

October 2019

Church of Jesus Christ

Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

NEWSLETTER

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*“For the Son of Man
is come to seek and to
save that which was
lost.”*



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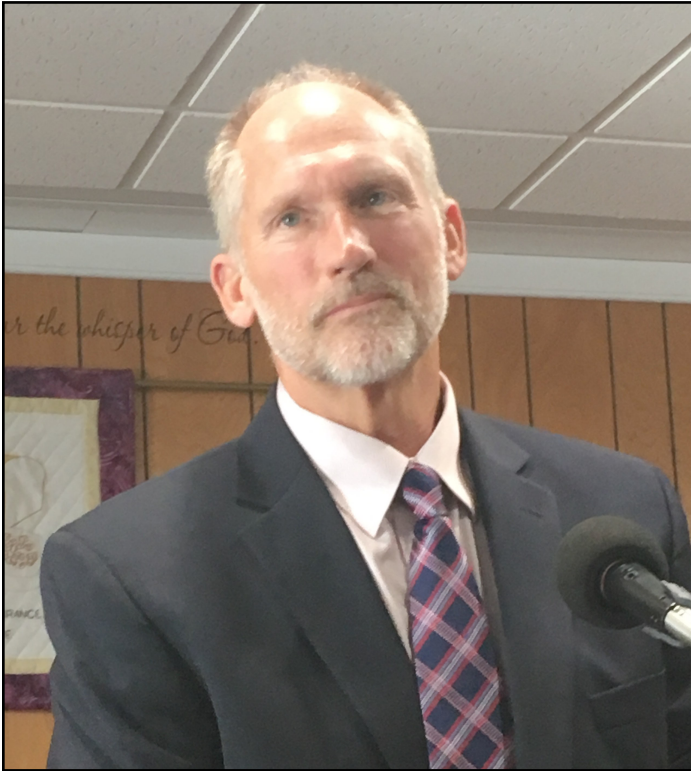
News & Notes

Ian Mickelson celebrated his first birthday last month with family and friends as the congregation was invited to help his brothers, Ike and Leo, celebrate the day right. Happy Birthday Ian!

The Congregational Hayride and Cookout was again held at the barber Farm outside Bethany, Missouri. The congregation and friends gathered Saturday September 28th for fun, fellowship and food.

A branch business meeting was held last month in which brother Rob Rolfe was re-elected pastor of the branch. Other officers were elected/re-elected. A full listing can be found on on the church website. Please keep them all in your prayers.

The branch will be sending delegates to the JCRB National Conference October 10-12 in Independence. Those who cannot attend may live-stream the events at the conference website: conferenceofbranches.org



HE IS OUR RESCUER

Elder Rick Forth
Xenia, Illinois
September 1, 2019

As a Call to Worship Elder Gordon Winkler read Doctrine & Covenants 76:4g-h. *And this is the gospel, the glad tidings which the voice out of the heavens bore record unto us, that he came into the world, even Jesus to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness; that through him all might be saved, whom the Father had put into his power, and made by him; who glorifies the Father, and saves all the works of his hands, except those sons of perdition, who deny the Son after the Father has revealed him.*

Good morning. It is indeed my pleasure to greet each of you this morning in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It is a pleasure to be with you, to be a part of this service, to be blessed by all of you who have come out this morning, to be blessed by the opportunity we have

thus far taken to partake of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Brother Rob, I extend my appreciation to you for calling and inviting me to speak this week. As the pastor of this congregation you look around this morning and realize how much we have been blessed by the gathering that has come in. We heard as part of the invocation, 'Please, Lord, provide enough communion because there are more than we expected.' What a blessing! What a glorious blessing to have more people than we prepared for.

I thank you for the invitation to speak and I thank this community of believers, this congregation that has gathered to hear the word. Because there are so many here I don't know I think it might be appropriate to kind of give you a little background about myself. I look forward to meeting each one of you.

Some forty plus years ago my wife and I graduated from a small college down the road that some of you may recognize. In that process following our graduation and years of marriage we have five grown children and twelve grandchildren. We come from Southern Illinois about 7 1/2 to 8 hours from here but we get to visit on a regular basis because our youngest daughter and her family live in Lamoni. She happened to meet a young man at Graceland that was from this area and they have three boys. Some of you were able to attend the youngest grandchild's one-year birthday party yesterday in Lamoni. We thank you very much for your presence. Those who weren't able to be there you missed a wonderful circus with the children.

In that process of graduation from Graceland and being allowed to come back to this area, we have been able to renew some old friendships. Brother Bob, it's good to see you on a regular basis. Bob and I played football together here and enjoyed that experience very much.

Those of you who have come this morning who might be students at Graceland enjoy your time there. Be blessed by the relationships that you will gain and thank your Heavenly Father for all those connections and all the family support you have and the support of the community and the local church. God bless each of you is my prayer.

I want to share a scripture from the book of Luke 19:10. It's a very short passage that says, *For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.* I want you to think about that a little bit. I am going to read it again. *For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.* You know in my understanding of the gospels, and it's a small one, Jesus had multiple reasons to



come to this earth. One of those was to teach, one to prophesy and one to deliver. Ultimately one of the most important ones is to reign in His kingdom that He will establish on this earth for the benefit of all those who believe on His word, all of those who make those choices that are pleasing unto Him and to His Father. But the gospel of Luke says He has come to seek and to save, a very simple yet profound and powerful mission. Jesus has come into this world to look for those who are lost and by any means possible to save them.

In the gospel of John we also find that there are very significant reasons for the Master to be looking to save those which are lost. In the book of John 12:46-47 it says *I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.* In this passage we should understand that being lost has at its core being in the dark and that there may be and most assuredly will be a judgment to follow. One might think after reading this that He said, 'I didn't come to judge you.' You might think well He's not come to judge but just because Jesus did not come to judge there is quite possibly One that will.

Let me try to address or expand on the word *save* as is presented in Luke and the context of religion today. The word *save*, at least for me, is a very powerful word, more powerful than I can imagine. Yet, for many of this world, it has become a bit generic, without much depth. That's my opinion, my feeling. Because of the way it's thrown around, it has diminished the power, the context in which Jesus presented it. It has become too easily used and subsequently lost some of its meaning or power. If you are saved by Jesus you are most definitely saved.

We've seen the signs so often proclaiming Jesus Saves but the signs don't say what He saves us from. Make no mistake to be saved is a powerful and redeeming notion. I don't want to diminish the value of those signs. I don't want to say that there is something wrong with them. I am just saying that because they are so predominant and the phrase is so short, 'Jesus Saves,' we don't always get the context of what God wants for us to understand about salvation.

Jesus Saves signs still dot the countryside though lacking in the meaning they once held so just what does this mean to the Restoration Gospel of Jesus Christ? What is so important to us that we might spend another few minutes talking about Jesus saves? I am going to try my best to fill in some of the gaps at least for me or shed some

light so to speak.

The quotes from the scriptures above refer to being lost to darkness and to judgment. To be lost in the everyday sense of the word, not necessarily the spiritual sense, for me at least is to be away from home or safety or to not be connected to my loved ones. So if I am lost I am not connected to that which I'd like to be connected with which is what I feel secure with and I don't have a viable way to get back to that. Not knowing how to find my way back can be termed a condition of helplessness. Sure it's possible to be lost and not completely helpless. Ask any man who has wandered around on the highways or freeways on a road trip, not real sure where he is but very much afraid to ask for help, or embarrassed or stubborn. Let me be very clear here. We never even admit we are lost let alone in need of help and above all we're not going to admit to our spouse that we're lost so what we do is we try to find landmarks. We try to find things we're familiar with along the way and we look for those things to help guide us. Now in today's age it has gotten much simpler. We just talk to our phone and our phone talks back and explains to us how to get there and tells us every turn to make. So it's a lot easier for us to stay on track and to not be lost.

When you are lost spiritually to God, let me be very clear, we need help. I need help. We all need help when we are lost spiritually to God. To be lost and in darkness is an entirely different and more difficult matter. I have probably in the past related my lost experience to some of you here. I am not sure whether I have done it from the pulpit or not so because of that I'm going to relate it again. It bears retelling. I like to hunt. I like to deer hunt, not necessarily because I like to harvest a deer but I like to be out. I like to be in the woods. I like to be alone from time to time to meditate and have that special time.

I was deer hunting in Southern Illinois on ground next to the Shawnee National Forest. For all of those here who are not familiar with that area-the forest runs from river to river. It's about 100 miles and it's a very old forest. There are a lot of virgin trees that have never been cut. There is some ground there that we hunt on right next to the forest that has some of those same trees. I went into a place that I had not been familiar with and the markings weren't too good. There was some of the little reflective tape you put on to find your way in at night that had been put there by others, not by me. I found my way in to a spot but could not find the tree stand. I got down in a depression, a 'holler' as we call it, with a lot of big trees around. It was



very dark early in the morning and I couldn't see any more of the reflective tape anywhere. I started shining my light and looking around and all I could see were these big tall trees in the darkness with no markings that I recognized. In that process something hit me. I didn't know where I was. I didn't know which direction to go and I had this fear that if I started walking in the wrong direction I would walk a few miles out of the way. In that process when fear hits you then despair hits and then you get this adrenaline rush to where you find yourself saying 'OK what I do?'

