

Church of Jesus Christ

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Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

NEWSLETTER

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O Come, O Come Emanuel

O come, O come Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.

O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
And order all things far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And cause us in its ways to go.

O come, Desire of nations, bind
All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife, and quarrels cease,
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!



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Christmas Memory

By Cheryl Phipps

Years ago when our family lived in Des Moines we were part of a young married adult group. Each year before Christmas we would hold a Christmas party in one of the homes. Our children would be part of this activity. We all wanted to be sure that our children understood that the true meaning of Christmas was to give to others. After all, God had given his Only Begotten Son to us so surely we could also give to others. I remember one year in particular. Before we got together as a group we would find out who needed something that they would not be able to get on their own. This year it was decided to give a set of car tires to a couple who needed new tires but couldn't afford them. We took up a collection which included the children giving as they could to come up with the money.

Years later, one of our daughters and her son learned of a family in Lamoni who would have a very tough Christmas. She found out what they needed, bought it and then she and her son delivered it to the family.

I am sure that many of you have similar memories of giving to those who have not. I have found that when you do that it not only enriches the lives of those you give to but your's as well.



What is the Gospel?
Elder Tony Crandell
October 31, 2021

In that passage from Romans 1:15-116 Paul says, *So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also. 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.*

A couple of months ago I preached on a theme “Who is this man we call Christ?” In Sunday school last week and again this morning we are learning about the times Christ lived in and “whence he came.” As we have heard numerous times in these last two lessons and throughout our religious training, it’s all about Him and His gospel. I will talk about what I feel is just one significant concept in our beginning study of “Who is this man we call Christ?” Since the American society is becoming more liberal and tolerant in accepting all ideologies, it is ever more important for us believers in Christ to understand the simplicity of the gospel.

So, my message this morning is very simply: What is “the Gospel?” This is one of the words in our church life we use regularly and that we give little thought to what we are really saying and trying to communicate. So, “What is the gospel of Christ” that Paul refers to in this passage?

First, it is good news! In fact, it is the ultimate very best news you could ever hear or receive! The Greek word translated “gospel” is euaggelion. We get our English words evangel, evangelize, evangelical from that word. (It is a combination of two words: eu which means good and aggelos which means messenger.) That word is transliterated as angel in our English language. Angels primary function is as messengers. So, the gospel is a good message; it is a declaration of good news. Why is that so important? Satan has convinced a lot of people that the gospel is really bad news.

Think about this concept...If the world really thought the gospel is good news, they would fill up the churches today. They would be knocking doors down to get in. They would tear the roof off if necessary to hear the message. But the “god of this world” (satan) is blinding us to the truth.

Folks today have been convinced by the devil that our message, the biblical gospel message, is bad news. It stops us from having a good time. It restricts our activities and reduces our pleasure. It binds us up with rules and regulations we don’t want. So, there is an upfront prejudice against the gospel message because of these preconceived ideas.

The devil has also taken advantage of formal religious teaching that simply gave people rules and regulations, rituals and gives them nothing more. But

according to Galatians (1:6-9) that is not the true gospel but a legalistic perversion of the gospel.

The gospel is good news because it can bring a lasting and permanent answer to all our problems with sin. It can deliver you from bondage (hopelessness) of sin that can or will ultimately destroy your faith. The gospel will set you on course that is for your highest good. It provides for you all things and concepts that pertain to life and godliness. It transforms your wants and desires so that they line up with God and His created purpose for you. And, it turns you from a pathway of self-destruction to a pathway of eternal life, joy, and peace.

In John 10:10 Jesus characterized the devil as a thief set out to steal from you what is good and ultimately destroy you. *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: Whereas Jesus said; “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* The NIV says, *...I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.* The gospel is a message of hope. The gospel is a declaration of God’s provision to meet your deepest needs. The gospel is good news for anyone who will hear it and receive it.

The gospel is good news ABOUT JESUS!

Paul opens 1st Corinthians 15 with these words, *Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you.* Then he goes on to give a reader’s digest form of the message. 1st Corinthians 15:3-4 *For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.* The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus are absolutely essential to the gospel, but some churches would rather not talk or sing about blood.

Without that, there is no good news. When so-called Christians abandon those truths, they are no longer Christians in the biblical sense. They may still call themselves Christians but their message is no longer the gospel. Their message is a lie and departure from truth. Anytime a preacher denies or evades the literal reality of Jesus’ death on the cross for atonement of sin or if a preacher denies the bodily resurrection of Jesus, he has denied the faith. It does not matter how sweet he says it or how friendly his church is. It doesn’t matter if thousands feel uplifted by the services or everybody just seems to love one another. If Jesus’s atoning death and literal resurrection are not affirmed, then the gospel has not been preached.

1st Timothy 4:1 warns that in the last days . . . *some will depart from the faith.* Thessalonians 2:3 says there will come a “falling away” or an apostasy. I think we are already seeing the pressures and influences that will cause this to happen. The Timothy passage talks about seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. There are already social pressures in



America at work to compromise these truths. It is rapidly becoming politically incorrect to stand up for biblical standards. If the culture continues its current course, it will become harder and harder, more and more costly. We will have to be more anchored in our faith; we will have to be firmer in our commitment to the Lord as the media and public opinion turn against us. The result will be some who turn away from the faith and some who turn to the Lord more wholeheartedly than ever. The middle of the road will be a difficult and lonely path to navigate.

You no doubt have seen the bumper stickers that say “Unity or Diversity.” As our society becomes more pluralistic (again, meaning tolerant and accepting), the name of Jesus will be more of an issue. The call will be to compromise with other groups for the sake of peace. On the surface, it will sound loving and kind. But, to do that will be to forsake our own opportunity for mercy. To do that will be to abandon the Source of real life and real peace. In short order, we could find ourselves facing situations like the early church faced.

Do you remember the healing of the lame man in Acts 3? Peter and John were on the way to pray at the temple. They encountered a beggar who was lame and by power of the Holy Spirit, the man was healed. When a crowd gathered, Peter preached Jesus as his explanation of what had happened.

Acts 4:1-2 says, *Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, 2 being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.* These rulers were ok with people praying, as long as none of the prayers were answered. They were not upset by Peter and John joining others at the temple. What upset them was the Name of Jesus! What upset them was the gospel, the good news of resurrection through Jesus.

They arrested Peter and John and brought them to trial. When asked by what authority they did these things, Peter answered (Acts 4:10-12) *...let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This (Jesus) is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*

That is one truth we had better know by heart: “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” The world hates that statement; they label it as exclusive, intolerant, and bigoted.

Well at least can't we just say there are many paths to heaven? No, because God has only provided one. Again, I remind you of the bumper sticker!

So, I have to ask you....do you think God would have sent His only begotten Son to suffer and die on the cross for our salvation if there was some other way?

You know, I have always wondered about that word begotten. Something is begotten when it's been generated by procreation — in other words, it's been fathered. Jesus is called the Only Begotten Son of God. From His Father, He inherited divine powers.

Do you think that God would have allowed His one and only Son to be spit on and mocked and nailed to a cross, if the wisdom of Buddha could bring salvation? Or if the reading of the Koran could get it done? “Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.”

Peter did not try to appease his accusers; neither did he try to finesse his way around the question. Let me paraphrase Paul's answer. “You asked and here is the answer: **Jesus**. Jesus is the answer that we will never compromise. Jesus is the essence of the gospel. The good news is that He died for our sins and rose from the grave for our justification.

Acts 4:17-19 tells us the religious community's response to Peter's answer, *But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name.* So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, *Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.*

Paul said in our text, *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.* I can tell you this, the devil wants you ashamed of the message; he wants you too intimidated to share the good news.

The devil intends to shut you up and keep you quiet about Jesus! He'll use reasoning like this to do it....

Most people will say....“Two things I never talk about is politics and religion.” Well, that only leaves the weather and the ball game. And eternal life will never be found in either of those conversations. We had better find some Holy Ghost boldness for days ahead because it may get real unpopular to proclaim Jesus and if we leave Him out, there is no good news for anybody.

I am going to have digress here a moment...I can't help but notice how sports is taking over the focus of our lives and our Sundays. Our Granddaughter is a U of I cheerleader, and naturally now, Sandra is a big U of I sports fan. I played football, I ran the mile in track, I swam butterfly breaststroke on the swimming team with Bob Cramer (past CEO of Fareway Stores). But I am absolutely no longer interested in sports. However, as I walk by the TV when Sandra has the Iowa game on and notice the 70K plus



folks in the stands, I can't help but wonder if in today's society, if that same crowd would come out on a Sunday and pack the stadium to hear Christ. And this is just one stadium. There are hundreds.

The gospel is the good news about Jesus and most importantly the Power of God for salvation.

When the true gospel is preached, the power of God is released (in honor of what Jesus has done). The Holy Spirit bears witness to Jesus. He did not come here to build monuments to men. He has not come to build denominations or religious institutions. He is sent by the Father to reveal Christ and His kingdom.

The gospel is an announcement of the Kingdom of God. Matt 9:35 says, *Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.* Notice the term, "the gospel of the kingdom." What does that mean? A kingdom is the dominion of a king. It is His realm of rulership. The gospel of the kingdom is the good news that God will come down among men; that God will assert His rulership, His authority, on the earth for benefit of mankind. He will not be just sitting on the throne somewhere in distant heaven watching it all happen. Christ has taken on Himself our form. He will mercifully step into humanity. He will come to help us where we cannot help ourselves.

Therefore, when John the Baptist came to prepare the way for Christ, his message was, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!* (Matthew 3:2). The rule of God has come. It is right here, right now (at hand). Matthew says that when Jesus began to preach, His message was *Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* (4:16). What does the rule of God look like? Matthew 9:35 links it with healing and deliverance. *Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.* The gospel is good news because it declares the rule of God that supersedes the oppressive rule of the devil.

