

# Church of Jesus Christ

February 2019

*Mount Ayr Restoration Branch*

# NEWSLETTER

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*And He took them,  
one by one and He  
blessed them.*



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## News &

## Notes

Sunday December 9th, Ian Mickelson, son of Joe and Anna, and little brother to Ike and Leo was blessed by his grandfather, Rick Forth, and uncle, Abe Forth. Several of the family were able to attend and witness his blessing.

On Years Eve approximate 30 members and friends gathered at the home of Ron and Di Smith to celebrate the coming of 2019. Good food, fellowship and games were the order for the night as we rung in the new year.

A Women's Retreat is being held Saturday, February 23rd at the Keosauqua Restoration Branch, starting at 8:30 AM. This Restoration Women's Ministries sponsored retreat is a one day event with four separate classes that focus on the theme: We Are Daughters of the King. (See more details on back page.)



## A TESTIMONY OF GOD'S BLESSINGS

by Alan Elefson, *Lamoni, Iowa*

I woke up 5:00 AM Christmas with my mouth bleeding. I had 4 teeth pulled on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December and with blood thinners and issues with blood pressure I had been slow in healing. With bleeding again I put gauze in my mouth over the sockets and I hoped it would stop. We were to go to Micah's in the afternoon where all of our family was meeting for Christmas. And by the time we left it had pretty much stopped and we started on our hour drive. But it started again maybe worse. I had not ate or drank since the night before. We took the food and gifts to Micah's then went to the Creston emergency room. Arriving between 5:30 PM and 6:00 PM it was delays as the ER Dr. tried to get an Oral Surgeon. As the Oral Surgeons debated who was on call, he got hold of an ER Dr to suggest how he could suture the socket together and medication could restrict blood flow locally. By 10:00 PM this was completed and I was released. After 17 hours of battling this issue, it would seem easy to be down on the day. Instead I found myself in prayer and counting all my blessings.

1. I was given another day of life in God's creation.

2. It was a day largely without pain.

3. I am sure I swallowed more blood than I want to think about, where I would normally throw up but did not through the whole process.

4. When the Oral Surgeons backed out, the ER Dr. stepped up and the nurse became his assistant., doing dental work he seldom if ever did.

5. Denise stayed with me through the whole process.

When we finally left, Denise said we needed to return to Micah's. They had been waiting for us to open the presents, including grandkids 4 mo to 10. When we finished the day was over, but it ended with all our family together happy and healthy. Praise God for all his blessings.

# THE CROSS OF GRACE

**Elder Jim Hobbs**

*Independence, Missouri*

**August 12, 2018**

As a Call to Worship Brother Joel Loving read Doctrine & Covenants 36:12c-g. 36:12c *And the Lord said unto Enoch, As I live, even so will I come in the last days--in the days of wickedness and vengeance, to fulfill the oath which I made unto you, concerning the children of Noah: and the day shall come that the earth shall rest, but before that day, shall the heavens be darkened, and a veil of darkness shall cover the earth; and the heavens shall shake, and also the earth; and great tribulations shall be among the children of men, but my people will I preserve; and righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of my Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men; and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out my own elect from the four quarters of the earth unto a place which I shall prepare; a holy city, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem.*

Brother Hobbs read 1<sup>st</sup> Nephi 5:133-35 as a





scripture reading. *Wherefore, he (Moses) did bring them out of the land of Egypt, and he did straighten them in the wilderness with his rod, for they hardened their hearts, even as ye have; and the Lord straightened them because of their iniquity. He sent fiery-flying serpents among them; and after they were bitten, he prepared a way that they might be healed; And the labor which they had to perform was to look! and because of the simpleness of the way, or the easiness of it, there were many who perished. Then from Helaman 3:47-48. Yea, did he (Moses) not bear record, that the Son of God should come? And as he lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, even so shall he be lifted up who should come. And as many as should look upon that serpent should live, even so as many as should look upon the Son of God, with faith, having a contrite spirit, might live, even unto that life which is eternal.*

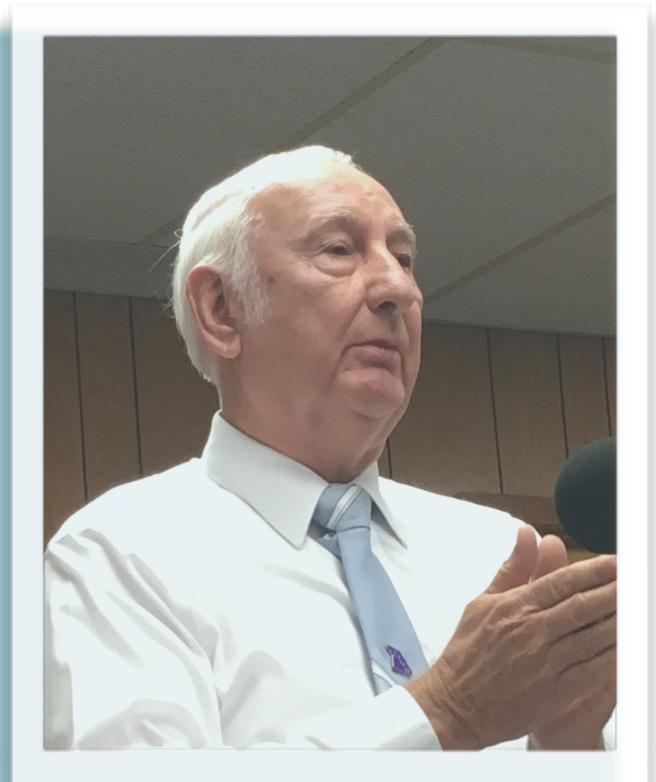
Joel shared how we met and when I first met him I felt like I had always known him. I've met a few individuals in my lifetime and the only way that I can express it is that we carry the same Spirit, a common Spirit. I feel like Joel carries that common Spirit that I carry.

One day I was struggling with some things that were happening in the church. I had put everything up on a shelf, so to speak, all these concerns, and I was studying the scriptures looking for answers. I was reading the Mormon Doctrine & Covenants. I read the revelation on polygamy, spiritual wifery and the Spirit of God filled me. I said, 'Lord, I know that what I am reading is not true but why do I feel your Spirit?' There was no answer so I read the next section in the Doctrine & Covenants and it was the same as it is in the RLDS Doctrine & Covenants. As I began to read that section, not only was the Spirit with me, but I found that Spirit in that revelation. I knew that this was the word of God. Through the years I have been able to use that as a guide. I guess you'd say that when I feel the Spirit in something that I read or when I feel the Spirit in someone else that I meet, I know that it's of God. So, when I met Joel I knew he was a man of God. I've been blessed because of that relationship that we developed.

As I was preparing for the sermon today I was saying, 'Lord, what can I share? What do these people need?' I was sitting in prayer service last Sunday. We have prayer service and then we serve the Sacrament. I was sitting there and the gentleman who was presiding was reading the scriptures and he read this scripture

from 1<sup>st</sup> Nephi 5. As I read that particular scripture, the Lord said, 'That's what I want you to share with this people.'

When I heard the family devotion this morning, there went my sermon. When I watched the presentation in our class this morning, there went my sermon. That's the God that I know. I could share many testimonies. When I was 10 years old I was baptized and I knew that I was making a covenant with the Lord, Jesus Christ. When I was 17 after I graduated from high school at the reunion that summer I received my Patriarchal Blessing. In that blessing God expressed that He was pleased with my desire to walk with Him and serve Him, to live that righteous life. Needless to say, it was downhill from there.



As I entered college I began to be bombarded by all these things such as the Bible is not true. It's mythology and fairy tales. The Red Sea didn't happen. The flood – there was no way that there could be a worldwide flood and creation can't happen the way the Bible says. While I was in probably my fourth or fifth year of college I took the extended plan. I was concerned and wanted to know the truth. Was the Bible true? I wanted a testimony of my own. I spent the whole semester of that year in the



library looking up information about the flood. The more I studied, the more I looked, the more I fell. There's more than plenty of evidence to support the worldwide flood. What I found out was that our scientists and geologists like to talk about all these levels of dirt, rocks and so forth. It's all the same throughout the earth or it's not. There's an anomaly or story right down here in Oklahoma by I-35. The rocks are supposed to be flat but they are standing straight up. The scientists don't understand how it is possible but we know that when Jesus died on the cross the rocks were broken up.

I went to Graceland after that for one semester in the fall of 1965. I took a religion course and as I went into the class the first day the first words that the instructor, who was an elder in the church, said was that our scriptures were mythology and fairy tales. They are there for us, they tell a good story but they are not true. Needless to say I flunked that course.

I went from there to the 1966 World Conference and in that conference one of the presiding elders lied and when he was caught in the lie, he said, 'We'll get the person that leaked this information.' It really challenged my faith, not only in the church, but it challenged my faith in the leaders of the church.

I was then drafted into the Army and I wound up the second year in Ft. Leonard Wood just south of Kansas City. I took every other weekend which I had off to go to various congregations but I didn't find the Spirit of God, I'm sorry to say. So one day as I was walking across the field there on the grounds of Ft. Leonard Wood, I told the Lord, 'If you can't run your church any better than this, I don't want to be a part of it.'

