

May 2018

# Church of Jesus Christ

## Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

# NEWSLETTER

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*Gather my Saints together...those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.*



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**LONGING FOR THE GATHERING**  
the Ashton SMITH (SONS OF ISAAC SIMONSEN) R. Ward Howe

On that bright and glo-ri-ous morn-ing When the Lord shall come a - gain, And the  
 When we gath - er in Mount Zi - on We will go with one ac - cord, And we'll  
 Then the Lam - en - ties, they will be blest, We'll all be - come as one When the  
 Then their eyes, they will be o - pened And their hearts will un - der - stand, And our

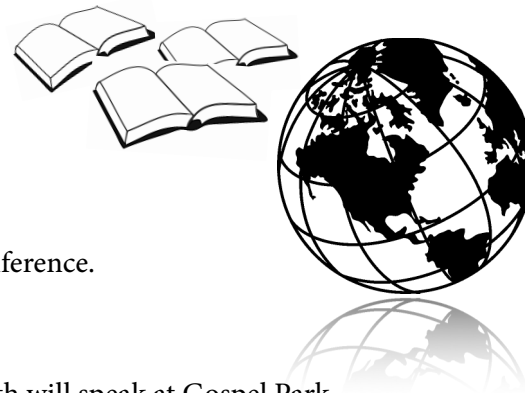
ab - ring of the flock will see to Him (will be to Him), Then the saints of God will flour - ish  
 tek up - on that cit - y and we'll sing (and we'll sing), We will sing the songs of Zi - on - on  
 sants of God go out to preach to them (to preach to them), They will have the Spir - it with them  
 ri - als and temp - ta - tions will be o'er (will be o'er), Then the Gos - pel in its pow - er

## News & Notes

On April 21st 46 MARB women and guests met at the Lamoni Community Center for the second annual spring brunch. Guests were from Lamoni, Mount Ayr, Decatur, Kellerton and Leon churches including Community of Christ, Methodist, Mt Ayr United Baptist - Presbyterian church, and Decatur Restoration Branch. After a lovely meal the ladies heard a program which included Sue Trullinger singing *Were You There When They Crucified My Lord*. This was followed by testimonies from four of the women (represented by four

MARB ladies) who were at the cross and were witnesses of the resurrection. All sang together *God Be With You Till We Meet Again*, which sounded like a choir of angels, to close the program. Many attendees gave very positive comments by phone and in person after the program.

On April 6th, many from the congregation shared with Saints from all walks of the Restoration with a hymn sing at the Stone Church in Independence, organized by brother H. Alan Smith.



# SAINTS MINISTERING ELSEWHERE

April 1 Elder Michael Jordison spoke at Gospel Park in Independence.

April 4 & 5th Brothers Joe Mickelson & Sherman Phipps spoke at the JCRB conference.

April 29th Elder Ed Anderson spoke at Osceola.

May 6th Priest Jim Barber will be speaking in Osceola while Patriarch Ron Smith will speak at Gospel Park.

May 13th Elder Jon Barney, of Lamoni, will be speaking in Mount Ayr.

May 20th High Priest Sherman Phipps will be speaking at Saints Haven Branch in Independence.

## WE NEED TO HAVE FAITH!

**Seventy Bob Moore**  
*Independence, Missouri*  
**March 25, 2018**

Brother Rob Rolfe read a scripture from Mosiah 11:97-101 as a Call to Worship. *And it came to pass that King Mosiah granted unto Alma, that he might establish churches throughout all the land of Zarahemla; and gave him power to ordain priests and teachers over every church. Now this was done because there were so many people that they could not all be governed by one teacher; neither could they all hear the word of God in one assembly; therefore they did assemble themselves together in different bodies, being called churches; Every church having their priests and their teachers, and every priest preaching the word according as it was delivered to him by the mouth of Alma; And thus, notwithstanding there being many churches they were all one church; yea, even the church of God: For there was nothing preached in all the churches except it were repentance and faith in God.* I hope that the day will come that we will be back to one church again because unfortunately we have

many churches but we are not ONE church. That's what I think the Lord would like to have us be.

Brother Moore began his sermon. Good morning. I would like to read as a text from Malachi 3:1. *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.* May the Lord add His blessing to the reading of this word.

This particular year on our calendar Good Friday actually falls on the solar anniversary of Jesus' death when He hung on the cross on Good Friday 33 AD. This is actually the solar anniversary day-wise as far as when Jesus rode into Jerusalem. A week before He rode into Jerusalem which would be last Sunday Lazarus died. He was a dear friend of Jesus. Jesus was not there. When He heard that Lazarus had died He delayed His coming and He arrived four days after Lazarus had been placed in the tomb.

Lazarus' sister Martha came out and ranted, 'Oh, if you had only been here when he was sick!' Those of the Jews who had come out of Jerusalem to comfort the Bethany family said the same thing. 'You could have healed him. You healed the blind. You caused the lame to walk.' Surely He would have healed His friend Lazarus. How did Jesus react to those? The scripture says, 'His soul groaned within Him.' It pained Him to hear that because they did not understand who He was or how He had power to save.

The scripture says, Jesus said, *Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord,*



*by this time he stinketh; for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, . . . And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes. (John 11:39-41; 43-44)*

What a marvelous miracle this was to testify of the divinity of Jesus who appeared as a man who had gone forth teaching wonderful things. Who had healed the sick and caused the blind to see, the deaf to hear and taught the peaceable things of the kingdom. But it was so hard to believe in Him despite all of these things. People said that He was false, that He was a tool of the devil and that He was violating the law so plainly written in the world.

When people heard that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead they believed. *Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there* (meaning that Lazarus was alive in Bethany); *and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.* (John 12:9) Bethany was only 15 furlongs that's a little under two miles away from Jerusalem, not far to walk and people came to see Lazarus. This man was dead and Jesus had raised him so the next Sunday when Jesus went into Jerusalem the news of Lazarus' resurrection had gone through the whole city. Throngs of people came out to see Jesus.

*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.* (John 12:12-13) The promise had been prophesied in the days of Malachi that Jesus would come to His temple. People cheered Him as He entered Jerusalem. They knew that He was greater than a prophet. They knew that He had raised Lazarus from the dead and they greeted Him, *Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord...* (Matthew 23:40)

But how did the leaders of the Jews react? John tells us. They had a meeting and they said, 'All men will believe on Him and the Romans shall come and take away both OUR place and station.' What were the leaders concerned about? Their place, their station. Here was Jesus, as far as they were concerned, a person who had come up independently and outside the halls and corridors of power. They didn't want to lose their station and as a result they plotted to kill Him and took counsel on how they would do that.

When Jesus comes to His temple He can't abide in an unholy place. Even after He entered Jerusalem the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the Scribes were plotting His death.



He entered the temple and cleansed it, cast out the moneychangers. Well, who there was left? What good is it for God to come to His creation and have no one there to greet Him or to commune with Him and so they crucified Jesus. But Jesus rose from the dead. Not only did He have power to raise Lazarus from the dead but He had power to raise Himself from the dead. He broke the powers of darkness and exited the tomb as testimony that not only could He raise Lazarus from the dead when He was personally upon the earth but He had power over death and He can raise all those who believe in Him.