So, here is the take-away for this morning. The sole purpose of the gospel is to show us that there is an opportunity for eternal life for everyone who will but believe in the message of the Gospel no matter what kind of life they have lived up to now. This is the Good News! It is "for the SALVATION of everyone who believes." or to say it another way, "the rescue, healing, deliverance, safety and well-being of everyone who believes."

The book of Romans explains what Paul means by the word "salvation." The purpose of the gospel is not just a continuance of the born-again experience. It must include that but birth is a beginning (not the end). We are born into the family of God; but then we are to grow in grace and

knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is a very big word that is generally glossed over in our reading of the Bible. At your new birth, (your Baptism) the seed for your full salvation was planted; but that seed must grow and come to full fruition. For many of us that gestation period is decades long...not days or months. Paul's gestation period was only a few days...mine was 70 years long.

So here is the practical importance of this morning. The devil is the accuser of God's people. He will rob you of your peace of mind; he will rob you of your joy; and the way he does it is to turn your focus from Jesus to your own puny efforts. He will point out every impure thought that has ever crossed your mind. He will capitalize on every slip of your tongue. He will call you a hypocrite and will certainly question your salvation. If your focus is not on Jesus, if your focus is on your own performance, you will be tempted to agree with him but the Bible says that we overcome by the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 12:11). Oh oh, here is that word "blood" again. When the devil comes knocking, tell him of the blood that gives you righteous standing with God. When the devil accuses you of insincerity, tell him of the blood that cleanses from all sin.

Your plea in the court of heaven cannot be that you really, really tried hard to live a good life. Your plea must be that the blood of Christ has satisfied the justice of God in your behalf. Your plea is that God made the way of salvation based on the cross; that you're the benefactor of a better covenant; that Jesus paid it all. And because Christ paid the price, you stand clothed in His robe of righteousness.

You know the "Church," not this Church or any other organization we call a church that we might join, can provide us a path to Salvation. Religion in and of itself cannot provide us salvation. Salvation is solely our personal relationship with Christ. I can't hold on to Sandra's great faith and good works as a leverage for my salvation. As much as I respected my dad's ministry, his faith, and his work in the church, it is not going to add to my salvation. Salvation is solely my personal relationship with Christ.

In the not-too-distant future for many of us, we will be rewarded for that personal relationship we are developing with Christ. Rob Rolfe remarked one time: that one day he woke up and realized that there is a "tipping point" in life. A point where you realize there are many more days behind you than there are ahead of you. A point where you are vividly aware that you must prepare for eternal life. All else becomes less important.

In the meantime, satan is trying his best to convince me that this "Jesus" thing is all a myth. That I have already ruined my chances for heaven and eternal life. Too bad, Tony. You screwed up too long ago and too many times; there is no hope for you now. It is too late to repent and try to make amends.



But Christ promises that if I endure to the end and maintain my faith in Him my eternal salvation is sure in Him.

In heaven, there will never be a day when we have to pray “Forgive us our sins.” All that will be past. On that day we will become completely sin-free. We won’t even be tempted with it.

It is disappointing and painful to sin. As children of God our inner soul is anguished when we fail and fall short. If we could, we would prefer to live in 1,000% percent obedience to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. If we could, we would be as loyal to Him as He is to us. But we are but earthen vessels. Most times we often disappoint ourselves and others.

There is coming a day when you and I will disappoint no one and will be disappointed by no one. There is coming a day when we will be so filled with the glory of God that the thought of sin will never pass through our pure minds, the slip of the tongue with an unkind word will never pass our lips. We will love and be loved forever and ever.

There is an old popular Southern Gospel song where the lyrics say:

“What a day that will be when my Jesus I shall see, when I look upon His face, the One who saved me by His grace. And He’ll take me by the hand and lead me through the Promise Land. What a day, What a glorious day that will be.”

At this stage of my life I am *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.* (Titus 2:13). Aren’t you?

Let us give God the glory for His goodness and mercy toward us. I tell you again, the gospel is simply good news.

When I Go Home High Priest Joel Loving September 19, 2021

I want to begin with really where I’ve ended another talk here at one point about the prodigal son and his brother. I’d like to begin here because I think it’s poignant to the message I want to bring. Remember at the end of the story, the prodigal returns and the older brother is upset. I always sort of wonder in life if we were to meet the prodigal on his way back what would we say? How do we greet those who are on their way back to the Father?

I wonder what that exchange and discussion would have been if the older brother had met the prodigal before the father saw him. Would he have chewed him out? Would he have accepted him? What do you think the blessing is of the story of the Prodigal Son? I’ll say it is this. The real blessing of both sons in the story of the Prodigal Son is the return to the father. That’s the blessing. The return to the Lord which is what the Lord has in store for you and me regardless of whatever we have done with our lives. He wants us back in His presence and we will be in whatever form that may take

depending on the decisions and the things that have happened to us in life.

That’s the ultimate destination but now I want to turn to the sons of Mosiah and a story out of the Book of Mormon. This story takes place after their conversion. If you remember the sons of Mosiah and Alma were basically troublemakers and were making fun of the people of the church. They were tearing things apart in terms of both spiritually and I suspect probably temporarily as well, making fun of those who were Christians. An angel stops them and an earthquake occurs and there’s a tremendous exhibition of the power of God as this angel speaks to them and they’re overcome.

After this experience with the angel these words are read. I’m beginning in Mosiah 11:200. And now it came to pass that Alma began from this time forward, to teach the people, and those who were with Alma at the time the angel appeared unto them: Traveling round about through all the land, publishing to all the people the things which they had heard and seen, and preaching the word of God in much tribulation, being greatly persecuted by those who were unbelievers, being smitten by many of them; But notwithstanding all this, they did impart much consolation to the church, confirming their faith, and exhorting them with longsuffering and much travail, to keep the commandments of God. And four of them were the sons of Mosiah; and their names were Ammon, and Aaron, and Omner, and Himni; these were the names of the sons of Mosiah. And they traveled throughout all the land of Zarahemla, and among all the people who were under the reign of King Mosiah, zealously striving to repair all the injuries which they had done to the church: Confessing all their sins, and publishing all the things which they had seen, and explaining the prophecies and the scriptures to all who desired to hear them: And thus they were instruments in the hands of God, in bringing many to the knowledge of the truth, yea, to the knowledge of their Redeemer. And how blessed are they! For they did publish peace; they did publish good tidings of good; and they did declare unto the people that the Lord reigneth. (200-207)

So they are making amends for what had happened and the group is traveling around Zarahemla but something beyond happens to them. Let’s continue - Mosiah 12:1-12, Now it came to pass that after the sons of Mosiah had done all these things, they took a small number with them, and returned to their father, the king, and desired of him that he would grant unto them, that they might, with those whom they had selected, go up to the land of Nephi, That they might preach the things which they had heard, and that they might impart the word of God to their brethren, the Lamanites, that perhaps they might bring them to the knowledge of the Lord their God, and convince them of the iniquity of their fathers. (This is an amazing revelation. It really is akin to one of our children today coming to us right now and saying I’d like permission to go to Kabul. Would you bless me?) And that perhaps they might cure them of their hatred towards the Nephites, that they might also be brought to rejoice in the Lord their God, That they might become friendly to one another, and that there should be no more contentions in all the land which the Lord their God



had given them. Now they were desirous that salvation should be declared to every creature, for they could not bear that any human soul should perish; Yea, even the very thoughts that any soul should endure endless torment, did cause them to quake and tremble. And thus did the Spirit of the Lord work upon them, for they were the very vilest of sinners. And the Lord saw fit in his infinite mercy to spare them; nevertheless they suffered much anguish of soul, because of their iniquities; and suffering much, fearing that they should be cast off forever. And it came to pass that they did plead with their father many days, that they might go up to the land of Nephi. And King Mosiah went and inquired of the Lord, if he should let his sons go up among the Lamanites to preach the word. And the Lord said unto Mosiah, Let them go up, for many shall believe on their words, and they shall have eternal life; and I will deliver thy sons out of the hands of the Lamanites. And it came to pass that Mosiah granted that they might go, and do according to their request.

A video from the movie Facing the Giants was played. Of course, Brock is you. What was his name? Jeremy was the 160 pound individual that Brock carried. Those are the burdens you carry and the coach is the Lord wanting to encourage you to go further than what you thought you could. Brock thought he could do 30 yards, maybe 50 but not with somebody on his back but in his blindness because his eyes would have deceived him he had to rely and have his faith in the voice of the Lord. When he was able to follow the Lord and be encouraged by him he made it to the final destination the end zone in that story.

Let's continue with our sons of Mosiah, And it came to pass that the Lord did visit them with his Spirit, and said unto them, Be comforted; and they were comforted. And the Lord said unto them also, Go forth among the Lamanites, thy brethren, and establish my word; Yet ye shall be patient in long suffering and afflictions, that ye may shew forth good examples unto them in me, and I will make an instrument of thee in my hands, unto the salvation of many souls. (Alma 12:17-19) I don't know of a greater blessing.

There's a story told of a missionary who spent 50 years in Africa. He was the representative of a very small congregation. They had sustained him throughout his ministry and when it came time for him to retire, he came home. It just so happened that he came home by ship and the timing of his arrival at the harbor, which I believe was in New York, happened to coincide with a band, a contemporary band that was very, very popular. When the band came ashore and walked down the plank there was a crowd of 15,000 or 20,000 people greeting them because they were so popular. The missionary stepped up to the plank and looked around for his reception after serving the Lord for 50 years. There were two people who greeted him - the pastor and the secretary. He'd finally come home. What thanks was there for him? As he walks down the plank he is a little bit disappointed, a little bit upset, a little bit kind of not really appreciating the irony of how this young band takes a tour in Europe where everybody raves over them comes home and receives this great reception. Yet as the missionary walks down the plank only two people are there to greet him. It was like, 'Lord, this isn't much of a reception.' He hears a voice and the voice says, 'You are not home yet. You're not

home yet.' I'm not talking about a city or a harbor. I'm talking about the divinely created amazing reception for you in Heaven. That's what we have to look forward to.