Now in the grand scheme of things in this life it was a very short experience and really quite small in comparison to the experience of others and many of you who have been lost. You see I was never in any real danger. There was nothing there that I was going to be afraid of that would take my life. Still the sense of near helplessness was unforgettable. The moment I recognized it I definitely experienced a degree of despair and fear. I can hardly imagine what it would be like to be really lost out in the elements somewhere with predators all around and absolute darkness and a very remote chance of someone finding you and rescuing you.

The difficulty of being lost gets a little more virile when we up the ante just a bit. We're not only lost in darkness but also under the threat and absolute guarantee of judgment based upon the actions which we may have taken or not taken. Imagine that you are lost in a dark place alone, maybe even solitary confinement, and waiting to be judged by the One that you know has the ability to judge you and has complete control over your life even unto death. This is what Jesus came to rescue us from.

For me the word *rescue* is a much more powerful word from being saved. Let me try to explain that. Rescue means the same as saved but I'm hoping a different word choice will cut through some of the religious numbness many of us experience when we see the sign Jesus Saves. If you go to the internet it defines *save* as keeping safe from harm or danger but when you throw in a definition for *rescue* it means to save someone from a dangerous or distressing situation. An example they give is when firemen are called out to rescue a man trapped in the river; to save from danger; save the life of; come to the aid of; set someone free; an act of saving or being saved from danger or distress; to be rescued, to be released, freed, liberated, delivered. All of us stand under the judgment for rebellion against God for however little or however great our rebellion might be. Our rebellion or our sin has put us

in darkness if you would allow me to describe it that way. The scriptures do. We cannot see ourselves for who we are in this world and we especially cannot see God for who He really is. We cannot find our own way out without help, without a guide, without someone to lead us, without a rescuer. If we do not acknowledge the One who rescues, the One who saves, we are destined to remain that way, lost.

Here is the astonishing mystery of God's grace and love. Even though we have rebelled against Him, even though we may continue in that rebellion, even though we may not make good choices to try to work out of that rebellion, He still loves us. He has come for us, for each one of us. He has come into our individual lives, our individual situations, and our individual moments of despair; moments of distrust and disobedience. Those moments when we may have feared that we are lost and have nowhere to turn to. We're looking around and we see the things that are keeping us in that lost condition. He still loves us.

He has come for us, for each one of us. In the book of Romans 5:6-11 we find these words. *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

Reconciliation is another of the many terms the Bible gives for getting unlost, coming back home as it were to the One who loves us and with whom we were meant to live in relationship of deep love and grace. We are allowed to come back into agreement with God, back into the terms of our covenant relationship in harmony with the Spirit that leads us and that is led by the Father. The "blood" of Jesus mentioned here is a reference to His death on the cross for us and "justified" means something approximately like being acquitted, not having to bear the guilt of our lives, being released from judgment and God's just anger toward rebellion.

Yet, and there is a yet, there is always a yet, to be shared with each of us who desire to be reconciled to God through the blood of the Savior. We must be willing to



take upon us His name, to repent of those sins that have kept us separated from His will and to make the effort to covenant with Him through the waters of baptism and through the paths of righteousness for His name's sake that we might be aligned with all of those things that God wants for us to choose that benefit His kingdom.

We must sincerely and humbly desire to be rescued. Some of us don't want to be rescued. We enjoy the life we enjoy. We enjoy those things that we want to choose, those things that we want to do and we really don't want to hear about the rescue from God because that might cause us to have to change how we live. We must sincerely and humbly desire to be rescued. This is the invitation and the promise of rescue. This is the way and the truth and the light of Christ.

We do not have the power to make the way. We have the power to follow the way which has been set.

We are, in essence, rescued from this sinful world by Jesus as we covenant with Him to stay with Him. The emblems which were prepared this morning, the service of those emblems to all of you is rescue. It is a rescue that God offers us every time we reach forth our hands to remind us of that covenant relationship we have entered into, that we are a part of something larger than ourselves. We are part of something very powerful, very enabling, very edifying and yet very humbling. We are, in essence, rescued from this sinful world by Jesus as we covenant with Him to stay with Him, to be removed from the darkness of being lost into the pure love and light of Christ.

Each of you received a handout this morning entitled "Rescue" by the artist Lauren Daigle. Tony is going to play this and I want you to follow along in your handout. Sometimes if you have not heard something it might be hard for you to pick up on all the words that are in the verses and I want you to meditate upon those words as you listen.

Rescue

You are not hidden
 There's never been a moment
 You were forgotten
 You are not hopeless
 Though you have been broken
 Your innocence stolen
 I hear you whisper underneath your breath

I hear your SOS, your SOS
 I will send out an army to find you
 In the middle of the darkest night
 It's true, I will rescue you
 There is no distance
 That cannot be covered
 Over and over
 You're not defenseless
 I'll be your shelter
 I'll be your armor
 I hear you whisper underneath your breath
 I hear your SOS, your SOS
 I will send out an army to find you
 In the middle of the darkest night
 It's true, I will rescue you
 I will never stop marching to reach you
 In the middle of the hardest fight
 It's true, I will rescue you
 I hear the whisper underneath your breath
 I hear you whisper, you have nothing left
 I will send out an army to find you
 In the middle of the darkest night
 It's true, I will rescue you
 I will never stop marching to reach you
 In the middle of the hardest fight
 It's true, I will rescue you
 Oh, I will rescue you

When you hear her sing that song and those words I want you to thoroughly comprehend the best each of you can how important you are to our Heavenly Father so much so that He will gather His armies however big it takes and they will never stop marching until they find each of us in that moment that we plead our SOS. From history and my mind I always thought SOS meant Save Our Ship but if you read the definitions of SOS it was always also commonly known that it meant Save Our Soul.

When the Savior for this world comes to us, to save us, to rescue us from the darkness, it does not come without a price. There is always a price for the rescuer, for the one who saves. The rescuer of the world put Himself at risk. Most assuredly He placed Himself upon that cross for each of us. We are extremely important to our Master.

I want to share with you one brief experience and a couple of thoughts following that in closing. Our youngest daughter Anna and our oldest daughter Allison were traveling south of our small town on a country road with



gravel on the edge of the road. It's what we call an oil and chip road. They were following a car and they noticed that the car was a little bit erratic. At one point when the car went around a curve and came out of the curve the car got on the edge of the road into the gravel. As it got into the gravel it got pulled into the ditch and as it got pulled into the ditch it hit a driveway abutment and when it hit it flipped over and went flying across the driveway on its top.

My two daughters stopped. My oldest daughter Allison got up and ran up to the vehicle and saw the lady hanging in the vehicle with the engine still running. She couldn't get the door open to get in but one of the glass windows was broken out so she crawled in to pull the lady out of the vehicle with it still running. The first thing she tried to get the lady to do was to turn it off to avoid a fire. She got the lady pulled out and everything was OK. The lady was very thankful. She was virtually uninjured but there could have been a worse outcome. When Allison told me that story I thought that Allison could have been blown up in the vehicle with the lady. When I asked her she said that she hadn't even given it a thought.

Rescuers don't give it a thought. When the firemen go into a burning building to save those that are in there they don't give it a thought. When there's an active shooter and the law enforcement officers' charge in, they don't give it a thought. When the enemy is upon the army and they are confronted, they don't give it a thought. The 911 rescuers went to those Twin Towers, to that scene of destruction and didn't give it a thought. When the Lord and Master of this world comes for you, He does not give it a thought of what the price is. He has come because of His eternal love for each of us.

In closing I want to read from you from the Doctrine & Covenants 50:8e. *Fear not, little children, for you are mine, and I have overcome the world, and you are of them that my Father hath given me; and none of them that my Father hath given me shall be lost.* You are the Father's. The Father loves us so very much that He has died for us. May we desire with all of our heart, might, mind and strength to be rescued by the Son of the Most High God. Amen.



HOW WELL DO WE KNOW JESUS?

High Priest Sherman Phipps

Lamoni, Iowa

September 8, 2019

As a Call to Worship Elder Tony Crandell read John 8:12. *Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*

The scripture I want to read this morning is from Section 90 of the Doctrine & Covenants. I hesitated about this and struggled with it a little bit because it is kind of long and I don't want to put anybody to sleep. But this morning I want to talk about our friend Jesus and this scripture says a lot about Him and so I hope you'll bear with me and that you'll listen to this and it will have meaning to you.

I am going to start with Paragraph 1c. This is Jesus speaking. *I was in the world and received of my Father, and the works of him were plainly manifest; and John saw and bore record of the fullness of my glory; and the fullness of John's record is hereafter to be revealed. And*



he bore record saying, I saw his glory that he was in the beginning before the world was; therefore, in the beginning the Word was; for he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation, the light and the Redeemer of the world; the Spirit of truth, who came into the world because the world was made by him; and in him was the life of men and the light of men. The worlds were made by him. Men were made by him. All things were made by him, and through him, and of him. And I, John, bear record that I beheld his glory, as the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father; full of grace and truth; even the Spirit of truth which came and dwelt in the flesh, and dwelt among us. And I, John, saw that he received not of the fullness at the first, but received grace for grace; and he received not of the fullness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fullness; and thus he was called the Son of God, because he received not of the fullness at the first. And I, John, bare record, and lo, the heavens were opened and the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove, and sat upon him, and there came a voice out of heaven saying, This is my beloved Son. And I, John, bare record that he received a fullness of the glory of the Father; and he received all power, both in heaven and on earth; and the glory of the Father was with him, for he dwelt in him. And it shall come to pass, that if you are faithful, you shall receive the fullness of the record of John. (And I'm not sure if that means there is more to be written or if means we will understand these words. I think that may be what it means but we'll receive the fullness of this testimony.)

