

August 2019

# Church of Jesus Christ

*Mount Ayr Restoration Branch*

# NEWSLETTER

2320 State Highway 2, Mount Ayr, IA 50854  
Robert A. Rolfe, Pastor Lamon Iowa

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



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*“For God is God, and  
He is Love.”*

A. A. Oakman



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## News & Notes

This month on the 18th MARB will be holding our evening fellowship service at Central Park in Lamon as an outreach to the community. All are invited to come and participate and bring their friends. Bring your lawn chairs or blankets and enjoy the fellowship and provided snacks. Please contact Michael Jordison if you know you would like to participate with a song or more.

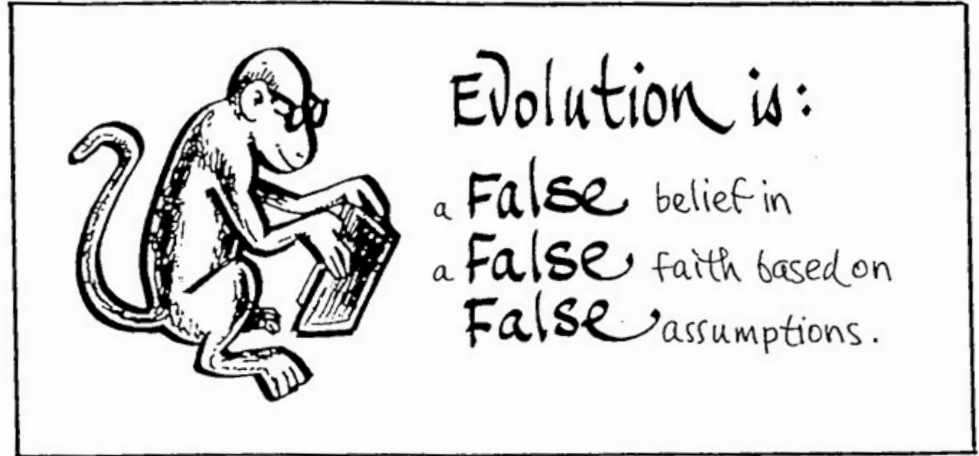
Next month, Sept. 21-22, the CRE Women’s Council will hold a women’s retreat at Odessa Hills.

The theme is “Joyful Together”

For those Saints who are looking for good resources to help supplement their spiritual journey, there are several sermons, books and audio files found online. The “Library” at [centerplace.org](http://centerplace.org) contains many past church publications. Several recorded sermons can be found at [latterdaytruth.org](http://latterdaytruth.org). Scriptures can be searched online at [restoredgospel.com](http://restoredgospel.com). **Links to these can be found on our website: [gospelrestored.org](http://gospelrestored.org)**



Art for  
**Goodness Sake**  
by *George Knotts*



Priest Joe Mickelson who presided over the service read Ether 5:27-29 as a Call to Worship. . . . *my grace is sufficient for the meek, that they shall take no advantage of your weakness; and if men come unto me, I will shew unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness, that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak thing become strong unto them. Behold, I will shew unto the Gentiles their weakness, and I will shew unto them that faith, hope, and charity, bringeth unto me the fountain of all righteousness.*

My scripture reading is from Mosiah 2:13-17. *Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things both in heaven and in earth; Believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; Believe that man doth not comprehend all things which the Lord can comprehend. And again: Believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you: And now, if you believe all these things, see that ye do them.*

I'm going to be talking today about being one nation, and what it means to be under God. We definitely are no longer one nation but what does it mean to be under God? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob gave very specific direction whether He was their God, or not. Hebrews 8:10 says: *I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.* In Deuteronomy 5:6-9 it says, *I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt have none other gods*

# ONE NATION UNDER "DARWIN?"

**High Priest Robert A. Rolfe**  
*Lamoni, Iowa*  
**April 28, 2019**





*before me. Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth; Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.*

Do you have a God? Did you make your God, or is it from your thoughts and imagination? If you have a God, what do you owe to that God? Does your life center around this God and your service to Him? Deuteronomy 6:17-18 says, *Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee. And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers.*

This country was built upon the principles of this Book and by people who believe they must and did worship that God only. The Book of Mormon says three times that the power of God was with them. Our country's history, the unrevised history, has numerous accounts of miracles that occurred during the Revolutionary War. Our leaders believed in Jesus Christ and regularly prayed to Him. George Washington, the "father" of our country made many, many statements about God. Here are a couple of the good ones: *It is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favors.* (Notice he says it is the duty of all nations...) *My fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe; who presides in the councils of nations; and whose providential aid can supply every human defect; that his benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the People of the United States, a Government instituted by themselves for these essential purposes, and may enable every instrument employed in its administration to execute with success the functions allotted to his charge. In tendering this homage to the Great Author of every public and private good.*

The Declaration of Independence starts with the words: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, among these being the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Notice these rights come from God and not from the Government,

according to the authors of said Declaration.

In his address at Gettysburg, President Abraham Lincoln said we were "under God." *Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate -- we can not consecrate -- we can not hallow -- this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain -- that this nation, UNDER GOD, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth. Abraham Lincoln, November 19, 1863*

The words of President Lincoln said we were a nation under God. The pledge of allegiance says we are "one nation under God." What does the phrase "under God" mean? Under would suggest there is something above. In the form of idioms, under the table means, illegal, or very drunk; under-handed would be illegal; under one's belt, under one's nose, speaking under one's breath and to be under one's thumb are other examples. But what does "under God" mean? It means more than one thing, but I know that George Washington and Abraham Lincoln meant we were under the Christian God, the great I am, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the great Creator God, Jesus Christ; and not any other God. He has control over us; He is sovereign; He takes care of us as a shepherd; He protects us and provides for us. *I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.* (Hebrews 8:8) We are His subjects and we most definitely are under His moral authority.



If we are not under a God, what were we, or are we under. For many decades no one objected to the phrase “under God” in the pledge of allegiance. Then in the 1960’s, God died. I saw a big headline, “God is Dead.” Soon religious expressions, prayers, etc. were prohibited in all kinds of public venues.

In 2004, a case was argued in the U.S. Supreme Court. Michael Newdow, a medical doctor who also was a graduate of law school, and is also a fervent atheist, decided it was offensive to him that his daughter sat in a public school classroom where the pledge of allegiance was stated, where the obnoxious phrase (to him) “under God” was used. As you already know, Abraham Lincoln and others used that phrase for many, many decades without any objection but this father objected. He was an absent father that never married the mother. Interesting, the school girl and her mother were Christians and they had no objection to the word “under God.” This father argued his own case, and the 9th circuit court of appeals (in California) ruled that it was an unconstitutional establishment of religious belief to recite these words in a public school setting.

Most people in the United States thought that it was an outrageous decision, even insane. All 100 of the US Senators joined in a public statement saying it was an outrage. Now our US Supreme Court knows that most of the public thought the decision of the California court was foolish. They likely did not want to appear foolish as well. What should they do? There were several alternatives. They could have adopted the Bush Administration’s view that the pledge of allegiance is a patriotic, rather than a religious exercise. It is only ceremonial. In other words, we used to be under God, but we aren’t any longer. The words are only ceremonial, and therefore, meaningless.

The really important question here, in light of the scriptures and our law, is what do the people of the United States think. After all, the constitution starts out, *We the People of the United States...* Do we the people, individually and corporately, regard ourselves as being “under God?” Or do we believe that God is dead and therefore, we don’t want anything further to do with God. IF we are under God, then God’s moral authority has some force in our public lives. If we are not under God, then God’s moral authority is a thing of the past and can be disregarded today, as it frequently and increasingly is. AND, if we are not under God, are we under anything at all? What should we teach in our schools if we can’t teach

we are under God? Should we teach one nation “under science?” Science would be the ultimate authority that governs what we do. How about teaching one nation “under the united nations?” How about one nation “under whatever,” or one nation under “nothing at all?” What difference does it make? Does it make any difference???