The sons of Mosiah are talking about what happened on this ministry and they say, But behold, my beloved brethren, we came into the wilderness not with the intent to destroy our brethren, but with the intent that perhaps we might save some few of their souls. Now when our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back, behold, the Lord comforted us, and said, Go amongst thy brethren, the Lamanites, and bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success. (Alma 14:110-111)

I want us to think about what's happened in this place over the years, the amount of ministry and the amount of God-given miracles and words and encouragement and healings that have transpired by you through the Lord's hands. I give Him the credit but you were the instrument. I think of many of you. I think of myself. Gordon doesn't like this when I say this but he saved my life. I would not be here but were it not for his encouragement to go to the hospital. I went in. I pointed to my forearm and they rushed me back. Within a minute they had my shirt off and a little later the doctor came in and said, 'Your troponin is 17. I think it's supposed to be .05 and I am way out of what's acceptable, probably within just a matter of a little bit of time before the heart just gives out. Troponin is what your heart muscle evidently creates when it doesn't get the right amount of oxygen.

I look at Steve (Trullinger). Steve, I don't think you may understand how key you are to Mount Ayr from this time forward not only with your ministry today but in the future. Sue, you were blessed in your relationship with him but you are not done and you're not home. Ammon was blessed to come here. Barbara was blessed to come here. Maynard and Ardna were blessed to come here. Michael (Edwards), your family was blessed in coming here. Ed, your family was blessed in coming here. Donnie was blessed in coming here. The Mickelsons have been blessed in coming here. The Crandells have been blessed in coming here. I hope all of you have been blessed in coming here. Bob you've been blessed in coming here. We have much to be thankful for but yet much to do.

I'll close with this song that I want you to hear. I had more to say but we're running out of time and I want you to just contemplate this next song. It's about when you go home. What you think is the end really isn't the 30-yard line or even the 50. There's more that the Lord has in store. This song speaks to that. It speaks to your reception with Him because that is the final destination. The final destination is with Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father in Heaven. Consider these words and contemplate them, put them in your heart as you move forward this week. May they always be a blessing. The song is titled "When I Go Home."

Verse 1:

In the moment He appears
and the light from heaven shines,
I'll forget ev'ry fear,
ev'ry pain I'll leave behind.
Then I'll see Him as He is



and I'll know Him as I'm known.
Ev'ry tear wiped away when I go home.

Verse 2:

Ever present is the tho't
that a moment waits for me
when unworthy as I am,
His glory I will see.
I will empty all my praise
before my Father's throne.
Ev'ry tear wiped away when I go home.

Verse 3:

If the trial I endure
and your presence I can't find,
be near me, Lord, I pray,
bring back unto my mind
That your promises are firm
and I'm never on my own.
Ev'ry tear wiped away when I go home.

We Need to Get to Work, Now Priest Jim Barber October 3, 2021

Priest Jim Barber read I Corinthians 11:23-26. *“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.” (I Corinthians 11:23-26)*

Thinking that I had already prepared this sermon and finding a can of wax in the basement cupboard, I decided to do something I hadn't done for years. I don't know why, but I thought I would go out and wax the car. It was a beautiful day, and nice to be outside. All the time that I was waxing, I had more thoughts about this sermon message. It may seem really negative, but these points could be turned around to be positive.

Sadly, this is probably going to be the last time that we will all meet together here as a church for communion, but this is what we are to do. We have to grow or we are not going to have a church in Mt Ayr or in Lamoni either. Looking around, we see all the people who are here. We are really thankful that there are some young people here, because ten years from now, who will still be here? I am going to be 77 years old next month. Ten years from now I will be 87. My father died when I was 87. I hope at that time that I can be still be here, and still able to serve God.

Where are these children going to be in ten years? Junior just said that he is going to be 10 years old. Ten years from now, he's going to be 20. Is he still going to be here in this congregation? We hope that he is not going to be gone,

but that may be what happens. Our kids have grown up, and we want them to grow up. We want them to go out into the world, but usually the children don't come back to their home towns. None of ours did. They are all good kids. All serving God in their own way, I guess. They are not in the church that we would like them to be in. They are active and believe in Jesus Christ, but they worship somewhere else.

The church that I grew up in was a Methodist church. There were several young kids there that were my age. We all grew up and then we left.

If we do not continue to reach out to other people, to replace the ones that go elsewhere, the church is no longer going to exist. I believe that we can grow, but it is going to depend on me and on every one of you. Are you going to be willing to step out of your comfort zone to invite other people to come and worship God, and to come and learn about Him. That's a big question.

If we have young people come, is there going to be someone to teach the classes? We need young people to be part of our congregations. We need them dearly. Not only that, they need us to guide them, and it is our duty to do that. We won't be able to do that unless we make the effort to teach them, to love them, and to care for them. In 1st Corinthians 12, it talks about the body of Christ. We are part of the body of Christ. We are part of His church. We have come this morning to renew our covenant with Him, to start afresh. This scripture talks about the different bodies of the church. It talks about the different talents of the church. In verse 7, it starts out saying, *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body, is it, therefore, not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body, is it, therefore, not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members, every one of them, in the body as it hath pleased him. (1st Corinthians 12:7-18)*

I would like you to imagine that something happens to your body. All at once your left leg doesn't want to go along with your right leg. It would be difficult wouldn't it, if you didn't have control over where your legs went. Sometimes, people in the church are that way. Some people want to go this way and some people want to go that way. We can't do that. We have to be united. We have to support one another. We are all members of the body of Christ. We are all people in His church.



I would also like to talk some this morning about the 4th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. We talked a little about it this morning. This revelation, was given to Joseph Smith Sr. in 1829. It says, ‘Now behold, a marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men; therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind, and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day; therefore, if ye have desires to serve God, ye are called to the work; for behold, the field is white, already to harvest; and lo, he that thrusteth in his sickle with his might, the same layeth up in store that he perish not but bringeth salvation to his soul; and faith, hope, charity, and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualifies him for the work. (D&C 4:1a-e, 2a)

That was one of the scriptures we talked about in class this morning. If you have these things then you are called to do His work. The field is white. There are people out there who need us. We have to be able to reach out to those people. It doesn’t matter where it is, whether it is Mt Ayr, Lamoni, Independence, or wherever you are, if there are people who are suffering, then the whole church is suffering. We have to reach out to them.

Yesterday, as I was trying to study, I got a really bad headache. I told Linda that I would just go down stairs and put on some soft, inspirational music and see if the headache wouldn’t go away. I went to YouTube on my TV and I just typed in “soft inspirational music.” A piano playing came up with a beautiful picture of Fall colors and Fall trees, leaves on the ground and leaves on the trees... just beautiful. There was a scripture from the book of Psalms, that I would like to share with you.” *‘He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. There shall no evil befall thee; neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone, He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation. (Psalms 91:1-4, 10-12, 15-16)*

I had some other things I was going to talk about, but I think I have said what I wanted to say. **We need to get to work and we need to do it now!**

Thank you. May God be with you.

Living With Empty Pockets

High Priest Robert Rolfe

October 24, 2021

My scripture reading this morning is from Matthew 6:27-30. *And your heavenly Father will provide for you, whatsoever things ye need for food, what ye shall eat; and for raiment, what ye shall wear or put on. Therefore I say*

unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your bodies, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? How much more will he not feed you? Wherefore take no thought for these things, but keep my commandments wherewith I have commanded you.

This sermon is about living with empty pockets. Pockets were made to carry money. Now they carry cell phones. One way to have empty pockets is to spend everything you have as soon as you get it. That is the typical American way. Currently there is approximately 1 trillion dollars of credit card debt for individuals in America. Another way of having empty pockets is to spend everything you will get over the rest of your life. In other words go in debt to the point you will never pay it off. Our country has a little under 29 trillion dollars of debt. To see this in proper perspective, when Ronald Reagan was President, our country passed the 1 trillion mark. So, from George Washington to Ronald Reagan our country passed a trillion dollars of debt. From Ronald Reagan (1989) to 2021, we now have essentially 28 trillion dollars of debt. It looks like another several trillion is going to be spent. The fact is, spending borrowed money means you don’t have the money to start with. Your pockets are empty. I know of a couple that wanted a loan because they had \$13,000 of debt on their credit cards. They obtained the loan, paid off the credit cards and 1 year later they were \$18000 in debt on their credit cards. They still had empty pockets.

I did a search on pockets and found they are a relatively new invention. (About 400 years old) For centuries people carried their money in a bag either tied at their belt or around their neck. Problem: an easy target for pick pockets. Solution: tie the bag on the inside of your clothes. This foiled the thieves but it was really hard to get anything out of the bag. Solution: Cut a slit in the pants or dresses to be able to reach your bag. Problem: It was still very hard to reach through the slit and get your money from your “pocket.” Solution: Sew the pocket inside your clothes with a slit that went directly into the pocket.

There is a law of the pocket. “Personal possessions expand to fill the empty space in all available pockets.” Of you use the pocket as a metaphor for lives you might agree with this law. It has been my experience that the more room we have (the more pockets) the more stuff we accumulate to fill up that room. I was able to move when Lynda and I was first married in our car. Then I needed a pickup; then flatbed truck; now a semi-trailer. The law of the pocket makes us fill our garages with \$200 worth of stuff and our \$20,000 cars sit outside. Sometimes we rent a mini-storage to keep the stuff. I don’t think we mean for this to happen, but it just does. As we live our lives, our pockets should fill up so we can help build God’s kingdom. It is interesting how small the \$20.00 bill looks at the movies and how large it looks when the offering plate goes by.

What’s in your pocket? First, there is invisible money. This is money that is in our pocket that belongs to someone else. We go to school and give the teacher money



for the field trip. There is no spending of this money because it doesn't belong to us. Ten percent of our money should be invisible money. It is in our possession before we turn it over to the Lord. It is God's tithing. It belongs to Him.