I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fullness, for if you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fullness and be glorified in me as I am in the Father: therefore, I say unto you, You shall receive grace for grace. And now, verily I say unto you, I was in the beginning with the Father, and am the Firstborn; and all those who are begotten through me, are partakers of the glory of the same, and are the church of the Firstborn. Ye were also in the beginning with the Father; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth; and truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come; and whatsoever is more or less than this, is the spirit of that wicked one, who was a liar from the beginning. The Spirit of truth is of God. I am the Spirit of truth. (He is one with His Father.) [90:1c-4c]

(Mikayla Edwards had the special music and sang 'Remind Me Whom I Am' by Jason Gray.) Thank you, Mikayla. I kind of wish I had called Mikayla and talked to her before I came over here today and had her tell me what she was going to sing because the theme of that song is probably more on target than the theme I picked for

what I really want to say today. I would like somehow for the Lord to touch your hearts today and let you know who you are to Him. That song really summed things up, Mikayla. Here are the lyrics.

Remind Me Whom I Am

When I lose my way,
And I forget my name
Remind me who I am
In the mirror all I see
Is who I don't wanna be
Remind me who I am
In the loneliest places
When I can't remember what grace is
Tell me, once again
Who I am to You, who I am to You
Tell me, lest I forget
Who I am to You, that I belong to You,
When my heart is like a stone,
And I'm running far from home
Remind me who I am
When I can't receive Your love
Afraid I'll never be enough
Remind me who I am
If I'm Your beloved
Can You help me believe it
Tell me, once again
Who I am to you, who I am to You, whoa
Tell me, lest I forget
Who I am to you, that I belong to You
I'm the one You love,
I'm the one You love
That will be enough
I'm the one You love
Tell me, once again
Who I am to you, who I am to You
Tell me, lest I forget
Who I am to you, that I belong to You, whoa
Tell me, once again
Who I am to You, who I am to You
Tell me, lest I forget
Who I am to You, that I belong to You
To You.

I had come at my thoughts for today from a different direction and that's why I wish I would have talked to Mikayla first. Maybe I would have changed my direction a little. I came at today's theme from the direction of trying to ask us how well we know Jesus but the real bottom line is, do we know who we are to Him? So my question this morning is how well do we know Jesus? Of course, that means how well do we know His Father, God, because they are one? If you followed this scripture that I just read to you from the Doctrine & Covenants ultimately their



desire is that we be one with them also.

Did it storm last night where all of you live? I think that the storm woke me up a little before one. It was lightning, lightning, lightning. I don't know if it was the lightning that woke me up first but that's what kept me up. Our bedroom light and fan has a remote control and because of that remote control, I am assuming, if the electricity goes on or off or it lightnings like it did last night, the light comes on and the fan stops. So we were laying there at 1:00 am and the overhead light came on and that's what I think woke me up. It probably would not be correct to say that the lightning kept me up because I like the lightning and the thunder. I really appreciate it. To me it's a reminder of how powerful our God is. I laid there and listened to that and thought, 'Wow, you are amazing, God!' I had this other little thought of all the energy this lightning created and how much energy it took for that to happen and the Lord just says, 'Do it,' and it's done. What if we as men decided well we'd like to make a bolt of lightning? Do you know how many years we'd have to plan? Do you know how many people we'd have to tax? It would go on forever and then we wouldn't get it anything like last night was. That was just a free show. God was just reminding us that He is God.

As I considered this morning I thought how well do we really know Jesus? I'm looking around the room here and I think everybody in here probably knows Him somewhat but how well?

There's a fellow in the scriptures that you may be familiar with named Amaziah. He was a king in Judah. You can look in 2nd Chronicles for this story. Chapter 25 is where I picked up on what I wanted to share with you. If you go to 2nd Chronicles and read this story one of the things you are going to find is it says . . . *he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord but not with a perfect heart.* (25:2) That struck me. I think a lot of times I try to do what's right but I don't know if it's with a perfect heart. Sometimes I question my motivation. Any way Amaziah decided to make war against his enemies the Edomites. He decided to make war with his enemies but then he decided he was going to need more men and more power than he had so he went to Israel and hired a hundred thousand mighty men of valor for a hundred talents of silver. I looked up what a hundred talents of silver would be worth today. One talent would be worth not quite one and a half million dollars so he paid the Israelites a hundred talents of silver and after he did that then a prophet of the Lord came to him and said you are going about this wrong.

The prophet brought a message from the Lord which said if Amaziah was going to do this he needed to trust in the Lord. Don't go out and hire somebody else. So Amaziah considered what the prophet said and told the prophet that he had already paid them a hundred talents of silver. What would that be today? 150 million dollars. The

prophet said if you use the Israelites the Lord will not be with you. If you trust in the Lord He will be your strength. Amaziah thought about that and decided that he'd better do it the way the Lord wanted him to do it and he did and was successful. They defeated the Edomites but in the process of this whole thing it made the Israelites mad. Can you imagine? The Israelites got their money and they were still mad because Amaziah said Judah didn't need them after all.

As time progressed Amaziah went and with the help of the Lord successfully defeated the Edomites but after he defeated them then he got to looking around and said, 'Well, they have all this stuff that would be good to have so let's take it home with us.' It included the Edomites' gods, their silver and gold statues. After they took it home they began to worship them as their own gods. As you can imagine that didn't make the Lord very happy so then God sent the prophet back and said, 'You listened to me to a point but then you failed to listen to those things that I have tried to tell you for generations, not to have other gods, etc. So when Israel had gotten offended and decided to come against Judah the Lord did not uphold Judah that time and they lost that battle.

What I wanted you to look at in this story is here is Amaziah who does do what's right in the sight of the Lord. He even listens to Him sometimes but not all the time and that got him in a lot of trouble. It got his people in a lot of trouble and the Lord said that Amaziah did what was right but not with a perfect heart. He wasn't so worried about obeying as he was concerned with winning favor. So he didn't carry through as he should have.

So how well do we know Jesus? Do we really pursue our understanding of Him with a perfect heart or do we just go to Him when we need help? Do we really know Him as a friend and a companion, as our Savior, or is He just somebody that we look to when we get in a bind.

I was going to go ahead and tell you a little more about this story that goes from grandfather to father to son. Amaziah's son, Uzziah, became king after Amaziah. Somewhere along the line Uzziah, apparently also experienced the blessings of the Lord as he tried to rule over Judah, but because he was blessed he got to thinking pretty highly of himself and at some point decided, 'Hey, I'm king. If I want to go into the temple and use the altar that is used to make sacrifices to the Lord I can.' But he wasn't supposed to go in there. That was the priests' job. Apparently he got to the point where he thought, or this comes back to how well we know Jesus, maybe he just didn't take time to really know Him and understand what the law was. In any event he decided he would just go into the temple himself and make these sacrifices. Well, he did and the Lord punished him. He was smitten with leprosy.

When we're talking about how well we know the Lord, when the Lord blesses us do we really recognize His



hand or do we begin to presume we can do these things ourselves? I hope we don't do that. I hope we recognize His hand and because of His hand I hope we determine to try and know Him better rather than just finally deciding that we're pretty good guys ourselves, pretty capable and take things into our own hands.

After Uzziah then there was Jotham, Uzziah's son. I'll just sum it up. From one generation to the next they had problems with really taking time to know the Lord and not getting carried away with themselves. Finally it says that Jotham became mighty *because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God.* (2nd Chronicles 27:6)

I don't know if those stories will mean anything to you or not. I hope they do but as I read them I kept thinking so where are we at in all that? Do we really take time to know the Lord, to understand what He wants for us? To know what it is He desires for us. What we mean to Him and to then turn our lives over to Him so that can be accomplished. Are we steadfast in our obedience or do we waiver in our allegiance?

I think most of you in here, who are of age, have been baptized. In that baptism you have made a covenant with Christ, with God that you would take upon you Jesus' name. How can we do that unless we really know Him? In order to fulfill that covenant we have to know Him. How are we going to do that? How can we get acquainted with Him?

If I were to ask you this morning, how can you get acquainted with or better acquainted with Jesus? What would you say? I am anticipating that if I really open this up I'd probably hear things like prayer, read the scriptures, fasting. Have I left out something obvious that you would say? One of the things that I found in the scriptures that I hadn't really thought about but maybe you have is we're told that we get to know Jesus through serving Him (Mosiah 3:17, 21). Think about that for a minute. How do you really get to know somebody? The people you work with you get to know because you work with them so you spend time with them all day long, every day. Do we spend time with Jesus every day? Are we able to really feel with Him what He's trying to do? Can our hearts be broken for mankind like His? Does that make sense to anybody? If we're going to know Him we would have to serve Him; to be acquainted with His voice. (John 10:3-30)

The scriptures talk about how at the judgment seat many will say to Christ, 'Well, we've done all these things in your name and He will say you don't even know me.' I wondered if that would happen to me if I were to do what Rob was talking about and just drop dead here this morning and all of a sudden have to stand before the Lord. Would I be in that boat? Would I be saying, 'Well, wait a minute. I did this and I did that. I didn't do this. I didn't do that because I didn't think you wanted me to.' Would He

look at me or look at us and say, 'You don't even know me.' I'm not trying to be critical of anybody. Ultimately if we really know Him we're going to have our hearts broken for mankind because of that love. He is love. We've talked about this many times and I have scriptures here that we've used before about how God is love. If we know Him and really take upon us His character, we'll have that love, the kind of love that does result in our hearts being broken for mankind. It will change our focus. (1st John 1-3)

I wanted to start out this morning by telling you in a sincere manner that I love you! I was going to start with that because I knew this morning would be a struggle. I thought even if my words don't accomplish what I wanted them to accomplish today, I would still want you to know that I love you because somehow when we come together like this it's not important that we have some great oratory. That might be fun. That might be good. You might enjoy it but what needs to happen here this morning in order for us to go out of here and be better servants? What needs to happen so that when we leave here this morning we'll have a greater desire to know our Savior, to know His Father and to be sure that others know Him? To love one another!