Don't challenge the Lord for the next year I spent in Vietnam. In that year I saw God. He carries us in His hand and there's nothing that can happen to us without His approval. As I was getting shots to go Vietnam I was again walking across the field and the Lord spoke to me and said, 'If you'll go to Vietnam I'll bring you home safe.' About a year and a half earlier I had gone AWOL from the Army because I knew I had orders for Vietnam and I didn't want to fight in a war that I didn't believe in. I wound up in Mexico City. I was running out of money so I wrote a letter home to ask my Dad to send my savings out of my savings account. I figured while I was waiting on a letter from my Dad to return, I would go to Acapulco. On the last day in Acapulco I was walking down the beach and I realized that what little bit of

money I had in savings wasn't going to last me very long and so I was contemplating what to do.

As I walked along that beach a vision opened before my eyes. I was standing in front of the Seventy's home there in Mexico City and as he came and opened the door, I could look through the door, across the living room and through the kitchen door and there sitting at the kitchen table was my father. I caught the bus back to Mexico City and just as I had seen in that vision it transpired. My Dad brought me back to the States and took me back to Georgia and I ended up doing lots of K.P. as punishment for going AWOL. I was reassigned to Ft. Leonard Wood where I was given job training to be a cook. There I again received orders for Vietnam but as I said before as I came across the field, the Lord said, 'You'll go to Vietnam. I'll bring you back safe.'

I'd like to tell you one experience that I had. I got to Vietnam and it took several days to process me. When they finally got me to my unit, that night we were hit with mortars and rockets and we spent a good portion of the night in the bunker. Late that night we went back to our hootches. I got in my bed and left all my clothes on. The next morning everybody else had gone to work but I hadn't been assigned my duty station yet. As I laid there sleeping a voice spoke, 'Get up and go to the bunker.' I raised up and looked around and didn't see anyone so I laid back down. Shortly a voice spoke to me again but more stern this time, 'Get up and go to the bunker.' I again raised up and looked around and again I didn't see anything or anybody so I laid back down. The third time the voice spoke it spoke very sternly. I don't know how your mother was but my mother when she reached the end of her line would say my whole name and would tell me to get over here. That's the way that the voice came across to me that day. I got up and got my boots on and tied them and took my time, picked up my flight jacket and helmet and walked out the back of the hootch headed to the bunker. I was just outside the back door. I threw my flight jacket and helmet in the bunker and looked out toward the perimeter and saw this flash. I saw this rocket. It began to come up, arched over and was coming right at me as I was standing there mesmerized by what was happening. As the rocket got about 2/3rds of the way in it all of a sudden turned 90 degrees and landed about a 100 yards from me. After it blew up shrapnel went everywhere. I got into the bunker and sat there for thirty minutes to an hour and finally saw that nothing else was going to happen so I got up





and went out.

That afternoon I was walking down the road in front of where our unit was. Next to us was a tank unit. This was during the beginning of the Tet Offensive in 1968. Behind us on the other side of the road was a ditch and in that ditch were a number of Air Force men. In other words if the enemy came through our perimeter they were there to back us up so that the enemy couldn't attack the airport there. As I was talking to them I found out that not just one rocket had come in that day but two. One had hit the side and one had hit the side of the tank. There was a young man standing there on the side of the road. He had his flight jacket on and his helmet but he didn't have his jacket zipped up which left about an inch gap where a piece of shrapnel had hit his chest and killed him. I still wonder why did he die and I lived.

I went out in the mountains of West Texas and spent forty days in prayer and fasting. During that time I told the Lord, 'I want to know truth. I want to know truth. I read a goodly portion of the Bible and the Doctrine & Covenants in that order. Then I read the Book of Mormon. As I read the Book of Mormon all of a sudden that book of geography became totally different. You see most of the time when we studied the Book of Mormon, it was the geography. I found that there were people in there who knew the Lord Jesus Christ and I wanted to know Him like these men knew Him. While I was there on the mountain the Lord spoke to me and said, 'You're a wicked man!' I was going to church every Sunday. I had paid my tithing. I was doing all the things that I thought were right. I didn't cuss, I didn't smoke and I didn't drink. I had given all that up.

Lord gave me a dream one night. In that dream a bunch of cushions was stacked up in the corner and I was going through these cushions looking for something and I couldn't find it so I turned around and there in front of my face was the cross, a cross of light. God said, 'You are sitting on the cross of grace.' I didn't understand. I had rebelled against God twice and gone back into the world. He gave me a testimony of His power. He gave me a testimony of His love.

After the second rebellion one evening He spoke to me and said, 'My son, it's time for you to get out of the gutter and get back into the church.' He also said, 'You've turned from me twice. If you turn from me again I'll withdraw my Spirit from you and turn you over to the devil.' He also told me at the very beginning

of this that if I didn't get back into church that He would turn me over to the devil and withdraw His Spirit from me.

At that point I wasn't really too concerned about the devil because I had one hand in the devil's and one hand in the Lord's. I knew during that year when I walked that pathway that if I died I would go to hell but you know I didn't care because the Christian people that I knew were hypocrites. I said, 'If I'm going to go to hell for being a hypocrite I'm going to deserve it.'

After I got back in the church one evening I knelt down and said, 'Lord, I can't do this on my own. I need a helpmate.' That was important to encourage me. In a short period of time He led me to Margaret. We had known each other. She and her sister were classmates of mine but we never dated. That's a different story that I don't want to get into today. She's been there for me 47 years this September.

It said in the scripture that I read from 1<sup>st</sup> Nephi that all the people had to do was look up at the serpent and they would be healed. The second scripture says that the serpent is representative of Jesus Christ. What I found out was that I was sitting on the cross of grace. I had been raised with the understanding that we are saved by grace but we're awarded eternal life by our works which we are. That's true. The thing that I understood was that grace really wasn't that important. What was important was the works we do. It is important not to sin, not to smoke, not to cuss, etc. but I found from my study of the experiences there on the mountaintop and in later years that when Christ died on that cross, the gospel is a two-part experience. It's Christ's part to die for our sins. He promised us redemption and that all mankind would be redeemed and stand before Christ to be judged.

The second part is my part, our part that is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, to enter into a covenant with Him that we would serve Him. We witness that covenant by going into the waters of baptism. Baptism is a witness that I'm going to follow Jesus. In the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of 2<sup>nd</sup> Nephi it says that Jesus was baptized to witness to the Father that He would give His will to Him. Jesus says, 'I do nothing but that which the Father leads me to do.' In this scripture it says that we are to follow Jesus. We're to repent. What do we repent of? The only thing that we repent of is our carnal flesh. This is where the problem is. This is why I sin.

In 2<sup>nd</sup> Nephi he says, Oh wretched man that I am. I have been to the mountains and saw mighty miracles. I



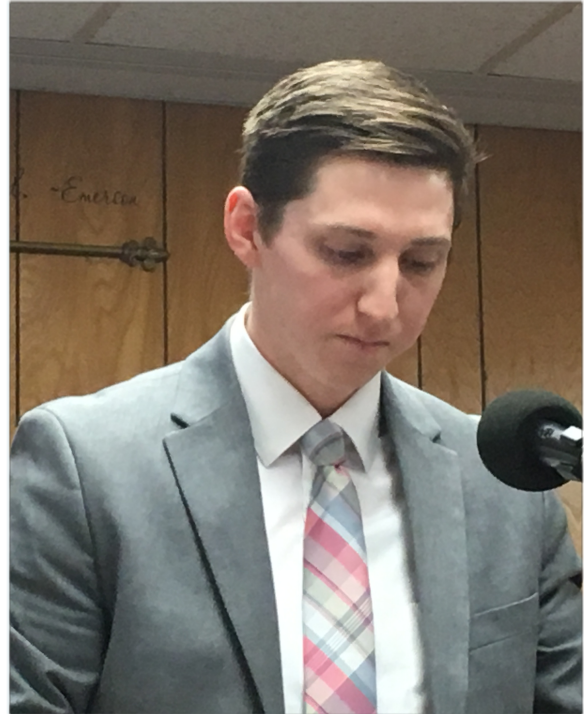
have been visited with angels and have seen the power of God work in my life and yet I stumble and doubt. I could relate to Nephi so well when I came to the understanding that Jesus died for those sins of the flesh and put a new Spirit in me. Shortly after the baptism of a friend of mine he was laying down to sleep and as he was laying there his spirit was pulled out of his body. He said, 'I looked at me, at my Spirit and it was clothed in beautiful white robes.' He said, 'I looked at that man of flesh lying on that bed and that carnal sensual devilish flesh was gnarled and ugly.' He said, 'After God had given me this experience He put my spirit back in that body.' And my friend said, 'No, Lord, don't don't! I'll pollute this beautiful Spirit that you gave me. But that's where he was wrong.

That's why Jesus died. He died for those sins that are part of our lives, past, present and future and all He asks us to do is to accept Him as Lord. In the Lord's Supper we partake of the bread and the wine. In the prayer over the bread it says, 'I witness unto Thee, O God, the Eternal Father.' I accept Jesus as my Savior and I will keep His commandments. When we eat His flesh we're taking Jesus in us and when we drink the cup of wine, the blood of Jesus covers us.

Am I saying it's all right to sin? No. Paul said, 'God forbid.' I don't sin that grace may more abound but I follow Jesus because I love Him. I seek to know Jesus better because He first loved me. He reached out to me. When I was in the depths of sin knowing that I deserved hell, He reached out to me and offered me eternal life and I received a born-again experience. Some say the born-again experience is speaking in tongues. No, that born-again experience is walking in the Spirit and walking in the power of Christ and walking with that Holy Spirit directing our lives so that when I meet somebody on the street and they open up their problems to me, Jesus can minister to that need through me. When I as an elder go to someone who is sick the Holy Spirit is able to work through me to bring a healing to that person.