What's in your pocket? Coins! We have little problem giving the coins to anything that arises. What's in your pocket? Wallet money! Money with past presidents on the face of it. Lynda would come to me and say, "I need some money." It would tell her she had 2 checkbooks and 2 credit cards but she would say, "I want real money." Wallet money is more serious than pocket money. It takes a deeper commitment to spend wallet money. You may plan to give a certain sum for oblation, or some other need at church. This is a commitment to God.

What's in your pocket? Finally, there's serious money. This is not to say all of the previous money is not serious, because all of our money belongs to God. When you give serious money to God you are saying, "all that I have I'm giving to you. It belongs to you.

What's in your pocket? The world says full pockets are a sign of intelligence, and prosperity. But in the kingdom of God, it is empty pockets that are praised. For example, the poor widow who gave 2 pennies. Jesus said she gave more than those who put in more, but their giving was really just pocket money. The widow gave all she had.

What's in your pocket? My advice is to save 10% of what you make, invest 10% and then live on the 80% which is left. People have told me they couldn't live on 80% of what they made, but, if you look around, you will see people living on the same amount as your 80%.

Remember this! God has you in the hollow of His hand. His Spirit is around and between every atom in your body. He knows our every thought and every emotion. If you think you can hide anything from God, you are mistaken.

When Lynda and I were first married we filed our first joint tithing statement. We owed \$270. After paying our tuition, buying books and getting set up in our apartment we had \$285 left. As we had the money available, we decided to pay our tithing. We believed the counsel in Malachi about tithing. At the same time, we also knew we would be living on about \$85.00 per month. Essentially, paying our tithing was giving to God everything we had. Was that wise stewardship? My scripture said that God would provide everything you needed. Do you believe it? How did it work out? We have never lacked for anything we needed. From that time on for 50+ years God has provided for us. After we paid our first tithing, we continued to have people provide for us. The bishop sent us a check one time. A man, that I didn't know, came to our door (twice) after midnight. He handed me 2 sacks of groceries and walked away into the night. (Real food) A widow lady in Lamoni adopted us and fed us a real meal once a week. Most interesting to me was, we received a check in the sum of \$2700.00 which we had no idea we were going to receive. Notice the check was for 10 times what we had paid. The promise of the windows of heaven pouring out a blessing is true. It is also true that God knew our every need.

The widow lady told me when she was first married, with 2 little children (during the great depression) she looked over what she owed for tithing and pledge to the church. It

was 26 cents. She had 26 cents but she also needed milk, matches and soap. Three times, she put the 26 cents in the offering envelope and then removed it. Finally, she decided to give the money in obedience to the financial law and her pledge to God. Did God know what she needed? Of course! What happened? The same day a friend Jeanette came over with 6 quarts of milk and gave it to her. She said they had a cow come in fresh and there was 6 quarts of milk she didn't need. (We had a cow that gave 24 quarts of milk twice a day.) A friend, Walter, stopped by and wanted to shave. He had 2 hours between trains. As he got ready to shave, he started to empty his pockets. They were full of matches. When he was done, a large pile of matches was on the table. (Walter didn't smoke.) Later there was a knock on the door. Upon answering, the lady found a man with a triangular hat, who told her he was giving samples of soap in the neighborhood. He had lots of sample sizes of soap, but he handed her a large box of Oxydol and returned to his car. The car looked like it had come from London, England. The lights were high and the shape was unlike any other car she had ever seen. When he started the car, it made an unusual sound. She heard the car going up the boulevard and it never stopped anywhere else.

Is this all just a series of coincidences? She needed milk, matches and soap, and on the same day she put all of her money in the offering envelope, she received milk, matches and soap. She wrote a book about her life. She called it, In the Hollow of His Hand. You can find it on the internet. We might think we could just give the money to God next week, or with other conditions but what's in your pocket?

We Are Not Alone Seventy Todd Henson August 29, 2021

Let's look in our scriptures a little bit and consider a few portions of the word of the Lord. There are three specific places I would like to read from. I want to look in the modern revelation book, the Doctrine and Covenants section 100:3d-f, *Behold, I say unto you, The redemption of Zion must needs come by power; therefore I will raise up unto My people a man, who shall lead them like as Moses led the children of Israel, for ye are the Children Of Israel, and of the seed of Abraham; and ye must needs be led out of bondage by power, and with a stretched out arm; and as your fathers were led at the first, even so shall the redemption of Zion be. Therefore, let not your hearts faint, for I say not unto you as I said unto your fathers, Mine angel shall go up before you, but not My presence; but I say unto you, Mine angels shall go before you, and also My presence, and in time ye shall possess the goodly land.*

Let's consider a couple things from the Inspired Version in Genesis 9:21-23, *And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember The Everlasting Covenant, which I made unto thy father, Enoch; that, when men should keep all My commandments, Zion should again come on the earth, the city of Enoch which I*



have caught up unto Myself. And this is Mine Everlasting Covenant, that when thy posterity shall embrace the truth, and look upward, then shall Zion look downward, and all the heavens shall shake with gladness, and the earth shall tremble with joy; And the general assembly of The Church Of The Firstborn shall come down out of heaven, and possess the earth, and shall have place until the end come. And this is Mine Everlasting Covenant, which I made with thy father, Enoch.

Just a little before that in Genesis chapter 7:70-71 it says, *And righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine own elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare; an 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. And the Lord said unto Enoch, Then shalt thou and all thy city meet them there; and we will receive them into our bosom; and they shall see us, and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other.* We are to look to the care of other souls, other than ourselves. This is crucial. What glorious times lay ahead!

We have had some pretty good things happen this morning. Mrs. Loving, as Mr. Loving calls her, said prayer this morning as we left the gravel road and hit the pavement. The prayer was for all of us, for we are The House of Israel.

Now, we are looking at 38 precious souls among us today in this congregation. I want you to just consider something, I would like you to apologize to two individuals, Rob and Hugh, because they have heard some of this earlier this month at the Odessa Hills Restoration Family Reunion. Even so, I want the Saints and friends here to hear some of these things. All are welcome and please, open up your ears to hearing, open up your hearts, open up your minds, and let's consider the Lord's word.

As I told them back at Odessa Hills this month, so I say to you the same. I am going to be a name caller and include myself too. I am going to call all 38 of you a name. (How many here are Spanish speakers? A translation of what is said was given.) There is nothing more important than a child. We look at that the same. I learned that from an older brother who came back from the service and went to Graceland College. His family have become great ministers. Well, the children, are very important to us. We are the children of Christ or of God; or if we are not included in that covenant, we are not making ourselves available. We are at least the children of men, as the scriptures say so it is very important.

Today, I would like to try to bring some things forth that will hopefully extend our vision. Satan has been notified. He is put on notice. He's got more to deal with now in this little stake of Zion. In this little neck of the woods, he is going to have more to fight against in his effort to bring us down in this day and age, because the Lord is moving here. We are going to see these things happen, so if two branches come out of this, and are strong and viable, working together, then praise the good Lord and He will give us the power to do it.

Well, I would like to share with you a few experiences. They are not all mine. Sherry and I have three adult children, two boys and a girl. When the middle one was very young, he was upstairs in our house where we lived at that time. One night, he had to get up and go to the restroom. Right there at the doorway was a personage in white. There were no words spoken but they exchanged a look and some understanding. My son just passed through right on to the bathroom, while the personage stood there. When my son came back, the personage was gone. To him it was no big deal. (To me, it would have been a big deal, but he is not like that.) So these things do happen among the Lord's people.

Another experience was given to a big fellow named Lenny. Back in the old days, he didn't have an opportunity to have much of an education. Lenny had to go to work and because of his size, he had a special steering wheel made for him that he would use to go places and minister to people. He did not know much, but desired to gain an understanding of the book of Revelation. (It is tough for a lot of us.) Lenny kept asking the Lord, "Will you teach me?" He used to go up on the north side of Independence at Mt. Grove Cemetery to where many of our wonderful individuals were buried: Joseph Smith III, and his family; Joseph Luff, Fredrick Madison Smith, and others. Lenny would go there and be taught by an angel. (Lenny once testified this to me.) The angel would teach Lenny from the book of Revelation. Lenny has passed on since then, but some of you may know that he was good friends and fishing buddies with John and Wathena Ballantyne.

My mom, in her old age, shared with me a memory of her childhood days during the Great Depression. An older gentleman came once a year to their back door. Her mother asked him to come inside and eat with them. He would quietly give thanks and eat. After the meal, her mother (Alice) would give the man a bag with another lunch in it to take with him. Years later, a man whom she had met previously at Graceland College visited her. The power of the Holy Ghost came over her in great power indicating to her that the man that her mother had fed during those years was one of those men we call, The Three Nephites. (The Three Nephites are important individuals. We believe that they were servants of the Lord in what we now know as the Americas. They had a change brought upon them, because they desired to stay and minister to souls, instead of dying. The Lord told them that the only hurt that they would have would be the pain of the wrong doings among the children of men around them. They can never be damaged and are ministering beings on the earth.)

Now, let me give you another couple here. Sam Kemple is gone now, but his wife, Charlene is still with us. Sam was a warrior for the Lord. He was kind and consistent. When he and his wife said that they were going to do something for the Lord, conviction came on them and they materialized it. They went to the Lord in prayer and said, 'Okay Lord, we are going to work with you and make this happen.' They went four times to the nation of Taiwan without financial help, letting the Lord make that happen for them. When it came time for his passing at the age of 91 or 92, I heard this experience told by Charlene and a couple other people. Sam was talking to a personage in these hours



before he left this life so we know these things that happen to the believers.