Part of what I hope you picked up on in that scripture this morning from Section 90 was that we either are God's children, we either come to Him through His Son Jesus or we're left in the dark. So it's really, really important for us somehow to be able to bring others to Christ so that He can present them to His Heavenly Father when that time comes and they are not left in the dark for eternity.

God is the Light. He is love and so if we are just going along day by day kind of ignoring Him or if the attention we give Him is just out of habit or routine that's not good. When Brother Ludy was here in June he talked about the natural man. In the scriptures we're told that the natural man is carnal, sensual and devilish. If you think about that then, where is the natural man's reward going to come from? Well, the devil. What does the devil want for us and what does he want for our brothers and sisters: darkness, despair, nothing good. Do we want that for our brothers and sisters? I hope not. If we really, really want them to be blessed then somehow we have to become acquainted with and take upon us the nature of God which is the same as the nature of Christ. We have to know Him. He has to live within us, within our hearts so that we can reflect that to those around us and help them find their way into the light so that they do not spend eternity in darkness.

I see people here today that I think have had experiences with God. We have these experiences because of His mercy. We know Him because He reveals Himself to us and is merciful to us. But have we taken time to really get acquainted with Him so that we can take upon us His nature so that we can have that kind of a



relationship with Him that enables us to be of some worth to those around us.

It seemed like most of what I did this past week was go to funerals. I went to a visitation for a fellow who I have known for a long time. I liked this guy. He was a good guy. He did good things for other people. He was big hearted and so maybe his reward in heaven will be more than I even know. Surely the Lord will be merciful to him but his life was a mess. You would not want any of your children to take him as an example and live like he lived and yet when I went over to the visitation, I talked to his mother. His mother told me that as a young teenager he came to her one time and said, 'Mother, Jesus told me....' Then he told her he had had this experience with Jesus so he knew Jesus as far as having had an experience with Him, but did his life reflect that he really knew Jesus and took upon him Jesus' nature?

I think all of us know Jesus because of experiences that we have had with Him but do we really know Him? Do we really know His heart? Is His heart within us so that our hearts ache for our brothers and sisters, so that we're really willing to give up the world and its ways in order to be of some worth to others that their souls might be saved?

I probably say the same things over and over when I'm up here and I'm sorry. One of the things that always comes to mind when talking about our relationship with the Lord is how much time do we spend watching TV or whatever thing you find pleasure in? For me it was cars and motorcycles. How much time did I spend going to car shows, reading car magazines and that kind of junk? Do I care enough about my brothers and sisters, not just to give that up, but to get to where I don't even care about it because I recognize it as just something I do because I enjoy it? It's selfish. It's not going to help anybody. Now I used to kid myself with the thought and idea that well I'll get this cool car and then I'll drive up to the youth camp or wherever it was that we were going and the kids will all want to talk to me and that will give me an opportunity to visit with them about other things. Truthfully, we didn't ever get much past talking about the car. Maybe it opened some doors. I don't know but we're back to this thing about what's in our heart. What's our real motivation?

If we really do those things because we think they'll open doors, open the way for us to communicate with other people and interact with them so that we can share the gospel and the light of Jesus Christ so their lives can be made better, then that's good. I'm not criticizing any of those things particularly but do we really have Jesus' heart within us? It says He went from grace to grace and grew. Are we doing that? I'll just pick on myself. When I look at myself I don't see myself going from grace to grace and growing. I see myself getting older and slower, not doing

as much as I think I did before. I don't like that so maybe I should sit down and you can talk to me about whether I'm taking time to get acquainted with Jesus like I ought to for the purpose of being able to share Him with those around us.

I said earlier if you want to get better acquainted with Jesus, one good way is to serve Him. Studying the scriptures is another good way and praying about them as you study them. How many of you read at least one of these: the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants every year. What we really need to be doing is reading all of them every year or maybe more often. It is just a great way to get acquainted with the Lord. If you want to do just a little tiny bit of that this week go read the Beatitudes again in Matthew 5. He's telling us: blessed are ye if ye do this, blessed are ye if you do that. He's revealing Himself to us. Here's the kind of person He is. Here's what is in His heart and if it's in our heart then He will bless us. (Read Doctrine & Covenants 4 again or Mosiah 1:120)

There are just so many things you are going to find in the scriptures that will tell you and remind you what Jesus is like. People would come to Him all the time with needs for the sick. A lot of times it wasn't their own needs, it would be somebody else's who would come and say my son is sick or my employee is sick, etc. When they would do that Jesus would go. There were times when He would say that they were healed without Him going because of that person's faith. He didn't even have to go but most of the time when you read through the scriptures, Jesus got up and went. Are we like that? If we hear that somebody is sick or has a need, do we say, 'Well, I'll pray for you' and then go on about our way? Maybe sometimes that is all you can do or do we get up and go to those people. Do we care enough to take time? I think a lot of you do so I'm not being critical, but I would like to encourage you to be steadfast in taking upon Jesus' name and nature.

In closing I'll remind you of what Jacob said in the Book of Mormon in Jacob 1:17. . . *having firstly obtained mine errand from the Lord*. Before he did anything he went to the Lord to find out what it was he should be doing. How can we go to somebody we don't know? If we're going to be about the Lord's work we have to know Him. I'm just going to encourage you to think about this for yourself. Ask yourself, how well do I know Him, really know Him? Well enough so that when we go out each day into the world that He can use us to reach those around us and bring them out of darkness into the light? Do we love our brothers and sisters enough to try to get rid of Babylon in our lives and adopt the Lord's ways in our hearts?





STANDING ON THE PROMISES

Priest Jim Barber
Bethany, Missouri
September 15, 2019

As a call to worship Elder Tony Crandell read Doctrine & Covenants 68:1d. *Behold, this is the promise of the Lord unto you, O ye my servants: wherefore, be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I, the Lord, am with you and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ, that I am the Son of the living God, that I was, that I am, and that I am to come.*

This morning I'd like to do something a little different if I can get Ryder and Josh to pass out some blank pieces of paper to each person. This morning I'm going to talk about promises and blessings. I thought it might be interesting to write down promises that God has given to you or blessings that God has given to you. We are not going to collect these after church but I thought it would be interesting for you to write down your own blessings and promises that have happened to you. After church maybe you can take this paper home and put it up on your refrigerator where you can see them every day and praise

the Lord for all the blessings that you have received and be reminded of those blessings.

I was thinking about the blessing of Abraham and Moses. Sometimes you have to go into the New Testament to see these blessings and what they are about. There were also blessings to the disciples mentioned in the New Testament. Acts 1:4 is talking about the disciples. *And, being with them when they were assembled together, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.* Luke 24:48 goes along with this where it says, *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.* I believe that Jesus is telling His disciples that they need to go out after they are endued with the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is what is going to convert. They are going to be blessed with this power so that they will be able to reach out to those people that they come into contact with. I think that is good advice for us today. When we go out we need to pray that the Father will endow us with His Holy Spirit, that He will guide and direct us in ways in which we can meet other people. We can't do it on our own. We have to be in tune with God and His teachings. That's the promise that He has given to us that if we ask these things He will give them to us.

There's a promise talked about in Acts 2:30 which is referring to David. *Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.* David was given the promise that Christ would come from his seed and we know that that happened. We know that Jesus Christ came from the seed of David.

I questioned whether or not I should even do this because it took me a long time to decipher this myself. It's a pretty long scripture but I'm going to try to explain what I felt about it. It's talking about the inheritance of the law, the law of Moses. *For if the inheritance is of the law, then it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then, the law was added because of transgressions,* (We know that the people of Israel were not always on the straight and narrow and they needed something besides the idols they kept trying to worship. This wasn't what God wanted so He gave them the law through Moses that they would be taught by and governed by this law.) *till the seed should come to whom the promise was made in the law given to Moses (In other words this law came through Moses who was ordained by the hand of angels to be a mediator of the first covenant and that first covenant is the law.* The law at that time was the mediator between God and His people. They had to be governed by law. We talk about when Christ came He did away with the law and that's not really true. He came to



fulfill the law). . . Now this mediator was not a mediator of the new covenant; but there is one mediator of the new covenant, who is Christ, as it is written in the law concerning the promises made to Abraham and his seed. Now Christ is the mediator of life; for this is the promise which God made unto Abraham. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid; for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. (Galatians 3:18-20) We can't obtain this promise of what Christ did for us unless we have faith. All promises have to come by the faith of Christ or faith in Christ and Christ is the mediator of the new law. The new law is that we should love one another. Love the Lord God with all your heart, might, mind and strength and the second is like unto it. Love your neighbor as yourself. That doesn't mean that we should not obey the law of Moses. We all know that we are not supposed to kill. We all know that we are not supposed to bear false witness.