Whether we are “under God” in the final analysis depends on whether God is real or is imaginary. If God is not real, how could we be under His authority? If God is real, to say we are under God is as obvious as saying we are under the sky. To deny God would be to deny reality. So, everything depends on whether we understand God to be real and the true creator of us all or whether He was created in our imagination. If we did create our own God, we can make our own moral principles that suit us right now, or in the near future. We simply disregard God’s word or any traditional view of morality. Isn’t this just what is and has been happening in this country?

What do you think Abraham Lincoln thought when he said we were one nation “under God”? Wasn’t he assuming or believing God was real? Who now makes the decision that God is real or imaginary in the public schools and other public places? Will we allow science to make the decision? According to the Darwinian theory and philosophy that goes with it, nature is a closed system of material causes and effects which cannot be affected by anything outside of nature. In other words, “nature is all there is.” And, nature had to do its own creating. Therefore, in order to learn anything, we have to assume that only natural forces had anything to do with operation of the world. God, according to science, can’t be put in the equation or we have quit talking about science and started to talk about religion.

How did the first organisms emerge? Did God create them or did they start as a mixture of non-living chemicals, in a chemical soup, by chemical laws and chance, without any participation of a Creator???? If we follow the Darwinian view, the answer is, of course! What proof is there? All the proof we need is that living organisms exist! They couldn’t exist if there were no means for coming into existence, could they? You may say to these evolutionary scientists, couldn’t God have created these organisms? They would answer and say, “Now you’re changing the subject.” You’re talking about religion. That is all right in church, but not in the real world, like schools, the office or in business. That is why saying “under God” in our schools is unconstitutional. To them, God cannot be included in a scientific discussion.





Other people have looked at the world and see unending complexity and order. But to the current crop of most scientists, many of whom are afraid to challenge the status quo for fear of being fired, no argument can be made about how there is no such thing as a simple cell. But when we look at a “simple cell,” we see that it is very complex. And how can a simple cell change into complex plants and animals? Human beings exist and they couldn’t come into existence without some means of that happening. And, the only means of coming into existence that science will recognize is some combination of chance and interaction of particles and chemical laws. So to decide if God is real or is imaginary, we must address the question of whether the evolutionary story is valid or not. Is it a true story, or is simply a religious or anti-religious belief? A subjective opinion! Or is it an unchallengeable fact as it would be if “God is really Dead?” The subject remains controversial.

My biology teacher in college shouted in my face that evolution is a fact, not a theory. A fellow student told me I would get an F for the course because I challenged that view. How should we, as Christians, approach the subject? We should teach the controversy. Darwinian evolution has not been established by the scientific method of careful observation and experimentation. It is a philosophical claim. For myself I do not have enough faith to believe in the evolutionary claim of all life starting as a simple cell and then changing to complex cells. Look at just our eyes. It takes seven parts to work. All of these had to come into existence at the same time, or no sight is possible. The wings of birds is another example. How should we approach the subject?

Do you remember the federal statute, “No Child Left Behind?” Senator Rick Santorum submitted a Resolution that read: *It is the sense of the Senate that good science education should prepare students to distinguish the data or testable theories of science from philosophical or religious claims that are made in the name of science and, where biological evolution is taught, the curriculum should help students to understand why the subject generates so much continuing controversy and should prepare students to be informed participants in public discussions regarding the subject.* Senator Santorum stated the purpose of the Resolution was to promote intellectual freedom. Senator Ted Kennedy stood up and endorsed the Resolution. Senator Byrd stood up and also endorsed it. The vote was 91-8 in favor of the Resolution.

Therefore the Santorum Resolution is effectively now

part of the federal law governing education and science. What do you think the “mandarins of science” thought when they heard what happened? (The mandarins of science control what books are taught, who gets funded in science, where the money goes and who can teach in our universities). To say the mandarins were horrified is an understatement. They were terrified! Why? They could say, don’t worry about this, evolution is a fact, God is out of the picture and just believe as you are told. But they know that someone is going to ask, “How do we know?” Is that a testable theory or is it a philosophical claim? What is the real reason they were and are horrified? It is simply because they can’t show you that natural selection has any creative power whatsoever. There is no fossil evidence that convincingly shows the change of species from one to another. The Cambrian explosion shows fossils of all kinds existing simultaneously with no intermediate forms. The theory just is not able to compete with continuing new discoveries that simply do not conform to evolutionary dogma. The public will soon see that evolutionary theory is a philosophical or religious claim, not a scientific one.

**But, the really important question is, ‘what does the public think? AND, ‘what do you think?’ ‘Is God real? Is He really our creator, or not?’** This is the crux of the question: Either there is a God, and we under God, or there isn’t and we aren’t. I believe there definitely is a God. AND, we are under this God, subject to Him, and receivers of His blessings and/or curses.

This land (America) is subject to His control. Ether 1:30-31 says, *And he had sworn in his wrath unto the Brother of Jared, that whoso should possess this land of promise, from that time henceforth and forever, should serve him, the true and only God, or they should be swept off when the fullness of his wrath should come upon them. And now we can behold the decrees of God concerning this land, that it is a land of promise, and whatsoever nation shall possess it, shall serve God, or they shall be swept off when the fullness of his wrath shall come upon them.* Do you think we are ready and deserving to be “swept off.” We could be obsessed with God’s punishment, but I prefer to think about God’s blessings to those that are “under God.”

Some of the “blessings” are found in Deut. 28: 1-12, which reads: *And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I*



command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth; And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face; they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

The Lord shall establish thee a holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee. The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand; and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

THIS IS A DESCRIPTION OF “ONE NATION, UNDER GOD.” Would you like to live in such a nation?



The rain, it raineth on the just —  
And also on the unjust fella.  
But chiefly on the just, because  
The unjust steals the just’s umbrella.

— Saints Herald, September 18, 1937



# REMEMBER, REPENT, RENEW

**Elder Tony Crandell**

*Lamoni, Iowa*

**May 5, 2019**

As a Call to Worship Elder Michael Jordison read Doctrine & Covenants 119:5b. *For whether it be upon the first Lord's day of every month, or upon the Lord's day of every week, if it be administered by the officers of the church with sincerity of heart and in purity of purpose, and be partaken of in remembrance of Jesus Christ and in willingness to take upon them his name by them who partake, it is acceptable to God.*

Today is the first Sunday of the month, and this is the Sunday when we traditionally observe the Lord’s Supper. We did that at the beginning of the service today, so I thought it appropriate to talk about details that make up our Communion experience and its beginning so that all would understand: what it is, what it means, and what we just did, so that we can be on the same page in our





understanding.

First of all, we need to remember how the Lord's Supper came about. We must remember that the entire nation of Israel was being held as slaves in Egypt for over 400 years. It was a severe time for them, and they were both feared and hated. The Pharaoh hated them and kept them impoverished. And finally, after 400 years of this treatment, the entire nation called out to God, and when that happened, He began going about the work that would lead them to their freedom. But it took the entire nation to do this.

Isn't this like the promise God made in 2 Chronicles 7:14, when He said, *If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land.* No matter what a nation might be going through, when the real believers of that nation turn towards God with all belief and reliance, God promises us to help us, personally as well as our land.

