

Church of Jesus Christ

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Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

NEWSLETTER

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Behold, my Spirit is upon you; wherefore all thy words will I justify, and the mountains shall flee before you, and the rivers shall turn from their course; and thou shalt abide in me, and I in you; therefore walk with me. (Gen. 6:36)

In that day thou shalt come, O Lord; and I will put my trust in thee. Thou shalt say unto thy people, for mine ear hath heard thy voice; thou shalt say unto every soul, Flee unto my mountain; and the righteous shall flee like a bird that is let go from the snare of the fowler. (Ps. 11:1)

And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (Is. 2:3)



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The Ten Commandments Speak To Our Day
Patriarch Ronald Smith
January 2, 2022
Lamoni, IA

Brother Smith read 2nd Nephi 1: 81-96 for his scripture reading. *For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, my first born in the wilderness, righteousness could not be brought to pass; neither wickedness; neither holiness nor misery; neither good nor bad. Wherefore, all things must needs be a compound in one;... And if ye shall say there is no law, ye shall also say there is no sin. And if ye shall say there is no sin, ye shall also say there is no righteousness. And if there be no righteousness, there be no happiness. And if there be no righteousness nor happiness, there be no punishment nor misery. And if these things are not, there is no God. And if there is no God, we are not, neither the earth, for there could have been no creation of things, neither to act nor to be acted upon; wherefore, all things must have vanished away. And now, my son, I speak unto you these things, for your profit and learning: For there is a God, and he hath created all things, both the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them is; Both things to act, and things to be acted upon.*

Good morning. This is the first Sunday of the new year. It is a new beginning for many of us. It is a time when many of us look to the future with optimism and make promises to ourselves that we call New Year's Resolutions. But this is also a troubled time. Many are troubled about the state of the nation in which we live. Our political system seems to be crumbling. Our rights are not secure. So many things seem to be going wrong.

How do we respond? The first step is to acknowledge the fundamental problem. The gospel of Jesus Christ says that the fundamental problem is neither political nor procedural, but rather it is our sinful nature. So what is sin? 1st John 3:4 says that *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law.*

According to this passage, sin is the transgression of the law. I believe that it is crucial to note that without law, there is no sin. The scripture that I read this morning begins with the fundamental understanding that if there is no law, there is no sin. So today, I would like to talk about the law, and specifically, about the 10 commandments and how they speak to our day.

The scriptures of three major world religions: Muslims, Jews, and Christians, all agree that the 10 commandments were given by God to Moses. While there are individuals in each of these groups that do not adhere to these commandments, I believe it is safe to say that a majority of people in each of these three groups at least gives lip service to these commandments, and say they ought to apply today. There may be some confusion in the restoration today about the status of the 10 commandments as they apply to us. I would like to address that situation, and hopefully, the Spirit of God will help us to "rightly divide the word of truth."

So let us start this morning by learning the ten commandments so that we can remember them and teach them to our children. I learned this from Jim Noland, and I would like to teach them to you. You have to use your fingers. So let's see them. You need to hold up one finger. Where are you pointing? (Someone responded, "To God") That is right. You have one finger pointing to the one God, and the first commandment is "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Say it. (The congregation repeated it. From here on, I will only give the initial prompts, and not the repetition.)

Now hold two fingers horizontally and pretend they are a pair of scissors. You are to cut out all the graven images. The second commandment is, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image."

If you hold up three fingers vertically and spread them, they look like the letter "W" which stands for "words". Put the fingers over your mouth, and that reminds us to be careful about our words, The third commandment is, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

The fourth one is a little harder to make the connection, but if you remember the verse with its actions from your childhood, you probably learned, This is the church, this is the steeple, Open the doors and see all the people. In this verse, the four fingers of your hand represent all the people who went to church. The fourth commandment is, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy."

The next ones are easy. Put your five fingers together and salute. The fifth commandment is, "Honor thy father and thy mother."

Next, hold up five fingers of one hand and point at them with one finger of your other hand, pretending it is a gun. The sixth commandment is, "Thou shalt not kill."

For the seventh commandment, hold up two fingers on one hand representing a husband and wife, and five fingers on the other hand representing everyone else. The seventh commandment is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

The eighth commandment went over really big in Taiwan. When you hold up eight fingers, it looks like one hand has only three fingers. In China, they call a thief a "three fingered person," presumably because punishment for a thief was to cut off a finger. At any rate, the eighth commandment is, "Thou shalt not steal."