In another experience, there was a man named Myron Lapointe and his wife, Donna, from Ottumwa, Iowa. They are both gone now, but he was a great seventy. They had three daughters and a son. Jenna, the third daughter only lived five years. Everyone knew that she was special, she had a closeness to the Lord. She was in the hospital and it was getting close to her time to pass on. (Now this is interesting. We believe that the Lord will allow the elders to lay on hands, like they did in ancient Israel, anointing with consecrated olive oil, which has been prayed over, as a symbol of the Lord's movement in spirit and pray for healing.) There were two little girls, Myron's daughter and another little girl about the same age in this hospital. This other girl had a pencil jammed down her throat. Her doctors and nurses could not get it out (without surgery). Myron anointed both girls, after asking permission from the parents. There were no other elders there, so he did it by himself. That pencil came dislodged and that little girl was healed inside. His own daughter was not healed. It was time for her departure from this world. Myron told me, "I don't know why. I didn't pray any harder for her than my own daughter, but the Lord does these things. Five years later, that little girl that lived and Myron still had a close bond. When it came time for Myron's departure from this life, Donna and the little girl's mother saw it: Myron just all of a sudden lit up and looked up and looked over and said, "Hi, Janet" and crossed over peacefully. You see, these things are happening. These beings are out there. We are not alone in this cause. The Lord want us to understand this today. We are not alone. We have assistance.

There was a man named Les Waterman, a very good friend of mine. Under the Lord's direction, I believe that he probably saved my life. After a priesthood visit to a home one night, Les received something from the Lord. He didn't know it had anything to do with me. He only knew that the Lord wanted something else done with those people before we left their home so we stayed longer. Afterwards, while I was driving the car, I noticed that the car needed gas and it began to stall. I pulled off the road into the gas station. That is when I realized that we had just missed a hold up. The girl at the cash register was counting money nervously. The manager was in the back office, and the police had just left the scene. If we had left the house as planned previously I may have been shot. Instead, Les had obeyed the Holy Spirit, remaining a bit longer at the house and I was spared.

Another experience is with a man named Russ. He was an eight year old boy in Independence who was the youngest child in his family. He had a brother, and two sisters. Their father, Big Russ, was quite ill and was about to leave this earth. He was on his sick bed with family nearby. (They lived in the Enoch Hill Congregation area.) Little Russ stood at the head of the bed on the west. He saw on the east side that the wall opened up, and two personages came through. Each one came up to the head of the bed with one on each side. One spoke up and said, "Russell, it's time to go." This little boy saw his dad's spirit sit up and take the personages' hands and they went out the eastern wall. The wall closed back up after them. The eight year old

impressionable boy said, "Wow, so this is the way it happens, when someone is going to depart. Wow. They come and escort the person away. It is wonderfully tremendous." Two years later, it came out in conversation that Little Russ was the only one of all who were present that day, when his dad died, who had witnessed this thing happen. The others there had not seen it.

Now, I am going to tell you one other experience. (All of these experiences happened to those who are members of our faith.) Some of the older people in the congregation might remember someone named Jim Elliot. He was a young missionary around 1956, I think. He had this desire to go out unto the farthest, outmost regions, and the densest of jungle areas, way out where the people were way back with no connection with today's world. He met up with this lady in a Christian school in which they learned to be missionaries. They had come together in this venture. He talked to some others and soon there were five young men, and their ladies, who were going to a village just outside the jungles called Quito, Equator.

The Inca people who lived there, were a group of people a few thousand years behind us in many ways. This people had no connection with the modern world. They were always at war with one another and other people and were quite savage. Their language was not really a language that is known today, but were grunt sounds, which had meaning. These missionary men studied the phrases in grunts and through observation figured out the meanings. They flew an airplane above the people and spoke these phrases using a megaphone to attempt to communicate with them. The naked and near naked natives would look up and seemed to be listening.

The next step the missionaries tried was to drop down gifts to the people that they could use like machetes or other items that they could use in their day-to-day lives. They soon began to get a little repour with these people. Then these people left some gifts for the men in the plane, so the missionaries came down. They started to spend more time together with the natives. Elizabeth Elliot took pictures, which are in their book now, but they both have since passed on. Eventually, they gave a few of the natives rides in their airplane. The missionaries had made a place up in the trees to stay. They vowed that the weapons they had would only be used for protection from animals and never people.

Sunday afternoon, January 8, 1956, the five young men missionaries knew that the heavens were going to open up that day. Then they would be able to make great headway with this people and tell them more about the Lord Jesus Christ and His kingdom. (Their wives and families were some miles away in a protected area.) The missionary men showed the natives a picture of one of their people who had been missing for a time and the natives killed every missionary.

About 30 years later, their wives went back to see what they could do to bring these natives to the Lord. The natives began to learn. These people had no concept about modern technology, so when the men had shown them the picture, they automatically thought that they had eaten her, so that is why they had killed the missionary men all those years



ago. They had no idea what a photograph was. The wives had forgiven them and taught them about Jesus Christ.

Today those natives are strong believers in Jesus Christ. The testimony that they bear today is that when these five men were killed, the people saw two beings from across the river from the forest who came over to these slain missionaries. Their spirits left their bodies and were escorted back across the river and up into the trees and it closed up. They did not know what to think about that back then but had come to understanding under the teachings of these women concerning Jesus Christ. Then they were able to share what they had seen with better understanding. They had seen throngs of what they had called “white ghosts” all over praising the Lord.

I want to make a point with you just as we have seen here in this experience. Let me read from the book of modern revelation. His angels are coming out today. In Doctrine and Covenants Section 104, we have already read about the general assembly and church of the first born, earlier this morning and an enumerable company of angels. We are not alone. We have more souls to be together with. It is not just a little group or body of people here in the building and some watching from homes. It’s not just us against this world. The Lord has many. We know that from scripture. We know that brother was shown that. All these thousands of souls. We are working together. He is going to make this happen.

Now, I want to tell you something else about these souls. He is bringing about in the Book of Mormon the restoration of the House of Israel. This book is going to do it. It is the key book. This book goes right along with the Bible. The Bible goes right along with this book. They portray each other. They say these two sticks, the stick of Judah and the stick of Joseph, shall work together to confound false narratives in this world. This book is going to do it. It is a book of the Jew. It is a book of the remnant, the people who came from the land of the Jews. These people came from the land of Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be revived. The old place will come back up. Also there will be a New Jerusalem right here in this land. It will start not too far south of this place right here and it will spread out. We are part of it. Those tribes were scattered. Every single soul looking today, you are probably actually biologically, physically, certainly spiritually tied in with the House of Israel. You can go back and check this out. They were scattered out.

Most of us tie in with that group who began the British Isles and spilled over here. They know for certain the Joseph Smith line and the Hales are from that tribe. The tribe of Ephraim and Manasseh. The tribe of Joseph. I’m just saying folks we’re not singled out as some modern day from European narrative, who are in a church who have restoration distinctives. We are more than that. We have distinctives, because we have things from the Bible which God gave us more information on. With these other two sticks you’ve got the Bible, the stick of Judah; the Book of Mormon, the Stick of Joseph; and I have a buddy who gave this to me years ago, the stick of Ephraim, the Doctrine and Covenants. He’s got things for us to do right here. You have the keys. You have the information.

You know in section one, which is the first section but not the first revelation, the first 15 revelations are from

sections 2-16. We need to study them. Your group or your two groups should get together and study them. They tell you how this book will spare the world. If you don’t believe it, get into the book and find out about it or get with some of us and we will give you directions on it. It is the elixir which will bring the healing mix unto this world. So, we’ve got to get together with these angelic hosts. He promises that He will dispatch them to be with us. In fact, I might ask how many of you know of a story in your own lives or someone close who have had contact with these other beings? Anybody here? Hey, we got several! Well, I could stop right here and let you share for the next couple of hours. We would be further strengthened. This general assembly and church of the first born is massive.

Twenty-five to thirty years ago the RLDS church was going to sell the Odessa Hills Reunion and Camp Grounds, but some of the people of the church bought it and now we have these grounds to use for the Lord and his people. Eric English, some years back at Odessa Hills Reunion Grounds said something like, I want you to picture something. This place has meant a lot to the people who have gone before us. The Lord has spoken to the people many times here. I want you to picture all of these people back here. These people had experiences with the Lord. Some have given their lives that people can come here and be blessed. I want you to picture thousands of them up on the hillside, north and east of us. As I heard him say this to us, I felt an identity with those people. Let us not lose that identity. We have some things that we have got to do. These personages are coming to people of faith.

As I read see where you fit in this morning. Moroni 7:29-35 says *And because he hath done this, my beloved brethren, hath miracles ceased? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; neither have angels ceased to minister unto the children of men. For behold, they are subject unto him, to minister according to the word of his command, showing themselves unto them of strong faith and a firm mind in every form of godliness...* I know we all have our strong and weak points. The strong can become weak and the weak can become strong, but we are trying to make an effort. We want to become better. He says He commands them to come to those who are of strong faith and every form of godliness. *And the office of their ministry is (1) to call men unto repentance, and (2) to fulfill and to do the work of the covenants of the Father which he hath made unto the children of men.* He made covenants with His children way, way, way back because of their desires for us today. Today, He is fulfilling them. You folks are part of that picture. (3) *to prepare the way among the children of men by declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him.* We need to ask ourselves, am I a chosen vessel? In what ways do I lack? Oh Lord, please show me and I will try to do better. *And by so doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men...* (not very many). On the edge of a great pail you pour it out and you have some residue left. There is not a whole lot left is there? Not a lot. “That the residue” of men and women *...may have faith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts according to the power thereof. And after this manner bringeth to pass the Father the covenants which he hath made unto the children of men. And Christ hath said, If ye will have faith in me, ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me.*” Do we get that? He has a whole lot of things for us to do. A lot more and grander than we thought we could do, and a lot bigger than we have ever seen. We are told that we are going to do greater things in this day than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself had



done when He was here in the flesh. He is going to facilitate it some way. We have to become His chosen vessels

1st Corinthians will tell you how to become chosen vessels. It is mainly by our choice. The great ones of this world, the high and mighty ones, are not the ones, unless they can humble themselves. It's the ones who seemingly come out of nothing. That's the ones He is talking about. Who are the ones that the Lord is going to send these angelic beings to? We have to be like Christ Jesus. We have to have charity, this pure love of Jesus Christ. This everlasting love. Those who have it in the last days when He comes, it will be well with them. They will be able to see the Lord Jesus Christ, the way He is. When He comes back, we are talking about a Zion-type enterprise. Not like we are doing today. We have to be that chosen. We have to have power among us. Like the ones who left what could have been their kingdom and went to live among the Lamanites, the people who hated them, and they had tremendous experiences. We have to be people who serve.