America is going through a bad time of political correctness these days. We have been told that we cannot pray in school because someone might be offended, and we have said "fine."

We have been told to stop reading our Bibles in public and we have said "fine." And now, we are told to not mention the name of Jesus or to pray where people can hear us because it might be "offensive" to some. And so far, we have said "fine."

Is it any wonder why America is having such problems as our youth being totally uncontrollable, or how we have been divided in this nation almost beyond repair? Maybe it is because, instead of praying for God's help as He told us to, we are trying to remove Him out of our culture. And we are suffering for it.

God told the Israelites that as their very last supper as slaves, they were to eat a meal that He described in detail and to do so with their sandals on so they would be ready to go at a moment's notice. Remember these folks lived in the dusty, sandy desert and traditionally when they entered a home to eat a meal, they took off their sandals and washed their feet. He also instructed them to eat that meal yearly in celebration of what He did for them.

So, now, let's fast forward. Jesus is in Jerusalem to eat the Passover meal with His disciples. And somewhat later in the future, He gives the Apostle Paul some very important information as to what happened at that meal.

And so, exactly what is the Passover Meal? It is called

the Seder. The Seder is a Jewish religious ceremony with a carefully prescribed ritual that makes this dinner different from any other dinners a family might enjoy. The dinner is a ritual and is laid out in a book called the Hag-ga-dah.

Fifteen years ago or more, we had a Church of Christ congregation in Lamoni and they invited us to a full Seder celebration. It was quite lengthy and very informative. The ritual is replete with candles, much Old Testament scripture, symbolic foods, and numerous prayers. I was glad when it was over because I am not a lover of mutton, but I was also glad I had experienced it.

The head of the family begins the ceremony by the passing of the bread, and then sanctifying the holiday with a benediction over a cup of wine. In all, four cups of wine will be consumed, each at certain intervals. In turn, after the cleansing of the hands, different foods are served, after which a second cup of wine is poured.

This Passover Meal celebrates how God passed over the Jewish homes and spared them from the death of the first born and it also celebrates God's leading them out of slavery. It was at this meal that Jesus changed the meaning to the Last Supper as it pertains to believers in Him. The Jews of today still follow God's command to eat that Passover meal every year in celebration of His leading their ancestors out of slavery. But today Jesus is telling all Christians to eat this meal in remembrance of Him and what He has done for us. Ever since then, Christians have observed this meal. The early Christians met secretly in homes to remember the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and since then, the church has been celebrating the Communion Service.

1st Corinthians 11:23-30 says, *For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh condemnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*



You know, Jesus did not tell us to remember His birth, even though we do celebrate it. He didn't tell us to remember the day He arose from the tomb, but we celebrate that, too. The only two things that Jesus ever commanded us to remember are baptism and the Lord's Supper, or what we refer to as Communion. We certainly remember baptism in that whenever a person commits him or herself to Christ, we baptize them into the body of Christ. And, we observe Communion. I think the message behind the Communion is that of being set free from the bondage of sin. We should humble our hearts to the Lord as no other celebration. I think that Communion is too often looked upon as being just something we do routinely in church. In reality, it is the opportunity for Christians to worship Jesus by remembering the sacrifice He was willing to make for our sakes.

But like all other memories, we cannot remember unless we have a personal experience involving the situation. For instance, you cannot remember the first time "I" ever rode a bicycle because you were not involved. All you can do is *hear* about my learning to ride a bicycle. In the same way, unless we are personally invested in the thing we are trying to remember, all we can do is hear about other people's memories of it.

As I continue, I want to explain what these verses I just read really mean to us today. The first thing is that the writer Paul was given this information by Jesus Christ himself. And he was given this information so that Christians throughout time could have a solid understanding of what Communion really is, what it really means, and how we are to properly celebrate it. At the Last Supper, all the disciples were seated around the table with Jesus. At the first of the meal Jesus took a loaf of bread and offered a prayer of thanksgiving to God the Father for that bread and then He took a piece and passed the rest to the disciples. In verses 24 and 25, Jesus told us that the bread and cup represent His body. Just as His body was broken and drained for our sakes, the bread is broken, and the cup is drained at the meal. And we are called to remember that each time we partake of these emblems.

If we have not given ourselves over to Jesus and taken Him as our Savior, we have no relationship with Him – therefore, we have no memories of what He has done. So, we cannot remember what we have never experienced. Just as you cannot remember the first time **I** ever rode a bicycle because you were not there to experience it, all you are able to do is hear about it. And if you have never experienced a personal relationship with Christ, you will

not be able to remember anything He went through for your sake.

But the idea of remembering is more than just recalling an event that once took place. It is the stirring of the mind to *re-live* with Jesus Christ as much of His life, death and resurrection as is humanly possible. Each time we observe this supper, we must remember how holy it is and what it means to our very salvation. It is the reason we assemble in this church in the first place. It is a time of honoring Him for His sacrifice for us.

In verse 26, it tells us that as we do these things, we are proclaiming to ourselves and to others the fact that Jesus died for us and that He promised to come back for us. And since younger children cannot understand the gravity of what they are doing nor the depth of the meaning of this meal nor the importance of these instructions, we ask that they also not partake of this meal. When they have reached the age of accountability and have been baptized, they will be invited to do so.

So what do we remember? We remember what God's Word says about Jesus.

### REMEMBER

- He left heaven to be born in a human body – Philippians 2:5-6
- He became poor that we might be rich - 2 Cor. 8:9
- He bore our sins in His own body on the cross - 1 Peter 2:24
- He took *our* place on Calvary - Isa. 53:4-6
- He shed His blood for *our* redemption - Rev. 1:5; 5:9
- He conquered death for us forever- Matt. 28:1-6; Rev. 1:18
- He ascended back to Heaven - Heb. 7:25

Communion is also a time of self-reflection —

### REPENT

Verses 27 and 28 give us a clear warning about how we partake of this meal. We must ensure that our hearts have nothing in them that would distract our focus away from the Lord Jesus as we eat this meal. We are told that if we eat this in a manner that is not worthy of Jesus, then we are purposely sinning against Him. Michael printed Section 119:5b in your bulletin, *for whether it be upon the first Lord's day of every month, or upon the Lord's day of every week, if it be administered by the officers of the church with sincerity of heart and in purity of purpose, and be partaken of in remembrance of Jesus Christ and in willingness to take upon them his name by them who partake, it is acceptable to God.*





Please take note of what it says. That is why we should never take the emblems if we have something on our hearts such as unforgiveness. If you have something on your heart today, such as negative feelings towards another for any reason, please do not take this meal this morning. It is nothing to be ashamed of, and everything Godly to do so until your heart is clear of any such sin.

In I Corinthians 11, verse 30, it tells us that sickness and even death can sometimes be attributed to how we partake of the Communion. Most people do not understand this meal well enough to know that if we partake of it with a heart and mind that is not fully focused on Him, that is a sin, and we are bringing that sin into the presence of Christ. And since that is a sin, and all sin calls for punishment, then we suffer the punishment for our actions, whether those actions were intentional or not.

Communion is a time of personal declaration —

### RENEW

It is possible for a non-believer to partake of the Lord's Supper and never be saved? This Communion event holds no saving power in and of itself! However, for those who are saved, it is a time for us to declare publicly that we believe His death and resurrection were for us! Let us take our stand with the redeemed and loudly proclaim our faith in Him and our dependence upon His sacrifice. The Lord's Supper is a prime time to identify yourself with the Lord Jesus!