So apostles went forth to preach that message, to bear testimony and they bore the tidings of the gospel. Gospel means 'good news' and what better news is there? Paul writes in the first part of the Corinthian letters. *Moreover; brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures; And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; After that, he was seen of about five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James, then one of the apostles. And last of all he*



was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. (1 Corinthians 15:1-8)

There were numerous witnesses who beheld Jesus, who saw Him after He died and they bore testimony of that. Because of that testimony the good news of salvation went forth as these witnesses bore their testimony. But how did the leaders react? The man that they had sought to destroy because they would lose their place was claimed to have been resurrected and now sending forth His disciples. What position did they have? So they gathered the guards of the tomb. It says, *And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him while we slept.* (Matthew 28:11-12)

So if you were just a person in Jerusalem or maybe you didn't live right in Jerusalem, maybe you lived two or three day's journey. Maybe you'd never seen Jesus but you had heard a lot about Him and you knew that He'd been crucified by the Romans. You knew that the Pharisees, your leaders, had charged Jesus with crimes of blasphemy and disobedience to the law. Then you heard His disciples saying, 'He rose from the dead' and here's the hope that we have. Your own religious leaders are saying, 'No those people



made this all up and they stole the body. He didn't rise from the dead.' Who would you believe and how would you ascertain the truth?

Peter makes an interesting statement in 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:19. It says, *We have therefore a more sure knowledge of the word of prophecy.* . . . They were eye witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus. Did they have a more sure word than being an eye witness? What is that? It's the revelation of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost can rest on people and give them immediate verification. That's what happened when the disciples went out. They preached the gospel and the heavens opened. Paul says that our gospel doesn't come to you in word only but in power and that power is the Holy Ghost. But as the word went out the Jews felt they were rejected by Jesus and although Jesus had come to His temple there was no holy temple nor holy people and His kingdom could not be established upon the earth.

It's not my purpose to take time to go through the history

of the gospel and the word as it traveled through time. Suffice it to say that when Jesus was admonished by the Pharisees, as He was entering into Jerusalem, to silence those people who were crying hosanna, He said if they were to be quiet the rocks themselves would cry out. But because the gospel went to the Gentiles and because of the Reformation, the rocks in Europe were built into cathedrals and they echoed with praises of those devout believers who met during the time of the Reformation. It was their quest to find the purified church that led them to cross the ocean and come to this land.

So the gospel survived in the sense of the testimony of Jesus' resurrection and the hope that that gives us. Millions of people believed that testimony but the root problem that faced Christians in 1830 was, what is the proper response to that testimony? Jesus died for you. He bore your sins on the cross because of that you can have eternal life. How should you respond to that testimony? The Holy Spirit burns within you and says yes that's right but how should you react? What should you do? Some people say that you have to make a private confession. Some people say that you have to do some other things. You need to come to the altar. You need to pray the mourners' prayer.

So a variety of answers came forth in the Reformation as to what to do but people didn't know. For that reason the Lord sent Moroni to Joseph Smith, a person of ill consequence from any worldly standard, a person who had not been educated, had little standing. But Moroni appeared to him and told him about the Book of Mormon. In the conversation that he had this is what Moroni said that Joseph would be writing. He, meaning Moroni, also said that the fullness of the everlasting gospel was contained in it, in the Book of Mormon plates, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants. You see during the time of the Reformation, people believed but they didn't know how to respond to the gospel message. When Jesus came to Martha and she lamented her brother's death, He said to her, *Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?* (John 11:40) Because reformers and those that believe their testimony believed and bore forth their prayers, the Lord heard them and gathered them to this land for what purpose? That He might reveal the proper response how people should react to the news of God's salvation and His Son Jesus Christ. That news is contained in the Book of Mormon.

If this were the game Jeopardy and Moroni said the fullness of the gospel is stated in the Book of Mormon by Jesus. Where is that? Can you tell me the verse and chapter? Where is that gospel? It's contained in the Book of Mormon and here's what it says. Jesus is speaking, *Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have*



*given unto you, that I came into the world to do the will of my Father; because my Father sent me; And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, I might draw all men unto me: That as I have been lifted up by men, even so should men be lifted up by the Father; to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil; And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father, I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works. And it shall come to pass, that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name, shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father; at that day when I shall stand to judge the world. (3<sup>rd</sup> Nephi 12:25-29)*

In recent times people have done a lot of research into what they call, 'Near Death Experiences' where people die. Sometimes those people have experiences and people have researched that and come to an interesting conclusion. They all have the same experiences regardless of their background. They all relate a sense of coming out of or through a tunnel of light into a presence of light and being lifted up. Some see themselves coming even before a personage. My point in stating this is that the people who have this experience are from all different backgrounds. It says all men, every person is raised from this life to come before Jesus. It is as stated elsewhere and taught elsewhere the salvation from the temporal death that was caused by the fall of Adam.

How do we respond to this good news? Death does not end life where we all will stand before Jesus. What's the response? Jesus continues, *And it shall come to pass, that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name, shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father; at that day when I shall stand to judge the world. (3<sup>rd</sup> Nephi 12:29)* Look at that. Whoever repents, we all understand we do things that corrupt ourselves. Sometimes we're just tired and we say something in anger. We know that it's wrong. We do things sometimes intentionally that we can correct. The promise is that even though all of us are soiled by our own sins, whoever repents, whoever confesses their sins and makes an effort to stop that and makes a covenant in the waters of baptism to do that will be filled. Filled with what? Filled with the Holy Ghost and that Holy Ghost lives in that person and empowers them to act more righteous. If a person endures in that Jesus promises to hold them guiltless. None of us are guiltless. We are all guilty. The good news of the gospel is that because Jesus died for us, not only will we be resurrected to stand before our Savior, but if we have done these simple things and lived under the direction of the Holy Ghost, we'll be held guiltless. Something we don't deserve.

So this gospel was restored and the elders of this church after the restoration took this message to the world preaching faith and repentance. This was in fulfillment of a prophecy through Ezekiel, *For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land (Joseph's land). Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. (Ezekiel 36:24-28)*

When the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon an individual they become temples of God. Paul writes, *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:16)* God can inhabit a building but if holy people are driven out of what value is that to Him and where is His communion with the saved and the redeemed? If that temple is a person, then when the Holy Spirit rests upon them, that person communes with God. The whole point of the gospel, especially in the last days, isn't that we just have individual believers but that those individual believers are fitly framed together into a spiritual house. Peter writes, *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:5)*

So the time came in 1830 when the Lord was going to return and He restored this church. He bestowed upon it the precious Book of Mormon with the clear explanation of His gospel and He sent people out, elders out, with this message. *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths strait, for the hour of his coming is nigh. . . wherefore, prepare ye for the coming of the Bridegroom; go ye, go ye out to meet him. . . (Doctrine & Covenants 108:5c, d)* How are people to prepare themselves? By repenting, covenanting with Him. I will follow your will. Receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost and then enduring under its direction. When that Holy Spirit lives within people it gives them power to both desire to do the will of God and to actually do that. They become building blocks into a spiritual house. We call that spiritual house Zion. It's a community of people that love the Lord and as a result love each other and are willing to interact with each other just like Jesus interacts with them. That became the call to the church in 1830.

The Lord says this in 1832. *And inasmuch as my people build an house unto me, in the name of the Lord, and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled, my glory shall rest upon it; yea, and my presence shall be*



there, for I will come into it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it, shall see God: but if it be defiled I will not come into it, and my glory shall not be there, for I will not come into unholy temples. (Doctrine & Covenants 94:4a, b) When the Saints in Zion received that revelation they were so busy putting in their crops that Parley P. Pratt writes in his autobiography, ‘We didn’t pay any attention to this.’ They didn’t try to build a house and what good would that have done if they hadn’t built the spiritual house beforehand. The building is of no value if the people are so unholy they can’t go there. The holy city that our heavenly Father wants built is a spiritual temple so that the building inside of it can house holy people. Not holy because they do everything perfect and they live by a certain code, although they will be trying to do the will of the Father at all times and be obedient to Him, they’re holy because they are covered by the righteousness of Jesus. They come together in love and treat each other with respect and dignity all the time. That’s what our Heavenly Father wants and that’s what He commissioned the early Saints to do and they did not do that.