If you hold up nine fingers, it looks like you are hiding one. If you said that you only had nine fingers, you would be lying, or, in the language of the Bible, bearing false witness. The ninth commandment is "Thou shalt not bear false witness."

Finally, hold your hands in front of you with the palms up. Wiggle your fingers, and say, "Gimme, gimme, gimme!" The tenth commandment is, "Thou shalt not covet."

Now that you know the ten commandments, I have some observations about them to share with you. First, the ten commandments are repeated in every part of our scriptures: They are found in the Old testament in Deuteronomy 5:7-21, and Exodus 20:1-18. In the New Testament we don't have them listed as such, but in Mark 10:17, Jesus was asked, "what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" And he quoted most of the ten commandments.



I believe you can find all of them in some form in the New Testament, and 1st John 2:4 says, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

In the Book of Mormon we find all ten of the commandments listed by Abinadi in Mosiah 7: 95-97 and 113-124. In the Doctrine and Covenants, you can find the ten commandments in section 59, paragraph 2.

My second observation is that the ten commandments have never been revoked. The description of the people during the 200 years of righteousness, peace, and joy after Jesus' visit to them includes the following: 4th Nephi 1:13. *And they did not walk any more after the performances and ordinances of the Law of Moses, but they did walk after the commandments which they had received from their Lord and their God, continuing in fasting and prayer, and in meeting together oft, both to pray and to hear the word of the Lord.*

And if you look at Jesus' words to find the specific commandments given to them, I believe that it is insightful to notice that Jesus made sure that their scripture contained the following: in 3rd Nephi 11:25, quoting Malachi 10, Jesus said, *Remember ye the Law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.*

Now you will find in the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy that the Lord spoke to the elders of Israel in Horeb, and gave them the ten commandments. That is what is known as the Law, and in case you were wandering about the difference between Horeb, and Sinai, Sinai is the mountain, and Horeb is the land in which the mountain is found, at least according to Wikipedia. The Book of Mormon makes clear that the performances and ordinances of the law of Moses are fulfilled, but the law (that is the ten commandments) were not revoked.

Some may believe that Jesus made the ten commandments obsolete when He identified the two greatest commandments: *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, might, mind, and strength; and Love your neighbor as yourself.* But Jesus didn't say to forget the 10 and keep the 2. He said that meaning of the law and the prophets were to be found in the two commandments. The first four commandments tell us how to begin to love God with all our heart, might, mind, and strength: We should have no other Gods. We should not bow down to graven images and worship them. We should not take the name of the Lord in vain. And we should keep the Sabbath day holy. The next six commandments show us how to begin to love our neighbors as ourselves: We should not kill, or commit adultery, or steal, or lie, or covet.

My final observation is that the ten commandments speak to our day. I happened to watch a YouTube video of a wonderful talk that Ben Shapiro gave at Liberty University. If you don't know who Ben Shapiro is, he is a conservative speaker who talks at 100 miles per hour, but many of the things he says, I think are worth listening to. Some of the ideas that I will briefly cover originated in this talk, and some are mine. If you disagree with any of them, just blame me. While many sermons could be preached on each of these commandments, I would like to briefly touch on each one

and point out some things that I believe it is saying to our day.

#1 Thou shalt have no other Gods before me. This sets the stage. We are God's people. We were created by Him. We are the "sheep of His pasture." We are not our own. It is true that we are co-creators with God of our lives. We spend our lives molding the way that we think. Whether it is childcare, house redecorating, mathematics, or selling cars, each of us decides what to think about. This command puts things in perspective. The same God who made the stars and the moon and the earth made you and me. There is truth to be found outside of ourselves and our point of view, no matter who we are or what we believe.

#2. Thou shalt make no graven image. If we were asked, most of us do not believe that we are involved in worshipping graven images or idols but have you looked at a dollar bill lately? That is a graven image that is worshipped by many people, and you cannot worship both God and Mammon.

#3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Most of us are used to thinking of this command as a prohibition on profanity. But whether we use the so-called minced oaths like "Gosh darn" or "Golly Gee", or whether we use the phrases that explicitly refer to God and Jesus as an expression of disgust, there is more to taking His name in vain. Each of you who has been baptized has taken the name of Jesus. Everything you do is a reflection of the seriousness by which you take that responsibility. If there is contention in your actions, if Christ is not in your countenance, have you not taken His name in vain?