The Lord has said that if you believe these things, see that ye do them. We have to be the doers. James tells us about those who are true doers. Doctrine and Covenants section 65 and 3rd Nephi 8 say that we have to be praying for Zion. In section 65, it says to pray about two kingdoms. Pray that the kingdom of God will go forth on this earth that the kingdom of Heaven may come. Those precious beings from before, Enoch's city, shall come. We believe that Enoch's city was taken up into heaven (don't we?), because they were so righteous, and there is all the others through the ages who decided to make the Lord's way - their way. We need to be praying that the kingdom of God will go forth on this earth in our hearts, so the kingdom of heaven may come. We unite together. Remember, we read earlier, when we finally embrace the truth and really and truly look upward in our hearts and our minds, really looking to an upward way of life, He is going to send them here to be with us. We will fall upon one another's necks and we will have a tremendous time serving the Lord together.

Joseph Smith Jr. was able to see in vision, his parents, (yet living at that time) and saw his brother Alvin who had died at the age of 24 years. He saw them in Celestial Glory as well as fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He truly marveled when he saw Alvin, because he did not understand how this could be when the Lord had not as yet reestablished the House of Israel on the earth. The Lord made it known unto him that all these beings who embrace the truth would be included. Even little babies and those who never had a chance. God is fair. He will not cast them off, because they do not know. So to do this we have to embrace the truth.

We have to make this happen. These two branches are going to be a stronghold. They are going to help in the gathering into Zion. We believe in this gathering. (See section 108 and other places in scripture.) He says it over and over. We are not going to be a bickering people. We are going to be a together people all over. We have done that wrong in our moves throughout time. We are human beings and need to stop this bickering someday. Now, if some don't want to stop, they may exclude themselves, maybe.

We are going to embrace the Lord and embrace His

truth. We are going to build up each other and build up His kingdom on this earth.

Help!
Elder Steve Smith
June 27, 2021

Today, the Lord has placed on my heart to bear my testimony. I have so many testimonies, that I hope I will not use up too much of your time. I have been blessed. My blessings started probably earlier than I can even remember.

I do remember living on Hilo, Hawaii, on the side of a mountain, at 88 Manulele Street (one of the few addresses I remember in my life.) My father was gone doing missionary work on a different island from where we lived. We lived on Hawaii, the main island.

It was time to go to bed, and mom had 5 kids at that time to send to bed. Our bedtimes changed with our age, so the oldest got to go to bed the latest. I was in the middle, so I got to go to bed after Doug and Karen were put down. I didn't want to go to bed, because there had been a fatal kidnapping in the area, and I was afraid. Mom came into the room and said that we should pray about it. So, we prayed that Jesus would be with me through the night, and that there would be safety. I went to sleep. During the night, my father came home and went to bed.

Later on, I woke up and had the distinct impression, at about 4 years of age, that I needed to go to the bathroom. So, I hopped out of bed and as I hopped out of bed realized that there were two people in my oldest brother's bed, (in Allen's bed). Being four years old, I went over to investigate.

Beside Alan, there was a man. His hair was a little longer than most of us. (I had just gotten a haircut. I had trouble holding still, during my haircuts, so they had me count to 100 and when I got finished counting to 100, my haircut was done. I learned to count really fast, as they got out the clippers and buzzed my head. That was normal hair length at that time.) This fellow had longer hair than that, and he had a well-kept beard. We had prayed earlier that Jesus would be there, so I went over and I looked at his face very closely. He didn't look like the pictures of Jesus, but I knew it was Jesus. Then I ran to the bathroom, because by that time I had to go pretty badly.

On the way back, I noticed that dad was home and so I ran in, jumped on the bed, and woke both he and mom up. I said, 'Jesus came.' They said (sleepily), 'Ya. He is supposed to be with us all the time.' I said, 'No, He is in the room with Allen.' Finally, I got them to wake up. They came into the room and Jesus was gone. (Interestingly enough, Allen hadn't moved and there was still the imprint of a person beside him. It was enough that both mom and dad believed me, that I had seen Jesus.) I felt bad. I felt abandoned, because I didn't have time to ask Him for a duck. I thought that would be a neat thing that Jesus could give me. I didn't quite understand



things. Just knowing that asking made it that Jesus was there, has been a blessing throughout my life.”

There have been many blessings. One of those of protection was one that an evangelist in North Dakota told. It has stayed with me for a long time throughout my life. In this dream, he was with the Saints in a valley in North Dakota. The Saints were meeting there in the valley, because it had been reported that an invading force was coming into the United States. The invaders were coming right through the valley area. The evangelist’s reaction was to pray. His prayer was that the Saints would be safe.

As he prayed, the Lord talked to him and told him to get fence posts. He was to place those fence posts around the people. So, he mobilized the people of the valley and they put up fence posts (like they were going to put up a fence). These fence posts were about 10 feet high. When they had put up the fence posts, at specified distances, he prayed again saying, ‘Lord, what do we do now?’ He was told to take a wire and place it around the top of the posts. Again, he mobilized the people and put a wire around.

As the wire was being finished, he realized that he could see the dust from the coming invaders. The people were becoming upset and started abandoning the valley. He went back to the Lord and asked, ‘What do we do now? The people are abandoning us.’ The Lord said, ‘Get some black tar paper’ (like you put around houses before you put shingles on) ‘and hang it from the wire.’ Doing the Lord’s will, he mobilized some of the people who had not left. They hung this black tar paper in sheets from the wire. He could see the faces of the invading armies.

He said, ‘Lord, what do we do now?’ The Lord said, ‘Look.’ So, he opened up the tar paper and looked, and saw that the invading armies had frozen in mid-step. Engine blocks were cracked, because of the freezing. People were not moving at all. He then realized that his prayer for safety had been answered by the Lord and that the invading armies were stopped. The Lord had prepared him, so he didn’t have to watch and see the destruction. I have held this in my heart, ever since it was told, because the Lord knows what we need. The Lord can protect us.

When I was in high school, I was a wrestler. We went to Bedford Hills to wrestle one time and I wrestled in the 182 pound range. There was this one time, our heavyweight was sick. The second in line was heavy, but not coordinated very well. It was important to the coach that we win the match, so he sidelined the other heavyweight and put me in his heavyweight class.

The guy that took my place easily won his match. We were at the point that if I won by a pin, we would win the match. If the opponent won they would win the match. If we tied, then they would win the match. Because the coach felt that this meet was important, I prayed, realizing that the protection of the Lord would come by prayer. I asked that we would be able to win the match (something inconsequential to me today, but at the time seemed so consequential.)

I got out on the mat with the other team’s heavyweight. All of a sudden the stands rang out with stomping of feet and yelling ‘Horse! Horse.’ It turned out that their heavyweight was the champion for two years running. In the first session, he would usually pin his opponent. It was unnerving to hear the support that he had. He was an excellent wrestler and had a counter for every move. I made it through the first period. The second period, (you are not standing, but on your knees when you start), he got me in a good hold. Fortunately, I was able to get loose. I stood up and he stood up. He was confident in his movements. As we came together, I was able to catch him at just the right moment and put him in a head lock and twist. We went down on the mat and he was pinned. It felt like David and Goliath. The Lord had protected and answered my prayers.

As time went on, I had other blessings from the Lord. I was with my friend at Graceland and we decided that we were going to go down the Grand River. We planned about a month in advance, and set up a cash of food for lunchtime. We planned on starting on highway 2 and by lunchtime we could stop and have some food, and at about 3:00 we would get out of the river in Missouri. We were able to get a canoe from the college and we started off on time. The problem was there had been some torrential rains and the river, now moving fast, was way up above its banks.

We put into the river anyway at about 8:00. By 9:00, we were where we had previously planned to be at noon, because of the current. We decided to eat and afterwards go back into the river’s main channel. We went over the top of a tree that was now buried in the river. The branches did not give way to our canoe, but our canoe gave way, dumping us into the river. We went down the river pretty quickly and came to the other side of the river. (There, was a small tree and as the canoe caught the current, it wrapped around the tree.) My body had gone about 50 yards where a large tree was on the edge of the river. I had time to say, ‘Help!’ The Lord heard my prayer. I slammed into the tree, grabbed it, and started shimmying up the tree. There weren’t any good branches to hold on to, so finally I decided that I would jump back into the river and go a little further downstream. I grabbed onto a smaller tree and shimmied up. (I was very fortunate, because by the next day the big tree had washed out by its roots and had fallen into the river.) I was sitting on the branch of this smaller tree and saw a raccoon that had gotten caught in the current and was struggling for life. It floated on down the river. I found that I could break off a piece of a branch and throw it as far up river as I could and count the seconds to see how long it would take to come by me. It took five seconds.

It was a cold October morning, I was wet and sitting in the breeze in the tree. I called to my friend, Greg, and asked him how he was, making sure that everything was okay. He was caught on the original tree that the canoe was wrapped around. It was about six inches above the water. I, being cold, had stripped down like a monkey in a tree, hung



my clothes out so they would dry and be warm and dried off as best I could. We waited.

A farmer went by and I started yelling but he just went on. Pretty soon, a car came by and they stopped. Apparently, the farmer had called around and the newspaper was out there with a camera. I had to get dressed really quick. They were looking and trying to find where the cry for help had come from. Then another car came, and another car came. Pretty soon, we had a whole bevy of cars out there on the road, looking. It became obvious that they had identified me and so I talked to Greg and told him of the people who were there. Among the people who were there was the sheriff. I rather unflatteringly described the people to Greg. I didn't realize that because he was right next to the canoe and water was coming like a waterfall over it, he was making enough noise that by the time I got to where I could talk to Greg, the people on shore could hear me.