We know all of those things but the promise that was given to Abraham was that he would be the father of many nations. It also meant that he would have eternal life and that is what Christ brought to us: eternal life. If He hadn't come and overcome death then we could not have had eternal life.

Also in Romans 4 it talks about the same thing. *For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.* (In other words it wasn't through the law that we know these things. It's through the faith that we have in Jesus Christ.) *For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect; Because the law worketh wrath; for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore ye are justified of faith and works, through grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to them only who are of the law, but to them also who are of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were; Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. (Romans 4:14-20) . . . if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification. (24-25)*

Hebrews 6:12-15 says, *That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.* We have to endure to the end if we're going to obtain the promise of eternal life.

In 2nd Peter 1:4 it says, *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.* It reminds me of the song we just heard. *In this broken generation With all of its dark and hellfire scenes There is only one salvation. We believe. We believe.* There is a lot of evil around us in this day but if we continue to believe in Jesus Christ and look to Him we can overcome these things. There is the promise that if we do these things we will have eternal life.

Matthew 7:30 says, *Verily I say unto you, it is not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, that shall enter unto the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.* We can't just believe and set around. We have to be out doing things. We have to be taking His gospel to everyone. That's the commission that we have this day. We are to take the gospel to the world.

Earlier I read one of the beatitudes but I'd like to refer back to those because with every one of those blessings there is a promise. You can find these in chapter 5 of Matthew. *Yea, blessed are they who shall believe on your words, and come down into the depth of humility, and be baptized in my name; for they shall be visited with fire and the Holy Ghost, and shall receive a remission of their sins.* (4) If we believe and are baptized we will be filled with the Holy Ghost or we will be visited with the Holy Ghost. *Yea, blessed are the poor in spirit, who come unto me; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* (5) I've always wondered what the poor in spirit really means. It seems to me that if you are poor in spirit we are humble and accept Christ maybe on other people's words if we can't on our own. The more that you work with Christ and listen to Christ and read His words, the greater your faith will be increased. If we do these things the Kingdom of Heaven will be ours. *And again, blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.* (6) Many of us have lost loved ones and we've been very sorrowful for that but the Comforter is always there to lift us up, to hold us up and show us the way. *And blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.* (7) Again I think that means that we need to be humble. We don't need to be boastful. We don't need to be talking about the many wonderful things we've done and all this. We need to be humble. I think that is what He is talking about as far as being the meek. If we do that



then we will inherit the earth.

And blessed are all they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost. (8) If we hunger and thirst after righteousness and if look at the scriptures and study them then the Holy Ghost will come upon us. *And blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy. And blessed are all the pure in heart; for they shall see God. And blessed are all the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.* (9-11) We need peacemakers today. There is a lot of struggle in the world today and we need to be peacemakers. Somehow we've got to do our part to stop the wars and the bitterness that we have one towards another. *Blessed are all they that are persecuted for my name's sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. For ye shall have great joy, and be exceeding glad; for great shall be your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.* (12-14) I'm reminded of what Rob always says. That you might not want to be a prophet because you would always be persecuted, put in prison or even killed. But if you read the rewards and what happens to those who are persecuted, it is far greater than any persecution that you could ever suffer. If you stand up for what God wants you to do and what God is and believe in Christ you will receive many, many blessings.

There are also many blessings of healings. I'm just going to mention a few. In Matthew 9:2 it says *And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed; and Jesus, knowing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee; go thy way and sin no more.* And in Matthew 9:28 it says that the woman who touched His garment was made whole. In Matthew 9:33, 36 Jesus healed two blind men but it was according to their faith. If you don't have faith then these blessings will not come in life. You have to have the faith that Jesus will heal you.

I'm going to mention some of the things in Doctrine & Covenants 86, the Word of Wisdom. As many of you know Linda and I lost a nephew this summer because he was an alcoholic. The Word of Wisdom has good advice for that. *Behold, verily thus saith the Lord unto you, In consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days, I have warned you, and forewarn you, by giving unto you this word of wisdom by revelation, (1a) (Now this is not a commandment. It is just words of wisdom to everybody.) that inasmuch as any man drinketh wine or strong drink among you, behold, it is not good, neither meet in the sight of your Father; only in assembling yourselves together, to offer up your sacraments before him. And behold, this should be wine; yea, pure wine of the grape of the vine, of*

your own make. And again, strong drinks are not for the belly, but for the washing of your bodies. (1b-c) Then it goes on and talks about tobacco and about all the herbs and the necessities for different herbs. There is nothing really wrong with tobacco because it is used to heal bruises and in cattle for different things and for all sick cattle. Everything that God has made is of use if we use it in the right way.

Linda was looking on her phone the other day. It said that there were around 850 who had been killed with guns in the last year. We're doing everything that we can do to get guns off the streets or out of the people's hands but it also said that there were 2300 accidents or deaths I believe caused by alcohol. What are we doing to stop alcohol abuse?

I don't know whether any of you know but you used to not be able to get alcohol if you went to a college football game but the University of Missouri this year has decided to sell alcohol at the games. I heard the other day also that they are thinking about serving alcohol at Disney World. I thought how ridiculous. This is where little kids are. I guess the parents can drink while the kids run and shake Mickey's hand. It just doesn't make sense to me. We do nothing to stop the use of alcohol but yet it is one of the biggest killers that we have.

And all Saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel, and marrow to their bones, and shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures; and shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint; and I, the Lord, give unto them a promise that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them. Amen. (86:3c-d) This is the promise we receive if we follow these words. I think that's a pretty good promise if we will just follow the Words of Wisdom.

Doctrine & Covenants 85:19-20 is kind of referring back to some of the scriptures I read earlier. It says, *Remember the great and last promise which I have made unto you: cast away your idle thoughts and your excess of laughter far from you; tarry ye, tarry ye in this place, and call a solemn assembly, even of those who are the first laborers in this last kingdom; and let those whom they have warned in their traveling, call on the Lord, and ponder the warning in their hearts which they have received, for a little season. Behold, and lo, I will take care of your flocks and will raise up elders and send unto them.* (I think they were concerned about the people that they had gone to visit to share the gospel with and then had to leave. They were concerned that they might fall away but God was giving them the promise that He would send Elders to continue to teach these people and that they would not be lost. He was talking some about the last days and I think this refers to the last days.) *Behold, I will*



hasten my work in its time; and I give unto you who are the first laborers in this last kingdom, a commandment, that you assemble yourselves together; and organize yourselves; and prepare yourselves; and sanctify yourselves; yea, purify your hearts, and cleanse your hands and your feet before me, that I may make you clean; that I may testify unto your Father, and your God, and my God, that you are clean from the blood of this wicked generation, that I may fulfill this promise, this great and last promise which I have made unto you, when I will. I think that's why we had the High Priest's Retreat this weekend. They gathered together to ask direction from God as to what we need to be doing and I hope that it was successful. I hope that they went with clean hearts and clean minds that they might be able to receive the promises which God would give them.

We are to search these commandments for they are true and faithful and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled. God doesn't make a promise without fulfilling it. Sometimes we don't do our part so we don't receive that blessing but God always fulfills His promises.

We all know the promises of the Nephites in the Book of Mormon. In 2nd Nephi 18:18-21 it is talking about Nephi and says, *Wherefore, I, Lehi, have obtained a promise, that inasmuch as those whom the Lord God shall bring out of the land of Jerusalem shall keep his commandments, they shall prosper upon the face of this land; And they shall be kept from all other nations, that they may possess this land unto themselves. And if it so be that they shall keep his commandments, they shall be blessed upon the face of this land, And there shall be none to molest them, nor to take away the land of their inheritance; and they shall dwell safely for ever.* That's a very good promise if we live up to it but if we don't then the promise is gone and we might be swept off just like the Book of Mormon people were swept off.

In 2nd Nephi 11:40 it says, *Wherefore, for this cause hath the Lord God promised unto me that these things which I write, shall be kept and preserved, and handed down unto my seed, from generation to generation, that the promise may be fulfilled unto Joseph, that his seed should never perish as long as the earth should stand.* Now this was the promise to the Lamanites. Even though they fell away they would never completely be destroyed and these words that Nephi was writing would be once again taken to them. I think there are people that are trying to do this but I think we are pretty slow about getting it done. I think we need to be working harder to get those things done.

In Mormon 4:84 it says *Behold I say unto you, that whoso believeth in Christ, doubting nothing, whatsoever he shall ask the Father in the name of Christ, it shall be granted him; and this promise is unto all, even unto the*

ends of the earth. I'm reminded there of John 3:16 that says that God so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son that whosoever believed on Him should not perish but have everlasting life. There's a promise there if we will believe.