This is to be a time of education as well as a time of worship. We must always take the time to explain what we are doing when we take the bread and wine. This service is a prime time for declaring the Gospel message to those who do not know it. In this day when many churches are becoming "seeker friendly" and others are abandoning the doctrines of salvation by grace through faith, let us determine that as long as there is breath in our bodies we will strive to protect that message in this church! Some churches have even removed crosses or other religious symbols from the church auditorium to make it *seeker-friendly*. Some churches even have suppressed the name of Jesus in their prayers and music.

You know, we too could compromise right here in Mount Ayr and draw a crowd if we had a praise band, cup holders on our chairs, Starbucks and Krispy Kremes in the foyer. You laugh, but that is exactly what our son witnesses in his mega-church in Des Moines every Sunday. In fact, you can even have breakfast in the fellowship room. But you know, I would rather preach the truth to a faithful few of you than to drag a crowd behind

me into a Christ-less eternity!

As a child, many of us can remember our mothers telling us to wash up for supper. Well, that is what the Lord is telling you and me this morning! Wash your heart up for the Lord's Supper. If your heart wasn't quite right this morning, repent of it, and renew your allegiance and dedication to Christ. **Remember, Repent, Renew**

All of us who are called by His name, and especially this small remnant of true believers who do truly seek to be like Christ, must remember, repent, and renew our covenant.




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What is the "end" in which the atonement finds completion? The end is in that one body of Christ. It is that group of people indwelt by his Spirit. And being so indwelt, they endeavor to do for others what Christ has done for them. Who must make the sacrifice for sin? Who made it for us? Did not Christ make it? How can enmity and sin be ended and overcome except once again Christ shall pay the price in us? For what other purpose have we been called? Who, in light of this atonement, would shun to bear the sin and carry the infirmities of others? How can the church be purged of her own selfishness unless we remember him who gave himself?

The Atonement has meaning only for those who strive to continue in its never ceasing activity, for still it goes on. And it will go on-the sun giving of itself and thus blessing the earth as it turns toward the Lord of day; the seed dying in the soil and thus making possible the life it enfolds. So Christ continually re-enacts in his church and in the people of his choice the Atonement, his own sacrifice being an essential symbol of the Divine Life.

*For God is God and he is love.*

Arthur A. Oakman, God's Spiritual Universe; excerpt from chapter, "The Atonement"



# MOTHERS ARE GOD'S INSTRUMENTS

**High Priest Sherman Phipps**

*Lamoni, Iowa*

**May 12, 2019**

As a Call to Worship High Priest Robert Rolfe read Alma 26:53-56, 96. *And now I say unto you my beloved brother, Moroni, that never had I seen so great courage, nay, not amongst all the Nephites. For as I had ever called them my sons, (for they were all of them very young,) even so they said unto me, Father, behold, our God is with us, and he will not suffer that we shall fall; then let us go forth; We would not slay our brethren, if they would let us alone; therefore let us go, lest they should overpower the army of Antipus. Now they never had fought, yet they did not fear death: and they did think more upon the liberty of their fathers, than they did upon their lives; yea, they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt,*

*that God would deliver them. Yea, and even according to their faith, it was done unto them; and I did remember the words which they said unto me that their mothers had taught them.*

Trying to find an appropriate scripture for Mother's Day can be a little tougher than you might think. I want to read a scripture to you here this morning and then I want to tell you why I think it is appropriate in case you wonder why I would pick this scripture. It's Psalms 113. *Praise ye the Lord. Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised. The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens. Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth! He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people. He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the Lord.* I am sure if you wanted to go into the real meaning of this scripture and how it relates to the House of Israel, you could do that. I just thought it was really interesting when I read that scripture that he's praising the Lord, this magnificent being that created everything, who has all power and after doing that the one thing that he made mention of was our mothers. Out of all of those marvelous creations of the Lord, he specifically talks about how wonderful it is to be a joyful mother of children.

I wanted to say thank you to Isabel, Elyse and Mike for their ministry of music but it also struck me that this is a perfect example of one of the main things that I would like to convey today which is thank you, Julia. This is the fruit of her work and it is a blessing to us all.

You know several years ago I had the experience of being asked to preach in the Auditorium. I really struggled with that. I could not see any way that I should be preaching there. I have kind of come here this morning with the same feeling down here in my stomach. Who am I to speak on an occasion such as this where we try to honor our mothers?

Rob mentioned his mother and I could stand here too and talk about my mother. She was an amazing, wonderful person but I am going to leave it at that. A lot of you knew her. Her mother, my Grandmother Butterfield, and they were both very, very significant in my life. Like Rob said





about himself, I probably wouldn't have lived to be 20 I am pretty sure if it hadn't been for the prayers of my mother and grandmother. But I don't want to dwell on them this morning, not because it wouldn't be appropriate to or not because I don't really appreciate them but all of you have mothers and I don't want to memorialize one over the other. In fact, I was going to ask the silly, redundant question, does anybody here not have a mother because we all have a mother. It's one of God's greatest gifts. There might be people, I don't think there's anybody here this morning, who might raise their hand and say no they never really had a mother. We'll come back and talk about that a little bit later.

In reality everyone has a mother. Even if in some of those awful situations that I know Joel has dealt with and I've dealt with and so has Rob where somebody feels like they've been kind of left without a mother, the Lord has other ways of trying to fill that in. Since I'm headed this direction, I'll just take a second and say you know when you talk about your mother, you have to also consider grandmothers. Also as a child growing up we had a woman in our congregation named Ruby Strand. Ruby Strand, in one way of speaking, had no children of her own but the reality is we were all her children. She was a very attentive and wonderful mother. She's another one to whom I owe much. Some of you probably had more than one "Mother" also. All of them are God's gifts to you.

I mentioned that I don't feel quite adequate to be the speaker on Mother's Day but at the same time I am grateful to be here. I hope that regardless of what I am or am not capable of saying this morning that when you leave here today all of you mothers will have felt by the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit how important you are to God's work and why it is that He has done everything He can to make sure everybody has a mother.

As I was looking for scriptures for this morning I found one that I thought might be really significant to Isabel, Elyse, Ryder, Gabriel and Jacob. There is a scripture in Leviticus 19:3 and I will just read the three words that caught my attention that I thought you young people might want to be very, very aware of. It says, '*Fear your mother.*' I think that term fear there probably means respect but I thought you might remember it better if I read it just the way it was. Fear your mother!

When you talk about mothers, I think you have to go clear back to Genesis 3:26 where it talks about Eve being the mother of all living. Think about that for a second. If she was the mother of all living I guess that means that

everybody that came after Adam and Eve are their children. They are their seed. They are related to them. Sometimes Eve gets a bad rap because she was the one that took the fruit and gave it Adam, etc. But the fact is if you go back and read that story of creation and Satan trying to tempt Adam and Eve and then go ahead and read forward, you're going to find out that Eve was just as influential in sharing the gospel of Christ with her children as was Adam. It says very clearly that she, as well as Adam, taught their children about God.

It always seemed to me when I looked at my mother and father, it was my mother who was there all the time, the one I really interacted with more often. I learned important things from my father but Mother was there every day. That may not be true in every family. It wasn't just what she said but it was the way that she lived. That's true for my dad somewhat too but it's good that I listened to my mom and watched the way she acted and had her as an ever present consistent example.

It says that Eve was the mother of all living and I want each of you who are here today who are mothers, and those of you who may be mothers someday, to think about becoming the anchor as you raise your children and your grandchildren. If you take the job of motherhood and deal with it as the Lord wants you to you become the anchor for many, many generations to come.

