of clay, No angel visitant, no opening skies, But take the dimness of my soul away" is not true for me. I want those things and I expect them. The God I know has promised those things and so I look forward to them. It's not that I don't like the song but I always feel like I'm not being totally honest when I sing that verse.

I want to read two fairly short scriptures this morning. One is from Psalms 14:2-3 and the other from Ecclesiastes 12:13. These scriptures are probably familiar to you but I want you to listen to them carefully. Not only because I think they carry an important message. I may get back to them in what I have to say this morning but maybe not. *For the Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, and by his voice said unto his servant, Seek ye among the children of men, to see if there are any that do understand God. And he opened his mouth unto the Lord, and said, Behold, all these who say they are thine. The Lord answered, and said, They are all gone aside, they are together become filthy, thou canst behold none of them that are doing good, no, not one.*

I have concerns about that. I hope that that's not the conversation between the Lord and His servant when He looks at us but I think we need to consider carefully whether or not those of us who say we are the Lord's would in fact be claimed

by Him.

The other one from Ecclesiastes 12:13 is really short. It says, *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.*

Paul in all of his letters to the various Saints always greeted them in the name of Jesus Christ. I want to do that this morning too but then he also would go on in those letters and send greeting to the Saints that he was writing to from the Saints that he was with or had been with. I want to do that this morning too. It feels really funny to be here this morning in a way because we've been gone for so long and yet on the other hand when we walked in this morning I felt right at home again.

You people have definitely become my family. I wasn't planning on saying this but as I was standing here this morning I was thinking I need to thank Lynda (Rolfe). I am sure there are others too. For a long time we didn't go to church anywhere and we felt we'd lost our church family. I know Lynda prayed steadfastly that we would find our way here. We did and so I'm very, very grateful for her prayers.

As we prepared to go out west for three weeks to attend a reunion in Vancouver, Washington, we were going to stop along the way and visit with some other Saints. Believe it or not as I was riding along the first or second day I thought to myself, 'Boy, I'm going to really miss my church family.' But what I believe was the Spirit rested on me and impressed on my heart that we were actually going to visit another part of our church family and that we would find them just as much family as those we meet with on a regular basis. I had been a little concerned about going out there so that was very comforting to me. This morning as I greet you I want to greet you on behalf of a number of other people who you may not know but they are your brothers and sisters and they long for the day when we shall be with them

and they with us.

One of them that I want to greet you on behalf of you do know. That is your very own Cessaries Galusha. Cessaries was at this reunion. I don't know that she said these words to me but I think she would be happy to have me tell you that she misses you and she loves you. You would be very, very proud of her if you could spend a little time with her. She's been responsive to the Lord and the Lord has blessed her greatly. In turn, she is a great blessing to your brothers and sisters in Washington and Oregon.

I would also greet you on behalf of all the others who were at this reunion. They love you even though they may not know you. I say that seriously because I felt a great love there among those people. They do long for the day when they can be gathered back to the Center Place and be a part of a larger church family and not feel so isolated all the time. I found a great ministry there.

I think I could probably legitimately this morning greet you on behalf of the Fox family who live in Glasgow, Montana. The Fox family I know would love to be here with you this morning. Cheryl and I met them several years ago at another reunion and I've stopped to see them before but together we stopped to see them this time. They long for the ministry of the Lord, for His Spirit. They are so excited when someone stops and visits with them about the gospel. Brother Fox has been in the hospital for at least two months now but he doesn't act like it bothers him. He just smiles and talks to all the nurses and everyone that comes into his room.

He's not a bit ashamed of the gospel. They wanted me to bless their great grandson while I was there because there was no one in that area to do that so that was one of the things they asked me if I could do while we were there. I did and Brother Fox made sure that the nurses knew what we were doing and invited them to stay. One of the nurses



did stay and she remained in the room during the blessing. In fact, apparently he had talked about some of this ahead of time and so the staff there at the hospital had made arrangements to provide us with refreshments after the baby blessing. He's quick to bear his testimony and he doesn't seem to waste time worrying about whether he's recovering or not. I'm sure he has some concerns about his recovery but it doesn't seem to bother him because he has the gospel of Jesus Christ. Even though he is out there by himself with his family, and they are very isolated yet they are very dedicated.

I wanted to greet you on behalf of the Esquivel's, Mike and Jan. They live in Zillah, WA. They are very isolated also. I won't spend a lot of time telling you how we got to meet them because we didn't know them but we ended up being in their home on the way out. We ate supper with them and spent the evening with them. Brother Mike is 87 years old. It was interesting to me that they didn't know who we were so I'm sure they were a little hesitant about us visiting but they invited us in.

Originally his wife had told us on the phone that his health wasn't real good and it probably isn't but it sure doesn't keep him from bearing testimony of how the Lord has worked in his life. They had a lot of testimonies to share. I have to tell you, brothers and sisters, when I walked into their home and met Brother Mike I knew almost immediately that I stood in the presence of one of God's children and that God greatly loved this man because of his lack of guile and his purity in sharing the gospel day to day. I don't know the man that well but I understood that from the Spirit. His wife also was a wonderful person. I really appreciate both of them. I would greet you on their behalf. They would love to be here too.

On the way back home we stopped at Jim and Linda Watkins. They've been at the Missionary Family Reunion the last two years. They had invited us to stop there and spend a few days with them. We ended up being there four days. They would greet you and love to see your faces and hear your testimo-

nies. While we were at their place Brother Jim decided on Saturday evening that maybe we should try to have some kind of a Sunday get together since we were there and that would make four of us which is more than they normally have. He called a brother that lives in Boise, ID which is about three hours away and asked him if his home would be available the next day and if there was any chance he could round up anybody else for a service on Sunday morning. He said yes for us to come on over so we drove three hours which is apparently typical for these scattered Saints if they want to meet.

We drove three hours and there were three people there plus ourselves making seven total. Those men, in addition to Jim and Linda would greet you this morning in the name of your Lord and Savior Jesus. Of the three that were there two of them live in Boise and we used the home of one of them. The other man drove six hours one way to be there on Sunday morning when he heard that there were going to be other Saints there and that the communion would be made available. That's how hungry they are for association with the Saints and for the ministry that comes only through the Spirit of God. They would all greet you this morning too.