#4. Keep the Sabbath day holy. The sabbath question has long vexed Christians. Which day should be a day of rest? Saturday or Sunday? I was astounded to find out that In Tahiti, for some time there were two calendars simultaneously, with each day of the week occurring on one calendar the day before it occurred on the other calendar. The Spanish traveled west to Tahiti through South America, and the French traveled east via Malaysia. Each had kept track of the days of the week, but when they got to Tahiti, their calendars differed by one day. This happens because when you travel east you have to move your clock forward one hour for each time zone, and when you travel west, you have to move your clock back one hour for each time zone, so by the time you meet anyone who has gone around the world in the opposite direction, your clocks will be exactly 24 hours apart This confusing state of affairs continued until an international date line was agreed upon. If you are on one side, it is one day, and on the other side, it is the next day. Now according to Paul, writing in Romans 14, the question of which day to keep holy is not the correct question to ask. The correct question is, "Are you keeping a day holy to the Lord?" This is the important question, and Doctrine and Covenants 119:7 says, *The Saints are to observe the first day of the week commonly called the Lord's day, as a day of rest: as a day of worship, as given in the covenants and commandments. And on this day they should refrain from unnecessary work; nevertheless, nothing should be permitted to go to waste on that day, nor should necessary work be neglected. Be not harsh in judgment but merciful in this, as*



in all other things. Be not hypocrites nor of those who make a man an offender for a word.

#5. Honor thy father and thy mother. This means that there is value in keeping some things the way they used to be. Recently, the statue of Jefferson was removed from the New York City Hall. It was originally commissioned to commemorate the fact that Jefferson was the one who gave us religious liberty in America. Yes, he was a slave owner but he also declared that “all men are created equal,” and helped to give us the Bill of Rights, insuring that we have the possibility of enjoying life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

#6. Thou shalt not kill. This is obvious at first glance but how have we come to the place where far more unborn children are killed in this country than COVID ever got? There have been 61,628,584 abortions in the US from 1973-2020, including an estimated 861,320 last year. When we say that a fetus is a mother’s choice rather than a God given gift, we are putting our interests above our maker’s.

#7. Thou shalt not commit adultery. There are two approaches to this commandment. One is to recognize that when God joins a male and a female, no one has the right to break that bond. The other is to deny the distinction between male and female. One of the advantages of denying the distinction is that one never has to worry about adultery. (That is not the approach that I advocate, of course).

#8. Thou shalt not steal. This includes legalized stealing. How is it that there will be no poor in Zion? Only when we come to the place that we can follow Jacob 2:22 *Think of your brethren, like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all, and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you. But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God. And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ, ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them, for the intent to do good; to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick, and the afflicted.* And what about tithing this year? Malachi 10 says we have robbed God by not bringing our tithes into the storehouse.

#9. Thou shalt not bear false witness. We have come to a point in our political discourse where people on the opposite side of our politics are demonized. The Nazis in Germany would never have been able to kill the 6 million Jews that they did had they not demonized them in speech. We cannot afford to cast our political opponents and rivals as demons, or we risk the same judgement. And how do you feel when someone you love is called names intended to hurt them? How do you suppose God feels? Perhaps we should consider this commandment when we begin calling males females and females males. There are many ways in which bearing false witness is becoming an expected, even mandated course of action in our present world.

#10. Thou shalt not covet. It is probably OK for you to covet a BMW. It is certainly OK for your neighbor to covet a BMW but it is certainly not OK for you to covet your neighbor’s BMW.

Much more could be said about each of the ten commandments. They speak directly to what is happening in our day. They are the bedrock on which our actions are to be founded. They are the beginning of the law. This is

something that we can and should learn, teach, and affirm to our children. This is the starting point. There is a law. There is sin. Jesus Christ cannot save us in our sins, but he can and will save us from our sins. May God bless you all.

Christ is the Magnet
Teacher Matthew Anderson
November 21, 2021
Mount Ayr, IA

Good morning. Today’s scripture reading is from Isaiah 41:10. *Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*

I’d like to start off today by giving you a little hiccup that popped out of my mouth this morning to Naomi. That is my soul companion was an annoying squirrel rooting through the leaves. Then I realized immediately after that that that’s not true as evidenced by the scripture reading. The Lord is with us and He’s always with us and we need to realize that because if we do not realize that that allows satan in. As we all know satan is the father of all lies. I’d like to start with a few of them.