There's one promise that I wanted to hold to the last. This promise I am sure all of you have heard. It's in the 9th chapter of Genesis and is talking about the rainbow. *I will set my bow in the cloud; and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember my covenant, which I have made between me and you, for every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.* (That's one promise but he goes on.) *And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant, which I made unto thy father Enoch; that, when men should keep all my commandments, Zion should again come on the earth, the city of Enoch which I have caught up unto myself. And this is mine everlasting covenant, that when thy posterity shall embrace the truth, 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. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant which I have established between me and thee; for all flesh that shall be upon the earth. (19-25) I am looking forward to that day, that when we start obeying all of God's commandments and look upward, Zion will look downward.*

Earlier I said in the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:10. *And blessed are all the pure in heart; for they shall see God.* When we become pure in heart then we will see God and that will be a wonderful, wonderful day.





THE INVITATION

Elder Tony Crandell

Lamoni, Iowa

August 25, 2019

Many times it helps to understand why a certain subject was chosen for a morning topic. This morning's topic is a result of two incidents. A week ago last Friday our Pastor, Sandra and I went to Chillicothe to hear a concert by Triumphant Quartet who are currently the number one most favored quartet in southern gospel. All groups generally have an "invitation" at the end of their concerts. It just goes hand-in-hand with their ministry of music. Generally, an invitation will last 2 to 3 minutes. They don't ask to you to come down front, they just ask you to raise your hand if you will publicly accept Christ into your life. Triumphant's bass singer Eric Bennet is a very serious evangelist and probably took 8-10 minutes to deliver his invitation. Eric is also an ordained minister and is very committed to "saving souls." Eric made it seem like a very simple process - just raise your hand publicly accepting Jesus. Now I don't want to make light of anything here. These are very sincere and serious folks and are very committed to the concept of the salvation of Jesus. They trust that if you made that commitment that you will continue to follow through with your pursuit of salvation.

Now fast forward two days. Last Tuesday Sandra and I are on our way to Mayo Clinic and we happened to tune into Colin Smith, an Evangelical Free radio (E-free) minister from the Chicago area. He made a statement in passing that really caught my attention.

Oh, by the way, a little historical note: The Swedish Evangelical Free Church (What we know today as the E-Free church) formed as the Swedish Evangelical Free Mission in Boone, Iowa, in October 1884. In the 1970's, the Boone RLDS congregation bought the building and tore off the 1880's era church and used the 1950's Sunday school addition as the RLDS church. About 2000 the local RLDS congregation sold the building and disbanded the congregation.

What Colin Smith said that got my attention was, "The tragedy of today's mainline church is that many of the members who call themselves Christians know little or nothing about the relationship they should have with Christ once they have accepted him." The church has reduced the "relationship with Christ" to a passport.

I have pondered those two events all week and hence the topic for my talk this morning. Some sermon topics leave you with answers. I believe this morning I will leave you with questions to yet ponder, continuing to search for your response.

How many folks here this morning have a passport? A passport is an important thing. I can't travel without it, so I must protect it. I keep it in a locked file. I only bring it out when I need it and many times that is less than once a year.

I am finding out that there are a lot of people who are "passport believers." They believe in God and that after this short life there is a vast eternity. They believe in Heaven and Hell and sometimes they even pray. They want to believe that when they take their final journey, that they will not have any problems in the immigration halls of heaven.

They want to make sure that everything will go well. This is their primary concern when they take their final journey. They ask the primary question, what must I do to get a passport to heaven? They have been told to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. They have been told to ask Jesus Christ into their life and they do that. You know it seems to them to be somewhat like filling out an application for a passport.

Do you believe that Jesus died for your sins and rose again? "Yes." Are you applying for the gift of eternal life? "Yes." Are you ready to forsake your sins and live a new life with Christ as your savior? "Yes." Having now completed the process, the applicant is confident when he comes to the immigration hall of heaven, he can show his passport, and all will be well. So what does he do? He takes his faith and he puts it away in a safe place. Yet, in



the meantime he knows that if he faces a crisis, he can turn to God, but he hopes that that will not be too often.

As I make this comparison you immediately recognize the fact that this concept is a whole world away from anything that the Bible describes to us. There is a whole dimension missing in this person's understanding of what it really means to be a Christian. Jesus Christ did not come into the world to offer us a passport. He came into the world to invite you into an eternal relationship.

Again, Colin said, "The tragedy of today's mainline church is that many of the members who call themselves Christians know little or nothing about developing a relationship with Christ."

The church has reduced the concept of "relationship with Christ" to a passport. The whole process of Christian conversion has become mechanical and "spiritless." You know in that quick invitation, Christ may be "received" without creating any special love for Him. A person can ask to be "saved" but at that quick moment they are not yet really hungry and thirsty for God.

You know, I wonder about my own salvation. I know that my passport will allow me to enter into eternal life, but what is and what will be my relationship to and with Christ. When I present my passport will I be given a schedule of heavenly activities?

You know time is nothing but a measurement of change. Here on earth we base time on the coming and going of the sun and the aging of our bodies. But, in the eternal realm, there is no time and so there no night or day. There is no aging of our spiritual bodies.

So, I wonder and ponder what I will do once I show my passport and pass through the golden gates? Will I be given a schedule for my harp lessons? Will I get instruction on how to relax and sleep on a cloud? How will I get around heaven? Will I be able to fly?

Speaking of passports, an interesting fact is that a passport only shows where you have been, it does not speak to where you are going. Think about that? The value of my passport is lost when I cross the threshold of heaven. No, in heaven there is no passport given or required. What is required is an eternal living and personal relationship with Christ. In the church today we have either lost or have never known the intimacy of the Christ relationship.

When a husband and wife exchange birthday cards, anniversary cards, and valentine cards, the message in the card speaks to a growing closeness of a long-term marriage relationship. The marriage is the same legal relationship, but there is a growing closeness that comes with the additional years of love and understanding. It is no longer just a physical and attractiveness relationship but rather it is now the union of the "souls."

Like a maturing marriage, a growing and intimate relationship with Jesus is marked with the same spiritual

growth in faith...hope....and love. There is a hungering and thirsting, a yearning for this intimate relationship with Him.

Have we lost or are we losing our hungering and thirsting desire for Him and have we replaced it with the confidence of our properly filled out spiritual passport application. We are more concerned with the question of "what is my standing" with respect to entering through the Pearly Gates. Perhaps we have stopped considering "what am I going to do with my eternal life once I step into eternity?"

They say that when I step inside, I will be overcome with the glory of Christ, and that I will fall at His feet and praise and worship Him thanking Him for His sacrifice. I want that to be true...but shouldn't I start to feel that way now? Shouldn't I be overcome now with gratitude? Shouldn't I be praising Him now?

We have been conditioned in today's church to "wait." Wait and all of this will be added to you at the last moment. Hmmm! This is very disturbing to me. What if the next moment I leave this earth? Will I have the ability to praise Him? Will I know how to worship Him? Will I have the ability to show Him that I truly love Him? How do you do those things?

Some of you heard me speak of Bill Ballantyne's spiritual experience with Nora Martin's funeral. For those of you who were not here last week, I will give you the "readers" digest version. Bill Ballantyne was a pastor, as well as the manager of the Lamoni Dairy. He was preparing to speak at Nora Martin's funeral and was concerned with what to say. He did not know Nora well or her family. His custom was to talk with the Lord as he was milking his cows. While he was milking and praying, Mrs. Martin appeared to him, standing above the ground. She appeared to him three times that day. I quote from Bill's experience....

She (Mrs. Martin) said 'Oh, Bill tell my loved ones about life. Tell them about life here where I am, that they might have hope! That they might not grieve for me but rather look forward to the time they can join me. Oh, if they could only know how marvelous are those things that await the righteous. And Bill, Oh, tell my loved ones that I have tasted of some new and wonderful truths. They were sweet above all that is sweet. They are more delightful than all that is joyful. They are precious above all that is precious. Yes, above the very best doughnuts I ever made. Yes, even the best of my cherry pies. [Bill did not know that she was an expert baker.] Bill, reassure them that it is by my passing from life to death, into life everlasting that I have experienced these things and now I know.'

Doesn't heaven sound like someplace you'd like to go? It doesn't give me the impression that Nora is resting on a cloud or playing her harp. It sounds to me that the little lady who lived a very simple life here on earth is



busily living a very joyful, full, and active eternal life.

Ok, how can I get started in my new endeavor of hungering and thirsting for a new relationship with Christ? In the early church Psalm 63 was sung each morning and at the beginning of any religious service as a reminder and pattern. It behooves us to begin to immediately daily praise Him and daily tell Him of our love of Him and our thankfulness for His sacrifice.

You know, With respect to Love, we can show our love for Him by the way we treat and uphold each other in this life. This little congregation is so unique in that way. We are all truly family and each one loves each other as family.

I admonish you as we leave this morning to start now your daily preparation for that future heavenly experience: verbally praising, and worshipping and thanking Christ. When? In your raising up in the morning, and at the beginning of each major task of the day, and especially at night as you lie upon your beds.



PLAIN HUMILITY

Elder Michael Jordison

Lamoni, Iowa

May 20, 2018

You know that song reminds me of a testimony that Gaylord Shaw shared one time about Jesus' touch. (Jim Barber shared the song, "He Touched Me") When He called His disciples, He touched them one by one and prayed for them. When He called the little children, He said bring them forth that I might bless them. He touched each one, didn't He, one by one individually. When He invited the multitude to come forward after His resurrection and to feel the wound in His side and the prints in His hands and His feet, He said come and He touched them one by one as they held on to Him. There is something very personal and intimate about our Lord Jesus Christ who wants to have a relationship with us.