As I thought about that I was reminded of Doctrine and Covenants 26. If you want to know the context of this section and what was going on at the time you can go home and read it but in the course of this section the Lord was speaking and He says, *wherefore marvel not, for the hour cometh that I will drink of the fruit of the vine with you on the earth, and with Moroni, whom I have sent unto you to reveal the Book of Mormon, containing the fullness of my everlasting gospel; to whom I have committed the keys of the record of the stick of Ephraim; and also with Elias, to whom I have committed the keys of bringing to pass the restoration of all things, or the restorer of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began, concerning the last days.* (2a-b)

Then He goes on and says that He will be here on the earth to drink of the

fruit of the vine with John the son of Zacharias. He says more things about each of these people which you can read for yourself. He says He will also drink of the fruit of the vine here on this earth with Elijah and with Joseph, Jacob, Isaac, Abraham, Adam, Peter, James and John. So this morning if the Spirit will allow I hope in your hearts you will feel the presence and greeting of all these men (and women) who have gone before you and who have been so dedicated to the gospel of Jesus Christ. I hope you will hear them greet you. I hope you can feel that greeting in your heart and feel their desire to be with and converse with you.

Part of the reason I hope you can hear that greeting is because I truly believe that the day is rapidly coming when they will be in our midst again and you will hear their voices. They will be friendly voices inasmuch as we have aligned ourselves with the Lord and agreed to be His people. These people that have gone before you love you and have given their lives to Christ even as Christ loves you.



Sherman Phipps



Doctrine and Covenants 38 tells us a number of things. One of the things it tells us is that God is no respecter of persons so the things I would like to be able to convey to you this morning by the power of the Spirit, if possible, applies to all of you, every one of you. It doesn't matter what your status in the community is, where you live or anything else. It applies to all of us. The Lord wants ALL of us to know Him as our Lord and Savior but He wants us to know Him too as our best friend who stands ready to walk with us always no matter what the situation.

Section 38 also tells us and warns us not to trust the arm of flesh. So the kind of relationship that I want you to think about this morning that you and I and our brothers and sisters need with God and with His Son Jesus is the kind of relationship that will require each one of us personally to seek Him out. It isn't enough that we hear good speakers. It's not enough that we hear good teachers and others who tell us what the scriptures say or what God has said. We need to seek these things out for ourselves. We need to know Him personally so that when He appears or when His servants appear we will know them and recognize them.

We need to lead the kind of lives that when that happens it will allow us to experience the great joy that God created us for. Isn't that what the scripture says? That He created us that we might have joy. Well it is a great joy that we will experience if we turn ourselves to Him and obey His commandments and become His children. We need to become a part of those who He will claim when He looks down and looks around and says, 'Where are my children?' He wants every one of you to be a part of that group who He smiles upon and says, 'Ah, yes, these are my children.'

Section 38:3c says *the angels are waiting the great command to reap down the earth, to gather the tares that they may be burned; and, behold, the enemy is combined.* This also has to do, if you read the rest of the scripture, with gathering His children and His flock. Remember this was given January 1831 so it should be more pressing upon us now even than it was when it was given. It's

my prayer that you will be part of His children and His flock out of Babylon.

It talks about how the angels are anxious. If you are interested you can read Revelation 8 and Section 85:27 also. In each of those you will find reference to the angels being anxious and waiting for the word that they might come forth to His people and not just to His people but that they might come forth and bear witness to the whole world that God is and that His Son Jesus Christ is, in fact, our Redeemer and that all of the things that have been talked about by the prophets all down through the years are true.

I don't know how many of you get the Beacon. If you have the April-May 2017 edition of this go home and look through it and read some of the articles that are in here. There are several articles that I think have great worth. One of the things I wanted to read to you from this edition this morning has to do with what I have been trying to say. This was just a real short article written by Shelley Taylor.

She says, I would like to share my testimony of the truth of the revelation given by God through Patriarch Neil Simmons at the 2016 U.S. National Conference. Brother Neil was standing at the rostrum, delivering the words the Lord would have him say to us. As he began to speak I started praying for him, that angels would attend him and the congregation. After I said "Amen," I looked at Neil. As he continued speaking, I saw three angels directly behind him, standing side by side with their arms interlocked as if holding something back. Behind the three angels I then saw hundreds of other angels who looked as though trying to get through. There was incredible joy, excitement and anticipation in their countenances, with each looking out at the congregation, and appearing "ready at the gate," waiting anxiously to be let loose!

I want to verify for you this morning and I hope the Spirit will verify to you this morning that these words in this testimony are true. That the angels in Heaven as we sit here today clamor anxiously, excitedly with great joy antic-

ipating the moment when the Lord will tell them now is the time. You may go forth and gather my sheep and cleanse the world. My prayer this morning, my hope is that each one of you will be a part of that flock, one of those sheep that those angels will so mercifully come and gather and shield and protect because the rest of the world is going to be in great disorder and disarray.

All the things the Lord has said He's going to do He's going to do. There will be great destruction and many will not survive. For those who do survive but know not God there will be great anxiety and darkness and you will not want to be part of them. I don't want to be part of them. The angels know you by name and their desire to come is to, in fact, come to you specifically, those who they recognize as the Lord's children.

As I stand here this morning I am aware that the scriptures tell us over and over to preach nothing but repentance. I don't know if I am qualified to do that other than the fact that the Lord told me to so I guess I'd better do it. With great sincerity I want to say to you this morning it's very very important to us that we repent NOW! We need to go to the Lord and find out what that means to us individually because we each need to repent in order that we can be ready when He finally gives the word and those angels come forth to gather His children.

We need to repent. We need to be obedient. One of the things that keeps coming to me is that we need to study the scriptures. We, personally, need to know what's in these scriptures. I don't know about you but there have been lots of times for me when I have kind of said to the Lord, 'Lord, I need more. I need more understanding.' I think sometimes if I were listening I might hear Him say, 'You do need more understanding and I want to give it to you but you haven't done anything with what I've already given you yet.'