I was called into a hospital several years ago. A gentleman had a hole in his intestines and they were going to have to do surgery. That morning early before the doctor came I went in and administered to him. When the doctor came in he said, 'Something has happened to you. The swelling is gone.' They took him back and did x-rays on him and the doctor said, 'The

hole has healed itself.' It wasn't me. It was Jesus Christ and He gave me the privilege of sharing in that person's life. I cannot begin to express to you His love for us.



## FEED MY SHEEP

**Priest Joe Mickelson**

*Lamoni, Iowa*

**August 26, 2018**

For a scripture reading Brother Mickelson read Luke 22:65-61 and John 21:15-17. *Then they took him (Jesus) and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house; and Peter followed afar off. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were sat down together, Peter sat down among them. But a certain maid beheld him, as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. And he denied them him, saying, Woman, I know him not. And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour, another*



*confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth, this man was also with him, for he is a Galilean. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.*

*Simon Peter, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*

I don't know exactly what it is about these two sets of verses that appeals to me so greatly, but time and time again, I have been led back to them. Each time, it seems, for a different purpose and with a different understanding, or application in my own life.

I didn't have many experiences as a teenager that I would consider now to be moments of spiritual awareness. There was one, however, that has stood out to me, even though it probably meant very little to anyone else at the time. As a high schooler, I went on a couple of different trips with the youth from the Lamoni COC congregation. One of the prerequisites for joining those trips was a certain amount of Sunday school attendance. I attended a lot of Sunday school classes over the course of about two years, and I don't remember a single part of any of them, with one exception. The one memory I do have of those classes is a very vivid memory. I remember, in great detail, the words as the teacher read the verses of scripture that I've shared with you this morning. I explicitly remember - as she transitioned from the verses in Matthew, where Peter is denying his Lord, to those in John, where the Lord asks his disciple concerning the love he has for Him - that the entire sequence of events made perfect sense to me. And, as the teacher finished reading and asked the question which I knew was coming, I had an answer ready and waiting. She asked us, "Why did Christ ask Peter three times whether he loved Him?"

I believe the Holy Spirit revealed the truth of it to me, even as the account was being read. I immediately

raised my hand, and answered, "Jesus was cancelling out Peter's sin."

Now, that explanation is overly simplistic. But, at the time, it made perfect sense to me. Peter had denied knowing Jesus three times prior to His crucifixion. If it were not for the resurrection, the guilt of that denial would have weighed on Peter for the rest of his life. Fortunately for Peter, as well as for the rest of us, Jesus rose from the grave, and the story was not yet ended. Peter was given an opportunity to shed the guilt of his transgression. Three times, Peter denied, so three times Jesus asked the question, "Simon, lovest thou me?" Despite such a seemingly egregious sin, because Peter still loved the Lord with all his heart, his calling remained the same. Feed the flock of the Lord.

Those three denials of Christ were buried and forgotten on the Cross. Because Jesus was resurrected, Peter could repent, be forgiven, forgive himself, and continue on steadfastly in the work of the building of the Kingdom of God. My sins (and yours) have been, are, and will continue to be buried and forgotten on the Cross, as well. And, because Jesus was resurrected, we have an opportunity to repent, be forgiven, forgive ourselves, and continue on in the work to which we have been called.

We all know that Peter and Jesus knew one another quite well prior to the three denials. It was none other than Peter himself who was blessed with the revelation that led to the exclamation, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Nonetheless, in a moment of weakness and fear, Peter denied knowing His Lord three separate times.

(At this time Joe read something that he had heard on the radio called Fountain of Life by John Flavel.)

*Here you may suppose the Father to say, when driving his bargain with Christ for you:*

*Father: My son, here is a company of poor miserable souls, that have utterly undone themselves, and now lie open to my justice! Justice demands satisfaction for them, or will satisfy itself in the eternal ruin of them: What shall be done for these souls?*

*And thus Christ returns. Son: O my Father, such is my love to, and pity for them, that rather than they shall perish eternally, I will be responsible for them as their Surety; bring in all thy bills, that I may see what they owe thee; Lord, bring them all in, that there may be no after-reckonings with them; at my hand shalt thou require it. I will rather choose to suffer thy wrath than they should suffer it: upon me, my Father, upon me be all their debt.*





*Father: But, my Son, if thou undertake for them, thou must reckon to pay the last mite, expect no abatements; if I spare them, I will not spare thee.*

*Son: Content, Father; let it be so; charge it all upon me, I am able to discharge it: and though it prove a kind of undoing to me, though it impoverish all my riches, empty all my treasures, yet I am content to undertake it.*

You and I are here because we've come to know the Lord Jesus in some capacity. And yet, there are times in my life, at least, in which I deny the Lord, in some way. Though the words have never escaped my lips, I'm sure that my conduct, at times, is as if I'm proclaiming to those around me, "I know him not." Philippians 1:6 tells us that: *He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

I am assured that God has begun a good work in each one of us. If not, we wouldn't be here. We wouldn't do the things that we do, believe the things that we believe, spend time reading the scriptures, fast, pray, or love one another the way that we love. Therefore, this promise is our promise. He has begun a good work in us, and He will see it to completion, if we will allow it.

That is why, at some point, after our sin and our transgression, after we've denied to the world that we know Jesus Christ of Nazareth, there will come a point in time in which the Lord asks the question of us again, "Joe, lovest thou me?" And if my answer is still "Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee," then my calling remains – Feed the flock of the Lord.

Over the course of the past few months, I fear that I've allowed circumstances of life to impede my relationship with my Lord. I could point the finger at the uncertainty that surrounds the life of our coming child. I could point at the drought conditions that have impacted so many farmers in southern Iowa. I could point to two toddlers who like to try their father's patience from time to time. I could point to a number of things as excuses for falling in to the traps of the adversary and allowing worldly things to occupy my mind and my time recently. But they are nothing but excuses, and they pail in comparison to the struggles that others face on a daily basis, yet they stand strong in their faith.

So I offer no excuses, for there are none that the Lord would validate. I'm sure that Peter, also, knew that attempting to excuse his behavior before the cock crowed would have been futile and pointless. The Lord didn't need to hear Peter's excuses, nor does He need to hear mine. All He needs to hear is the answer to the question: "Joe, I know you've fallen short. I know you've transgressed, and failed to uphold the calling

I've given you. Nevertheless, Joe, lovest thou me?"

It's remarkable how many aspects of my patriarchal blessing have already been witnessed in my life. That blessing was given last spring, and entailed the following prophetic words of wisdom: "There will be times you will look back on your ministry and feel that there is so much to be done. At times you will feel you have fallen short of the calling God has placed in your life. In those times continue on this journey one day at a time, placing your full trust in the Lord Jesus Christ." I am still relatively new to the priesthood. Yet, already, there have been numerous times in which I know that I've fallen short of the calling God has placed in my life. In those times, I must continue on this journey one day at a time, and place my full trust in the Lord Jesus Christ along the way.

Last Sunday evening, I gained the impression that there are those of you in this congregation who also feel that you've fallen short of your calling in some way. I would encourage you to also continue on the journey, one day at a time, and place your full trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Whether you've fallen short of your calling or not is not for me to judge or decide. That's between you and God. However, even if you have, He is still asking you the question even now, "Lovest thou me?" And if your answer is still a resounding, definitive, earth-shattering, "yes," then your calling remains: Feed His sheep. Love His people.

Perhaps there are some instances in which we, collectively as a congregation, have fallen short of our calling. Perhaps we haven't always done things the way the Lord intended. Maybe we haven't always been as diligent or eager as we should have been. These things may well be true, but yet I am certain that the Lord does not question whether or not we, as a branch of the Church of Christ, love Him. I see evidence of that fact every single time we meet together. Last week, brother Tim Carr made a statement that brought a smile to my face. He said that, "Love is the difference between a people that know Jesus versus a people that merely know about him."

I've been a part of at least 5 different church congregations over the years who know about Jesus. I have been a part of one congregation in my life that knows Jesus. Even though I hadn't formed the proper relationship with Christ at the time, I knew from the first service I attended here in Mt. Ayr that you people know Jesus on an intimate level. It was evident by the love that you had for one another, the love you had for the ministry that was being offered, and the love you



showed to me and my family from day one.

Over the course of the past two years, your genuine love for one another has been made evident time and time again. It comes naturally to you, and shines forth without preemptive thought or intent. It is evident when you take a meal to a brother or sister who's dealing with heartache or trials. It's evident when you stop by unannounced to share a book that reminded you of one within our church family. It's evident when you place aside your busy workload to come and pray with someone in need of prayer, or simply talk through questions regarding the church or our faith. It's evident by the smiles on our faces as we share the details of our daily lives over a meal. It's evident by the tears in our eyes as we hear about the struggles of our fellow members. It's evident by the fact that we are able to have tough conversations about the direction of the group without losing a single member out of hostility or frustration. It's evident in so many ways, and I've seen it shine forth from each and every one of you in some way.