Rob read this scripture from the Book of Mormon that talks about this group of young men who were referred to as the sons of Helaman and how they said that they had been taught by their mothers and because of that they had no doubt as to certain things. If as mothers with the help of God, because we're always dependent on Him and His assistance, you convey to your children this absolute sureness of God and their ability to relate to God and to rely upon Him in such a way that it gets passed down from generation to generation then your influence far exceeds just that which you see before you from day to day.

You get just a little teeny tiny bit of insight into what the mothers of the sons of Helaman taught them if you go on back a number of verses where it mentions these same sons again. It talks about not only the fact that their lives were preserved in battle but it goes on and talks about the kind of men they were and what they learned this from their mothers. Here are some habits that they had apparently learned from their mothers. *And they are strict to remember the Lord their God, from day to day; yea, they do observe to keep his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments continually; and their faith is*



*strong in the prophecies concerning that which is to come.* (Alma 26:166-167) In other words they had learned to pray, to be obedient and to study the scriptures and to have faith in those things. They learned all of that from their mothers.

If you go to Genesis 4 it talks about how Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord and that after many days an angel appeared to him and he had an exchange with him. After he shared that experience with Eve. This is back to what I mentioned earlier. It says that when Eve heard these things she was glad. Then it goes on and says that Adam and Eve blessed the name of God and they made all things known unto their sons and daughters. It becomes really important for you as mothers to understand how significant you are to all of those of us who follow.

As I tried to prepare for this morning I kept coming back to the value of children. It all gets tied in together. When Christ ministered in the flesh in Jerusalem and the surrounding area one of the things that He did that is recorded is that He blessed the children. He brought the children together and blessed them. Again when He appeared in this country we have a record of Him blessing the children so the children were obviously very, very significant to Christ. He was very concerned about them. Do you not think if He were to appear to us today that it wouldn't be the same? I think it would be. If He were to appear to us today one of the things He would want to do for us is to have our children brought together to bless them. It doesn't say this in the scripture but I wondered who brought them? Probably their mothers did.

Each of you mothers need also to consider bringing your children to Christ. Now some of them are out of the home and so you don't have any control over them physically. We all know the Lord never takes away our agency so our children are free to go their way and do as they want and it should be that way. They need to make those decisions but at the same time, as their mother it will always be your job to try and bring them to Christ that He might bless them even if they don't know you are doing that, even if it's a matter of prayer and they don't pay any attention to it. Still I believe the Lord will bless your children if you continue to bring them to Him in prayer.

That's one of the roles that you have as mothers is to bring your children to God that He might pray for them, that He might bless them. It says in both of these

experiences that the Lord took the children and He prayed over them. It talks about His prayers being so marvelous that the words couldn't even be recorded and so I have to believe that some of those words, some of His prayer was for the mothers that they could bring their children up and teach them the right way. As I'm standing here this morning I am convinced that Jesus still stands ready and ever willing to pray for all of you mothers that you might be able to carry that role that He has placed upon you to be the mother of your children and your grandchildren, to all those who follow. It is not a role; it is not a job or a responsibility that you have to carry on your own without help. He's given you other help. He's given you the Holy Spirit and He's given you your husband. He's given you your mothers and your grandmothers but He personally stands ready if you will bring your children to Him to pray for you, as well as for your children, and to give you wisdom in fulfilling this opportunity that He's given you.

There are other scriptures that talk about how children are a blessing and surely all of you who are mothers know that but at the same time the scriptures tell us in all things there is opposition. The adversary is always there trying to interfere with that relationship. Of course, he doesn't want you to raise your children to know God so he'll do everything he can to interfere with that. As you go through the scriptures you'll find out all the mothers down through history have had to deal with the adversary trying to interfere. A lot of their children did not do what they told them or didn't pay much attention to them, starting with Eve whose one son killed her other son. In spite of all the adversary can do, if you as mothers will continue to bring your children to God, even if it's just in prayer or by your example, I am convinced that Jesus stands ready to help you and that there will be joy in your motherhood in the end. That doesn't mean there won't be a lot of struggles along the way and a lot of heartaches but in the end if you are faithful and consistent, the Lord will uphold you in that and your children will be blessed because of your prayers, because of your faithfulness and your diligence.

There are some examples of that in the scriptures. Elijah went to a widow who had a son and stayed there for a while. Then after she had treated him so kindly, provided him with housing and food he left and her child died. The reason I bring this up is because as that child's mother instead of taking him out and burying him, she sent for Elijah. She had faith that Elijah could do something to address this thing that had happened to her and her son. Sure enough Elijah returned, presented the child to the



Lord and the Lord restored him to life. Now think about that for just a second. How significant to her son was her faith? Wow! He lived because of her faith.

Then Elisha did the same thing in another situation. He also had interaction with a mother and her child and the child died. She said this can't be so. This isn't what was supposed to happen with my son. She took her son and placed him on Elisha's bed (Elisha spent a lot of time at her home when he was traveling by). She actually saddled an ass and traveled to where Elisha was and implored him to come back to her house. He went to his room where the child was and laid on top of him twice and he came back to life. How significant was the mother's faith to this child?

As I thought about that in relationship to this morning I wanted you to think about not just the fact that these young men were raised from death, the physical death, I wanted you to think about how important it is to our children that you have the faith to present them to God through His Son Jesus that they might be resurrected spiritually. A lot of our children need a spiritual resurrection, maybe more so than they need a physical one. As their mothers you might just be the person, through your prayers, to open the door for them to have new life.

Being a mother is not one of those jobs where you retire. You never retire from being a mother. Your children, whether they want to admit it or not, even though they may not like you are dependent on you. They are dependent on your prayers and your faith and your continued presentation of them to their Heavenly Father.

Another story from the scriptures that I wanted to be sure and mention has to do with Hannah. She didn't think she would ever have a son and then the Lord granted unto her that she might have a son. His name was Samuel. She took him to the prophet as she had agreed to do. She had said, 'If I could just have a child, I would dedicate that child to the Lord's work.' I hope the mothers who are here this morning and have young children have some of that same feeling and desire that your children or grandchildren might be dedicated to the Lord and His work. Hannah, after the child was old enough to do so, took him back to the prophet and it says, 'She lent him to the Lord for life.'

I hope as mothers with children, whether they are your biological children or whether they are other children that you have had the opportunity to mother like Ruby Strand did so many of us that your goal will be that those children

might be lent to the Lord for life. That through you and your efforts they will know the path to eternal salvation. They will have joy eternally and their lives will have the meaning that God intended when He created them.

Your influence as mothers can go far beyond just your own little brood. Another good example of that is Mordecai. We don't know his wife's name but I assume that they took their niece Esther to raise. Have you had that experience of trying to help raise your nieces and nephews too as well as your grandkids. You know the rest of the story. Esther was key to saving the nation of Israel at that particular point in history. She obviously had gained the faith that it took to do what she did from her aunt and uncle in their home. This is another example of how parents are so essential and key.