Have we studied His words? Do we know what they are? Have we done anything with them? I know for me when I pick up one of these books and just leaf through it I'm amazed at what I find. I've read these, I don't know how many times, but it's new again. In fact, one



of these days I think when I'm scheduled to preach I'll not prepare anything. I'll just come and bring my books and start opening them up. For instance, in looking through the Doctrine and Covenants just now here's something we should consider. In Section 10:4a-c it says, *Even as you desire of me, so shall it be done unto you; and, if you desire you shall be the means of doing much good in this generation.* Guess what the next verses say? *Say nothing but repentance unto this generation. Keep my commandments, and assist to bring forth my work according to my commandments, and you shall be blessed.* I think we could spend hours just flipping through these scriptures and randomly read what is there and we would be blessed inasmuch as we began to open ourselves up to His words and His counsel.

This whole thing isn't just about us. It's about God's people who are everywhere. That's why I wanted to talk to you a little bit about the people we visited with on our trip. That was just one little trip but His people are everywhere. He's reaching out trying to gather those who love Him. He finds them in a lot of different places. I wonder this morning when we consider our part in this do we really have a feeling for the souls of our brothers and sisters and how important it is that we share this gospel of Jesus Christ and His plan of salvation.

I heard one of the speakers at the Vancouver Reunion say something about this. When you look around you and interact with those you interact with every day, do you see their souls? Do you see them as having souls? Do we understand how our repenting or not repenting, obeying or not obeying, taking time to learn the scriptures or not taking time can impact the souls of our brothers and sisters for eternity?

I tried to think about eternity last night and got nowhere. What's the universe that we know? It's like it is 93 billion light years across so we're in the middle of that which makes it 46.5 billion light years out to where we can see it at this point. Of course, science keeps developing so they keep pushing that out so they can see further next year than this year. My point is we're talking

about the eternal welfare of the souls of our brothers and sisters as well as our own. If we can see out there 46.5 billion light years away and we haven't gotten to the edge of creation yet, how far is eternity? The decisions we make today, the things we decide to either obey or not obey, how far reaching are those and how much do we care?

The theme of the Vancouver Reunion had to do with preparing a people that God can work with. It was a good theme but the whole time I was there I kept wondering to myself, we've talked and talked about preparing. We've talked about repentance and obedience. How much time do we have to talk? How much time do we have to consider these things? How long until the Lord does release His angels and He goes forth with His plan whether we are ready or not?

I wondered this morning about Noah. The Lord told him to build the ark and he did but it took him 100 years. I wondered several things about that in relation to ourselves. Do you sometimes feel like the Lord has called you to do certain things but you just get tired and give up and quit? For a hundred years Noah worked on this ark and for a hundred years he must have been the brunt of a lot of comments from his neighbors who might have said, 'See what that idiot is doing down the road.' But he didn't let that deter him and he kept working.

What if Noah had said, 'You know what I've been working on this for 98 years and I've had it. I'm giving up. I'm not finishing that door on the front. It's too much work.' How many people's lives would have been affected by that decision to stop work? All of us would not exist if Noah hadn't been faithful and continued on.

You could talk about the Brother of Jared, Lehi and others that have specific tasks given to them that could have been considered burdensome and maybe too much for them to do. My point is we can't give up. We can't quit so long as we live and breathe. We have to understand that at some point our time to serve will end one way or another and all those people who the Lord sent us to impact

on His behalf will they be impacted or not and if so how? Will we have done our part? Will the Lord recognize us and accept us as His sheep and a part of His flock? Will we be allowed at that feast that was talked about in Section 26 to set down with our brothers and sisters from all the ages and to rejoice? I hope so. That's my prayer for you this morning. That you will make the choices, and stay steadfast and faithful, that will allow you to be part of that feast to which He has invited each of you.



September

- 19 -- David and Barbara Houston
- 23 -- Bob and Jennifer Rowland and anyone else we missed



CONNECTION OF FAITH

Elder Gordon Winkler
Mount Ayr, Iowa
August 27, 2017

The scripture reading today is from Acts 2:38 – 47. *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*

In verse 44 the emphasis is and all that believed were together. Being together in one place was important. In verse 47 it says And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. The Lord added to the church daily. Who added to the church? The Lord did!

Other key phrases from Acts 2 were – continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship. They were all

in agreement on one doctrine. They were one in their prayers. They had all things in common. I don't think it means that they had all things owned by the group, but that they had whatever they had available for those who needed it. For example, I have a neighbor who has a rototiller and a chain saw. I don't have a rototiller and a chain saw, but when I need one I borrow one from John. I have a tractor with a blade but he does not. When he needs one, he uses mine.

They continued daily with one accord and shared with one another in the breaking of bread. They ate together with gladness and singleness of heart. And they praised God. This section of scripture provides insight into the need to be connected. This early church formation provided a nucleus to support new believers. A deposit of sorts for the souls of men that the Lord determined should be saved.

I attended a meeting held at the Mercy Comfort Health Center for Women last week. It was a beautiful new facility built with donations from the Comfort family. There was a glass atrium with a large painting or mural that caught my attention. It was 20 ft. tall and about 30 to 40 feet long. I never had art nor art appreciation classes, but I was really touched by this. The background was linen colored, with softer pastel colors in it. There were words and phrases in different writing styles, some printed, some bold, some in cursive. On one side of the mural were butterflies – large to very small ones. On the other side were pictures of hands stacked one on the other.

While I was looking at the painting a receptionist asked me if I would like information about the artist and what she was portraying with the artwork! I said yes! Two themes are portrayed

with exchanging butterflies and the hand game.

Exchanging butterflies is about the caring helpful interaction we share with one another. It is where we are free to give each other our worries and concerns. You give me your worries, and I will give you mine. The butterflies in the art piece represent our anxieties. Ever felt like you had butterflies in your stomach? When we give our anxieties away the butterflies are free to fly skyward, tilting their way across the canvas full of joy, life and vitality. We are free. Our burdens are released.

Have any of you played the hand game? (Isabel came up to help demonstrate the hand game, where you put hands on top of one another and the hands take turns shifting to the bottom of the pile.) Everyone takes turns being on top and on the bottom, but the hands remain connected sharing each other's energy wherever they are on the pile.