We at the Mt. Ayr Restoration Branch have our faults. We aren't perfect. We have already and will continue to face trials and temptations. But it is our love of God, and the way that love permeates to one another, that will hold us together, strengthen us, prepare us, and allow us to grow. We may feel, at times, as though we've fallen short of our calling. It is in those times that we must continue on this journey one day at a time, placing our full trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

First Peter gives the following council of the primary duties of a church body: *Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; ... sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer with meekness and fear to every man that asketh of you a reason for the hope that is in you...be ye... sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity preventeth a multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God... Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof... And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away... Yea, all of you be subject one to*

*another, and be clothed in humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

Whatever faults you may feel have fallen upon this congregation, whatever areas you may feel we've come up short, please know and understand this: The characteristics described in the passages of scripture I just read are found in abundance with this congregation of saints. These characteristics are the very reason that Anna and I are here. They may not be as evident to some of you as they are to Anna and I, but I promise you that they shine forth with a light so powerful it draws you in, and entices you to find out more. I don't say this to boast of you or puff you up, but to encourage you, and to serve as the vessel of the Lord in assuring you that He sees your work and He sees your love – and it is pleasing in His sight. Is there room for improvement? Sure, there always will be. But because so many of you have sanctified the Lord God in your hearts, ready to give an honest answer in meekness as to the reason of the hope that is in you; because you have compassion one to another, loving as brethren with fervent charity; because you are sober and prayerful, and you feed the flock of God that is among you; because of all of these reasons (and more) you have reason to be joyful. The things that we get to experience when we're in each other's presence should never be taken lightly or taken for granted. Most people long for what we have. We could have more, and we must be diligent with that which we have, but we also must never lose sight of how precious it is.

I believe that if we are faithful; if we continue to grow in our love for the Lord and our love for one another; if we continue to fall further and further into the depths of humility – laying aside our own will, our own agendas, our own perceptions – and take up our cross; relying solely upon the Holy Spirit to guide and direct us, that the day will come when we will be endowed - endowed with new members that fill the pews; endowed with spiritual gifts and angelic ministry; endowed with the types of things that can only come from the Lord Jesus, not any planning committee or propaganda scheme. Allow the love that we feel for one another to permeate throughout our communities, and our communities will take notice. Allow that love to spill over to our brothers and sisters outside this congregation, and our communities will be awestruck. Perhaps my favorite movie of all time, Field of Dreams,



says it best: “People will come; people will most definitely come.”

We are the Church of Jesus Christ. That means that man who is supposed to lead this church sits on the thrones of Heaven. He is in charge – it’s His church, not ours. If we allow Him to lead the way, people will most definitely come. If it happened before, it can happen again:

*And it came to pass that in this same year, there was exceeding great prosperity in the church, insomuch that there were thousands who did join themselves unto the church, and were baptized unto repentance; And so great was the prosperity of the church, and so many the blessings which were poured out upon the people, that even the high priests and the teachers were themselves astonished beyond measure. And it came to pass that the work of the Lord did prosper unto the baptizing and uniting to the church of God, many souls; yea even tens of thousands. Thus we may see that the Lord is merciful unto all who will in the sincerity of their hearts, call upon his holy name; yea, thus we see that the gate of heaven is open unto all, even to those who will believe on the name of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God. (Helaman 2:22-25)*

You all have been a blessing beyond description to me. You have been the instrument in the hands of God that brought me to repentance, opened my eyes to the love of the Lord Jesus, and ignited a passion in my heart to attempt to do that which is holy and righteous and just. You’ve continued to bless me in my times of trial and temptation, loving me every step of the way. I trust that love will continue to carry me and my family through for years to come. You are the reason that God led us back to southern Iowa. You are what He wanted us to witness and be a part of. And I know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that there are others like me who the Lord will lead to our doorstep in due time. We may not have tens of thousands, as was the case in Helaman’s day, but if we continue to grow and abide in the love of Christ, with humility and repentance, those whom the Lord desires will be led to us in His time.

Despite my assurances, perhaps you are still struggling with thoughts that we’ve failed as a congregation- fallen short of our calling. Or, perhaps, you are struggling with those things on a personal level. If this is the case, that is just fine. You’re not alone. It’s not over. The end is not yet here. The apostle Peter, a close personal friend of Jesus, has walked where you are walking. He has felt what you are feeling. The anguish and despair he must have endured in those days

following the crucifixion are more than I care to imagine. Not only had he lost a man he dearly loved, but he had betrayed him, in a sense, prior to his death. Yet, despite all of that, or, perhaps because of all of that, Jesus redeemed Peter. He will redeem you. He will redeem us as a branch. Even now, I can imagine Him standing before us, posing the question to us. Our redemption can be found by how we answer.

*Mt. Ayr Saints, lovest thou me?” “Yes, Lord, thou knowest we love thee.” “Then feed my sheep.”*



## CHRIST'S BRIDE

*The following words were given by the Spirit to Bishop Bullard as he was studying on the subject, November, 1911. —Zion's Ensign*

I saw a woman pure and fair,  
All clad in glory bright;  
A tiara rich bedecked her hair,  
Of jewels clear as light.

Her raiment pure as whitest snow,  
No sun could spot display,  
Her face in radiant glories glow,  
Shone bright as noontide ray.

Her form symmetrical and strong,  
Erect with conscious power,  
Had oft withstood earth's crushing wrong  
Through persecution's hour.

Her foes, though legion Satan's band,  
Now lay beneath her feet;  
Their prince was bound by angel hand,  
For sin had met defeat.

No glory could her light outshine,  
Her clothing was the sun.  
Her smile as clear as moon sublime,  
Her triumph, victory won.

I looked, there stood at her right hand,  
A King, a Prince, her Lord.  
He came from Heaven from glory land,  
To be in her adored.

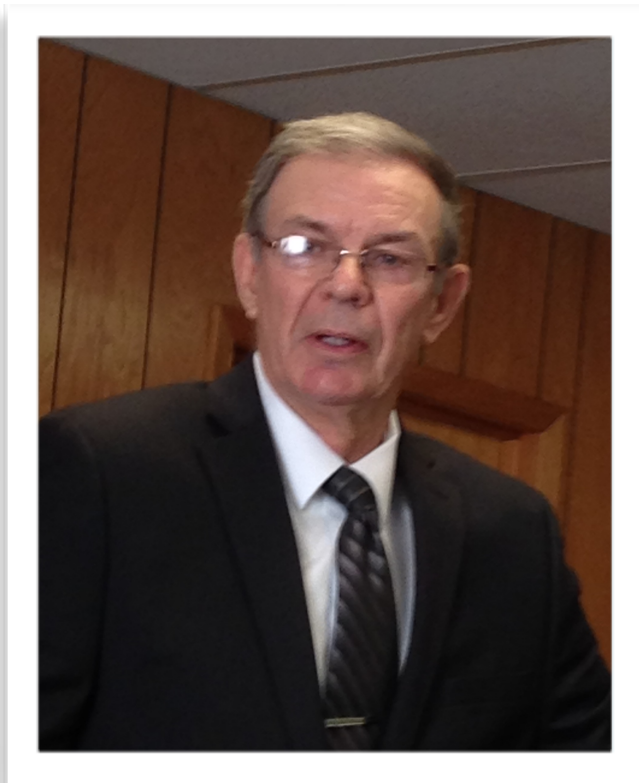




His name is Jesus, she his Bride,  
The two at last are one;  
He clasps her hand with loving pride,  
God's well beloved Son.

O Angels praise, ye Seraphs sing,  
The church is now complete,  
Let Saints their Alleluias ring,  
With voices loud and sweet.

Heaven's day has dawned, the feast is spread,  
This is Christ's wedding day;  
A pledge in newest wine and bread,  
No more to part for aye.



## MAKING CHOICES

***Priest Jim Barber***

***Lamoni, Iowa***

***October 7, 2018***

As a Call to Worship Elder Ed Anderson read Mormon 4:95. ...*see that ye partake not of the*

*sacrament of Christ unworthily; but see that ye do all things in worthiness, and do it in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God: and if ye do this, and endure to the end, ye will in no wise be cast out.*

The things that I have prepared this morning actually I didn't prepare. A good friend of mine Marjorie Speas gave me some different things that she had saved over the years. I don't know whether her husband wrote this sermon or not but I read it and it really stuck to me. I just could not pass it by. It's talking about making choices. We talked about that in Sunday School class this morning.

The scripture that is part of this is beginning with Mark 12:35-36. I think most of us are familiar with this. *And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.* Also Psalms 119:11 says, *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee,* and Psalms 119:105. You remember the worship center that Sue put up last week. That scripture was up here. *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

I am going to start out in the Garden of Eden this morning. In the Garden of Eden we see two trees: the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Adam was given instruction regarding the one tree. *And I, the Lord God, commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; Nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but remember that I forbid it.* (Genesis 2:19-21) God didn't want us to just serve Him because we were supposed to. He wanted us to choose. He wanted us to choose Him but He wanted to give us that choice.