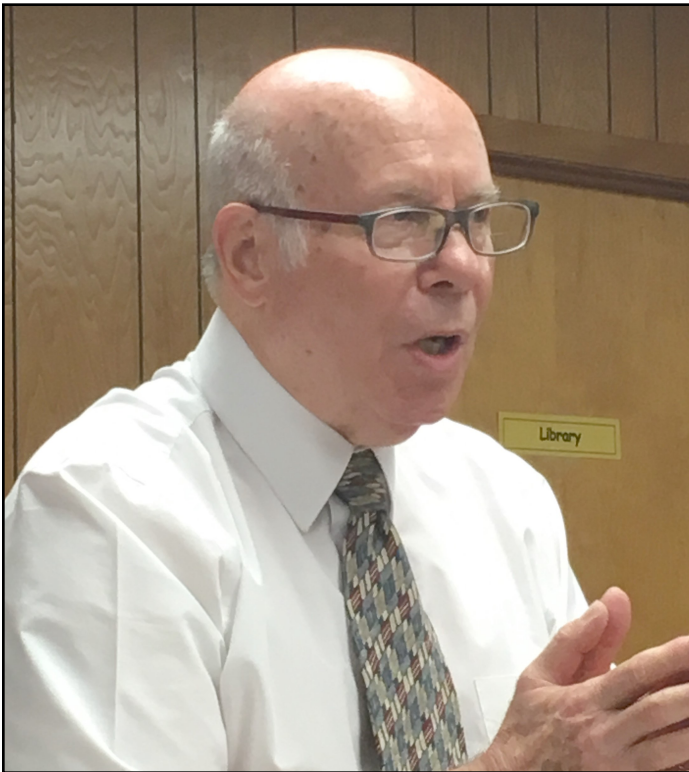
I suppose I should mention my own wife. Everybody knows we have four daughters and I don't know what they would have ever gotten from me. I was gone all the time but certainly as I look at our life and particularly Cheryl's part in that there was a lot of work and a lot of effort and there must have been days when she wanted to give up but praise God she didn't.

This morning I haven't covered near what I thought I might cover but I want to close with this. For the mothers I hope that I have somehow reminded you of how important your role is and that you must never ever give up. I am not talking about just the words you speak, but the lives you live and the example you set. Your children need to see Jesus and so to the mothers I would say, as I would to anybody, Jesus is always the example. When you go through the scriptures you will find that the characteristics that were His and the things He taught will be the example to you as to what you need to share with your children.

To the rest of the congregation I want to say pray always for the mothers. I am serious about that. I hope you take time during your day to pray for the mothers. I'm not just speaking to the men, all of you pray for the mothers. I am standing here looking at these two young ladies (Isabel and Elyse Jordison) and thinking that probably that will be their role someday too so pray for them that through the mothers God might bring faith and understanding, even righteousness, to His children. We know those things come through Jesus and His sacrifice and His great love for us but surely the mothers are His instruments in bringing these same things to the children of today and tomorrow.







## NATURAL MAN VS SPIRITUAL MAN

**Elder Paul Ludy**  
*Bates City, Missouri*  
**June 9, 2019**

Good morning. I'd like to share with you two passages of scripture. The first is from the Book of Mormon in Mosiah 1 starting with 119 and then I'm going to slip in a verse from 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:14. *For the natural man is an enemy to God, (this is Mosiah 1:119) and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever.* In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:14 it says, *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* We are going to talk about the difference between the natural man and the spiritual man. Let me finish with verse 120 in Mosiah 1. (It says in my book but if he yields. Some of your books will say unless he yields. Unless makes more sense.) *but if [UNLESS] he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man, and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ, the Lord, and becometh*

*as a child—submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.* Natural man can become spiritual man. If we still have some natural man tendencies within us we can change them.

I'd like to share with you something that happened this past week. We had a little cell phone problem. I dropped my phone, the screen went blank and I said, 'Well, I've had that phone for several years. It's time to change and get a new one.' New to us doesn't mean a smart phone. It means get another dumb phone so we have a flip phone which works and does exactly what I need it to do. I want to share something with you about cell phones. We printed this in the Restoration Youth Magazine in 2006. I thought you might like this.

*What would happen if we treated our scriptures the way we treat our cell phones? What if we carried them around with us all the time? What if we'd go back and get them if we forgot them? What if we flipped through them several times a day? What if we looked forward to frequent communication from them? What if we wanted our friends to know that we used them? What if we received important messages from them? What if we used them to stay connected to loved ones? What if we treated our scriptures as if we couldn't live without them? (When my cell phone went dead I felt I was disconnected.) What if we gave them as gifts to people we love? What if we depended on them as we traveled? What if we used them in case of an emergency? What if we always tried to stay in places where we could get the best reception? What if we kept the same idea about our scriptures that we do about our phones?*

**I** am going to read a lot of scripture today. We read the natural man is an enemy to God. We are going to discuss one of your biggest problems. How do I know it's one of your biggest problems? Well, it is also one of the biggest problems for almost everyone, including me. Obviously it included some guy named Peter that we read about in the Bible. The problem was identified by Jesus Christ just before He was crucified. Do you remember that He went into the Garden of Gethsemane to pray and



asked three of His disciples to wait there with Him? He said, ‘Stay awake. Wait here with me. I’m going alone to pray.’ After He prayed to His heavenly Father, Christ came back and found Peter, James, and John asleep. Then He said to Peter, *What, could ye not watch with me one hour?* (Watch and pray. I want you to listen to this and memorize this line.) *Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing; but the flesh is weak.* (Matthew 26:37-38).

Those last few words describe one of our biggest problems—“our flesh is weak!” But the words just before that—“the spirit indeed is willing”— is more important because the spirit is more important than the flesh. And in the words just before that He tells us the answer to our problem. *Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.*

Now we know about the flesh. This stuff on my arm is flesh. The stuff we eat like hamburger is flesh but the Greek word (pneuma) used here means the heart and soul of man. It is the human body and nature with its human aspirations, human morals, and human frailties. There is nothing wrong with having a body of flesh. I’m glad we all have that except that such bodies, the heart and soul, have desires to sin. The flesh is a weak-willed person inside us. It has no character, no resolve, no backbone, no self-control. The mindset of the flesh is death. It’s hostile toward God. We read the natural man is a what? He’s an enemy to God. Even in our better moments we know that that’s going to destroy us but we sometimes go on anyway.

I read this and said, ‘This is fantastic.’ The natural man lives in a shack. God wants him to tear it down and live in a mansion that is prepared for him. But the natural man wants to hang on to his shack. He may repair it a little here and there, and maybe he will give it a new coat of paint. The natural man thinks God would accept the shack as a good dwelling. But God knows there is nothing so pathetic as a well-painted shack. How does the natural man get out of the slums of life if he refuses God’s help?

Human nature emphasizes our weaknesses, which are related to the sin of sloth. The natural man experiences sorrows and sadness because he refuses the good things God has in store for him. It’s like having all these good books, having the scriptures available, having time to come to church and go to reunions and various things and saying, ‘I’m too busy. I don’t have time for that.’

There is an opposition in all things: You might want to follow along with me. I am reading 2 Nephi 1:97-100. *To bring about his eternal purposes in the end of man,*

*after he had created our first parents, and the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air, and, in fine, all things which are created, it must needs be that there was an opposition—even the forbidden fruit in opposition to the tree of life—the one being sweet and the other bitter. Wherefore, the Lord God gave unto man that he should act for himself. Wherefore, man could not act for himself, save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other.* You have to have the alternative in order to make that decision.

In Deuteronomy 30:15-19 we have this explanation and commandment directly from God: *I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil, in that I command thee this day to love the Lord, thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply. . . . I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore, choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.*

Moroni wrote in 7:10-11: *All things which are good cometh of God; and that which is evil cometh of the devil; for the devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against him continually, and inviteth and enticeth to sin and to do that which is evil continually. But behold, that which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good continually; wherefore, everything which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him is inspired of God.* Guess what the natural man does? He discounts the gifts of God. He runs to hide under the cover of his flesh and he offers an excuse like, ‘I’m only human. What do you expect of me?’ Now it’s too bad because God made the humans so in a way he’s blaming God.