I don't know if you know the significance of Pentecost. So many churches today talk about having a relationship with Christ but it's more of a relationship where He blesses us and we pray to Him but we don't really interact with Him throughout the day. One of the distinctives and differences in this church is the fact that the Lord offers us an opportunity, not just to know about Him and to be in His church, but an opportunity to



commune with Him in a way that His Spirit becomes a part of who we are. It's like a marriage. When you get married the husband and wife come together and it says that two become one flesh. The gift of that Holy Ghost is there to unite the individual, the created with the God or the Creator back into union and one. I think that is very significant. The Spirit only comes in a certain way. We can ask for the Spirit but unless we are prepared and conditioned we cannot receive His Spirit to be in us. That's one of the distinctives about this church. We understand this fact that God wants to have communion with us, but He expects us to be obedient to His commandments in order that we have a place, a habitation, a house here prepared that that Spirit may find a home.

I talked about the different fair Indians in the Book of Mormon. You have a man who is alone, by himself, he has just a few spaces left on these metal plates and he talks about how difficult it is to write. He said that he doesn't have any ore. That there is no ore around where he is at now, so he can't make new plates to write more. So he has to think, 'All right what is the most important thing that I could possibly put down in this book that would be of worth because I am not going to spend my time idly here on frivolous things. I want the important stuff to be put in this book because this book is going to be used by people at some future point and the establishment of the kingdom of Zion, God's Kingdom upon this earth.'

As he ponders these things he has these revelations, these experiences with Jesus Christ. I think that is pretty



amazing. He says, in Ether 5:39 *And now I, Moroni, bid farewell unto the Gentiles (good-bye for now), yea, and also unto my brethren whom I love (the brethren that he hasn't seen. He's seen them in vision but they are not with him.), until we shall meet before the judgment seat of Christ, where all men shall know that my garments are not spotted with your blood.* (He's talking about our blood and his brethren today because these words are what he can share with us to make sure that he has given us all the instruction that we could possibly need to become righteous. He's laying it all on the line here.) He says, *And then shall ye know that I have seen Jesus.* (This is 400 years after Jesus was on the earth. It is 400 AD). He says, *I have seen Jesus and he hath talked with me face to face, and that he told me in plain humility, even as a man telleth another in mine own language, concerning these things.* So here you have this man that has just a little bit of time left, just a little bit of space plates pouring out his whole soul. Just the most important things so what does he write about: faith, hope, charity. Let's go on and look at the book of Moroni. Just think if Moroni hadn't been written, if he hadn't included that in this record the things that we would miss out on: the calling of the Apostles; the prayers of ordination; the prayers on the emblems-the bread and the wine; the manner in which the priesthood was called and how the priesthood were to conduct the meetings. We wouldn't have the instruction on infant baptism and how that is wrong and the understanding of what baptism really is. We wouldn't have this bit on the work and calling of angels and the ministry that they have today.

So we have this little bit and he's talking to us in our day and he says, this is the most important thing. Jesus has spoken to me in plain humility. That's what I want to talk about a little bit this morning.

What is humility? Are you humble? I can say for myself in my own life that I haven't been humbled. I haven't been sufficiently humbled. I have been humbled but there's a difference. We've all been humbled haven't we? We've all had our foot stuck in our mouth and realized that at some point. We've all done something that we shouldn't have and it was cast in front of a large body of people or people that we respected or loved. We've had to eat crow or however you want to put it.

We've all been humbled but that's not the same as being HUMBLE. In Moroni 8:29 he says, *And the first-fruits of repentance is baptism;* (Ok so when we repent the first thing to do is to be baptized.) *and baptism cometh by faith, unto the fulfilling the commandments; and the fulfilling the commandments bringeth remission of sins; and the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart;* (I'm just going to tell you right off the bat, meekness and lowliness of heart is becoming humble, becoming submissive as a little child.) *and because of meekness and lowliness of heart,* (because you submit

yourselves willingly, because you become humble then) *cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God.*

So here we have a situation, brothers and sisters, where we desire to have God's Spirit within us, that communion we talk about. Every first Sunday we get together and partake of that memorial meal. We remember the sacrifice that Jesus made. We remember the covenant that we made in the water of baptism. We said, 'Lord, we're going to serve you until the end of our days. We want your Spirit to be with us.' Every first Sunday we do that. He says that if we'll do that we may always have His Spirit to be with us. We read that over and over again the Communion Prayers but do we really have His Spirit with us? Is He really living here in our hearts? What is going on in our lives that keeps Him from inhabiting us the way that He desires to? Jesus when He was with His disciples in Bountiful prayed a prayer. He said, 'Father, I want to be in them as thou art in me that we may be one.' I don't know if you have thought about this but how are Jesus and His Father one? Are they God? Are they different Gods? Are they different people? No and He's praying to His Father saying, 'Lord I want these people who I am praying for, you and me, I want to be in them just like I'm in you and you're in me.' So we need to ask ourselves is God living in us in that kind of a relationship the way that Jesus and the Father are living in a relationship together as one? If not, why?

You know I had to ask the question 'Lord, what's holding us back?' What's holding us back from being obedient to the gospel? We have had commandments to gather together and to establish the cause of Zion for a long time. We've had commandments that do many things as a church to share and to witness and to proselyte. **What's holding us back from operating in fullness - with the power of the Holy Ghost?** The Lord says it's us. He's waiting for us, waiting for us to what? He's waiting for us to humble ourselves. I don't believe that we as a people really understand what that means. What is humility to you? Does it just mean selling everything that we have and walking around in sackcloth? I remember attending services year ago where Ron Livingston was dressed in sackcloth. That was a powerful experience to see somebody standing up on the stage in sackcloth. That must be somebody really humble I thought. But humility is not in what we wear, but rather what is in our hearts.

Humility is not something that should be taken lightly. It's something that I don't know if I'm qualified to speak on it because I'm not as humble as I should be or I'm qualified to speak on it because I can speak on one of my own problems. Rob, you talked about that many times; that Lynda would get after you about speaking on a topic



that you hadn't mastered. You said, 'If I speak on a topic that I've mastered then I won't have anything to say.'

I feel very impressed that this is something that the body of Saints needs to study more fully. Humility is preferring your brother over yourself or your sister over yourself. Humility is taking a cloak of a mantle so to speak and hiding your own glory in order that the glory of God might be manifest. Humility is not reviling your brother. I don't know if you've done this but I know I have where you get pulled into these conversations where people are talking about somebody else and gossiping I guess you could say. A humble person doesn't do that because a humble person recognizes the fact that we are all beggars, we are all sinners before God and we're all His children. Even those who have made mistakes and maybe aren't worth talking about are loved by God and God seeks to redeem them. God didn't come to condemn us and to destroy us, He came to save us. We can't afford to be backbiting. As a matter of fact I think it says in Romans that backbiters are equivalent to haters of God. We can't mistrust one another in the Church.

Humility is recognizing that I could be wrong and that my own dogma isn't more important than someone else's ability to have a relationship with Christ. In other words, just because I think I'm right about the gospel or right about something doesn't mean I can beat somebody over the head with it because I'm right or because it's right there in the scriptures. Humility is working with another individual on their level with their understanding. Just as Moroni said he spoke with Christ face to face in plain humility and Christ was able to explain and expound these things in a way of plainness to his understanding to his comprehension to the level that he could then put them down even in spite of his weak writing skills. He could put them down in a way that we can understand today.

Humility is a change that has to occur by our own agency. Now what is our agency? It's our ability to choose. God gave us the gift to be agents unto ourselves, to choose. When God created the heavens and the earth there wasn't anything but God so He had to create from Himself. Everything was an expression or extension, a part of Him. By virtue of us being an extension of Him He fashioned us it says in the scriptures. He picked up some clay and He molded it and set it down and breathed the breath of life into us and we became living souls it says. When you think about it we are His, are we not because He is the creator and we're the created. We are the workmanship of His hands. He gave us that life but really ultimately we are His. He had to give us something else because He wanted us to return the love that He had for us back to Him, a willing love free of compulsion. In other words we weren't required to love Him back. We weren't commanded to love Him back and so He gives us agency

which is our ability to choose whether or not we want to love Him.

In the garden everything was perfect, right? Adam and Eve were there. They were just busy eating up all the fruit of the trees and were communing with God. It was a perfect environment. Well creation wasn't finished. It talks about the fact that there are six days of creation and the seventh day God rested. Brothers and sisters, I am going to tell you that creation hadn't been finished yet. The reason why is because God wasn't done. He was still making us into the people that He wanted us, creating us into the image of His Son Jesus Christ. In order to do that it required that there had to be some kind of restoration or revelation. Some kind of change had to occur within so that we were no longer compelled or had this compulsion to love God but that we were free and willing to do it on our own. And in that we find the fall of man. Adam and Eve listened and harkened unto the evil spirit through the serpent and partook of the fruit of the forbidden tree and it says that their eyes were opened and they were cast out of the garden.

Now we have this experience where mankind has fallen but let me tell you, that was a part of the plan. Men are that they might have joy and Adam fell that men might be, right? If you remember back in Genesis the Lord commanded Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply. Now wait a second, be fruitful and multiply means to have children does it not? But we find later on Eve saying, 'If we hadn't partaken of that fruit we would have never had children.'