In the 1950s I was a child and I remember many of the church leaders imploring the Saints to become Zion. The time for Zion needed to come. There had to be a righteous community. The world was yearning to see a practical application of the gospel of Jesus Christ. That was a constant theme in the church in those days and we didn’t do that. I’m guilty. I was interested in my own pursuits. There were so many things that were attracting our attention as our society became more affluent. All the opportunities were available. Zion didn’t come and so the leaders began to wonder, ‘What’s the mission of the church? We’re becoming a worldwide church. We have more members in this nation than we do in Independence. What is the role of the church?’ They began to rethink the mission of the church.

In so doing some of them began attending academic places that knew nothing of the Restoration or had the power of the Holy Spirit. They began to lose their faith. They didn’t see Zion being built in the place that was set. Were Joseph’s revelations really true or did they just become an outgrowth of the hope of that day and age and culture? As a result doubt invaded us. It invaded all of us. It’s not the other guys, it’s all of us. We’ve grown up in that. Many of you were born after this and were all affected by it. Did Joseph really see a light? Did Jesus and the Father appear to him in the grove? Did he actually see Moroni? Did he handle golden plates? Did he translate them and see the words so that they could be written correctly? What’s the fruit of that doubt? It’s what we have reaped. It is confusion. It is differences. It’s contention. It’s debate. It’s division, a division that ends in death. Ultimately the real question is did Jesus rise from the dead?

Both those questions have plagued people that come

from a Christian background. What’s the fruit from disbelief that Jesus rose from the dead? What are your choices? Do you want to go worship the earth or do you want to just disbelieve in God and go get lost in the pursuit of things of this world? It’s all death. There’s no life. There’s no hope. It’s only in faith that there’s any goodness and that’s why Jesus said to Martha when Lazarus lay dead in the tomb, *Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?* (John 11:40)



The Lord has promised to prove Himself, first to His Saints and secondly to the world. Let’s read the Inspired Version of the Bible in the 29<sup>th</sup> chapter of Isaiah verse 24 and 25. Isaiah has prophesied the coming forth of a sealed book. The learned can’t read it because it’s sealed and the unlearned can’t read it because they are unlearned. Then he speaks to the person who is to translate the unsealed portion which is implied here but not stated. *Wherefore, when thou hast read the words which I have commanded thee, and obtained the witnesses which I have promised unto thee, then shalt thou seal up the book again, and hide it up unto me, that I may preserve the words which thou hast **not** read until I shall see fit in mine own wisdom to reveal all things unto the children of men. For behold, I am God; and I am a God of miracles; and I will show unto the world that I am the same yesterday, today, and forever; and I work not among the children of men, save it be according to their faith.*

When the apostles came forth with the gospel after the ascension of Jesus it was by faith that people believed. It was by faith that they received the divine assurance in those days. When this Restoration message first went to the world, it was by faith that people received it. After exercising faith and entering the waters of baptism they were bathed in the righteousness that descended upon the church in those early days. God does not change. He is still a God of miracles and He is still speaking to His children, ‘I am coming but if you want to prepare, you have to exercise faith. The glory of God



is not revealed to those who do not exercise faith.'

Moroni makes this statement in the book of Ether. *And now I, Moroni, would speak somewhat concerning these things; I would shew unto the world that faith is things which are hoped for and not seen. Wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith, for it was by faith that Christ shewed himself unto our fathers, after he had risen from the dead.* (Ether 5:6-7) We have had a trial of faith have we not? You have exercised that faith. Even your attendance here today is an exercise of faith. Is the Restoration true? Is our testimony of this Latter Day work true? Did Joseph III have authority to gather the Saints back to the land of Zion? I am not asking if you believe this. I am asking if you will exercise your faith in that testimony.

If your scriptures are still open to Isaiah 29 let's look at verse 26. Remember the Lord says to Joseph seal these things up. After you have received the witnesses, seal these things up that I can preserve them until a time that I see fit to bring them forth because I am a God of miracles. I'm going to perform a miracle to save my work and show the world and my people that I am the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. Then he says this, And again. That's the beginning of verse 26. And again doesn't mean I am going to repeat what I've said. He says I am going to do again the miracles that He did before. He's going to do them again because He's the same God. *And again it shall come to pass, that the Lord shall say unto him that shall read the words that shall be delivered him, Forasmuch as this people draw near unto me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their hearts far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precepts of men, therefore I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people; yea, a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise and learned shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent shall be hid.*

Do we live in a day where people have drawn nigh to the Lord with their mouth and lips but have removed their hearts from Him? I'm not necessarily talking about you. I am not asking this as a judgment but would that be an apt condition in our world today? People give honor to Christian traditions that are a part of our society that don't believe and certainly don't obey. Do we live in a day where religious precepts are taught by men? It's in this day after the book has been sealed and delivered by Joseph that the Lord will do a marvelous work. That's the point of this scripture. Afterwards there's a marvelous work to come forth and it will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the learned and their understanding shall be hid. I bear testimony to you that that day is now at hand. The Lord has already set His hand to save His work, to show Himself that He is God. My question is will you exercise your faith?

Twenty-three years ago Joseph F. Smith came among the Restoration people and said, 'Lay down your differences.' How well do we do that? If the Lord is going to have a united people that are willing to live with each other in love, we all must repent. Will you let Him gather you? Why do I ask that? Latter Day revelation gave this promise to Joseph Smith Jr., *as I said unto Abraham, concerning the kindreds of the earth, even so I say unto my servant Joseph (meaning Joseph F. Smith), in thee, and in thy seed, shall the kindreds of the earth be blessed.* (Doctrine & Covenants 107:18c) When Jason Briggs wrote Joseph III the letter of invitation asking him to take his father's place, he referred to that promise. Then taking a scripture out of Isaiah that says that promise is a nail fastened in a sure place. I suggest to you that if you will exercise faith in the testimony that we bring and let yourself be guided by the invitation that Joseph has given, you will fasten yourself to the sure place, the place where the promise of God is and there will be a united people. People that are willing to live together without differences and disputations, without judgments and accusations but in righteousness and in faith and they shall see the glory of God.

Martha said, 'How can it be, Jesus?' *Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?* (John 11:40) I am testifying that if you will believe, if you will have faith in the promise that God has made, you will see the glory of God unfold and the salvation of this Latter Day work and the redemption of Zion.



## LET NOTHING SEPARATE YOU

**Elder Peter Cornish**  
*Columbia, Missouri*  
**April 1, 2018**

Greetings, and a Happy Easter. A lot of times when I speak I like to share a story at the beginning. The idea that came to my mind was a little different than I expected. Bear with me and trust that while at the beginning you may not think that this is a typical Easter sermon, we'll get there eventually.



A few weeks ago I was talking to our girls, Esther and Millie. At some point maybe in their school they talked about what to do in a fire drill. If you are at home and there is a fire that's happening, what are you supposed to do? We didn't talk long. We discussed a few ideas about maybe if there's a ladder you could climb out or jump out a window or get on the roof and come down. I remember when I was a kid we talked about that as a family and I'm sure all of the kids here have experienced that in some way. The point of this is that this is something that we have all experienced and gone



through, this idea of a fire drill. The main critical factor of it all is that there is a meeting place once you leave whatever abode you were in that everybody is to gather in one place. That is critical for reasons that will come along. I just want you to keep that in your mind but set it aside for the time being and we'll get back to it.

As I mentioned I've been here many times. Most of you know who I am. There are some not so familiar faces and some that I've met today and some that I haven't seen for a long time. I was trying to think about when I first came to church. I think it was the year before I went to college so this would be 1995. Coming to Graceland I had the choice to go either here or Decatur City and for some reason I came here. There was a girl I was pursuing that went here and somehow my pursuit worked out. I guess I am persuasive or too tenacious.