In this painting the blue plate has words of greetings used throughout the day. These are words to show friendly interaction and positive thoughts exchanged between friends, family and strangers. It's a beautiful day. O Happy day! Good evening. See you tomorrow. The purple plate has words used in politeness and showing appreciation to others. Great job! Thank you very much. You helped me a lot. You're welcome.

My granddaughter Jillian likes to play this game, but she likes to see how fast she can go. Let me repeat the artist's sheet and point out the significance of the hand game. At any part in the game, someone will have the upper hand; soon falling to the bottom of the pile. Everyone takes turns being on top and on the bottom, but the hands remain connected, sharing each other's energy wherever they are on the pile. Do you



feel like this hand game is a metaphor for our lives together? I DO!

It's been a rough year in the Winkler family. I feel like I am at the bottom of the pile. First my father's health was failing and he died in February. Then Karaline was hospitalized in ICU for weeks; now Melissa's cancer diagnosis. Being connected to this congregation and you good folks gives us the energy, strength and courage to keep going. Our faith connects us when our hands are not touching.

The hand game got me to wondering if there is physiological or psychological evidence to support hand holding. It turns out there is! Dr. James Coan, Associate professor of Psychology at the University of Virginia, has done research into the emotional connections of hand holding. Dr. Coan offers evidence that hand holding has specific effects on the brain. He says that the act of holding someone's hand can be a means of relaxing the brain when in a stressful situation. The mind is calmed by holding hands with familiar people.

Another study by Dr. Richard Davison, who runs a brain imaging lab at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, concluded the closer the relationship between the people holding hands the more significant was the reduction of brain activity in areas of the brain that are associated with threat detection, pain and anxiety.

Hand holding is one expression of being connected with residual benefits. How about love? I have experienced love by holding hands with Linda, our children and grandchildren. We frequently end our Wednesday evening services by holding hands in a circle and offering prayers. I don't know about you, but I feel connected and blessed from that circle of hand holding. Last Wednesday night Joel expressed the need for us to be connected between generations; that he feels strongly the need to keep connected with our children and grandchildren and pass on the knowledge and understandings of the teachings and commandments of God or the church will continue to suffer.

God never intended for us to be

alone; the church is not an individual; it is not you or me – it is US! Genesis 2:23 says *And I, the Lord God, said unto mine only Begotten, that it was not good that man should be alone.* In verse 28 we see that Adam underwent anesthesia and had orthopedic surgery. Actually it says – caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and took out one of his ribs, which I, the Lord God, made woman.

So from the beginning we see that God did not want us to be alone. He wanted us connected to each other. God expects us to grow in our connectedness. He started out with Adam (one soul), then created Eve out of Adam's rib, then they had children/family, like the congregation. The church collectively is the Body of Christ. We are told there are only two churches – the church of Christ and the Church of the devil. Zion is the reward of connection. Is that a plan for growing in our connectedness? Is that simplistically God's plan?

Well friends, sometime I feel like we are moving in the opposite direction! The Body of Christ is moving toward independent congregations – families separating, and a connecting doctrine is being lost. And you know who is happy about this – SATAN. Do you want to help make satan happy? I don't think so. In the book of John it is recorded that Jesus teaches his disciples about the need for being connected to Him, to God, to each other. This lesson follows him foretelling of His betrayal and that a Comforter that will come to abide forever. Imagine walking through the countryside with Jesus having a conversation about his betrayal and Him telling you He will pray to the Father to give you a Comforter. Walking past a vineyard He stops and shares this lesson about being connected.

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the

vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love. (John 15:1-9)

Jesus explains the connection between the branch, the vine, and bearing fruit and the husbandman. Jesus is the vine. Disciples (us) are the branches. If we abide in Him and thereby associate with each other, we can bring forth much fruit; but without Jesus we can do nothing.

Jesus concludes with: *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue in my love.* It is the love of God to us through Jesus that keeps us connect-



Gordon Winkler



ed. And Jesus says to stay connected, continue in my love.

When we are baptized into Christ we are part of the Body of Christ – His church. So through Christ we are bound together in a connection of faith. Because we belong to Christ, we belong to each other. Remember Acts 2:44 and all that believed were together.

How many of you have seen the giant redwood trees in California? I have seen them only in pictures. They are the largest living things on earth and the tallest trees in the world, some over 300 ft. high and more than 2500 years old. You would think that trees that large would have a tremendous root system, reaching down deep into the earth. But that is not the case. Redwoods have a

very shallow root system, only 12 to 14 feet deep. The roots of these trees are, however, intertwined. They are tied in with each other; interlocked. The roots can occupy over an acre of earth. When the storms come and the winds blow the redwoods still stand. With an interlocking root system they support and sustain each other. They need one another to survive. So do we!

Our natural tendency is to pull away and go it alone. We must resist that temptation. We will fall into the devil's trap if we do so. No wonder Jesus prayed about our unity in His last prayer. It is a challenge for us today, within the church and in a broader sense, among our churches. We were created to be connected. We are not

called to do it alone.

God has given us this family. Ephesian 2:19-22 says *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

It is absolutely essential that we stick close to Jesus Christ our Cornerstone for strength and guidance. Let's make this connection of faith a priority in our lives. Be devoted to it, the same way the believers in Acts were.



THE FOUR SEEDS

Ordination Charge For Samuel Jordison

**High Priest
Joel Loving
Lamoni, Iowa
June 25, 2017**

As a scripture reading I want to quote from Moroni 10:2-5. And I seal up these records, after I have spoken a few words by way of exhortation unto you. Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam, even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts. And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; 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.

Good morning. Some of you know that before a service, especially if I'm involved in some sort of role or capacity to serve the Lord, I imagine the Lord coming into the sanctuary. I imagine the Holy Spirit resting here. It helps in terms of my own preparation. Today it's not hard to imagine. I want you to think beyond what your normal or natural eyes would see and recognize the holiness that we're all privileged to partake in today. Sam, I will be speaking directly to you and to the rest of you through Sam.