God isn’t listening. God made the entire universe, each atom, each particle, each star. He holds it all in His hand and He cares about each one of us. He is always listening and He always cares.

God doesn’t care. If God didn’t care He would not have created us. If you take a carpenter and watch him work, each stroke of his work is meaningful. Every little mistake he makes reflects on him and he knows that. God doesn’t make mistakes and He’s proud of each one of us for the good that we do and He laments when we do not do what we should.

You aren’t good enough. Each one of us sin. It’s true for everyone and it always will be but God sent His Son to save us. That is why we are here on this earth to be redeemed.

There is no truth. This is a common belief now and it’s tearing out country apart that there is no truth. Anecdotally I would say to you, ‘Well, you have a dog. Let’s say it dies. It’s true that the dog is no longer living, correct? It’s also true that the dog was living. Just because the two facts do not align at the moment does not mean that they are not true.’ In God’s eyes He sees all time as if it were one instant. He can see the front to the back and He knows all and He knows what we need. We need Jesus who is the truth. He is the one thing in this world that cannot be corrupted. He is the truth, the way and the light.

Another one of satan’s lies is that you should give up. You should never, ever give up. Naomi and I had a Conceal and Carry class about a year or so ago. The very last thing that our instructor left with us was a picture of a pelican devouring a frog but the frog had his hands wrapped around the pelican’s neck. Can you imagine satan as the pelican and not the frog. You need to do everything that you can to get out of his mouth because if we do not we have failed and for the rest of eternity we’re alone out of God’s presence. I don’t



mean to give a morbid sermon but none of us wants that and we don't want that for anyone else either.

So what I propose is that people are like materials. We're going to start off with plastic. This is a diagram of what the dipoles which are the magnetic things in a material look like for plastic. This is a magnet. If I stick a magnet up to plastic nothing is going to happen because these dipoles are in a random orientation. This is a piece of steel. It's also random. However, when I stick a magnet up to it the dipoles all align. We need to be like steel because Christ is the magnet. We can be like this plastic that will never change and never bring anyone to Christ OR we can be like this magnet and this steel and change from a random orientation into what Christ wants. Then we act as an extension and we can bring other people who are willing to be like Christ to Christ. It's the same concept of a screwdriver pulling a screw onto it if it's a magnetic screwdriver. We need to be like steel or better yet, we need to emulate the magnet itself, Christ, so that we can avoid people being fallen off and alone and in darkness forever.

Knowing all the people that I have known and how many of them fall away, we need to be more like Christ because other people look to us and say, 'Who are they that say these things but act like this. Who are they that put this on but present this to the world.' We need to practice what we preach because not doing so turns people away. However, if this is what's in our hearts and this is what we put out, they will say, 'I want to be like that. I want to be like the magnet.'

God's Promises are Sure
Priest Jim Barber
December 12, 2021
Lamoni, IA

This morning's scripture reading is from Isaiah 9:6: *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

I thought I would talk this morning some about prophecies in the Old Testament. We have been talking about promises in Sunday school class, and if you read the prophecies that are given in the Old Testament, they are like promises. God promised that He would send His son. The first scripture I read is well known. I've got some others that I would like to share also. Isaiah 7:14 says, *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and shall bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.* And in Micah 5:2, *But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*

I just picked a few that prophesied the coming of the Lord and Savior. If you study all of them, it looks to me like they should have known. Some of them did. Some of them accepted Him but a lot of them didn't. It says that He was born of a virgin. We know that happened. That was fulfilled. It tells even where He was to be born. That happened, that

was one of the promises that was fulfilled. And even in the Book of Mormon--it wasn't just in the Old Testament--it was in the Book of Mormon for the people on this land. Even from the very beginning when Nephi had his vision.