In my early memories of coming here we were at the old building. We went there and shortly thereafter to the electrical building and then split time from the library to here. Ultimately we ended up here. I was just reflecting on a lot of the things that have changed. On one side of things I can remember that when I first got here the class that I was in was taught by Mildred Smith. I don't think she taught too much longer than that even though she lived a number of

years after that. I remember when Josh Jordison was a little tiny kid. I have this memory of him at one of the Winkler's New Year's Eve party. Those who have been here a long time could look around and see that there are, in addition to Mildred, many people who aren't here. Many of them I knew and was blessed to have known them. The lives of those people have left a lasting impression upon me. You can't come here and be called "Tex" anymore. Well, I guess you can start calling me that. George would be proud. I go on with stories about everyone, all of the people that I came into contact with. It was a good learning experience for me.

My first sermon ever was here and I don't know if it's any coincidence but today it is snowing. If you don't know the story, the day I was supposed to preach my first sermon ever was here. I was ordained in Texas but I didn't preach until I came here. We were all set to go, I think Rob was pastor at the time, and it started snowing. They would have canceled church if my family had not been coming up from Texas. We could only make it to Ron and Di's house and we ended up having church in their upstairs. I'm sure it was a memorable service for everybody but it was my first one.

A lot of other things have changed in addition to loss and new people coming and for me having kids and that sort of thing. A lot of changes have happened in the world. A lot of changes have happened in the church. You can think about all the many things that have gone on in the last twenty-three years. I only put that specific date as opposed to going back further because that was the time period in which I was here. The people were a little bit more unified. I think the people maybe had a little bit more love for each other. I think there have been a lot of divisions that have come in the church since that time period. I think when you look back to 1995 there were really just one or two divisions but now there are many.

You know one would like to come up with some great idea or some great activity that might rectify the problems that have occurred over the last 25 years and if you want to go back further, you could find any date you would like if it was the 80's or if it was the early 1900s whatever it is. There are some dates that you can look at and say this was a problem that happened. I am not here necessarily to present a solution more so than an idea because I think that we've gotten to the point in our church and our lives where we really need our Savior. We really need Him to be part of who we are as a people. One of the critical factors that we need to have in our lives is showing forth the love that He has for us because He died for our sins.

That story that I shared about the fire drill I think can be related to our church. It's no accident that it happened necessarily and it wasn't like it caught us by surprise or it





shouldn't have. Section 105 of the Doctrine and Covenants was given in 1837 and we can apply this to, I'm not going to give you a date when this happened, but it says, *Verily, verily I say unto you, Darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people, and all flesh has become corrupt before my face. Behold, vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth--a day of wrath, a day of burning, a day of desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation--and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth, saith the Lord. And upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth, saith the Lord. First among those among you, saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me, and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house, saith the Lord.* (105:9a-10b)

So in 1837 we were told that there was a whirlwind that was to come. Now as all of the kids can probably tell you when they learn about fire drills in their school there is a plan that they have. The plan is to get out of the house safely and to find a meeting place to go to. I feel that as a church while we had this section and it's been printed multiple times in multiple versions of the Doctrine and Covenants, as a church we didn't necessarily believe that it was going to happen and we didn't have a plan.

If you think about the idea of some sort of disaster like that if you are in your family home and your family is there you are very concerned about all of the people that are in that building. Erin and myself have four children and we would want to make sure that all four of those children were safely out of that house. Now if you were in charge of some building and you were thinking about that and having your family in that building how differently would you plan or carry out the plan if it was your family versus people that might be friends or people that might be strangers? You might not hold fast to long to the idea of well we've got to wait here long enough to make sure everybody is out, unless it's my family and my close associates, to make sure that they are with you. You might wait for close friends but strangers we might not care so much about. I feel that is the way that we dealt with the church. There was some challenge that came upon us and then we all left that building and we didn't come to a central meeting place or a central theme that would unite us and make us all there.

In a fire once you are there and you have all met whether it's at the mailbox or wherever it might be and watch the smolders of the fires and see the house come down, you have the opportunity to reflect on the past but you also have the opportunity to rebuild that structure. For my family it would be important for me to wait and make sure everyone is there so that we can all continue to build that house up together.

So I feel that is probably where we are today. We've all

gone different ways and in particular I think that many opportunities and many times we've treated other people like strangers or maybe not so close friends because we haven't been concerned about those other people to bring to that central meeting place where we are supposed to go and where God instructs us to be in terms of people. You know if I came out of my house and it is burning and saw that one of my kids wasn't there I guarantee you that I would go back and get that person out of the house to make sure that they were there with me.

Now I could be honest and ask, 'Well if it was my neighbor's house and I saw that one of them was missing would I go back or if I was driving down the road by somebody else's house that was burning would I stop and make sure that everybody was there. Or, even if I didn't know that somebody was in that building would I proceed to try and find somebody out?'

We can see that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ died on the cross for us, everyone. He made that sacrifice for us. Let's look at Doctrine and Covenants Section 122. I really like this. This is a number of years later and there is a dividing time between when Joseph Smith Jr brought revelations and when Joseph Smith III did. Section 122 was addressed in part to the priesthood but I think this section at least is applicable to our day and our time and to all of us. This was given in 1894. Verse 16 and 17 talk about the same thing but there are slight differences in some of the ideas which I'll talk about. Section 122:16-17 says, *And now I say unto you mine elders, apostles and high priests of my church, Continue ye in the ministry unto which you have been called; and if ye cannot fully agree on all the points of the law, be patient and be not contentious; so far as you can agree work together without heat, confusion, or malice. Ye are equal in worth of position and place in the work of the church; and if in honor ye shall prefer one another, ye will not strive for precedence or place in duty or privilege, and shall be blessed of me. Yea, verily, thus saith the Lord, unto the elders of the church: continue in steadfastness and faith. Let nothing separate you from each other and the work whereunto you have been called; and I will be with you by my Spirit and presence of power unto the end. Amen.*

So what does that say to me? In verse 16 it talks about if you can't agree on all the points come together and meet on what you can agree on. In my mind when I was preparing this sermon I was thinking, what is that central location that we could all meet at outside of this imaginary building that's on fire? What is that central theme that we could all agree on? In verse 17 it says, *Let nothing separate you from each other and the work whereunto you have been called.* I am not an English major, obviously, but when it says let nothing there are no exceptions to that rule. It says let **nothing** separate you



from each other. That's the same idea or concept of making sure that everybody is there at the same place as it talks about in verse 16 where you can agree on. What is that central theme or idea?

I would propose to you what I feel that central idea is. It is the meaning for the day of which we are here, that of Jesus Christ. On this day we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. A few days ago we celebrated His death. I think the central theme of who we are as a people and as Christians is we are people who believe and trust in the salvation that comes through that sacrifice and that great gift.

Now for me to simply say that that's sufficient to acknowledge the preeminence of Christ, for me to say that that's all it takes for us to come together is a bit naïve. So as I continue through this I would like for you to think about, in your own minds, what are the steps that you feel are necessary in your life to truly be at that location where Christ is King, to truly be there waiting for other people or going out and getting other people. Now the other thing I would like to mention is if I am waiting outside and one of my kids is in there or a family member or stranger and I think that they are still in the burning house, the first thing I'm going to do is I'm not going to go get the firehose and try to put out the fire. No, I'm going to go back in and get that person. I don't care so much about that building. I care about the people that are there.

I am not trying to say that I should not care about the church in this analogy what I am trying to say is that's not my responsibility. So if you continue in the Doctrine and Covenants Section 105 where I left off there in verse 11, *Therefore, see to it that ye trouble not yourselves concerning the affairs of my church in this place, saith the Lord; but purify your hearts before me, and then go ye into all the world, and preach my gospel unto every creature who has not received it; and he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not, and is not baptized, shall be damned.* In this analogy what we should be doing is being concerned about every creature who has not heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and taking that to them to making sure that everybody is there at the foot of the cross of Christ so that we can see what that sacrifice truly meant for us.