I guess if I had to title today's sermon it would be "The Four Seeds" or the "Four Multipliers." These are things that are principles that I am telling you personally, Sam. If you will plant them, if you will practice them they will multiply. They will be like a seed that grows into a great tree which blossoms and produces much fruit and indeed will become something quite eternally edifying, not only for you but for the Lord and His people.

The first seed: Pursue Christ with relentless diligence. At the heart of all that we're doing, the greatest truth

of all time is about Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Alpha and Omega and through your relationship with Him not only as a son of God but even a friend of Jesus, you will find amazing insight. If you can lose yourself in that, wonderful things are in store.

The first scripture that I want to read with that in mind is from Alma 17:9-19. This is a story which many of you already know. It's kind of amazing because it's probably one of the biggest comebacks in all history. We all like comeback stories. This is one of the big ones because Alma in the 17th chapter tells his story. Remember he had some buddies and they were going around persecuting the church and making fun of the people. An angel came and had something to say about it and they all were stopped in their tracks. These are Alma's own words.

And the angel spake more things unto me, which were heard by my brethren, but I did not hear them; for when I heard the words, If thou wilt not be destroyed of thyself, seek no more to destroy the church of God, I was struck with such great fear and amazement, lest perhaps



I should be destroyed, that I fell to the earth, and I did hear no more; But I was racked with eternal torment, for my soul was harrowed up to the greatest degree, and racked with all my sins. Yea, I did remember all my sins and iniquities, for which I was tormented with the pains of hell; Yea, I saw that I had rebelled against my God, and that I had not kept his holy commandments; yea, and I had murdered many of his children, or rather led them away unto destruction; Yea, and in fine, so great had been my iniquities, that the very thoughts of coming into the presence of my God, did rack my soul with inexpressible horror. O, thought I, that I could be banished and become extinct both soul and body, that I might not be brought to stand in the presence of my God, to be judged of my deeds. And now, for three days and for three nights was I racked, even with the pains of a damned soul. 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 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. Now stop there just for a second. I want you to imagine the extreme desperation of this cry and how you would think in many respects it's over. It's gone. He's done enough. He's in real trouble here and he knows it and yet how with even this thought Christ responds to this. This pursuit of Alma's at this point is literally between life and death and he knows it. Not just life and death on this earth but eternal death outside of salvation. And now behold, when I thought this, I could remember my pains no more; yea, I was harrowed 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.

Sam, you know this but I reiterate this as one of the seeds. You are to develop one of the highest standards of study, prayer and fasting that you can muster. Through that plead with your God, our God, Jesus Christ for His inclusion and transformation in your heart and your mind. You will be visited, you will recognize and perceive and discern our Holy Heavenly Father as He reveals Himself to you. Pursue it with unrelenting diligence.

I used to be part of the Community of Christ. I still have many friends in the Community of Christ who I dearly love and though I disagree with them strongly about many issues I still pray for them and hurt for them. When you work for the Community of Christ you have to take classes. Some might call it indoctrination but this was a class called MEADS (Ministerial Education and Discipleship Studies). You can't work for the church if you don't take these classes. It's kind of a watered down Masters Class if you are not able to go to seminary, the school of theology. So I was in a class and a respected leader of the church was before us teaching the class. I liked this teacher a lot. We were studying RLDS scripture.

Of the Book of Mormon he said, 'There is no evidence for the historicity of this book.' My jaw dropped. I was hearing this from a church leader. Then I got upset and then I got mad. I was mad at myself because I didn't have some immediate response to say about this claim. I was at Graceland University attending this class. My sister Valle happened to be there with our daughter Kasey and Ron Smith was there. I got back from that class and I was kind of beside myself. I was really bewildered. It was like, 'What! What!' We don't even believe this book anymore?!

Now about this same time a good friend of mine, Rich Rupe, who some of you know through the book *The Book of Mormon an Inconvenient Truth* and then a second book *God's Plan of Salvation* was part of a congregation called the Highlands in Kansas City, MO. He

was the financial officer and I was the pastor. I was a full-time paid pastor at that point. By the way I do not believe in being a paid pastor AT ALL. It creates enormous problems and pressures.

Rich walked into my office one day and sat down across from my desk and said, 'Where are the miracles.' Do some of you remember the old commercial, 'Where's the beef.' Many of you I can see don't. Sam, where are the miracles? I wanted to defend the church and say, 'They are there.' This man is a little older than me and he said, 'No, no. I have seen miracles. I was part of the miracles. Where have they gone?'

We began talking about various things including the Book of Mormon. We wondered what the church believed any more about the Book of Mormon. What had happened to the church? This is important because I want you to know I have seen the under-belly of the Community of Christ. I don't speak in condemnation. I speak lovingly and mercifully but I can tell you I know. Listen to my journey because at that point Rich and I made some important decisions.



Joel Loving

He wanted to write a book. I said, 'That's great. I think you should write a book. Let's investigate all these issues about what's going on in the Community of Christ because we see it faltering and falling apart. And what's happening to the Book of Mormon?'

So he started his book and we went to pray together. This was the prayer, something like this. 'Lord, we are in a quandary.' This is a James 1:5 kind of thing. 'We want to know the truth. We don't want to play games. We don't want to pretend. We don't want to make believe. We don't want to say one thing and believe another. We want to know the real thing. You have made promises about that and we're asking you now with sincere hearts (Just like the scripture we read earlier out of Moroni.) We want to know the truth.' We went on to investigate. This is largely Rich's story, not mine but because we worked together this was the blessing that happened.

We started asking questions of church members, church leaders and we couldn't find the answers that we were seeking so we had to go to the Restoration leaders. We went outside the Restoration to the Mormons and their leaders many of whom are professors. We went to other split offs from the Restoration churches earlier and asked them questions. Do you know what we found out? Well, I would hate for you to remain in this state of ignorance. Basically, we asked if the Book of Mormon was a true book? What is your testimony and out of the Community of Christ we basically got this answer. 'It is scripture. It did come from God but it's ahistorical.' I say this not to give a hard time to anybody other than just to be truthful. So it allows them to sort of make this dual answer which is yes it is scripture but it didn't really happen. This allows them to meet the membership and acknowledge the rightfulness or the divine nature of the Book of Mormon but also it allows them to look at their academic friends and say we know it didn't really happen. This was really disappointing to us.