While it was a choice to obey or disobey actually they were forbidden of the Lord God to eat of the one tree so Satan had to enter in. His way is to trick people in disobeying God. Satan does not tell the truth and he's even called the father of all lies. Satan used the serpent to talk to Eve to trick her into thinking wrong was right. The serpent was the most subtle beast God had created. That means it was hardly noticeable so it fit right in with Satan's ways. Satan spoke by the mouth of the serpent *And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden.* (Genesis 3:7) That innocent sounding question got Eve talking to him and she answered Satan and then went on



to explain that they were not to eat of the one tree adding that they were not to even touch it or they would die. She was assured by Satan that this would not happen. *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it became pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make her wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.* (Genesis 3:11) That's what gets us into trouble. To stay around temptation and to talk and not walk away is dangerous. Eve stayed to look and then she took of the forbidden fruit. The longer one stays around something that is tempting the harder it is to resist it. Sometimes a little pity party can be the beginning of a big mistake. It may start with thinking we are not getting all we deserve and it would really be good for us making us so smart even though we have been told not to do it in no uncertain terms.

In Matthew 4 we are told that Jesus met temptation with three words, *It is written*. Jesus knew what was written and we too must know what is in the scriptures and what Jesus has said in order to make the right choices. Jesus gave a wonderful promise in John 14:26. *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* Let's remember that we can't remember the words of Jesus unless we first read them.

The scriptures that I read at the beginning I think would be good scriptures for us to memorize and learn where they are. The one scripture said *Thy word is a lamp unto your feet*. Does that say anything to you? You have to have the word. You have to know the word and if you know the word it will light your way. The paths that we take, if we are following God, will be lit up for us. It would be far simpler to walk in the light than it is to walk in the dark. The word of God gives us that light.

Because we have direction from the Lord and even His words and because records were kept we have so much help available as we make choices to obey or disobey throughout our lives. We can learn so much as we look again at the Garden of Eden and the results of Adam and Eve's choice to disobey. First they tried to make things right themselves. When they realized they were without clothes they sewed fig leaves together to wear. Then when they heard the voice of the Lord they were afraid and hid among the trees. Of course, hiding from the Lord will never work. Then what I call "the blame game" begins when they are questioned. *T h e*

*Lord God said unto Adam, Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee not to eat. And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest me, and commanded that she should remain with me, she gave me of the fruit of the tree, and I did eat. And I, the Lord God, said unto the woman, What is this thing which thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And I, the Lord God, said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, . . . upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.* (Genesis 3:16-20) *The Lord God made coats of skins and clothed them and sent them forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground and the thorns and thistles for as I, the Lord God, liveth even so my words cannot return void.* (Genesis 3:29-30)

The Lord God means what He says always and He follows through. He always knows best because the clothing made of skins certainly was a better idea than their idea of fig leaves and the thorns and thistles. From now on we shall see Adam and Eve's hard work and most important of all their obedience to the Lord. In Genesis 4 we read, *And it came to pass, that after I, the Lord God, had driven them out, that Adam began to till the earth and to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow, as I, the Lord had commanded him, and Eve also, his wife, did labor with him. And Adam called upon the name of the Lord, and Eve also, his wife; and they heard the voice of the Lord, from the way towards the garden of Eden, speaking unto them, and they saw him not; for they were shut out from his presence. And he gave unto them commandments, that they should worship the Lord their God; and should offer the firstlings of their flocks for an offering unto the Lord. And Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord. And after many days, an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying, Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him, I know not, save the Lord commanded me.* (Genesis 4:1, 4-6) I guess he had learned his lesson. He thought he had better serve the Lord. That is real obedience. He didn't need to know why the Lord commanded him to do this. He only knew he must obey. The angel then explained that bringing the best of their flocks as an offering was similar to the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father. The angel said to repent and do everything in the name of the Son who was full of grace and truth. Adam and Eve continued to call upon the name of the Lord and made all things known unto their sons and daughters.

Their two sons, Cain and Abel are prime examples of disobedience and obedience. *...Cain hearkened not*



saying, *Who is the Lord, that I should know him?* (Genesis 5:4) Cain was a tiller of the ground *And Cain loved Satan more than God. And Satan commanded him, saying, Make an offering unto the Lord. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.* (Genesis 5:6) Abel hearkened unto the voice of the Lord. Abel was a keeper of the sheep and brought the firstlings of his flock for his offering. The Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering but unto Cain and his offering he had no respect. Cain was very angry and listened not anymore to the voice of the Lord, neither to Abel his brother who walked in holiness before the Lord.

Adam and his wife also mourned before the Lord because of Cain and his brethren. However, satan was very pleased with Cain. Satan and Cain plotted in secret for satan to bring Abel to Cain that Cain might murder his brother. Cain was happy as he worked with satan in this evil plan to murder for gain. All of Abel's flocks of sheep would be his he thought. So Cain went into the field and talked with Abel his brother. *While they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. And Cain gloried in that which he had done, saying, I am free; surely the flocks of my brother falleth into my hands. And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel, thy brother? And he said, I know not, am I my brother's keeper?* (Genesis 5:17-20) Cain lied. Isn't that what Satan did? He was following Satan but the Lord knew what had happened and he told Cain that from then on the ground would not grow any more crops for him and that he would just wander from place to place with no permanent house or home. Cain blamed, explained and complained. He said Satan tempted me because of his brother's flock. He explained that he was angry because the Lord did not accept his offering but did accept Abel's. Then he complained that his punishment was greater than he could stand. Cain was shut out from the presence of the Lord. Cain and those with him kept not the commandments of God thus the work of darkness began to prevail among the sons of men. Adam hearkened unto the voice of God and called upon his sons to repent.

There are some words here that I think are good for us to remember. The word hearkened means to listen closely and really pay attention. Sometimes when my wife's talking to me I don't really listen. I don't hearken to what she says. Sometimes that gets me into trouble. The sermon I am sharing is talking here about seven servants that he picked out that he thought were good servants of God. He begins with Adam and Abel.

Another son of Adam and Eve was born who was like Abel. Listen now for his name and the name of his son which are two of the names on the list of seven servants. So we have Adam and Abel and then *God revealed himself unto Seth, and he rebelled not, but offered an acceptable sacrifice like unto his brother Abel. And to him also was born a son, and he called his name Enos.* (Genesis 6:4) Seth taught his son Enos in the ways of God wherefore Enos prophesied also. So we have Adam, Abel, Seth and Enos. Seth and Enos are the third and fourth names on the list. We know very little about Enos but from the scriptures we have we know he prophesied because he was taught in the ways of his father Seth.

Now again I think there is something which I think is very exciting and important coming up in the next reading of the scripture. We will be talking about this special book which is mentioned. *And then began these men to call upon the name of the Lord; and the Lord blessed them; and a book of remembrance was kept in the which was recorded in the language of Adam, for it was given unto as many as called upon God, to write by the Spirit of inspiration; And by them their children were taught to read and write, having a language which was pure and undefiled.* (Genesis 6:5-6) I had kind of forgotten about the book of remembrance and that they were commanded to write their experiences with God and it says that they were taught by these writings. Do we teach the word of God in our schools today? I don't think so. Yes, a book of remembrance was kept and we will hear it mentioned again a little later when we hear about the man who is the sixth name on our list. He says that he could not deny what he is telling them because of the book of remembrance.

Maybe it might be wise if we kind of made a book of our own remembrances, keeping in it your two lists and a record of the scripture passages mentioned. This could be of help to you as you talk about many important and interesting things with your family or in your Sunday School classes or people that you meet at school or wherever. Records are so very important. Where would we be today if the Lord had not provided for records to be kept? Think of the many different ways records have been kept in the past; at first on clay tablets, scrolls, sheets of brass and gold and then there's paper, hand and ink and the printing press.

Jared's son was Enoch. Jared taught Enoch in all the ways of God. Many important teachings came through Enoch so Jared is another one of the servants that is mentioned here because he taught his son Enoch. We find that Enoch as he teaches the people refers to the





fact that his father taught him in all the ways of God. When Enoch was first told by the Lord to prophesy to the people, he was very surprised. He didn't think he was old enough for such a big job and he couldn't speak very well. How many times have I used that excuse? But the Lord assured him that he would tell him what to say and that no one would hurt him. *And the Lord said unto Enoch, Go forth, and do as I have commanded thee, and no man shall pierce thee. Open thy mouth, and it shall be filled, and I will give thee utterance; for all flesh is in my hands, and I will do as seemeth me good. Say unto this people, choose ye this day to serve the Lord God who made you. Behold, my Spirit is upon you; . . . and thou shalt abide in me, and I in you; therefore walk with me.* (Genesis 6:33-35) *And it came to pass, that Enoch went forth in the land, among the people, standing upon the hills, (they said) there is a strange thing in the land, a wild man hath come among us. . . . no man laid hands on him, for fear came on them all that heard him, for he walked with God.* And Enoch said, my father taught me in all the ways of God. The Lord said, I give unto you a commandment to teach these things freely unto your children.