I think part of that we'll get into in a second but I would like to read a scripture that is a segway to that thought or idea. It's from Section 22 of the Doctrine and Covenants. I think this gives us a hint of the mindset we should be in as we get to the place we need to be. In 7b-c this is Moses having an experience with God and seeing many wonderful things. *Now, for this cause, I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed; but now mine eyes have beheld God; but not mine natural but my spiritual eyes, for mine natural eyes could not have beheld, for I should have withered and died in*

*his presence; but his glory was upon me, and I beheld his face, for I was transfigured before him.* The experience that Moses had there was seeing God and experiencing being in His presence. Now I could go off in a tangent and talk about the judgment and the insights that are provided in Mormon in the Book of Mormon about being in His presence. Being in His presence brings to us the ideas of where we stand with Him, what we've been doing in our lives and most importantly it provides us with a sense of humility. That's what he expressed through this that he was humbled before Him. I think humility is very important and essential for us as we move forward. Far too often we've been more concerned about being right than being humble. I think as we move forward in that way we will be better as a people.

I have felt for a number of years and maybe even a little bit now that I am like a person standing outside of a burning building and looking up at this building going down in flames and not knowing what to do. There's a lot of sadness that comes with that because I love the church and I love the people. Standing there and not knowing what to do and being sad is a very difficult experience I feel. We need to get to the point where we realize what our job is and our opportunities are and to be happy.

There are a couple of stories I'd like to share in that vein. These are kind of two of my favorite stories. One story is the story about Enoch and how he was talking with God. In this story Enoch goes through this emotional roller coaster. He experiences many things and sees many things. God shows him all this stuff and he wonders why God is so sad. God is like this is why I am sad and then Enoch's like, 'Oh, I'm sad too now.' I always like to share this story because I remember when I was a kid I would get mad maybe at mom and she would always be able to cheer me up even though I would sit on the sofa and say, 'Don't try to cheer me up.' I wanted to stay mad for long enough time but mom would always cheer





me up. This is what happened to Enoch. It says he refused to be comforted.

Then down in the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of Genesis starting with verse 51 it says. *And as Enoch saw thus, he had bitterness of soul, and wept over his brethren, and said unto the heavens, I will refuse to be comforted. But the Lord said unto Enoch, Lift up your heart and be glad, and look. And it came to pass, that Enoch looked, and from Noah he beheld all the families of the earth, and he cried unto the Lord, saying, When shall the day of the Lord come? When shall the blood of the righteous be shed, that all they that mourn may be sanctified, and have eternal life? And the Lord said, It shall be in the meridian of time; in the days of wickedness and vengeance.* (51-53) So as Enoch is in despair, it's like he's looking at this house and saying God did this great thing and now this house is falling down because of all the sin in the world and what are we going to do? Then what does God say, 'He says lift up your heart and rejoice and look. Then He shows him our Savior.'

Another story of similar magnitude is found in the book of Alma 17<sup>th</sup> chapter. This is the story of Alma talking to his son Helaman and recounting to him the experience that he had with the Lord. *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. And now behold, when I thought this, I could remember my pains nor more; yea, I was harrowed by by the memory of my sins no more. And O, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain; yea, I say unto you, my son, that there could be nothing so exquisite and so bitter as were my pains. Yea, and again I say unto you, my son, that on the other hand, there can be nothing so exquisite and sweet as was my joy.* (14-19)

We could go on and read more about that but the purpose of these two stories of Alma and Enoch is that they were in an emotional state where they were very depressed about the sins of the world. What really lifted them out of that was the knowledge of Christ and what He could do for them. For our purpose to think about today what is our common meeting point? We should have planned ahead. We had advance warning. If somebody came to your house tonight and said, 'There's going to be a fire in the next week.' We'd think all right we're going to get a plan or maybe not even be in the

house for the next week. But we all have to have a plan that everybody is going to meet here and make sure everybody gets out. It doesn't seem like we really did that. We weren't really prepared and it came upon us and we're like 'Wow, this is kind of weird that it happened and haven't done anything about it to prepare.'

Now is the time to prepare and the scriptures lay that out in Section 105. It says to purify your hearts and go out in the world and preach the gospel to every creature that hasn't heard it. That is to make sure that everyone gets to that same place, that meeting location. We have to have the same base to have any fruitful arguments to go forth and discussions building upon that. We have to make sure we're all founded in Christ. Of course we could all say that but what do we really need to do? What are some concrete steps to move forward. That is something that we all have to think and pray about. How do we come closer to Christ because that's truly where we need to be. For some people it might be prayer. For some people it might be study or fasting. These are all good things to do but we all need to be there and most importantly we need to treat everyone like family.

You know in the church for many years we called each other brothers and sisters. I think the real reason for that is that as we call people brother and sister we truly think about them as family. Family are not people we want to leave behind. Family are people that we want to be with us at all times. I can't say that my kids don't fight. I can't say that I never fought with my sisters. I still do today and I'm sure my kids will still fight at some point in the future. But the fundamental thing that holds us together is family and when God said let nothing separate you from each other or the work where unto you have been called, He means LET NOTHING separate you from each other. It means what He said so no matter what I do or what I say. I may have offended everyone here at some point including my wife, but what holds us together is that fundamental bond of we're married. In the back of my mind I always have this image of the video that we took at our wedding with people doing various things and one of the things that Ron said was 'Don't mess this up.' He probably doesn't remember that he said that but I remember and I don't want to mess this up because Ron is going to get mad at me. There are more reasons than just that but that's one of the many reasons.

All right, so that's what we need to do. We really need to think about that and if we really care about all of the people honestly and truly then we want to make sure that everyone gets there. In this day where we celebrate Christ let's think about that. Let's go before Him. Let's go see Him hanging on the cross dying for our sins. Let's go see Him in the tomb. Let's go see Him as the risen Lord. What does He really mean for us? Those grounds are the grounds we should be



walking and thinking about and sharing and proclaiming to the world and saying, ‘This is what we need to do.’

I really appreciate the opportunity to be here. I love you all and hope we all come to that common goal and understanding to build His Kingdom and then share His gospel to this world.



# ONE

**Elder Steven Smith**  
*Lamoni, Iowa*  
**April 8, 2018**

Today I wish to talk and sing about being one. I will talk of :

- the command to be one,
- the covenants to be one,
- enduring in the covenant,
- the common name change that identifies us with the covenant
- keeping the commandments of God
- integrating thoughts, emotions, words, & actions
- pray, forgive, love, and teach to include others

I will give 4 examples of being “one”, and sing 4 songs about prayer, forgiveness, love, and teaching. When you hear the 4th song, you will know the end is near and like the writers of the Book of Mormon, rejoice.

First, God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit are one. That has confused the philosophers. There are those who say that God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are three entities with one purpose. Some believe that the Holy Spirit is a being. There are those who claim that the Holy Spirit, Holy Ghost, and Comforter are 3 different entities. Critics of this thought then claim that we are worshiping more than one god. There are those who claim that there is one God with many manifestations that we have named. We have become divided over being one. We are invited to become one with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

God’s invitation to the Old Testament Jews to covenant came when Moses went up on the Mountain Sinai, and received God’s original will for the people. When he

descended, the sin of the people was such that it was too much for the people, and God simplified the code. This covenant to be one had 10 parts that were the responsibility of the people. They were called the 10 Commandments, and were referred to throughout the Old Testament as “the covenant.” The covenant was carried in a gold covered wooden box known as the “arc of the covenant.” Keeping God’s 10 commandments was keeping the covenant with God.