This journey took about five years. We went down to Mexico several times. We talked with folks down there. This was a diligent search and you know

what I'm going to say. I'm almost going to shout it! IT'S TRUE. IT HAPPENED AND IT'S SO SIGNIFICANT. A little bit later I'm going to ask everybody here what is so critical about the Book of Mormon? I think you should have a very quick sentence answer that you know deep from within your heart. I do and I'm not that smart but I have something that makes my heart pound powerfully about what's happening in the Restoration and what God is doing and what we, in many ways, are undoing. All this is to say, I read it, many times. I asked many questions about it. I spent a lot of time on my knees and went to the Lord about it. It's true. I bear witness that the Book of Mormon is true and has more of a role and a purpose both divine in the end times than we can possibly imagine. It is so critically key.

I'm skipping a lot of details here, but at the end of about five years I came home to my family with something important to say. I had found out this truth but I had had the Book of Mormon my whole life. I had read it and knew what was in it but not to this degree so my wife and I met with our four children and said, 'There is a whole new standard of understanding about this book that we have to testify of and have to bring it to you for the very salvation of your souls. It's not enough to half-way believe it or pretend to believe it or have it up on your shelf and know a few of the quotes from it.' We decided as a family to read the Book of Mormon every night about 8:15 or 8:30 until 9:00 o'clock. It took us a year to get through the whole book. Guess what? The kids said, 'Dad, you have to carry this. You have to carry this testimony, all these insights. We come from a generation that doesn't know this Book very well.' Since that time I have been a part of several Book of Mormon studies. All I am going to say is your pursuit of truth is the pursuit of Jesus Christ and you must not give up your pursuit of knowing Christ.

The second seed: You are to be taught from on high. Listen carefully. It is the Holy Spirit that is the great teacher. You are hearing my words. That's not enough. It's not good enough. Just trust

me. I am less than the dust of the earth. I know that. You don't need to trust my words. It's the Holy Spirit you are really seeking. Even as you read it's not just the words, it's the Spirit of the words. It's the author of those words that comes through the Spirit. Find the light in the words that the writer has written down. You are to know the author and the Spirit by which those words were copied down as you read about scripture. You are to be taught from on high.

Listen to this. We talked about this in our adult class this morning with Rob. It's from Matthew 16:16-21. *He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. I believe that's the greatest truth of all time. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.* (Then He throws them a curveball. I always love it when the scriptures throw a curveball because it means there is extra special study that we need to do to understand it.) *Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus, the Christ.*

What? Do you take truth and hide it under a bushel? Do you keep it a secret? Here's Christ saying, 'Shhhhh. Don't tell anybody.' What does that mean? Why keep it a secret? I want to give you a clue. In Matthew 3:24-25 it says, And it came to pass that Jesus grew up with his brethren, and waxed strong, and waited upon the Lord for the time of his ministry to come. And he served under his father, and he spake not as other men, neither could he be taught; for he needed not that any man should teach him. (Who taught Him? It was the Holy Spirit. Jesus was saying earlier, 'Don't tell anybody.' At that point in history I believe He was reserving that knowledge, that informa-



tion, that revelation and that light for the Holy Spirit to bring the message. It's the Holy Spirit that is the messenger. The Holy Spirit is the teacher.)

Now I am going to read from Ether 3:18-19: *And the friends of Jared and his brother, were in number about twenty and two souls; and they also begat sons and daughters, before they came to the promised land; and therefore they began to be many. And they were taught to walk humbly before the Lord; and they were also taught from on high.* Folks, I want you to read good books. I want you to listen to good teachers. There are many to read and hear from. But make no mistake, it is the Holy Spirit in the final analysis which must be the teacher.

In the Sermon on the Mount which is in the Book of Mormon and in the New Testament but I'll read from Matthew 5:8. *And blessed are all they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.* Do you hunger? Sometimes we don't hunger if we are really honest. Sometimes it like, 'OK enough of this church stuff, enough of these scriptures. I'm falling asleep as I try to comprehend it.' Here's what I say. Simply pray for the desire of righteousness. Simply pray to have the desire of righteousness. Simply pray for the desire to have holy desires. Now I wonder how our Heavenly Father who hears all of these prayers, answers that prayer because I think that's a pretty solid prayer. I know He answered my prayer when I asked to not be deceived or misled. I wanted to know the truth. I wonder what He will answer you if you honestly say, 'I would like to have holy desires take over my heart.'

The third seed: I want you to learn all you can about His covenants. I've only recently come to a fuller awareness of this. You wonder why the world is in so much turmoil and trouble. What's happening? Is this what God wanted? Regardless of whether He wanted it or not it's here. What's going on? Here's what I've come to realize. Knowing Him and trusting Him and having faith in Jesus Christ, He would have made a way. There would be a way for us to negotiate the travails and the challenges of life in order to make it to Him and to enlight-

enment and to revelation. It's in the covenants that He keeps making with these holy prophets. They get close to Him and He meets with them and reveals to them divine insights and they end up making these covenants. I want you to seek out the covenants. They are key. This Book of Mormon is a covenant. We'll talk about this shortly.

Section 1 of the Doctrine and Covenants which Rob also mentioned this morning would have been Section 67 had it come chronologically. It was moved from that position to be our first Section. I want to read from paragraphs 4a through e. Listen carefully. *Wherefore I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth,* (I have a son who I love dearly who does not like me to preach anything negative. I feel like I'm checkmated because it's like I just read *Wherefore I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth.* How do I translate that into something positive?)

Folks, I'm sorry if this is doom and gloom but I'm accepting it because it's the truth. I have more of an allegiance to what the truth is because that's where Christ is then trying to make you always feel so rosy about fuzzy, warm Jesus. So the truth is, something calamitous is going to happen.) *called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jr., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments, and also gave commandments to others, that they should proclaim these things unto the world; and all this that it might be fulfilled, which was written by the prophets; the weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones, that man should not counsel his fellow man, neither trust in the arm of flesh, but* (In these days that are coming the Spirit will work directly. You won't have to hear someone else say things and test it. You will know directly from the Holy Spirit.) *that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world; that faith also might increase in the earth; that mine everlasting covenant might be established; that the fullness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and the*

simple, unto the ends of the world, and before kings and rulers.