In Section 86 of the Doctrine & Covenants, the Word of Wisdom is described as the *will of God in the temporal salvation of all Saints in the last days.* In it God instructs man about what to eat and what not to eat or drink or use. Man is to avoid wine, strong drink, tobacco, and hot drinks. God says, *All grain is good for the food of man, as also the fruit of the vine—that which yieldeth fruit, whether in the ground or above the ground.* God instructed that meat (flesh) should be used “sparingly.” He said, *It is pleasing unto me that they should not be used only [except] in times of winter, or of cold, or famine.* So even in our eating habits, man has the opportunity to choose whether to try to please God or not. The natural man chooses not to.

Natural man likes to live on the edge and have a little excitement from the books he reads and the movies he watches (sometimes over and over). He feels that if he



doesn't have his recreation or entertainment—with some thrills involved—he isn't living the “real life,” that others are enjoying more. And he likes to try out some of the things he reads about or sees.

I am going to tell you an example of a temporal thing that I tried out that I read about. I wondered if it really worked. I about lost my best friend. I was ten or twelve years old and read a book about some kid who was being held against his will and he escaped. He stopped somewhere at a restaurant and when the guy wasn't watching the kid put a little bit of pepper in the palm of his hand. When the guy wasn't looking the kid blew pepper into the guy's eyes. I wondered if that would really work so I tried it with my best friend. It worked. He went crazy for a few minutes. DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME but you get the idea. You read something in a book and think let's see if that really works. Some people try that with physical things. Some people try that with spiritual things. The spiritual are much more important, much more devastating, much more threatening to our eternal life.

The natural man likely misses the whole point in Christ's statements to Peter in Gethsemane: *Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing; but the flesh is weak.* The natural man will agree and say, “Yeah, that's right! The flesh is weak! That explains everything. That's why my life is messed up. See? Jesus understands and accepts why my life is the way it is!” But that thinking is just the opposite of what Jesus was teaching—that even though the flesh is weak, the spirit is truly willing! The Greek word for the spirit in this case is *prothemon* which is also translated as “eager or ready.” Yes, the spirit of man can be ready or eager for the things which are good, beautiful, and true. Man needs to starve the flesh and feed the spirit, which seeks for goodness. Jesus says that watching and praying are methods to help us keep out of temptation's snare.

Sometimes—but probably not nearly often enough—we sing the hymn “Yield Not to Temptation.” It includes these phrases: “Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin. (I'm going to tell you that temptation is not sin. Being tempted is not sin. We're tempted with things all the time. It's the yielding to it that is a sinful thing.) Dark passions subdue. Shun evil companions, bad language disdain. God's name hold in reverence, nor take it in vain. Ask the Savior to help you, comfort, strengthen and keep you. He is willing to aid you; He will carry you through.”

Nephi back in the very beginning of the Book of Mormon was told to go back to Jerusalem and get the

plates. The older brothers didn't want anything to do with it. That's a good example of natural man. Nephi said, *I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.* (1 Nephi 1:65).

Paul wrote: *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.* (1 Corinthians 10:13)

The natural man can be distracted so easily from prayer, from worship, or from the accomplishment of a good deed. Hunger, pain, thirst, exhaustion, and many other physical conditions shout loudly when they want something. And so man gives into the temptations of the flesh. He's working hard to help somebody. He's too tired out. Our flesh is a natural ally to temptation. Proverbs 22:3 says, *A prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself; but the simple pass on and are punished.*

Satan has set up the world to appeal to our lust, greed, gluttony, etc. Almost every advertisement we see speaks to the fulfilling of some weakness of the flesh—whether it is a new car or truck or furniture, or whether it makes us look thinner or feel better about ourselves or whether it makes life easier and thus appeals to our desire to get more done with less work—or probably just having less work. Don't forget, the natural man is lazy as well as stubborn. He wants to win the lottery or find some other way to get rich quick!

1 Nephi 5:231-233 says, *Because of the weakness which is in me, according to the flesh, I would excuse myself. For the things which some men esteem to be of great worth, both to the body and soul, others set at nought and trample under their feet. Yea, even the very God of Israel do men trample under their feet.* Excuses come easy for the natural man. He's always ready to rationalize why he did something or why he didn't do something. It's never his fault. He doesn't offer a sincere apology. Natural man says, ‘I'm just looking. It's not going to hurt me just to look.’ He makes excuses. ‘I didn't start the conversation. Somebody else did. I just happened to be there.’ Then he lays claim to God's patience and says, ‘I know He'll forgive me anyway.’

I am going to read several verses in 2<sup>nd</sup> Nephi 12:9-13. This is talking about eating, drinking and being merry and it's not a happy time. The natural man is described quite





well in 2 Nephi 12:9-13: *Yea, and there shall be many which shall say, Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die; and it shall be well with us. And there shall also be many which shall say, Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God; he will justify in committing a little sin; yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words; dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this; and do all these things, for tomorrow we die; and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God. Yea, and there shall be many which shall teach after this manner—false, and vain, and foolish doctrines—and shall be puffed up in their hearts, and shall seek deep to hide their counsels from the Lord; and their works shall be in the dark; and the blood of the saints shall cry from the ground against them. Yea, they have all gone out of the way; they have become corrupted.*

Alma's words concerning Satan fit this situation: *I say unto you all that this was a snare of the adversary, which he has laid to catch this people, that he might bring you into subjection unto him, that he might encircle you about with his chains, that he might chain you down to everlasting destruction, according to the power of his captivity.* (Alma 9:8-9) Satan is not a happy guy and he wants us to be like him.

I'd like to share with you from Galatians 5:16-21. The end of chapter 5 talks about bad things and good things and ends up with what we call the fruit of the Spirit. *Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary, the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like* (think of all the things that fit in such like); *of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* So if you are doing any "such like" you are in bad company. Don't do it. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.* (Galatians 5:22-23) We know what those words mean because they are good things.

King Benjamin told us a little bit about these "such like" things. He said, *And finally, I cannot tell you all the*

*things whereby ye may commit sin; for there are divers ways and means, even so many that I cannot number them. But this much I can tell you: that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe to keep the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not.* (Mosiah 2:48-50)

I am going to suggest that a person doesn't mature in godliness just because of something that happened years ago. 'Years ago I was baptized and now I'm perfect.' It is a daily battle and sometimes it's more than a daily battle. A person does not mature in godliness simply because of one experience that happened years ago. He grows into the likeness of Christ only by daily cooperation with God's working in his inner man. We can remember the verse that says, *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus* which is in Philippians or we can give into the flesh. We can vent our anger, be sarcastic, be all wrapped up in ourselves, listen to satanic music, read racy novels, watch sexually-oriented movies or we can shield ourselves from such things, control our thoughts, bridle our tongues, and avoid activities where we can't invite Jesus Christ to join us. To help insure that we do not yield to temptation, we can avoid frequenting the places where temptation abounds. We often hear in the news about someone who got into trouble after meeting someone in a bar. Well, duh, avoiding the bar would have averted the trouble.

To establish self-control, we have to put sin to death—not just for one hour a day but for every hour; not just for one day but for every day. We may work at our job 8 hours a day, or maybe 10 or 12 but we are supposed to be Christians for 24 hours each and every day. Remember what we hear in the sacrament service when the prayer over the bread is read: *That they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him, and keep his commandments which he has given them, that they may always have his Spirit to be with them.* (Moroni 4:4; DC 17:22d) That's part of the vow that you made when you were baptized, to remember Him and keep His commandments.

It's easier to preach about self-control than it is to exercise self-control. If you preach about and don't exercise it, you are called a hypocrite. Every once in a while we get caught doing something that is hypocritical. There's a hymn "Just a closer walk with Thee" that



includes these words: “I am weak, but Thou art strong.” Ether 5:28 gives these words of Christ: *I give unto men weakness, that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.*

Philippians 2:5 says, *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.* When the natural man allows that, temptations no longer grip him with such overwhelming power. Jesus said, *I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly.* (John 10:10) I am going to suggest that that’s not after this life that’s during this life that we can have that abundant life today and tomorrow. We can have a better life than many of the people around us have. We can set an example for them.