Great was the faith of Enoch *And the Lord called his people, Zion, because they were of one heart and of one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there were no poor among them. And Enoch continued his preaching in righteousness unto the people of God. And it came to pass in his days, that he built a city that was called the city of Holiness, even Zion.* (Genesis 7:23-25) The Lord talked with Enoch and he was shown many things. He was shown that his city Zion would be taken up into heaven. He was also shown that Noah would build an ark and that the earth would never be covered by the floods again. The Lord promised Enoch that Noah and his family would not be destroyed and that after the flood there would again be people on the earth. *And the Lord said unto Enoch, As I live, even so will I come in the last days . . . And great tribulations shall be among the children of men, but my people will I preserve; and righteousness will I send down out of heaven, and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men. And righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth . . ., to gather out mine own elect . . . unto a place which I shall prepare; an holy city, that my people may . . . be looking forth for the time of my coming; . . . it shall be called Zion; a New Jerusalem. And the Lord said unto Enoch, Then shalt thou and all thy city meet*

*them there; . . .* (Genesis 7:67, 69-71)

It is of the upmost importance to remember that Zion is to be a place the Lord will prepare. He leads and it is the Lord's ideas not what people figure out. That makes a difference. Enoch was also told that it would be a holy city that his people may be looking for the time of His coming. There is nothing more exciting than to be His people and to be looking for the coming of our Lord and Savior. Enoch's city will return. *And it came to pass, that Enoch saw the day of the coming of the Son of Man, in the last days, to dwell on the earth, in righteousness, for the space of a thousand years. And all the days of Zion, in the days of Enoch, were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch and all his people walked with God. And it came to pass, that Zion was not, for God received it up into his own bosom; and from thence went forth the saying, Zion is fled.* (Genesis 7:73, 76-78)

Enoch's son Methuselah was left so the promises the Lord made to Enoch could be kept. I chose not to put his name on the seven servants list because Methuselah made a serious mistake of taking glory unto himself saying all the kingdoms of the earth would come through him. A great famine resulted. Methuselah lived to be nine hundred and sixty-nine years, the oldest age recorded in the Bible. Methuselah did have relatives on the ark. His son Lamech had a son named Noah and Noah is the seventh servant that is mentioned here.

Noah certainly showed faith and obedience so he is the seventh name on the list of God's servants. *Noah and his sons hearkened unto the Lord and gave heed and they were called the sons of God. Noah prophesied, and taught the things of God, even as it was in the beginning. And the Lord said unto Noah, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, if men do not repent, I will send in the floods upon them. Noah called upon the children of men, that they should repent, but they hearkened not unto his words.* (Genesis 8:4, 4-5, 8) Noah was a just man and he walked with God and also his three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. And God said to Noah, *Make thereof an ark. . .* (Genesis 8:19) I got an interesting email this week. It was about different signs of things. This one sign said that Noah evidently had great faith because he took two termites on a boat made out of wood. I thought that was kind of humorous.

When the flood would come the Lord could keep his promises to Enoch for Noah and his family would be kept safe. The ark was to be made exactly like the Lord told Noah. It was made of gopher wood, three stories tall with windows and made a certain size. It took him over a hundred years to build the ark. God said to Noah, *And*



*thou shalt come into the ark, thou and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with them. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every kind shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep alive with thee; they shall be male and female. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind; two of every kind shalt thou take into the ark, to keep alive. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather fruit of every kind unto thee in the ark, and it shall be for food for thee, and for them. Thus did Noah, according to all that God commanded him. (Genesis 8:24-28)*

The Lord shut them in the ark and after seven days it began to rain. The rain lasted 40 days and nights but they were in the ark much longer than that because they had to wait until there was some dry land. God made a wind pass over the earth. The water began to be less and less and finally the ark came to rest on Mount Ararat. When a dove was sent out that did not return they knew it was getting so that they could leave the ark. After they got off the ark Noah built an altar and gave thanks unto the Lord. *And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I will establish my covenant with you, which I made unto your father Enoch, concerning your seed after you. There shall be no more flood to destroy the earth. 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. (Genesis 9:15, 21-22)* Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood. All of the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years.

There is another word that I think we need to remember; embrace which has deep meanings. If we embrace the truth we will not just dabble in it but we will make a serious effort to know and follow the truth so then we must study, pray and obey. I feel there is a connection of why this man chose these seven servants. If you remember as I read the scriptures each one of them taught their children. I think that is important that we teach our children so that they will not stray.

In 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:15 it says, *Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* 2<sup>nd</sup> Nephi

14:4 says *...Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.* Nephi 14:12 says *...that ye must pray always, and not faint: that ye must not perform anything unto the Lord, save in the first place ye shall pray unto the Father in the name of Christ, that he will consecrate thy performance unto thee, that thy performance may be for the welfare of thy soul.* In Alma 17:70 it says *Yea, when thou liest down at night, lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou riseth in the morning, let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; and if ye do these things, ye shall be lifted up at the last day...* Psalms 19:14 says *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.* Doctrine & Covenants 68:4 says *And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance; faith in Christ the Son of the living God; and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands when eight years old, the sin be upon the head of the parents.* In Genesis 6:35 the Lord said unto Enoch *Say unto this people, choose ye this day to serve the Lord God who made you.* In Joshua 24:15 Joshua is telling his people *...choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . .but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.* Ephesians 6:11 says *Put on the whole armor of God . . .*

It is my prayer that you will always choose to serve the Lord. Embrace the truth and look up to Jesus, our example, our Savior and our Shepherd. Feast on His words, pray and obey and put on the whole armor of God.



## ENDURE TO THE END

**Elder Abe Forth**  
**Blue Springs, Missouri**  
**April 22, 2018**

Priest Joseph Mickelson shared: I went back and forth about which one of the following two scriptures I should use as a Call to Worship so you are going to hear



them both. The first is from Genesis 6:34-36. *Open thy mouth, and it shall be filled, and I will give thee utterance; for all flesh is in my hands, and I will do as seemeth me good. Say unto this people, choose ye this day to serve the Lord God who made you. Behold, my Spirit is upon you; wherefore all thy words will I justify, and the mountains shall flee before you, and the rivers shall turn from their course; and thou shalt abide in me, and I in you; therefore walk with me.*

From Alma 16, I'm going to back up a ways from where this first starts in your bulletin, 178-184. *Thou art merciful O God, for thou hast heard my prayer, even when I was in the wilderness: yea, thou wast merciful when I prayed concerning those who were mine enemies, and thou didst turn them to me: Yea, O God, and thou wast merciful unto me when I did cry unto thee in my field; when I did cry unto thee in my prayer, and thou didst hear me. And again, O God, when I did turn to my house thou didst hear me in my prayer. And when I did turn unto my closet, O Lord, and prayed unto thee, thou didst hear me; yea, thou art merciful unto thy children when they cry unto thee to be heard of thee, and not of men, and thou wilt hear them; Yea, O God, thou hast been merciful unto me and heard my cries in the midst of thy congregations; yea, and thou hast also heard me when I have been cast out, and have been despised by mine enemies; Yea, thou didst hear my cries, and wast angry with mine enemies, and thou didst visit them in thine anger, with speedy destruction; and thou didst hear me because of mine afflictions and my sincerity; And it is because of thy Son that thou hast been thus merciful unto me; therefore I will cry unto thee in all mine afflictions; for in thee is my joy; for thou hast turned thy judgments away from me, because of thy Son.*

For your hearing today I am going to read a scripture that's familiar to most and some of you may even know it by heart. It comes from 3rd Nephi 12:25-30. *Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you, that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me; And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, I might draw all men unto me: That as I have been lifted up by men, even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil; And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father, I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works. And it shall come to pass, that*

*whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name, shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father, at that day when I shall stand to judge the world. And he that endureth not unto the end, the same is he that is also hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence they can no more return, because of the justice of the Father: and this is the word which he hath given unto the children of men.*

Good morning, Saints. It's good to be with you this morning. It's always a privilege to gather and commune in the fellowship of the Saints. I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and our Savior. As I've grown older, and I know I am not old yet, I have learned a few things. One of those things is to appreciate moments. Moments are a big part of our lives. I am especially thankful this morning to stand up here in the stead of our Savior, to have Joe preside, to have my parents here and to worship with you. So I'm taking this moment in and I am going to cherish it. I grew up and was warmed by the glow of holy enthusiasm and today I feel that same glow so thank you.

Endure to the end. This Friday I spent some time with Patrick McKay. I know some of you know him and he asked me, 'Abraham, what are you going to talk about to that group up there. They need to hear so much.' I said, 'Well, I am going to talk about enduring to the end.' He said, 'Well, this is what you do. You speak until 1 o'clock and see if they take it all in.' I won't take Patrick's advice. I usually don't.

We are all called to endure to the end. That much is clear but what does it mean to endure? Why must we endure and what is the end? What is our end? This phrase has occupied my thoughts for a long time. We read it in the Book of Mormon over and over again. It's straight forward enough for most but for me it has an undiscovered depth and the more time I spend trying to understand what I believe is its depth, the more strength I receive. I, by no means, have a profound understanding of the phrase. However, I would like to share some insights that have helped me and reinforced my belief in the power of the restored gospel. . . . *and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father; . . . And he that endureth not unto the end, the same is he that is also hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence they can no more return, . . .* (3rd Nephi 12:29-30)

Some can hear those words and they feel the harshness but I feel a sense of hope in the strongest possible way when I read that portion of scripture. How can I not? Granted it demands so much of us coupled





with a hidden meaning beneath that hope. How could I, how could any of us sincerely and passionately believe in a Savior and in a Savior's gospel that did not call us to endure? A gospel that does not call me to endure to the end is a gospel that cannot be true? It must not be true.

There are many Christians that you and I know outside of these walls that do not believe that they are called to endure to the end. Some sincerely believe the doctrine of once saved always saved. Their profession of



faith and their commitment to Christ is the beginning and it is the end. It's been determined. The Book of Mormon is clear we must always be seeking our Savior. There is no time to rest. Our rest is in the communion with our God. We are called to take righteous step after righteous step and when we stumble in weakness and when we stumble in disobedience, we get right back up and continue on that eternal path. With that hope that wells up inside of me and I hope that hope that wells up inside of each of you comes a great responsibility and a great endeavor begins.