I could go on about what the fullness of the gospel is. It is itself a multiplier, understanding what that means. Our brethren who we should look up to and love as our brothers and sisters in other faiths and other denominations do not believe they need the Book of Mormon. But this book is for them as well and we should understand how this all fits together and what the fullness of the gospel is. They would say to you. 'Wait a second. We have the gospel. We believe in Jesus. We've been saved. We're going to live with Him in paradise. We have faith. We're saved. That's the gospel. What's better than that? I would answer the fullness of the gospel. Wait a second. How can there be something greater than the gospel? Keep listening.

Genesis 9:21-23 talks about the everlasting covenant. *And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant, which I made unto thy father Enoch; that, when men should keep all my commandments, Zion should again come on the earth, the city of Enoch which I have caught up unto myself. And this is mine everlasting covenant, that when thy posterity shall embrace the truth,* (By the way what does that mean? It means embrace Christ ultimately.) *and look upward, then shall Zion look downward, and all the heavens shall shake with gladness, and the earth shall tremble with joy. And the general assembly of the church of the firstborn shall come down out of heaven, and possess the earth, and shall have place until the end come. And this is mine everlasting covenant, which I made with thy father Enoch.*

Do you know why the heavens are shaking and the earth is trembling? Because they are moving. Have you ever moved? This is big. I'll talk about it later. You don't seem to be catching on with me.

In Section 108:11a it says, *And for this cause, that men might be made partakers of the glories which were to be revealed, the Lord sent forth the fullness of his gospel, his everlasting covenant,* (They are combined here now.) *reasoning in plainness and simplicity, to prepare*



the weak for those things which are coming on the earth.

Now we compare the fullness of the gospel with the covenant to restore Israel in Section 39:3e. *Thou shalt preach the fullness of my gospel which I have sent forth in these last days; the covenant which I have sent forth to recover my people, which are of the house of Israel.* (And finally, the Book of Mormon and the fullness of the gospel are combined. This is all wrapping together, folks, finely woven with holy, sacred thread.) *Behold, this is wisdom in me; wherefore marvel not, for the hour cometh that I will drink of the fruit of the vine with you on the earth, and with Moroni, whom I have sent unto you to reveal the Book of Mormon, containing the fullness of my everlasting gospel.* (D & C 26:2a)

So why is this Book of Mormon so critical? We don't really need it to get to heaven do we? So why do we need it at all? Here's your why. Here's your simple answer. Here's the answer that has caught me on fire. This is the key to heaven returning to earth so that Jesus may reign in our midst just as I am standing before you, just as you have people sitting next to you. Jesus will be walking in our midst. Not just Jesus. This is a divine reunion. The greatest reunion I can possibly imagine.

Now, folks, let's capture this. You have grandparents and great grandparents. I had a grandmother who died when I was two. I understand she was a very angelic person, a wonderful person, an amazing person. I don't know anybody who doesn't speak with the highest regard for her. Somehow, I don't know how other than through the Holy Spirit, somehow I sense it was her prayers not only on earth but beyond that brought blessing to me in my life.

Now that's a question for you. Do you think they say prayers in heaven? Do you think those who die and go to heaven with Jesus in paradise say prayers? You bet they do. Guess what they pray about? You. You have loved ones who've been praying ardently, desperately to the Lord to bless you to return to be part of your lives to be together with you: fathers, mothers, brothers. Do we get this? This is like

Moses or Abraham or Enoch.

I heard a testimony. I won't go into a lot of details. I'm not at liberty to do so. I heard a testimony about a recent ordination that was taking place and a couple of people saw and sensed angels in that room, Peter, James and John. Do you know what they were doing? They were holding back citizens of the city of Enoch who were pressing to return, to reveal themselves, to bring blessing. Do we understand what this book is about? This isn't about your plan. This isn't about what I imagine. This is a God scope, a quantum leap of discernment and quickening of our minds.

Folks, this is where God gets what He's wanted, what He's been planning. The greatest sculptor, the greatest artist, the greatest creator, the greatest greatest who will ever be has come up with this amazing end time story which will be culminated as we accept and follow the covenants that bring to pass His freedom to make those occur. Is that not amazing? It's another testimony of Jesus but other faiths have Jesus. They don't have this story about the return of heaven together in Zion like you do as part of the Restoration and yet we let the book sit on our shelves or our scriptures set on our shelves.

The fourth seed: This is for you specifically, Samuel. In the pure love of Christ you are to find your way into hearts and homes. This is a lost practice in the Restoration. I've struggled with this in this congregation. This is the greatest congregation ever that we've been part of but we still struggle with this. I say this fondly but lovingly. It's hard for us to get into homes. It's hard for us to have priesthood visits in the homes. Can anybody tell me a righteous, divine reason why we are not in the homes? Is your house not clean enough? Does it make you too uncomfortable or you don't want to stop watching your favorite TV shows? I don't know. I love you but, Sam, get in their hearts and get in their homes. Do you hear me? This will multiply your ministry many times over and add to it. You are going to do other things later on but let's not worry about that let's just get in the hearts and


get in their homes.

I'll just tell you a couple of stories. I didn't even ask them permission to talk about this but if you are in this congregation you know the blessing that Bob and Jen (Rowland) have brought to us and Bob's call to the priesthood. Bob's led an interesting life. He's experienced a lot of different things but when it comes to faith, when it comes to standing boldly he's one of the strongest of all of us. I'm telling you that I sensed when I first met this man that there was something about him that I needed to draw close to. There is strength in who God is transforming in you, Bob, and you are to bring that blessing to this congregation as you have.