When Jesus came, He restored God’s original intent so we are told that there was a new covenant. This required an integration of our thoughts, emotions, words, and actions. In the new covenant, it was not enough to simply not kill, it became important that our words, and thoughts, and emotions carried out the intent of not killing, so we were not to call people worthless, or a fool (we use loser today). We were to pray for our persecutors. We were to forgive them. We were to even love our enemies. We were instructed to teach the commands of God so they would also know. Pray, Forgive, Love, and Teach, the acronym is PFLT (puf-elt). By growing closer to our enemies, neighbors, brothers, and friends, we become closer to God, until we become one...the atonement. Now, the commandments spanned the entire breadth of life requiring a lifestyle change with a goal of being one.

Becoming one with God is called atonement. Atonement was not even an English word until the translators of the King James version of the Bible found a concept that they could not translate, so they made a compound word out of “at,” and “one,” and added the suffix “ment.” If I remember the rules of phonics, an “e” at the end of a syllable makes the previous vowel into a long vowel sound. Therefore if you



put a “b” in front of one, you get bone. However, some rules are to be broken, so if you put a “d” in front you get done, or a “g,” you get gone. In fact, if you use the grammatically incorrect phrase: one bone done gone, you get 4 different sounds for the “o.” The old English pronunciation of “one” was closer to “own” than “won” as in the French “un.” Thus we got the word “atonement” today which refers to the condition of being one with God, made possible by the sacrifice of Christ in the new covenant.

Communication is paramount in attempting to attain this oneness. Prayer, the first part of PFLT, lets us organize and give voice to what is going on with our interactions. It allows us to call upon the powers of heaven to solve human problems it allows us to think through our condition.

*Pray*

*She cried for God’s mercy, and Grace for her son  
And safety on the strange path that he had begun  
The boy found prayer fruitless, declared it obscene,  
To grovel and talk to someone unseen*

*She’s like a barker in a carnival, being for God’s attention  
With creative words and phrases, to try to lure Him in... But  
Her prayer went straight to the master, with emotion in each  
word*

*Jesus sent back his Spirit to acknowledge that he’d heard  
Her prayer was broadcast thru heaven, for it was so sincere  
And when Jesus said let’s help her, a band of angels  
volunteered.*

*He talked repentance to his errant son  
And begged for forgiveness from the Holy One  
The boy found prayer fruitless, declared it obscene,  
To grovel and talk to someone unseen  
He’s a lone captain in a canyon, keeping order with  
commands*

*mocked by the echo of panicked demands...But  
His prayer went straight to the master, with emotion in each  
word*

*Jesus sent back his Spirit to acknowledge that he’d heard  
His prayer was broadcast thru heaven, for it was so sincere  
And when Jesus said we need more help, another band of  
angels volunteered.*

*In a hand held circle, to intervene for their friend  
His self-centered habits would hurt someone in the end,  
The boy found prayer fruitless, declared it obscene,  
To grovel and talk to someone unseen.  
They are like survivors in a life raft, shouting out into the air  
Between empty horizons, lost without a prayer... But  
Their prayers went straight to the master, with emotion in  
each word*

*Jesus sent back his Spirit to acknowledge that he’d heard  
Their prayers were broadcast thru heaven, for it was so  
sincere*

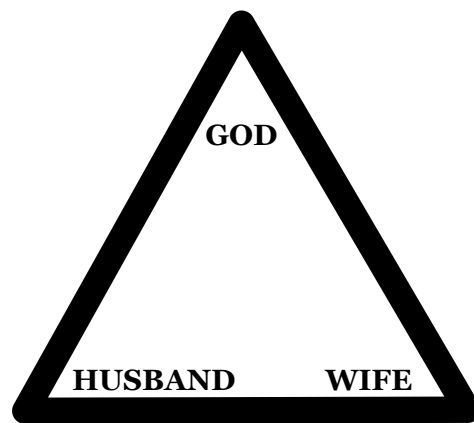
*Jesus said we’ll need a lot more help, a dozen band of angels  
volunteered.*

*Sad and disgruntled, a consequence of sin  
His broken heart can hold no more peace within  
The boy found prayer fruitless, But that didn’t mean  
He couldn’t humble himself before a God that’s unseen  
He’s a schoolboy experiment, not knowing where to start  
With a freeform stream of consciousness, flowing from his  
heart*

*His prayer went straight to the master, with emotion in each  
word*

*Jesus sent back his Spirit, to acknowledge that He’d heard  
His prayer was broadcast thru heaven, for it was so sincere,  
And when Jesus took away the doubt, the angels high fived  
and cheered.*

So we are to be one with God. God knew this may be easier said than done. Tyrants have claimed to be one with God. So God gave us a laboratory to overcome our differences when we choose one other individual and asked us to be one. That laboratory is called marriage. We are



**1 + 1 = 1**

asked to become one in a strange mathematical equation of God + 1 + 1 = 1. Think of it as an equilateral triangle with God at top, and the husband and wife as the bottom points. The closer the spouses come together, the closer they are to God. With God in the equation, and keeping His commands, we avoid being self-centered and bullying our point of view on the other. As we grow closer we eventually become one. But as humans, we tend to want our own way.



Steve and Sue recently entered this test kitchen called marriage. Please forgive me Steve and Sue for using you to illustrate a point. If Steve writes his own scripture as say... Steve 2:3-4 which says "I am to be addressed as master or captain when we meet, then you may bow down, grovel, and kiss my feet.", Sue would not be easily taught. One shared thought can be attained by agreeing with me, because I do too like your stupid ideas, or both of us agreeing with God. When teaching, you must agree to use the commandments of God as the basis. This makes God a part of our covenant. First, He asks that we covenant...for a lifetime. Unfortunately, only about 50% of our church can achieve that in marriage today. We are told if we cannot love an individual whom we have seen, it is likely we do not understand how to love God.

We take on a common name. Often it is the husband's last name, but in some cultures, they hyphenate the last names of the wife and husband. I even saw a case in Saskatchewan, where a farmer with daughters that would end his last name, convinced his oldest daughter's fiancé to take



her last name to continue the name. I am also aware of a couple that chose a name new to the both of them. In any case, those who choose to covenant to become one, are known by that covenant name. We make a covenant with God and each other. No one else is allowed to interfere and that becomes the covenanters' responsibility. We leave our parents. We cling to each other, and covenant to be one. Only through Christ can we become one. We pray for each other. We forgive. We love. We talk to teach each other so we communicate our needs. We become one with God and each other.

### *Forgive*

*I enjoyed our heart to heart these last few days  
Though I started out so mad, I couldn't find words to say  
When my tongue would not deliver, my lip began to quiver*

*I shivered like a trembling rampart, you whispered, "listen to your heart."*

### *Chorus*

*Lub dub, Lub dub, to live forgive  
As I forgive, I'll be forgiven, In God's spirit I'll be livin'  
Not forgiving leaks God's Spirit from my soul  
I will forgive you, So God forgives me too  
Forgiveness heals my Spirit so I'm whole*

*I find my wounded Spirit starts lagin'*

*Falling off the forgiveness wagon  
My soul starts to canker, caught up in the rancor,  
Clutching my anger and my darts, you whisper, "listen to your heart."*

### *Chorus*

*Jesus' grace allows repentance that is true  
To forgive accepts that Jesus' gift applies to others too  
God took away my sin, Set the Holy Ghost within  
Placed me on a path to win with a new start, you whisper  
"listen to your heart."*

### *Chorus*

*I gave it up, Jesus took my sin I'm free  
I forgave, so your sins have no power over me  
Resentments I held dear, are no longer here,  
Gone is the fear on my part, you whisper, "listen to your heart."*

### *Chorus*

Not all of us will have the opportunity to participate in the test kitchen or laboratory of marriage, but God has another laboratory which is a little larger. He has asked his church to be one. He has asked that we covenant with him through baptism, and take upon us His name.