So, what does it mean to endure? To me if we focus only on the word it conjures up competition and athletes, people who have achieved success in a grueling field of study or work. These are the positive thoughts. On the

more difficult side I think of the sufferings of those around the world who struggle with the lack of food and water, members of the military who face the hardships of war. I think of our family and friends that go through physical and emotional pain. Most prominently my mind goes to the faithful in the scriptures. It goes to the early Saints. We have so many inspiring and incredibly difficult examples. It's easy to think of the martyrs: Peter, Abinadi, Joseph, Hyrum and on and on, men who died because of their testimony of Jesus Christ.

So is it just about perseverance? Is suffering a test of strength? It is steadfastness. It is a resolve to keep the covenants that most of us have entered into. When we are baptized and receive the Holy Ghost we are promising to walk a path of righteousness, submitting to the will of the Father. By submitting to the will of the Father we promise to lay down our selfish desires. The scriptures espouse a number of commandments, most importantly that we love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy might, and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

There are so many others though that are important if we are to continue on that path the entirety of our lives. We are to look to Christ. We take the name of Christ upon us. We feast upon the words of Christ. We teach the gospel in our homes. We extend charity to our brothers and to our sisters, we pray unceasingly, we fast, we fulfill the responsibilities of our membership and of our priesthood and on and on. Yes, there will be tests. Yes, there will be trials but we can never allow these trials to derail our commitment to Christ.

From 2nd Nephi 15:10, . . . *except they shall be reconciled unto Christ, and enter into the narrow gate, and walk in the straight path, which leads to life, and continue in the path until the end of the day of probation.* Enduring to the end is about being above the suffering, it's about keeping our covenants with the Lord. Doctrine and Covenants 23:4b says, *Be patient in afflictions, for thou shalt have many; but endure them, for lo, I am with you, even unto the end of thy days.* We are commanded to keep those promises throughout our lives. There can be no equivocation, no turning back. People suffer every day, Christians and non-Christians alike. Suffering by itself and unattached to a spiritual cause does nothing to bring about the kingdom of God or assure our entry into that kingdom.

Arthur Oakman once said, 'God doesn't save us from the suffering. He saves us for the suffering that counts in bringing about the kingdom of God.' When we suffer and when we fall away, because it will happen at



least once in the lives of the most pious and many times in my life, we find that path again. In repentance we receive that fresh start, we find that path again because of a broken heart and because of a contrite spirit. The path doesn't change. It's not there one day and gone the next. We are the ones who change. We are the variable but it's time to be the constant. It's so simple. He that endureth to the end him will I hold guiltless. If enduring to the end means that you and I keep our covenants to Christ why do so many fail to endure? Life can be hard. No one's life experience is the same.

When Kaitlyn and I moved to Independence we rented an apartment east of town. It sat up on a hill and was a nice place to live. Just down the hill was one of the largest churches in all of Independence. We often drove by this church on Sunday and would be amazed at the cars that filled the parking lot. They had at least a couple dozen people directing traffic. The parking lot was always full. They held multiple services to accommodate the demand. The pastor of that large church, and several other people that I have talked to, have estimated that three to four hundred of the members of that church are ex-RLDS members. I'll let that sink in just for a few seconds, three to four hundred. That's an estimate. This shocked me when I first heard it, not only the number but the thought of so many people who had presumably been touched by the fullness of the gospel at one point in their lives and then turned away from that gospel. What caused those Saints to seek another fellowship?

I'm confident that as a group, you and I together, could come up with a number of reasons why they chose another fellowship but it points to a larger question. What happens to us along the way? I cobbled together a familiar story as an illustration. It's a not a perfect parallel but I think it's helpful. It comes from 1st Nephi 2. *And I beheld a rod of iron; and it extended along the bank of the river, and led to the tree by which I stood. And I also beheld a straight and narrow path, which came along by the rod of iron, even to the tree by which I stood. (62-63) And it came to pass that they did come forth and commence in the path which led to the tree. And it came to pass that there arose a mist of darkness; yea, even an exceeding great mist of darkness, insomuch that they who had commenced in the path did lose their way, that they wandered off and were lost. And it came to pass that I beheld others pressing forward, and they came forth and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; And they did press forward through the mist of darkness, clinging to the rod of iron, even until they did come forth*

*and partake of the fruit of the tree. (66-69) And after they had tasted of the fruit they were ashamed, because of those that were scoffing at them; and they fell away into forbidden paths and were lost. (76) And he also saw other multitudes feeling their way towards that great and spacious building. And it came to pass that many were drowned in the depths of the fountain; And many were lost from his view, wandering in strange roads. (79-81)*

Some held fast to the rod of iron. Some let loose of the rod. Some made it to the tree and some fell away. Most, if not all of us, have covenanted to walk that straight and narrow path and make our way to the tree. I am in no way implying that the people I used earlier in the illustration have lost their salvation. I remember a minister that said, 'You don't tell people that they are saved. You tell people how to be saved. Only God takes people.'

Yet I believe those same people are missing layers of truth and light and are missing the power of the ordinances. But we read that even some that have made that commitment and taken upon them the name of Christ will not endure. We give way to our own will. We give way to our own desires. Our own creations and imaginations take hold and lead us away from that eternal path. In each of our lives there is something that has the unfortunate potential to keep us from enduring to that end. Even things that seem harmless like devotion to family, loyalty to work, pursuit of recognition from an organization can steer us away from complete submission to the gospel of Christ.

I have my own obstacles. It has taken some internal reflection to discover but I know what stands in my way, what can keep me from walking that path that can keep me from enduring to the end. Ever since I was a little child I can remember never wanting to disappoint people. As a kid that typically starts out as not wanting to disappoint your parents. Then it goes into not wanting to disappoint teachers. Next it is coaches and on and on with the people you associate with. I like rules. I like to follow rules and maybe that's why I do what I do today and I think other people should follow the rules.

What happened along the way was that I was more concerned about disappointing people than I was concerned about disappointing God. I think there's a lot of truth in that for most of us if we are honest with ourselves. By not wanting to disappoint people, I let things of the world influence and sometimes even dictate decisions that I made in my life. What to do? Where to go to college? What profession to go into? I



started to seek the things of the world. It's a constant battle and when we seek the things of the world can we truly, a hundred percent with all of our hearts, minds, and our souls, seek after that which is righteous, that which is of God. I recognize that and Kaitlyn and I have discussions about this. I have to really focus. I've been around the people who have sought the things of the world, people that are admired because of that. It's not important. It doesn't give them fulfillment and it won't give me fulfillment so that's the obstacle that I face. If you do that internal reflection tonight in the quiet of your study, I know each of you will find what that obstacle is so that you can overcome it and be done with it today.

Arthur Oakman tells a story several times in his sermons about D.T. Williams. I believe he was an apostle. He talks about how the apostle had one son who was killed in a car accident when I believe he was 18 years old and how devastating that was to this man. It would be devastating to any of us. How his faith was challenged and how he questioned his faith. He confided in Brother Oakman, 'I really questioned my faith. I've started to fall away but I knew if I could get one question answered, just one question, everything would be fine.' So Arthur asked him what that question was and he said, 'Is there a God?' Brother Williams got his answer that there was a God and we will all get our answers in different ways but that was his obstacle. He had faced something in life that was difficult for him to bear, that had the potential to keep him from enduring to the end but he found his answer.

Have we been called to an impossible task? To the world it must seem impossible. The world cannot and never will grasp the eternal truth that we can be changed into individuals of endless love and compassion demonstrating undeniable discipleship in the midst of our weakness. This gospel beckons us to take up our cross and become joint heirs. This is why we must endure. There is no other way. Our endurance is a light and a helping hand to those around us. People look to the Saints for strength, for an example of what an unselfish Christ-centered life looks like. They expect to see charity from those that are to endure to the end. The Book of Mormon tells us that charity is the pure love of Christ. It is not impossible. However, it will push us beyond our humanism and gradually everything we use to hold dear will become a faint memory.