They finally got a rescue duck boat out there but as it came up to the main current of the river, the six large men in the duck boat found that they were not able to cross. They called to me and asked if we were okay. I said, 'Yeah, we are fine.' They went back to the cars on the road and disappeared. They were planning to come in from the other side to get to us.

Later in the afternoon, they came, and when I saw them, I told them to go up stream a little bit, because Greg was close to the water and was not able to get dry. They got Greg and then they came to get me. To do so they had taken rope from several different sources and tied the ropes together to make sure that they did not get washed downstream. When they got to me, they were about 20 feet short, so I asked them to throw out the life preserver. I timed it so that when I jumped, I was able to grab it. They hauled me into the boat, and I was saved.

Interestingly enough the conservation officer, while filling out the report, asked Greg what his first and middle name was and Greg told him. I had never heard his middle name before so I snickered. The conservation officer thought we were playing a joke on him and after questioning us, he was finally convinced. When he asked me my name I said Steven Smith. He asked where I lived and I said Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. He put his pen down on the paper and said, 'Come on guys, I am just trying to get information.' It took about another five minutes to convince him that it was true. We were taken back to Graceland. When my roommate came into our room, I said, 'Hey, guess where I have been today!' He said, 'You're the fool out on the river!' and I said, 'Yeah that was me.' The word had gotten around Lamoni and he had heard it at Hy-Vee. The Lord had blessed me and I learned that day that whenever you need help, sometimes all you have to say is 'help' and the Lord can bless you.

When we lived in Saskatchewan, there was an older lady that had a testimony of the Depression. She was about four years old at the time. She lived with her father in the Cornish Settlements (Where J. J. Cornish had bought some

land on which the Saints had gotten together to live.) This lady's father was known as being a ne'er-do-well. At this point in time, he was in jail. (He had a good heart and would help some of the bums along the train rails, giving them food and a place to sleep.) He had been out in the field and the Lord gave him a cow. It happened to be his neighbor's milk cow, but he went on and butchered it anyway. The neighbor was not very happy, so he was in jail.

It was harvest time, and his wife was left with the job of harvesting, as well as taking care of four children. One of these children was about four years old and followed her mom all over. It was Wednesday (wash day) and the older children were at school. This little girl was out with her mother, and her mother had to go down by the barn and pump the water, put it on the fire, get it warm enough to wash the clothes, and then hang them out. It turned out that by noon as she was washing clothes, she realized that her daughter had wandered away. She looked for her daughter, but was unable to find her.

Now in Saskatchewan, they have permafrost. You dig down about two feet and all you get is ice or clay with ice in it. I remember at the reunion grounds we would dig out the outhouses and you would dig down about two feet and then you would start a fire in that hole. Next to it, you would do the same thing. Then you would move the coals from one side to the other to thaw the ground. You could only dig about six inches at a time. That is a lot of work and it took about a day to build one. The permafrost could cause death at night if you were unprotected while doing something outdoors.

The mother was concerned about her daughter freezing, so she went to her neighbors, most of which were church members. The neighbors came, brought food, and search parties went out looking for the little girl. From time to time they would come back, eat, have prayers, and go back out to search. As it was getting close to 6:00, they realized that they needed professional help. They called up the RCMP and asked for a tracker. The closest tracker that they had was in Regina, Saskatchewan, but it was going to be morning before the train could bring him. They decided to invite the tracker out anyway and were advised to stop looking. They had an all-night vigil in the house with food and prayers.

In the morning, they were all at the train station at 6:00 and the Indian tracker got off with his son. They had brought horses and rode them to the house. It was no longer a rescue mission, but a recovery. The tracker started in a small circle and went in ever larger circles, looking for evidence of girl.

By noon, the younger Indian tracker was sent back to the house, because they had found evidence of her footprints on the cattle path, so they had a direction to go. They also found the footprints of a pack of wolves on top of her footprints. The tracker followed the tracks which led down to the Saskatchewan River. At that point, the river is about a half a mile wide and is treacherous. It is lined with Saskatoon



berry bushes. They are like blueberries but are about thirteen feet tall. They can get up to an inch in diameter. It was fall and the berries were ripe.

He tracked the small child down to the berry bushes. He found a piece of yellow sundress, torn on one of the bushes. He could hear wolves in the berry bushes roaming around. He pulled out his gun and shot into the air. The wolves ran in every direction. He went to retrieve the body (an Indian tracker would not get paid unless he came back with the body or some part of it.).

As the wolves scattered, he saw the little girl walking out of the Saskatoon berry bushes. He threw his saddle blanket around her, rolled her up in it and they went back on the horse to the house. Her father, who had been let out of jail to find his daughter, saw them coming and ran ahead of the group. He had assumed that she was dead. The tracker handed the daughter to him. They both were surprised that she was alive. He asked her, 'How did you make it through the night?' She said, 'The dogs. God sent dogs. They were big dogs.'

Later in her life, she would tell that in the night the wolves caught up with her; and one dominate female put herself between the other wolves and her. All night, she could feel the breath of this female on her neck. They let her lay on them and among them and kept her warm. In the morning, when she was hungry, she could not communicate with them of course, but when it was time to eat breakfast, they went down to the Saskatoon berry bushes and she ate the berries. There were plenty of mice for the wolves to eat. That is where they were at when the tracker shot his gun in the air. The Lord has great power, to protect, to comfort, beyond our ability to even imagine.

In my fourth year of Graceland, I was bored during winter break in January. My friend Greg (who was with me on the canoe trip) decided that it would be fun to take a car hood, turn it over, tie a rope to it, tie it to the back of his truck, and we could go up and down the back roads (there was plenty of snow) and so we did. There were some nice hills in the countryside.

I decided to take the first run on the car hood, and it slid marvelously, but as we got started down a hill the rope jerked just enough to cause my "sled" to catch up with the truck, which made him speed up just a little bit more. He sped up too quickly. It made another jerk, and I started going faster downhill at about 60 mph. I hit the bottom of the hill, but there was a curve at the bottom of that hill that turned off to the left. I hit a berm of snow, went airborne, hit the far side of the ditch, bounced back, hit, went airborne again, went across the ditch, and across the road, and across another ditch, and landed just in time to hit a hedge corner post. I was in a sitting position. My foot hit first and tore the ligaments and tendons in both my leg and my ankle, but the generated energy was enough to send me into the hedge post head first. When my head hit, it hit with such force that a staple in the fence popped out of the post into my sinus. But I still had

energy (of motion) left, so that my feet came off the "sled" and I rolled into the hedge post and down the barbed-wire, until I got to the place between that post and the next one. It propelled me like a slingshot, about fifteen feet away from the fence and then head first into a snow berm, which was really an ice berm.

My friend, not realizing that I had left the "toboggan," continued on. I was laying there thinking, 'This hurts.' and not moving at all. When Greg noticed that I was gone, he came back looking for me, and finally found me beside one of the ice berms on the side of the road. He loaded me into the truck. As we were going, I said, 'Greg, something is wrong. I am having some problems seeing.' Sure enough I had injured my head bad enough that I had cracked open my skull and was bleeding pretty well. (I still have scars on top of my head today. My nose has had about three surgeries to reconstruct the nose on my left side.)

Greg decided to take me to Graceland's infirmary. We went in and the nurse on duty kind of lost it, running around in circles. I said, 'I think I am going into shock.' and she laid me down. I waited and waited and they got in touch with Uncle Norman, (the doctor in town.) They decided to take me into town on a stretcher, with the help of some boys recruited from the sidewalk. Things were spinning and hurting. I prayed that the Lord would take me quickly, and to let my mom know that it hurt a lot less, when they weren't moving me. At the hospital, I was given an anesthetic, and they started to take care of my wounds. I was put in a cast, and then they started on my head. Realizing the severity, they decided I should go to Des Moines.

In Des Moines they were holding a continuing education seminar for surgeons and those dealing with head trauma. Some of the top trauma surgeons from all over the United States were there. One of them, who ended up taking the lead (in my case) was Bobby Kennedy's surgeon, which was fortunate for me. I was out for a long time. They missed the staple in my sinus, but they did take the other debris out. I had a long uneventful recovery, except that I was blind for a time. They were able to bring back my sight and take care of my plastic surgery problems. It took a long time for my leg to heal, so I could walk.

My brother Allen, was the closest family member to the hospital at the time, so he came to see me. When he came into the intensive care, he looked at every patient, and did not recognize me. My face was purple and swollen, and of course they had shaved my head. I was in pretty bad condition. It wasn't until I opened my eyes and saw what looked like my brother walking and looking for me. (I was blinded enough that it was hard to see anything.) I raised my hand and he saw and realized it was me."

That night was a Wednesday night, my little brother Doug had a test at school the next morning, so he did not go to church. (They were having a business meeting anyway.) He was at home and got the phone call that I had been injured. He called mom, at church. Mom was called out of



the room and after receiving the message, she went back in and the people were informed of my condition. The people decided to pray and the business meeting that was about to adjourn turned into a two-hour prayer service. The Lord blessed me, because of the prayers of the Saints.

I still have some injuries associated with that accident. I was still able to go through veterinary school, although because of my short-term memory, I had to learn other ways to remember, instead of using my short-term memory. The Lord once again blessed me, at the request of the people who prayed for me. The Lord is good. He hears our prayers. He will be able to help whenever we ask. There have been many other opportunities to testify. Most of the time, it was because of my sins that I got into trouble and needed help through them. I realize that sometimes when testifying, we don't want to reveal or confess our sins to others. We want to make it sound like it wasn't our fault, but many times it is.

I thank you for listening to some of the main testimonies which have made a difference in my life and have testified of God. I hope that you will remember that you can ask the Lord and He will be there to help you.

(Steven Smith passed away at a Des Moines Hospital on December 20, 2021. Ron Smith, one of his brothers has written a short article in remembrance of Steven.)