Baptism is a multistep covenant process. There is our signature act, of being buried with Christ under the water, and raised in faith of the resurrection. This is an act that can be understood by every culture and language...no signature...no language barriers. God then gives a greater degree of the Holy Spirit as His representatives lay their hands on the covenanter's head. Again, His act crosses the barriers of language. Finally, monthly thereafter, the covenant people gather and remember Christ and their covenant, when they take Christ's name (with a name change), promise to keep the commands, and promise to continue to remember Christ and their covenant.

Now we are asked to be one with a group of people. This is a little harder than having only one person to concentrate on. Our triangle becomes an umbrella. In fact,



He has compared the church to a bride with Christ as the groomsman. If instead of keeping the commands to allow us to be one, we fight and become splintered, it is like we are His schizophrenic bride whose sickness keeps us inept. As people join the church, they become our “children,” who by the teaching and example of prayer, forgiveness, and love, mature to become one with us as the bride of Christ.

Our second covenant is called baptism. Our name change comes as we take the name of Christ upon us, and we are called Christians. It requires that we become one with a number of other people by keeping the commands as our common tenant, and praying for, forgiving, loving, and teaching others.

Love

*Love starts as thought, a choice is made,  
Blooms as emotion, as fear fades  
Love's praise and prayers said behind one's back,  
It's all we do how we react*

Chorus

*Love combines all we think, feel, say and do  
Defines the paths that we pursue,  
Our covenants toward one love show  
In God's Spirit love will grow*

*God reigns supreme, yet He is one  
Bound by His Spirit to His son  
When we love God, keep His commands  
Join Him as one as love demands  
Chorus*

*God asks we covenant in love  
Husband and wife as one above  
We wed a spouse, choosing another  
One with God and with each other  
Chorus*

*The template's set for covenants  
One church in love, God's blessings grant  
But if we fight as the baptized  
We're Christ's schizophrenic bride  
Chorus*

*When we love God, our love extends  
To include all, of God's children  
A covenant everlasting,  
Heaven joins earth as Zion sings.  
Chorus*

Now there is another step. Some have covenanted in marriage, some have covenanted as a church. If we love God, there is one more major covenant to accept. It has been set and offered by God for us to accept or reject.

Genesis 9:22-24 says, *And this is mine everlasting covenant, that when thy posterity shall embrace the truth, and look upward, then shall Zion look downward, and all the heavens shall shake with gladness, and the earth shall tremble with joy; And the general assembly of the church of the firstborn shall come down out of heaven, and possess the earth, and shall have place until the end come. And this is mine everlasting covenant, which I made with thy father Enoch. And the bow shall be in the cloud, and I will establish my covenant unto thee, which I have made between me and thee, for every living creature of all flesh that shall be upon the earth.*

To accept this covenant, we need to pray for others, forgive others, love others and teach others so they will know the commands of God. If we will look to God and keep His commands, He will be physically with us, and our covenant name will be Zion.

We are faced with divisions within marriages, divisions between those who claim to follow Christ, and political divisions of hate upon the earth. Our job is to covenant on many different levels, determined to endure, pray for, forgive, love, and teach each other, guided by God's commands, and not our own wonderful abherent ideas.

Parallel Array

*Set in parallel array, Dressed like soldiers of the Lord,  
Covered in His blood. Defenders of His word  
Practiced fighting in our homes, Barricaded pews  
pitted one against another, in a fight that we all lose.*

Chorus

*'Cause we haven't understood, this fight is fought with prayer  
With the fruit of His Spirit, or His sanction is not there  
As we surprise him with forgiveness, Hit with love from deep  
within  
Teach His word is like a two edged sword, that cleaves the  
shackled for his sin*

*This battle's for our minds, Deep down to the core  
If we win with hatred, God has lost the war  
This battles for our words, And who we're going to tell  
This battles for our actions, Let us pray we all fight well  
Chorus*

*Let forgiveness dry the tears, Of the vanquished and the lost  
Let the victor help restore, Dignity the struggle cost  
Let us gently teach with patience, those meshed in sin*



*As we both grow in wisdom, In a fight where all may win.*

*Chorus*

*So sit in parallel array, Go dress like soldiers of the Lord  
Covered by His blood, Go be defenders of His word  
Practice fighting in your home, Bring it back to the pews  
Fighting for another's hope, gives them one more chance to  
choose*

*Cause we finally understood, That if we band in prayer  
With the fruit of the Spirit, He's promised to be there  
As we surprise them with forgiveness,  
Hit with love from deep within,  
Teach his word is like a two edged sword,  
That cleaves the shackled from their sin*



# HUNGER FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

**Elder Ed Anderson**  
*Lamoni, Iowa*  
**April 15, 2018**

Friends, today you are invited to:  
Remember all your covenants  
Resolve to endure in your covenants  
Humbly claim and display the new name associated  
with your covenants  
Love God and keep His commands  
Integrate our thoughts, emotions, words, & actions  
Pray for, forgive, love, and teach others...PFLT  
and become one  
The atonement, becoming one with God, results in being  
one in judgment, known as Saints  
one in knowledge, knowing God and Christ...eternal life  
one endowed Spirit, giving entrance to the Kingdom  
one in accepting Christ, you will have salvation  
and one walking with God, in Celestial Glory, or  
corporately, we will be in Zion.



I wish to start my discussion about righteousness by looking at the scriptures, in particular, Luke 12; 18-34. In these verses Christ speaks a parable to the people. A rich man had ground that brought forth in abundance but he found that he didn't have enough storage for his bounteous harvest. He decided to tear down his inadequate barns and build new, greater barns where he could store the produce of his labors. He comforted himself by the quantity of his goods, reasoning that now he could rest and eat, drink and be merry. The Lord had different ideas of how the rich man's life was to proceed. The Lord said unto him, *This night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?*

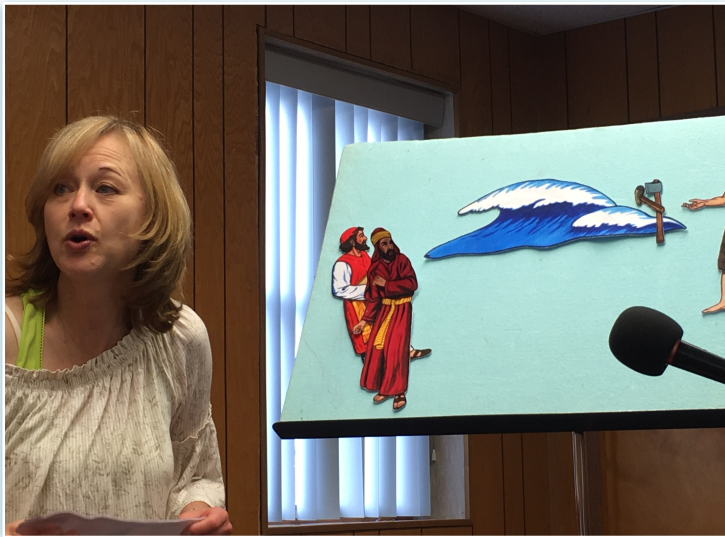
The Lord then said unto the disciples, *Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what you shall put on. For the life is more than meat, and the body more than raiment.* The Lord explains to his followers that He has provided for all the needs of His creation and so will also provide for the needs of His servants. Jesus concludes the parable with the words addressed to His disciples *Therefore bring forth the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.*







A quest for righteousness begins with a conscious decision. For members of the church, we made a covenant at baptism and promised to love and serve God and always keep His commandments. Some that have been baptized may have just gone through the motions and have yet to commit themselves fully. The Spirit is seeking all people of all nations who will believe on His word and become servants of Him. A knowledge of right and wrong is placed in the heart of every soul that was created and placed on earth. When we hear the still, small voice urging us to embody the life of Jesus in our daily walk, a person has three choices (A person's choices or commitment can be answered verbally and by action or lack thereof). One: yes, we will follow Jesus. Two: no, we will not follow or obey. Three: maybe.