Here we have an experience where God is continuing to create within us after the creation, after those six or seven days. The fall wasn't just something that happened to us, it was a part of the creation. God says from the foundation of the world He prepared a way whereby mankind could be redeemed. The lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. He prepared a way. He prepared a plan that Jesus would come in the meridian of time and would atone for the sins of mankind. Because He would atone for them mankind could be redeemed from the fall. That was a part, again, of His creating us into His image as free agents willingly giving back and loving God.

If you recall in the account in the New Testament when Jesus was crucified there was a great earthquake that happened. In fact the earthquake was so bad that it split and went into the temple and rent the veil in two. In the Book of Mormon we find the accounting of the land at that same time. It says that all of the rocks were rent and the fountains of the deep were broken up and everything was moved out of its place. There was an earthquake that rocked the entire earth at the time of that crucifixion. Let me tell you that earthquake was something that was so far beyond the physical that we understand. It was a spiritual earthquake that rocked every particle of every atom in the



entire universe that had been created. Just like when rocks which are very rigid and the ground shakes and they break apart, every particle shook and was rent apart. Just like when that happens and you see this big crack in the ground of an earthquake. What's in that crack? It's a void right? Every particle has a void created within itself to allow for change to occur. Jesus willingly went to the cross, and willingly exercised His own agency. Jesus was a man just as we are. He exercised His agency to be obedient to the Father. Because of the exercising of His agency and the Lord and His Father placing those sins and all of the sicknesses and all of the fallen things that had occurred to mankind upon Jesus, it created the spiritual and physical earthquake because there is no separation really between the physical and spiritual. All things are connected. Because of that it created a void or space in each of us in every atom that makes us up, every particle that is in us. Jesus allowed for an expansion. A rending of the heart is softened and allows for the Lord to grow and to expand and to fill us. We talk about the Holy Ghost coming in and filling our lives. This happens because we humble ourselves, we make ourselves submissive which allows the Lord's Spirit to come in and to fill those gaps that were created by that spiritual earthquake in the crucifixion. The sacrifice of Christ filled every particle of our being and made us into something greater.

If you remember on the road after the crucifixion you had Mary and Martha as they came to the garden and saw Jesus. They didn't recognize Him at first but when they did and went up to touch him, what did He say? Touch me not for I have not yet ascended to my Father. I don't know about you but I've wondered about that verse for a long time. What does that verse mean, I've not yet ascended to my Father? Have you thought about that statement or maybe you just rewrite over it. Why couldn't they touch Him? Because we know just a few days later He was inviting all the people to come in and touch Him. There is a change that was occurring to the physical body of Jesus Christ, a physical change. It was a process and all of life is a process. Just the fact that we grow from babies to old people is a process right? In reading the scriptures of Enoch's Zion it says and *lo in process of time Zion was taken into heaven.*

The physical crucifixion had occurred to Jesus Christ and He descended into the depths of hell. But His physical body as it was becoming alive again was changing, was growing because of that earthquake that had rent those cells in two. When you and I, brothers and sisters, again humble ourselves and submit ourselves to the will of the Father, we are actually following in the footsteps of Christ because He said take up your cross and follow me. We are to follow in the example of Jesus Christ by laying down our lives. Just as He came to earth as a little baby, a simple carpenter and did not revile against mankind when they

spit upon Him and slapped Him on the face. He is asking us to do the same thing in this part of our lives. We have got to stop our bickering and our fighting. We've got to start learning to love one another in spite of our differences, in spite of our different doctrines, in spite of our different dogmas in a way that will allow the Spirit to come in because when that Spirit comes in it begins to grow and expand within us and we are recreated or we continue to be created into the image of His Son Jesus Christ. That is why humility is so important because without it you can't have faith. You can't have hope and you can't have love. That's what Moroni teaches us.

We talk about the need to love all of these people. I understand that we can attain to a certain level of love and we can have a certain level of hope for the coming Kingdom or for whatever it is that we might want to hope for to live in the mansions with God. We can have a certain level of faith where we can say that we really need a blessing from the Lord or we are going on a trip and we want the Lord to be with us. We have faith and believe in your Son Jesus Christ coming. We can attain to a certain level but we can't attain to the level that God is calling us to without this element of humility that's in us.

Again I give unto men weakness, that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me. . . (Ether 5:28) What is God's grace? Moroni after talking about faith, hope, charity and humility says, 'I prayed to the Lord that he would grant unto the Gentiles grace that they might have charity.' Well, grace is merely the ability of allowing God's Spirit to influence you so that you can do good things. I think I heard Bob Bobbitt talk about this one time. He said, 'Grace is the divine influence upon the heart and it's reflection in the life.' So in other words, when God's grace is upon you, His favor is upon you to grant unto you power to do good things or to change or to be different. When Moroni said, 'I prayed to the Lord that he may give grace unto the Gentiles.' What he was saying is, 'Lord, I want you to give the Gentiles power that they may humble themselves in order that they might be filled with charity which we know is the pure love of Christ, complete and utter love on the sacrificial level. That's the level of charity that we need to attain to.'

I don't know about you but I've got some work to do but the key is that we work together and we grow together in our understanding. There's a lot more that could be shared about faith, hope and charity. There's a lot more that could be shared about humility. There's a lot more that could be shared about grace but I think that the Lord wants us to begin with one step at a time and grow from grace to grace as He says, 'I give you power to achieve this one thing and as you step out in faith and do it then I'll grant unto you more grace, more power to step over the next hurdle, to come to new understandings on the



next thing that you have before you.’ I think that we are living in a time when there are so many doctrines, there are so many ideas of what the Church should be doing, of what the scriptures teach today that it becomes very difficult for us to understand what we should even do, let alone believe. We’ll only be able to discern these things if we have the power and the gift of the Holy Ghost. If you go back and read in the 13th chapter of 2nd Nephi he’ll talk to you about what you need to do in order that you may have the Holy Ghost and how you may humble yourself. Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost, therefore, they speak the words of Christ.

We, brothers and sisters, should be speaking by the power and the gift of the Holy Ghost in order that we speak the same things that the angels speak and that we speak the same things that Jesus Christ spoke and continues to speak today. When we begin to speak in that manner and in that way our lives become changed because of that sacrifice that was made and that rending that has occurred within ourselves and with us allowing the Spirit to expand and to enliven our souls. Hopefully, you have a little better understanding of what that means, to enliven your soul. It means to expand and to grow in understanding and knowledge, wisdom and truth. As we do that as individuals and a collective body, the Lord can move forward with His Church in establishing and accomplishing His purposes in these days of cloudiness, these days of doubt and misgivings, these days where we revile against one another. Hopefully, we are not doing that here.

One thing that continues to come back to me as I look through the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon is pride. You know the saying ‘pride cometh before the fall.’ I don’t think that is actually in the scriptures but that is the one thing that the Nephites continued to struggle with over and over again. They would humble themselves, the Lord would prosper them and they would grow in their understanding and goodness toward one another and the next thing you know because they were so affluent and had all these good things and there were no difficulties then they would fall back into the same pattern of being prideful and would begin to sin again. The Lord has to chastise them or punish them in some way. It’s not that He’s chastising them and punishing them, He’s allowing the natural consequences of their sins come upon them. We today are very similar in that respect. We need to humble ourselves because not all of us are going to be in the Kingdom. That’s kind of hard to think about isn’t it? When you look around, and I hope that’s not true for anyone here, but there’s a real possibility that some of us will not be a part of the work or part of the Kingdom in its fullness let me put it that way. We have an opportunity to assist in the establishment of the Kingdom. We have an opportunity to do things that the rest of the world won’t

have an opportunity to do because they don’t know any of these things yet. God has placed you, He’s placed me and placed us in this dispensation. He’s placed us in this location for a purpose. It’s kind of frightening in a way to think that He’s trusting us to carry on this work or He’s trusting me. Who am I? You know I struggle with so many things but yet He has done that and He’s doing that to each one of you. Together we need to rise up to the challenge. By rising up I don’t mean being lifted up in pride. We need to rise up to the challenge and humble ourselves into the depths of humility in a way that we haven’t done before. We need to put off the fancy things that we hold to. We need to focus on the basics. We need to focus on relationships. We need to focus on people. We need to build up the Church, not the building, but the lives of you and me, your children, my children and those around us in a way that the Kingdom of God can grow within us and that our community might be able to grow in a way that the world will come to it and say, ‘Wow!’ How did you guys get to this level? What can we do to have this in our lives? What can we do to be a part of this? And we can say, ‘Well, I’ve got some answers right here. Let me tell you about them.’



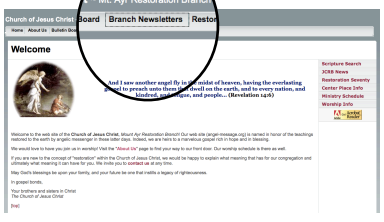


Church of Jesus Christ Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

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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

- Oct. 7, 14, 21, 28** **Doctrine and Covenants Class**
7 PM on Mondays - Ron 7 Di Smith home
- Oct. 10-12** **JCRB National Conference** - Independence, Mo.
- Oct. 15** **Women's Meeting** - 5:30 TBD
- Oct. 20** Food for the service center due

Potlucks are being changed to the 2nd Sunday of every month instead of the first, to give families time to prepare for the Sacrament instead of potluck food.