Joseph Smith Jr. penned these words while a prisoner in the Liberty Jail. *'Oh, God, where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth that hiding*

*place. How long shall thy hand be stayed and thine eye yea thy pure eye behold from the eternal heavens the wrongs of thy people and thy servants and thine ear be penetrated with their cries? Yea, O Lord, how long shall they suffer these wrongs and awful oppressions? Before mine heart shall be softened toward them and thy bowels be moved with compassion toward them. O, Lord God Almighty, maker of heaven, earth and seas and of all things that in them are remembering thy suffering Saints. O, our God and thy servants will rejoice in thy name forever. My son, peace be unto thy soul, and thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment. And then if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high. Thou shalt triumph over all thy foes. (repeated) Peace be unto thy soul and thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment.'*

Our probation is but a small moment. Our probation is but a small moment to prepare and to endure for the kingdom. The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Are thou greater than He? We must endure because He came for us, plucked us from the bands of death and our preservation, our fulfillment and our covenants is the strongest testimony that we can bear of our love for that willing Savior. Nephi said, *For it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.*

I've littered this throughout but what is that end? From the 10th chapter of Matthew verse 19, *And ye shall be hated of all the world for my name's sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.* Doctrine and Covenants 12:3b says, *Keep my commandments in all things; and if you keep my commandments and endure to the end, you shall have eternal life; which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God. It's eternal life. It's residence in the kingdom of God.*

Christ is the first person I think of when I read the commandment to endure to the end but there's another that comes to mind. It comes from the book of Mormon 4:2-3; 6. *And now it came to pass that after the great and tremendous battle at Cumorah, behold, the Nephites who had escaped into the country southward, were hunted by the Lamanites, until they were all destroyed; and my father also was killed by them; and I, even remain alone to write the sad tale of the destruction of my people. But behold, they are gone, and I fulfill the commandment of my father. . . for I am alone; my father hath been slain in battle, and all my kinsfolks, and I have not friends, nor whither to go; and how long the Lord will suffer that I may live, I know not.*

In these verses we read that Moroni had just survived one of the most devastating and awful





experiences imaginable. The Nephites had become wicked. They turned away from God. Therefore, they were destroyed. Moroni fought side by side in that destruction. He witnessed the physical pain and worse the spiritual pain. His father, who was righteous, fell with the unrighteous but we know that they did not share the same end. Now Moroni is alone and through his words I can feel his sorrow. The anguish revealed in those words is palpable. His father killed, his people destroyed, no friends left, and unsure of how much time he had left on this earth. This is the time to doubt or beyond doubt the time to be convinced that God has abandoned you. That's a reasonable reaction and a logical conclusion. Yet Moroni knew that he was called to finish the course. He had a job to do. He, like you and I, was called to endure to the end.

This is what is hopeful for me. I can endure. I am not called to that impossible task. You and I are called to fulfill one purpose. In this sin-sick world our very beings long to be with our Creator and for that reason our work is never done because the Lord's work is never done and the end is eternal life. Contrast that promise of eternal life with the adversary. With God we know what the end is if we are faithful to our covenants. There is victory whether we choose to be a part of that victory or not. The war is over even if the battles continue. The devil never shows us the end. The devil only shows the beginning. He can't show the end or no one would start at the beginning, no one would start that crooked path. The devil's end is destruction, torment, suffering, and worst of all the knowledge that you consciously sinned away your day of grace and along the way unnecessary pain, sorrow, rejection and failure.

The end is important, brothers and sisters. God has made a promise to each of us and has shared His blood. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. He keeps His promises to His people. He is at the beginning, everywhere in between and most assuredly at the end when we shall see His face. Let us follow this counsel from 2nd Nephi, some of my favorite words in the Book of Mormon. *Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.* (2nd Nephi 13:29-30)

I have heard some say and many more will continue to say that of course Jesus endured to the end. He was in the bosom of the Father from the beginning. Of course, the Apostle Paul fought the good fight. He finished the

race. He was spoken to from heaven. Of course, Joseph the Prophet was faithful. He saw the Father and the Son and was given the record of the Nephites. The scriptures tell the stories of countless others who have had direct communication with heaven and then the thought continues that if I am spoken to by an angel or have an open vision then I will be steadfast and I will endure like those other men and women that we read of. What a terrible perspective. How sad. Are we any different from the men and the women of God that we read about in the scriptures? Have we not been baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost? Have we not received the power of the Holy Ghost through the laying on of hands? Do we not talk to God and He to us each and every day through prayer? Have we not seen Christ in each other? Has He not touched our lives in immeasurable ways? Jesus Christ has experienced the flesh and He has carried our burdens. He lives and the calling is undeniable.

I had a professor in law school who taught constitutional law. He was a famous scholar when it came to constitutional law. He was an excellent writer. He entered an article into a writing competition and won first place in this national competition. I think it earned him a \$100,000.00 grant. It was quite a deal for him to win that. When he came back to class he held kind of a question and answer session about the competition, his article and so forth. One of the first questions that someone asked, I don't even think it was a student, I think it was another professor who came in the classroom and sat in the back. He asked, 'Professor Esbeck, if you could lay down three of the most important things when you write what are they and what order?' He thought just for a moment and then said, 'Number 1-be clear. Number 2-be clear and Number 3-be clear.' The scriptures cannot be clearer. We are commanded to endure to the end.

In some of my quieter moments recently precipitated by conversations and experiences, the feeling has come to me. That feeling is that I sense that the Saints are tired. Year after year has taken its toll on many. Task after task, burden after burden has been born and the emotions that come to mind vary from empathy to sadness to even pride. In competition you get tired just before the end but if you are conditioned and if you are prepared that is the moment that you receive that last burst of air, that last dose of mental strength that pushes you harder than ever before. Not because you paced yourself along the way, rather you now see the end so clearly and in the power and the glory of that end



something wells up inside of you to finish stronger, even stronger than you started. Brothers and sisters, you have exercised more faith, devoted more time and energy, prayed more prayers and shed more tears for the kingdom than I have. You have labored faithfully in that vineyard. The Lord knew as did Moroni that there would be times of weariness and that's precisely why the scriptures are so clear, *But behold, Jesus Christ hath shewn you unto me, and I know your doing.* . . . (Mormon 4:47)

We are to endure to that end. If that end is tomorrow so be it. If that end is 100 years from today it makes no difference. Our path is the same. It was laid before us years and years ago so I'm pleading with you today. Will you take a deep breath? Will you refocus your mind and press forward with a renewed zeal? Will you take my hand? Will you take the hand of a neighbor when we become discouraged? Will you lift your head upwards in times of difficulty? Will you love your enemy as God loves you? The Lord will give each of us the strength needed. Let's see this to that promised end. I need you, your family needs you, the world needs you to be Christ-like. Don't give up. Don't just hang on. Be steadfast and unwavering and we shall see the New Jerusalem together.



## A REMARKABLE TESTIMONY

by J.W. Nanny

*Reprinted from Zion's Ensign*

July 11, 1912

Shortly after this I got quite a bundle of tracts and a little paper entitled The Return, which made some very strange claims. Also quite an assortment of tracts and papers from Utah claiming legal succession for that body, and there was a Mr. Collins representing the Church of Christ which are Hedrickites, claiming they were the true church. Now I had asked for the divinity of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and now comes three other bodies claiming to be that church. The same argument that convinced me that the sects were wrong was evidence that but one of these factions could be right, so I decided to put James 1:5 to the test. I sought the Lord in prayer and continued to read everything they sent me and compare it with the

scriptures, knowing that God alone could give me light, till one day in the latter part of February I was chopping wood out of dead trees in a cotton field; being alone I was in silent prayer. I had felled a tree and sat down beside it to rest, leaning back against the log as it lay across the cotton rows. As I sat there in silent meditation I was impressed to look up, and to the northwest I saw a personage approaching me clothed in a white flowing robe. He stopped directly in front of me and about ten feet away and beckoning me said "Come hither."

I immediately left my body and started with my guide and we seemed to go many miles till we came to an exceeding high mountain which was very beautiful. For the first time since we started, my guide spoke and said, "What desirest thou?" I answered, "Oh, my Lord, if I have found favor in thy sight, shew unto thy servant where is the true Church of Jesus Christ." He said, "As thou hast been faithful before the Lord, and sought him in humble prayer, these things shall be made known unto thee; therefore, I say unto thee, look." I looked and he said, "What seest thou?" I replied, "Oh, my Lord, my reins are consumed within me, for I see an old man with full long white beard and gray hair crowned with a radiant light and hedged about with a structure mighty and strong which all the powers of the earth and hell can not overthrow." He then said to me, "knowest thou the meaning of these things?" I said, "Be merciful unto me, oh, Lord, their meaning." He said, "The old man that thou seest is the servant and prophet of the most high God, Joseph Smith, the son of Joseph Smith that was slain for his testimony, and the light that crowns his head is the spirit of revelation by which the Saints of all ages are led, and the structure thou seest is truth, the rock on which the church is built, and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ is the body, the ride, the lamb's wife, with whom the authority rests."

I would have kneeled down and thanked or worshiped him, but he said, "Do it not, but return unto thy body and do the work that is in store for thee." He spoke also many other words unto me which have given me strength thus far and will help me to anchor in the port when the Lord of Glory calls.



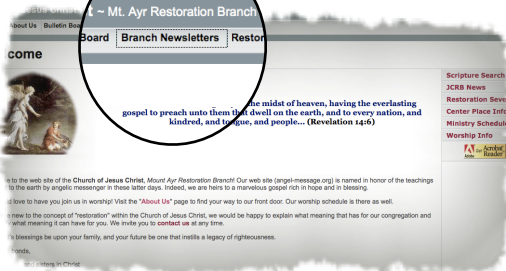


# Church of Jesus Christ Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

c/o Cheryl Phipps  
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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

**Feb 7, 14, 21, 28**

**Book of Mormon Night.** Every Thursday evening in Lamoni at 6:45 PM. Ron & Di Smith's home.

**Feb 9** Men's Breakfast at the Lamoni  ~ 11:00 AM

**Feb 17** Food for Center due

**Feb 23** **We Are Daughters of the King** - Women's Retreat at 906 Broad St., Keosauqua, IA Restoration Branch. RSVP Betty Vickery at **573-469-2132**. Registration starts at 8:30 If you need arrangements for sleeping over contact Betty.

**Classes:** 1) What I Say to One I Say to All 2) Let's Do It the SMART Way 3) And Take It Further 4) Stop Trying - Start DOING!

**Apr 15-19**

**JCRB General Conference** - Good Shepherd Community of Christ Church on Blue Ridge Blvd.