In 1st Nephi 3:52-56 it says, *And it came to pass that I looked [remember this is Nephi's vision, and God was showing him this vision] and beheld the great city of Jerusalem, and also other cities. And I beheld the city of Nazareth: and in the city of Nazareth I beheld a virgin, and she was exceedingly fair and white. And it came to pass that I saw the heavens open; and an angel came down and stood before me; and he said unto me, Nephi, what beholdest thou? And I said unto him, A virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins. And he said unto me, Knowest thou the condescension of God? And I said unto him, I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless I do not know the meaning of all things. And he said unto me, Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh. And it came to pass that I beheld that she was carried away in the Spirit; And after she had been carried away in the Spirit for the space of a time, the angel spake unto me, saying, Look! And I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms. And the angel said unto me, Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father! Knowest thou the meaning of the tree which thy father saw? And I answered him, saying, Yea, it is the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men; wherefore it is the most desirable above all things. And he spake unto me, saying, Yea, and the most joyous to the soul. And after he had said these words, he said unto me, Look! And I looked, and I beheld the Son of God going forth among the children of men. That promise was also fulfilled. Christ was born. He was born and walked among us And taught us how we should live.*

What did Jesus come to teach? We've been studying this: the kingdom of God. That's what He was teaching us. He was showing us how to live our lives so that we might be a part of His kingdom, and that was the greatest gift of all. The gift of love. God loved us so much, that He gave His son for us. 2nd Nephi 9:27 says, *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and shall bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

Sherman [Phipps] talked about this from the fifth chapter of Helaman this morning. I think it's something that we all need to keep in mind. I will read it again. As Sherman said this morning, Samuel was a Lamonite, but he had come into the Nephite land. They were very wicked at that time. They had fallen away from the teachings of God. So Samuel came in and got up on the wall, and they shot arrows at him and did everything they could do to get him out and they could not hit him. I think that is a miracle. But he left and then God told him to come back. Now that would take a lot of faith. But Samuel came back. And this is what he told the people (Helaman 5:54-61): *And now it came to pass that Samuel, the Lamanite, did prophesy a great many more things which can not be written. And behold, he said unto them, Behold, I give unto you a sign: for five years more cometh, and behold, then cometh the Son of God to redeem all those who shall believe on his name. And behold, this will I give unto you for a sign at the time of his coming; for*



behold, there shall be great lights in heaven, insomuch that in the night before he cometh, there shall be no darkness, insomuch that it shall appear unto man as if it was day; Therefore there shall be one day and a night, and a day, as if it were one day, and there were no night; and this shall be unto you for a sign; for ye shall know of the rising of the sun, and also of its setting; Therefore they shall know of a surety that there shall be two days and a night; nevertheless the night shall not be darkened; and it shall be the night before he is born. And behold there shall be a new star arise, such an one as ye never have beheld; and this also shall be a sign unto you. And behold this is not all, there shall be many signs and wonders in heaven. And it shall come to pass that ye shall all be amazed, and wonder, insomuch that ye shall fall to the earth.

We know that promise was fulfilled too. Flip on over to 3rd Nephi chapter 1, beginning with verse 10: *Now it came to pass that when Nephi, the son of Nephi, saw this wickedness of his people, his heart was exceeding sorrowful. And it came to pass that he went out and bowed himself down upon the earth, and cried mightily to his God, in behalf of his people; yea, those who were about to be destroyed because of their faith in the tradition of their fathers. And it came to pass that he cried mightily unto the Lord, all that day; and behold, the voice of the Lord came unto him, saying, Lift up your head and be of good cheer, for behold, the time is at hand, and on this night shall the sign be given, And on the morrow come I into the world, to shew unto the world that I will fulfill all that which I have caused to be spoken by the mouth of my holy prophets. Behold, I come unto my own, to fulfill all things which I have made known unto the children of men, from the foundation of the world, and to do the will, both of the Father, and of the Son of the Father, because of me, and of the Son, because of my flesh. And behold, the time is at hand, and this night shall the sign be given. And it came to pass that the words which came unto Nephi were fulfilled, according as they had been spoken: For behold at the going down of the sun, there was no darkness; and the people began to be astonished, because there was no darkness when the night came. And there were many who had not believed the words of the prophets, fell to the earth, and became as if they were dead, for they knew that the great plan of destruction which they had laid for those who believed in the words of the prophets, had been frustrated, for the sign which had been given was already at hand; and they began to know that the Son of God must shortly appear; Yea, in fine, all the people upon the face of the whole earth, from the west to the east, both in the land north and in the land south, were so exceedingly astonished, that they fell to the earth; For they knew that the prophets had testified of these things for many years, and that the sign which had been given, was already at hand; and they began to fear because of their iniquity and their unbelief. And it came to pass that there was no darkness in all that night, but it was as light as though it was midday. And it came to pass that the sun did rise in the morning again, according to its proper order; and they knew that it was the day that the Lord should be born, because of the sign which had been given. And it had come to pass, yea, all things, every whit, according to the words of the prophets. And it came to pass also, that a new star did*

appear, according to the word. What a glorious thing that would have been to witness something like that! It is just unbelievable what God has done, and what He can do.