God’s solution to this problem that we have of yielding to the natural man is both simple and effective: *Pray always, lest you enter into temptation and lose your reward. Be faithful unto the end, and lo, I am with you.* (Doctrine and Covenants 30:4c) You can read the same kind of thing from 2nd Nephi 13 that says to press forward with brightness of hope and to endure to the end. Sometimes we endure for a while but we can’t make it all the way to the top of the mountain or to the end of the road. We are just human but we can rely upon God to help us. In James 5:16 it also says to *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. We need to offer our mighty, fervent prayers for one another.*

I should have said earlier that I bring you greetings from Bates City, MO. We have about this many seats, maybe a few more in our sanctuary. In our congregations we need to offer our fervent prayers for each other. The Lord has provided a way out of the sin that man gets himself into, and He offers forgiveness upon repentance. Don’t forget the words of Isaiah. They are timeless: *Wash ye; make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well. . . . Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* (Isaiah 1:16-18)

Let’s take a few minutes and look at what the spiritual man should be like. He’s supposed to be like Jesus Christ. He’s supposed to be purified as Christ is pure. There are

some really neat scriptures in 1<sup>st</sup> John 3 and in Moroni 7 that talk about when Christ comes that we will see Him as He is. We will know as we are known. We’ll be purified like He is. We can’t think that somehow we’re going to cross over from one street to the other, walk into Zion and be pure. We need to practice these things now.

What is the spiritual man like? He is like Jesus Christ. Here is a short list of attributes of the Lord:

**JESUS WAS LOVING**, and He told us to be loving: *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* (John 13:34-35)

**JESUS WAS COURAGEOUS.** Jesus was not afraid to call a spade a spade or a hypocrite a hypocrite. He stood up for what He believed. He asks us to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

**JESUS PRAYED** and He taught us to pray: *Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.* (Matthew 6:10-11) We often put a disclaimer on it. ‘But, Lord, please do it my way.’ It says, Thy will be done and Jesus said, thy will be done and we need to say, ‘Thy will be done.’

**JESUS WAS A SERVANT**, and King Benjamin explained the servant role for us: *I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom, that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God.* (Mosiah 1:49)

**JESUS SACRIFICED** and we need to: *I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice—holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God is.* (Romans 12:1-2)

**JESUS FORGAVE.** Oh, my. Even when He was being crucified he said, *Father, forgive them for they know what they do.* Can we? He said, *And when ye stand praying, forgive if ye have aught against any, that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your trespasses.* (Mark 11:27-28)

**JESUS WAS ONE WITH THE FATHER**, and He prayed that we would be also. What’s the real Lord’s



prayer? It's not Our Father who art in Heaven. It's a prayer that Jesus prayed which is recorded in John 17:21-22. *That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one.* We have a problem with this because we're a congregation here, one group there, somebody over there that doesn't believe quite the same way that we do. We all pray the same prayer, Our Father. If He's our Father that doesn't make us cousins, that makes us brothers and sisters. We have to learn how to work together.

I need two volunteers who will do something really special. Come on girls. (Isabel and Elyse Jordison are drafted. He gives them two big cups and asks them to fill one with hot water and one with cold.) We're going to let the hot water represent the spiritual man being fired up for the gospel of Jesus Christ. The cold water represents being cold toward God—natural man whose an enemy toward God. He is idle, unclean, a lover of pleasures more than a lover of God.

We sometimes think that we can walk on the wild side a little, waste a little time in foolishness, have some "fun" as the Gentiles do; and then we can make up for it by spending an equal amount of time reading the Scriptures, helping the elderly, meditating and praying, etc. We may think we can "Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God." Then "God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God." But that doesn't work for people who know better—and we do!

What happens if we mix equal portions of hot water and cold water? We get lukewarm water. What's wrong with lukewarm? The Lord said this about one congregation: *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.* (Revelation 3:15-16)

Let me ask you a couple of questions. How much hot water would it take to overcome the cold? Once you put cold water in it you are not going to get hot water.

Let's try the same thing with black paint and white paint. (Hold up 2 gallon cans of paint.) I'm not going to mix them together but I want you to get the idea. If you mix black and white together, what are you going to get? You're going to get black aren't you? Logically white and black make gray but somehow the black overcomes the white and you're going to have a very, very dark gray. In a 5 gallon bucket let's put in two or three more gallons of

white. What color will we have then? Pretty dark gray. You would have to put in gallons and gallons of white paint to make it light gray.

I'll tell you an example of something that happened that way. I was a cook at school for several years. One day I wasn't able to be there and a friend came in to cook spaghetti for the students at school. Anybody can cook spaghetti, right? He opened a #10 can of tomato paste to start with the sauce. I didn't tell him to do that. He just thought he should do it. I know he thought it was tomato sauce instead of paste. I would take out tomato paste a cupful or spoonful at a time and put it in baggies and freeze it and use one little baggie every once in a while but he had a #10 can. He tried to dilute it to make it edible. He put in gallons of water and maybe some tomatoes or whatever else but it still tasted like tomato paste.

We're going to get very dark gray here mixing the paints. The sin, the evil, the black overpowers the white. You can't make white paint out of that once it has black in it. I talked to a professional house painter, Dan Sherer, and said, 'Dan, how does this work?' He said, 'Yeah, you've got it right. It's going to be that way. Sometimes painters who want to paint a house white will add black to it so it will cover better.' Now you can add a little black to the white and you can't tell the difference unless you know what pure white is. When you buy paper you can get paper that is different degrees of whiteness. Unless you have something that is pure white you can't tell that a house or paper is not pure white. It looks white next to the gray house next door. We do that with ourselves. We judge ourselves as being pretty good when we compare ourselves with the neighbor next door.

We cannot walk through life as a natural man and also as a spiritual man at the same time. That person is called a hypocrite. And we cannot be in the Kingdom of God or in celestial glory if we still have sin in our lives. The Lord says that He cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance but He does say that if you repent and keep the commandments, the Lord will forgive. He has provided a way to redeem you from the scarlet, or the black or the evil.

The last question: *Remember, to be carnally minded is death, and to be spiritually minded is life eternal.* (2 Nephi 6:74) Which do you want? There is an opposition in all things. We choose. Which do we want?





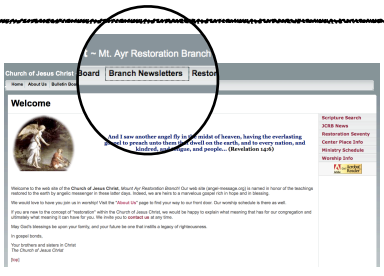


# Church of Jesus Christ Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

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



Have you misplaced your MARB Newsletter?  
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*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

- Aug 14** Prayer service will be at the church in Mt. Ayr.
- Aug 18** Food for Center due
- Aug 18** Evening Fellowship will be held at Central Park in Lamoni at 6 PM. All are invited to share in the singing at the Gazebo. Drinks and snacks will be provided. This is an opportunity for outreach in the community so please invite your friends.
- Sep 14-15** CRE - Kirtland Priesthood Retreat. Registration can be made online at: [www.eldersconference.org](http://www.eldersconference.org)
- Sep 21-22** CRE - "Joyful Together" - Women's Retreat at Odessa Hills
- Oct.** JCRB - National Conference - Dates TBA