Bob got here at 7:30 this morning to prepare this sanctuary for your attendance and for the reception of the Holy Ghost. See what I mean? Or Joe (Mickelson) and his wife Anna who have become part of this congregation and are bringing blessing all ready by who they are and what they stand for and his call to the office of priest. Rob and I went out and visited Joe and Anna. Rob knows all about Joe's family. It wasn't about the visit. It wasn't about Rob and I. I'm just saying ask Joe and Anna what's happened as they've been visited, as people have entered their hearts. What's going on in this congregation?

Folks, we are all recipients of these seeds at some point or another. We've all benefited from these promises. Sam, I give them to you in the most utmost respect. I want to honor God and praise Him for who you are but more importantly for who you are becoming for you have this DNA. It's in you, this spiritual promise that will unfold as you develop these principles and others. I am so excited about what lies before you. May we all be blessed as we follow that light and pursue Jesus Christ is my prayer.





**And the light which now shineth,
which giveth you light,
is through him who enlighteneth your eyes,
which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings;
which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God,
to fill the immensity of space.**

**The light which is in all things;
which giveth life to all things;
which is the law by which all things are governed;
even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne,
who is in the bosom of eternity,
who is in the midst of all things.**

Doctrine and Covenants 85:3a-b



September 2017 8/30/17 Changes highlighted

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			Aug 30 Mtg 7 PM <i>Linda Boswell's</i> <i>Jim Barber</i>	31	1	2
3 Potluck after svc Priesthood Mtg 8:30 Fellowship 6 PM Joe Mickelson's <i>Joel Loving</i>	4 5 pm Women's Prayer Time	5	6 Prayer Mtg 7 PM Bob Rowland's <i>Rodney Bastow</i>	7 Bk Mormon Class 7PM Brian & Kasey Courtney's Ringgold Singers @ church	8	9 Men's Pizza - 11 AM
10 BUSINESS MTG - 9:45 Fellowship 6 PM Rowlands <i>Joel Loving</i>	11 5 pm Women's Prayer Time	12	13 Prayer Mtg 7 PM Steve Smith's <i>Joel Loving</i>	14 Bk Mormon Class 7PM Brian & Kasey Courtney's Ringgold Singers @ church	15	16
17 Fellowship 6 PM Ron Smith's Rob Rolfe Food for Center	18 5 pm Women's Prayer Time	19 Women's Mtg 5:00 Linda Rolfe's	20 Prayer Mtg 7 PM Ron Smith's <i>Michael Jordison</i>	21 Bk Mormon Class 7PM Brian & Kasey Courtney's Ringgold Singers @ church	22 Retreat - 6-8 PM <i>Jim Noland/Joel Loving</i> Ron Smith's	23 Weekend retreat 8-12, 1-4, 6-8 <i>Jim Noland/Joel Loving</i> Ron Smith's
24 Potluck dinner after service 9:45 - 10:45 (No SS) Afternoon visiting Fellowship 6 PM <i>Music in Central Park</i> Gazebo <i>Michael Jordison</i>	25 5 pm Women's Prayer Time	26	27 Prayer Mtg 7 PM <i>Linda Boswell's</i> <i>Ron Smith</i>	28 Bk Mormon Class 7PM Brian & Kasey Courtney's Ringgold Singers @ church	29	30
Oct 1 Potluck after svc Priesthood Mtg 8:30 Fellowship 6 PM			Notes: Location of Sunday evening & Wednesday prayer service in green Presider is in red & italics. Specific assignments on reverse. Ladies - Women's Group meeting is 5 - 6:30 September 19th at Rolfe's			



September 3

Presiding	Rob Rolfe
Speaking	Joe Mickelson
Devotions	George Knotts
Pianist	Cheryl Phipps
Music Ministry	Sue Beck
Greeters	Ed/Diane Anderson
Custodians	Jordison Family

September– 10

Presiding	Ed Anderson
Speaking	Rodney Bastow
Devotions	Tony/Sandy Crandell
Pianist	Cheryl Phipps
Music Ministry	Steve Smith
Greeters	Rowland family
Custodians	Linda Boswell

FYI –Absences:

Crandells gone 9/ 21 –10/3.
 Barbers gone Labor Day weekend, most of September
 Phipps's gone 9/24
 9/24 – Sherm Phipps speaking in Belle, MO.
 Ron Smith gone 8/31 – 9/14

September 17

Presiding	Michael Jordison
Speaking	Samuel Jordison
Devotions	Rowlands
Pianist	Cheryl Phipps
Music Ministry	Jordison family
Greeters	Dwight/Shirley Edgerton
Custodians	Joel/Deni Loving

George Knotts in Osceola

September 24

Presiding	Joel Loving
Speaking	Jim Noland
Devotions	-----
Pianist	Bonnie Major
Music Ministry	Rob Rolfe
Greeters	Jordisons
Custodians	Bob/Liz Bell

October 1

Presiding	Ed Anderson
Speaking	Matt Anderson
Devotions	Rob & Lynda Rolfe
Pianist	Cheryl Phipps
Music Ministry	Diane Anderson
Greeters	Linda Boswell
Custodians	Sue Beck

PLEASE REVIEW YOUR ASSIGNMENTS AND LET SANDY CRANDELL (641-784-7204) KNOW IF THERE IS A CONFLICT. CHECK SCHEDULES AS PRINTED WEEKLY

FOR CHANGES. Those giving Presiding Ministry, please share your hymns with the assigned pianist prior to Sunday: Music Coordinator: Rob Rolfe - 641-784-6030; text/call 641-442-5894; Musicians: Cheryl Phipps – 641-442-5570, Bonnie Major 6641-289-0535,

Church cleaning should be done prior to Sunday date assigned. Church website is www.gospelrestored.org/.

Family Devotions- 9:30 Preaching Service- 11:00 Sunday evenings – 6:00 PM Wednesday prayer service-7:00 PM



Church of Jesus Christ Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

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

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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)

News & Notes

Continued from front page

MO, will be teaching the classes for the weekend.

The retreat will finish up Sunday when Brother Noland will bring the message for the Sunday morning service in Mount Ayr.

The retreat is for the whole branch.

Music in the park

For the Sunday fellowship Sunday, Sept. 24, there will be music in the Central Park Gazebo in Lamoni at 6 p.m.

We hope everyone will want to take part in this event.