I'd like to talk a little too about another promise. He promised us He was going to come again. How many scriptures do we read that say He will come again? Even Nephi saw what is going to happen at the end. It is plain as can be, that He is going to come. I'd like to share a few of the scriptures that I found in Doctrine and Covenants, section 45. It's full of what's going to happen in the last days. And Matthew 24 goes right along with what is in the Doctrine and Covenants. Section 45 says the Jewish people were scattered. DC 45:3f says, *And this I have told you concerning Jerusalem; and when that day shall come, shall a remnant be scattered among all nations, but they shall be gathered again; but they shall remain until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

Paragraph 4 says there will be wars and men's hearts will fail them. The love of man will go cold, and the fullness of the gospel, which is the Book of Mormon, will come forth. But when man will not receive it, there will be a desolating sickness over the land. There will be earthquakes and men will fight one another. When the disciples heard all these things, they were troubled. But the Lord told them to not be afraid, because those are signs of the coming of the son of man. We shouldn't be afraid of these things. They are going to happen. We are going to live through them. If we trust in God, we will live through them.

Paragraph 6c-d of Section 45 says, *and they shall behold blood and fire, and vapors of smoke; and before the day of the Lord shall come, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon be turned into blood, and stars fall from heaven; and the remnant shall be gathered unto this place; and then they shall look for me, and behold I will come;* And 7a says *and they shall behold blood and fire, and vapors of smoke; and before the day of the Lord shall come, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon be turned into blood, and stars fall from heaven; and the remnant shall be gathered unto this place; and then they shall look for me, and behold I will come.* Paragraphs 8 and 9 say that the Lord will set forth his foot against the nations, and the Heaven and Earth will shake, and they will mourn, and the Jews will know that it is that he is the Lord.

Doctrine and Covenants 43:7a-b says, *... these are the words of the Lord your God; wherefore, labor ye, labor ye in my vineyard for the last time: for the last time call upon the inhabitants of the earth, for in my own due time will I come upon the earth in judgment; and my people shall be redeemed and shall reign with me on earth.*

There are many scriptures that proclaim that Christ will come again. We have to study them out. We have to know them. It is said that no man knows when Christ will come. And we don't, we don't know. But He wants us to watch and wait for the coming of the Lord. He wants us to be aware of these signs so that we will be prepared. If we're not prepared, He is going to pass us by.

We have to read the scriptures. We have to study them in order to be able to overcome all the tribulations that are going to come. Ron Smith didn't answer my question last week, or Linda's question--she is the one that asked it



because he said he didn't really know. But he has always said, and I believe it because it says it in the Scriptures, that Jesus is the one who is going to establish Zion. Does that mean that Jesus is going to be here during the tribulation because it says, in order to survive the tribulation, we have to flee to Zion. I don't know the answer, and I'm not putting Ron down because I don't think anybody knows but it sounds to me like He will be there. He will be there when all the tribulation gets so bad that we can't stand it and we have to flee to Zion. If we don't, we will have to take arms against our enemies and I don't want to do that. I guess, well, I'm old for one thing. But there are many, many scriptures that tell us that we need to be prepared.

There are many scriptures that tell us that before Christ comes, He's going to send us help. In Malachi 4:5-6 it says, *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.* These things will happen. God promised that they would, and He always fulfills His promises. We just have to be prepared, and we have to look for His coming.

Doctrine and Covenants 85:38 says *See that ye love one another; cease to be covetous; learn to impart one to another as the gospel requires; cease to be idle; cease to be unclean; cease to find fault one with another; cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated; and above all things, clothe yourselves with the bonds of charity, as with a mantle, which is a bond of perfectness and peace; pray always, that you may not faint until I come; behold, and lo, I will come quickly, and receive you unto myself.*

1st Nephi 3:214-216 says, *For the time cometh, saith the Lamb of God, that I will work a great and a marvelous work among the children of men; A work which shall be everlasting, either on the one hand or on the other; Either to the convincing of them unto peace and life eternal, or unto the deliverance of them to the hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their minds, unto their being brought down into captivity and also unto destruction, both temporally and spiritually, according to the captivity of the devil, of which I have spoken.*