Remembering Steve

Most of the world would agree that my brother Steve thought outside the box, but I'm not so sure that he ever knew there was a box.

Steve's first home was Minneapolis, Minnesota, but before his second birthday, we all moved to Hilo, Hawaii. One of the stories from those days that he was fond of retelling was the day that I shot him in the leg with an arrow. I was practicing with my new bow and shooting the arrows into a kapu stump (a type of fern whose fibrous stem makes a natural target), and Steven wanted to take a turn. When I refused, he proceeded to stand on the stump. Naturally, my arrow went a little higher than I expected, and hit him in the lower leg. While I remember it hitting and bouncing off, his version of the story is a little more dramatic, including holding on to the arrow and trying to keep it in his leg while running to Mom.

Steve grew up with a very strong body, and a will to match. We moved to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, when he was going into his sophomore year in high school and I was in my senior year. We both were on the wrestling team. Steve and I both weighed in at

about 170 pounds, but I wrestled at 190. Wrestling was a relatively new sport in the eight high schools in Saskatoon, and in several of our matches, the opposing school did not have any challengers in these categories. So, we often had "exhibition" matches, and we would wrestle each other. That was very tough. I had more experience and a little more weight, and could always get Steve in a pinning combination, but I don't remember ever being able to pin him. He would arch his back and neck, and no matter what I tried, I could never get both shoulders to the ground at the same time.

During his Junior year, Steve's football team took the city championship. Steve was written up in the paper due to the touchdown he scored while on defense in the championship game.

Shortly after our move to Saskatoon, one of the professors from the University of Saskatchewan involved in cancer research, showed up at church one day. Dr. Sheltgen found out that Steve had a strong interest in biology, and Steve was invited to visit his lab. Soon, Steve was working there, taking care of the mice and prepping them for microscopic inspection of their brains. During his junior year, Steve was charged with teaching Dr. Sheltgen's students the lab procedures.

Steve ended up being a high school dropout. He grew very tired of school during his Junior year. He was working at the University lab, and high school biology just was not a challenge. He finally decided to drop out of school. He took the SAT test, and scored well enough that he was accepted to Graceland, so that is where he came instead of completing his senior year in Saskatoon.

At Graceland, Steve made a name for himself with taxidermy. He would retrieve road kill and make it look nice. He had a beautiful owl, but when the local DNR officer found out, Steve's room was raided and the animals confiscated. Steve did not hire a lawyer, but when he appeared before the local magistrate, he asked for the charge to be read. Due to a clerical error, the charge said something about gigging fish, and so Steve plead "Not guilty" and the charges were dropped.

Sometime later, some of his friends woke him up explaining that a deer had been hit. Steve went out and field dressed it, brought it back and hung it up in the shower. It was not a big hit with some of the others on the floor who went to get a shower the next morning. When the DNR officer was about to get involved again,



the men on his floor had a huge deer steak fry and got rid of the rest of the evidence.

Steve’s biggest adventure came the winter of his senior year, when he and a friend thought that it would be fun to ride on an upside down car hood towed behind a pickup truck. When the truck turned a corner at almost 70 miles per hour, the rope broke, and Steven hit a fence post. Those scars lasted the rest of his life.

Steve got married the week before I did. He and his new bride lived in Saskatoon, where he went to Vet school. Of the many stories attached to his name there, the one that I remember hearing was the day that he decided to taxidermy a skunk in the lab one day. As the pelt was being stripped off the body, the gland with the skunk’s trademark defense mechanism was activated. Everyone was surprised. Steve had to get home, and convinced a friend whose car had a moonroof that it would be a good idea to drive home with Steve’s head sticking out the roof. It worked fine for Steve, but not so well for the driver.

As a veterinarian, Steve literally made headlines in the Kansas City Star, with a huge color picture of him holding the boa constrictor that he unwrapped from the body of a young man who thought it would be fun to show off his snake to his friends. The snake, of course, was just trying to get warm when it decided to get under the young man’s shirt. Due to their inebriated state, it seemed more prudent to call the Kansas City pest control than to extract it themselves, and so Steve got to be the hero of the day.

There were three big tragedies in Steve’s life. His divorce, the death of his oldest son, Anan, due to Leukemia, and the loss of his wife Elaina due to early dementia.

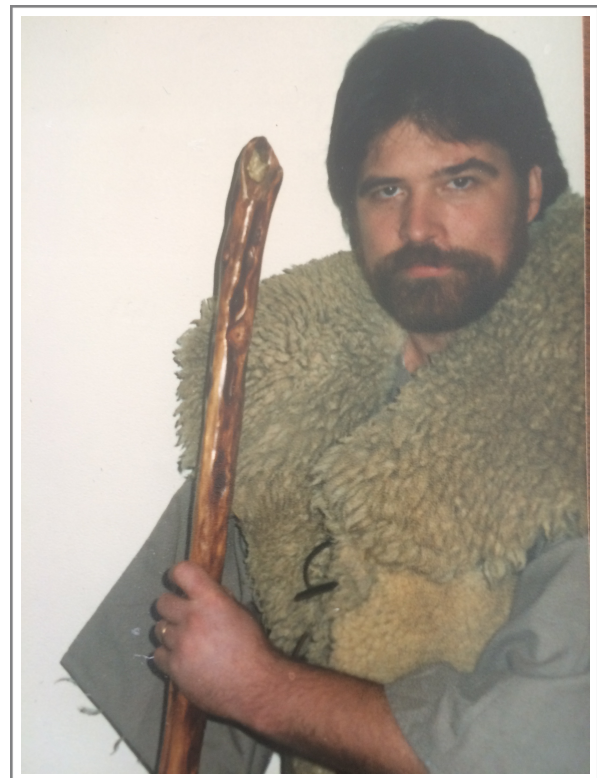
Steven loved to teach. His methods were not always orthodox. He might show up to class on the scientific method in a toga, emphasizing its Greek roots. Or, he might disguise himself as a bacterium by wearing a garbage sack with holes for his head and arms. His student ratings were unusually high, but his penchant for speaking his mind on every biological subject including abortion and homosexuality in his classes probably contributed greatly to his relatively short tenure as a biology/anatomy/physiology professor at Graceland University.

Until he lost his sight, his sermons were adorned with clever audio-visual aids, usually borrowed from a science lab. And he loved composing songs. Every

time he was assigned special music in his later years, he would compose and perform an original song. These were not always confined to the usual box, either. His beginning lyric, “My God, she’s pregnant” while intended to convey the sense of outrage of the small town Nazareth towards Mary, was, I believe, quietly vetoed by the family as inappropriate for his Christmas special one year.

Steven’s hobbies were myriad. He hunted (and found) mammoth bones in Iowa. He used his metal detecting skills to look for Joseph Smith’s copper pot on the Turley lot in Nauvoo, and found lots of other things for the archaeologists there. He painted pictures of birds and animals. He collected geodes. He fashioned jewelry from silver and stones. He formulated the “PFLT” principle from the scriptures for dealing with enemies: Pray, Forgive, Love, and Teach them. His interests were as diverse as his imagination. The house that he built faces southwest. When I suggested that he put a cement walk up to the back door, the only one anyone ever uses, he informed me that he wanted the approach to look like “a dry riverbed.” It does.

My brother Steven never quite fit inside anyone else’s box, but he loved the Lord, he loved his family, and he lived life.





Gospel of the Kingdom

Steven Smith

Come on and tell me 'bout the gospel of the Kingdom,
I wanna hear it again.
Last time I heard it, I was with family and friends...
And we were talkin' to the Lord, and bragging' on
Jesus...
And singin' some fine melodies.
So, come on and bring the gospel of the Kingdom to
me.

Come on and tell me 'bout the gospel of the Kingdom,
I wanna hear it again.
How God who made me, wants to be my friend...
And I can mark off time, with the secrets He tells me,
To rejoice on fulfilled prophecy,
So, come on and bring that gospel of the Kingdom to
me.

Come on and tell me 'bout the gospel of the Kingdom,
I wanna hear it again.
God's made a bunch of promises, He'll honor to the
end...
If I will do what He asks, He's bound to bless me...
And add to my testimony.
So, come on and bring that gospel of the Kingdom to
me.

Come on and tell me 'bout the gospel of the Kingdom,
I wanna hear it again.
I wanna have His Spirit, when I remember Him.
And I adopt His name, as a child of His,
To keep commands that set me free.
So, come on and bring that gospel of the Kingdom to
me.

Come on and tell me 'bout the gospel of the Kingdom,
I wanna hear it again.
Last time I heard it, I was with family and friends...
And we were talkin' to the Lord, and bragging' on
Jesus...
And singin' some fine melodies.
So, come on and bring the gospel of the Kingdom to
me.

How to Zoom our Services

If you wish to zoom Mount Ayr or Lamoni Sunday services and Wednesday evening prayer services, please go to: gospelrestored.org and there is a listing for each congregation that you can click on and immediately be transferred to the service you are interested in.



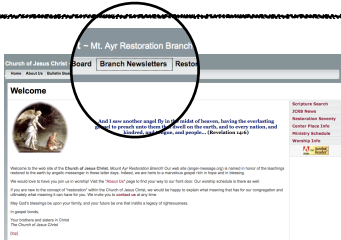
Church of Jesus Christ Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

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



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Visit the Mount Ayr Restoration Branch website at:

www.gospelrestored.org



And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. (Revelation 14:6-7)

January Speakers

Mount Ayr:

- 1/2/22 Prayer, Testimony & Sacrament Service**
- 1/9/22 Tony Crandell**
- 1/16/22 Rodney Bastow**
- 1/23/22 Gordon Winkler**
- 1/30/22 Sharing Service**

Lamoni:

- 1/2/22 Ron Smith**
- 1/9/22 Eric Woolery**
- 1/16/22 Doug Smith**
- 1/23/22 Bob Rowland**
- 1/30/22 Levi Vickery**