Let's start with the easiest to deal with, which is the person who wants nothing to do with following Jesus. Enough said. Our responsibility is to love them and encourage them by prayer and witness to accept Jesus the Gift.

The maybes live their life on the fence not willing to commit themselves to a course of action. These, the scriptures teach us, He will spew out of His mouth. Within each person there is a level of indecision that makes them unrepentant and a servant that can't be used to bring forth righteousness.

Those who make the commitment to follow Jesus, rearrange their priorities, put away the clutter in their life and make room for Him. It is a choice of the mind and the spirit to keep the covenant they have made ending any procrastination that holds them back from service. If you are committed to Christ, you make the time and are willing to go to any expense. Within you is the burning fire of His Holy Spirit teaching you to love God and all people to the extent one can't abstain from testimony nor hold back one's desire to minister according to His commandments.

The scriptures tell us in the Doctrine and Covenants Sec 11:4a-b *that no one can assist in this work work, except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope, and charity being temperate in all things whatsoever shall be intrusted to his care.*

Maybe we should start from the beginning again. Let us acknowledge to ourselves that we are sinners and stand in need of repentance. Acknowledge to ourselves that all of our good works and righteousness is as filthy rags to our God. Let us put on our sack cloth and ashes and humble ourselves and seek repentance for our short comings, our rebellions, our unfaithfulness when we have chosen evil rather than God. It is easy to fall into Satan's trap and lose our salvation. Most of us here are baptized members of Christ's church in these the last days. Either we were raised in the church or were converted when we heard of the church Christ had restored on earth in these the last days. Not always are the hearts of those who are baptized changed by His Spirit. Sometimes other factors play a part in our decision to enter the waters of baptism. Things such as: a girlfriend who is a member of the church and won't marry you unless you join the church. This church is all you've ever known because you were raised in it and it was just expected of you to become a member because that is just the way it is supposed to be. You might have joined the church to gain the respect of someone that is important to you. You might have joined the church because you felt a good spirit when you attended services. There could be many reasons.

As a church we don't believe in the philosophy that once you are saved you are always saved. We don't believe that once we have had our conversion experience nothing more is required. We go to the grocery store and find if we look closely at the food containers there is an expiration date somewhere on each product. All the drugs used in veterinary medicine have expiration dates after which the manufacturer will no longer stand behind the product. The government says that you can't sell these products after the expiration date. Repentance has an expiration date. We have to check that small print on us to see if our repentance expiration date has expired. Now what could I possibly mean that repentance has an expiration date? There is a trap set by Satan to steal your soul from you. He is subtle. The man with the many barns but not enough builds more barns for his harvest. He is all set. He has enough and will be able to live comfortably because of his storehouse. Satan whispers in our ears that all is well in Zion. Some he tells that they have performed enough service and ministry that their salvation is assured. He tells us it is ok to put our lives on auto-pilot and coast 'til we stand before the judgement bar and all will be well and the words that we will hear are, "enter thou thy good and faithful servant." To such a one their repentance has expired. They would continue



to do the "work," go to church, pray wonderful prayers for others, visit members, clean the church, preside, preach and all the other "ministry" associated with a good church member.



If we treat our repentance casually, do we put ourselves in the class of people who at the last day petition Jesus saying, *"And many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name; and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will say, Ye never knew me; depart from me ye that work iniquity."* Without daily repentance, we act out that philosophy before mentioned that of "once saved always saved." (Matt 7; 32-33)

I'm going to make an assumption here. That assumption being that each of you have had a conversion experience. I don't mean a conversion to the church. I mean a soul searching, prayerful petition to your heavenly father in which you have been given assurance that your sins have been forgiven, that your garments have been washed in the blood of the Lamb. I'm going to trust that each of you have been forgiven of your sins and when you stand before God at the judgement day that through Christ you will not remember your sins.

I want for each of you to do as Enos did. Enos chapter 1 in the Book of Mormon gives an account his struggle to receive forgiveness for his sins. Enos was taught in the language of his father and also was taught in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This means that he was raised with teachings about Christ and told of His ministry and all things pertaining to righteousness. This teaching and knowing about Jesus was not enough. Enos wants to tell his audience: us about his conversion. Evidently, he and his family were hungry and he went hunting for sustenance. As he was hunting the words of his father needled at his heart. His soul hungered and he kneeled down before his maker in

supplication for his own soul. His seeking was not a 10 minute miraculous change in his heart. He was persistent. Verse 6 says, *And all the day long did I cry unto Him; yea, and when the night came, I did still raise my voice high, that it reached the heavens. And then ...there came a voice unto me saying, Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee...And I, Enos knew that God could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away.* Enos didn't bask in his own feel-good state. In verse 12, he begins to really understand God's nature. The love of God manifested in the sacrifice of His Son Jesus made it possible for his garments to be washed white. When he felt God's love for him, he sought the same blessing for his brethern. Verse 17 says *...I prayed unto him with many long stugglings for my brethern, the Lamanites, And it came to pass, that after I had prayed, and labored with all diligence, the Lord said unto me, I will grant unto thee according to thy desires, because of thy faith.*

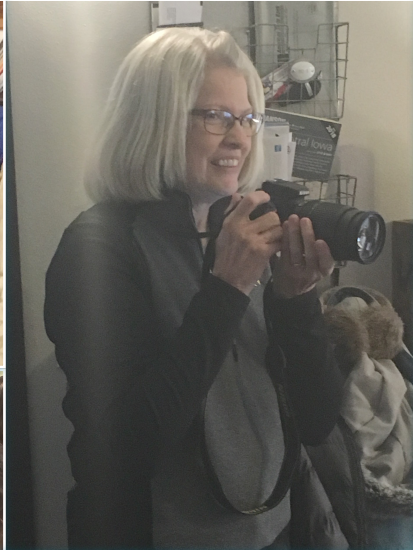
My message for you today is that each of us is to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, that our service might be acceptable to the Lord. The scriptures are plain that it is by their works that you shall know them. An evil man cannot bring forth good fruits nor can a good man bring forth evil works. Every person that brings forth not good fruit shall be hewn down and cast into the fire.

Matthew 13: 3-7 says, *... Behold, a sower went forth to sow. And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and when the sun was up, they were scorched, because they had no deepness of earth; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprung up and choked them. But others fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit; some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*



Book of Mormon Symposium was held April 27th & 28th, in Independence with a gathering of many Saints for the two evening event. A men's quartet from MARB sang for the event on Friday night. Details will be in the next newsletter.

Also, question and answer sessions by Brothers Bob Moore and Kelvin Henson regarding their recent trip and testimony from Brazil were also held at MARB and the Jordison home, respectively last month. We hope to have a further write-up next month for those who weren't able to attend.





## Church of Jesus Christ Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

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

*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)*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31**

**Book of Mormon Night.** Every Thursday evening at Joe & Anna Mickelson's in Lamoni at 6:45 PM

**May 4-6** Aaronic Priesthood Retreat - Odessa Hills Campground

**May 12** Men's Breakfast at Pizza Hut 11:00 AM

**May 13** Mother's Day - Guest Minister, Elder Jon Barney

**May 15** Anniversary of the Aaronic Priesthood restored to Earth

**May 28** Memorial Day

**Jun 17-23** "Cast Your Nets" - Missionary Family Reunion - Lamoni, IA

**Jun 24-29** "Zion the Beautiful" - CRE Restoration Reunion - Waldo Branch

**Jul 6-8** Fasting Weekend

**Oct 11-13** JCRB Fall National Conference