God gives us the right to choose whether we will serve God, or whether we will serve the devil. In 1st Nephi 3:230-231 it says, *And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb, and upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; And they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory.*

He's going to help us, if we will just look to Him. He's going to arm us with righteousness, if we will listen to Him and follow His commandments. My object today was to try and convince people that they need to be looking and they need to be seeing what God has in store for us. Let's don't be like the people back when Jesus was born. Yes, some of them did see what was happening but the majority did not believe. Even after He was on the earth, it wasn't long till the church

fell apart because they didn't believe. They weren't steadfast. I think there are still some prophecies that are to happen yet but some of them are going on now. I think the Gentiles—and I'm talking about some of the saints—have rejected the Book of Mormon, and it was prophesied that they would. So we need to be careful that we don't fall into that trap. One last scripture I'd like to share with you this morning comes from Doctrine and Covenants 83:17. *The Lord hath brought again Zion: The Lord hath redeemed his people, Israel, According to the election of grace, Which was brought to pass by the faith And covenant of their fathers. The Lord hath redeemed his people, And Satan is bound, and time is no longer: The Lord hath gathered all things in one: The Lord hath brought down Zion from above: The Lord hath brought up Zion from beneath; The earth hath travailed and brought forth her strength; And truth is established in her bowels; And the heavens have smiled upon her, And she is clothed with the glory of her God: For he stands in the midst of his people: Glory, and honor, and power, and might, Be ascribed to our God, for he is full of mercy, Justice, grace and truth, and peace, For ever and ever, Amen.*

Christ is our Example **Elder Ed Anderson** **November 7, 2021** **Mount Ayr, IA**

Good morning. I have selected some scriptures today from the Bible mostly but also from the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine & Covenants. John 14:12 says, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.* That is repeated in 3rd Nephi 12:34-35 which says, *Verily, verily I say unto you, This is my gospel; and ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do, that shall ye also do; For that which ye have seen me do, even that shall ye do; therefore if ye do these things, blessed are ye, for ye shall be lifted up at the last day.* Verily, verily must be a Hebraism. I thought what exactly are we talking about? What did the disciples see Jesus do that they could know what they were supposed to do. I am going to talk about a few of them. I am going to talk about obedience, fasting, prayer, the need to be baptized, fulfilling the commandments, calling, teaching, sacrifice, light, and faithful to the end or endure to the end. I am going to share scriptures that give examples of Jesus doing these things.

We're going to start with obedience: In John 17:4 Jesus says, *I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.* Jesus is talking to His father saying, 'OK I've accomplished the things you have given me to do. *For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me;* (So this is again Christ talking to God and saying, 'Ok, God I have given these people the words which you wanted me to give them which is going to be beneficial to them.) *I have kept them in my name, those you have given unto me have I kept and none of them are lost. As thou hast sent me into the world even so I have sent them into the*



world. So again Christ is saying, Father, you have sent me into the world and now I am saying to my disciples now it's your turn. You go into the world and you minister in my name. *Neither I pray for these alone that they all may be one and the glory which thou givest me I have given them that they also be one even as we are one.* So, Christ is fulfilling the commandments that God is giving Him to bring the message of salvation to His disciples and to the world. Obedience was also finished with the death on the cross and the resurrection but there was a message to be given that Christ gave and to fulfill the full measure of His coming into the world was culminated in His death and resurrection.

Section 58:6c-d of the Doctrine and Covenants says, *For, behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things, for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward. Verily I say, Men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; for the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves.* We don't necessarily need to be waiting for a command to do things. We should seek out things to do to minister in His name. To bring people to the church here in Mount Ayr, we're going to need to seek out and go beyond what we have been doing to reach those people that need to be ministered to that the kingdom might come here in Mount Ayr and people might receive.

One of the things that Christ showed unto His disciples was fasting. In Matthew 4:1-2 it says, *Then Jesus was led up of the Spirit, into the wilderness, to be with God. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights (I don't think I know very many people that's fasted 40 days and nights. The only people I think that have done that is the people in prison who go on a hunger strike. I'm not sure they could make 40 days and nights. I think they say you have to eat in 7 days. That is about as long as you can survive with water. You might be able to survive longer without food.), and had communed with God, he was afterwards an hungered, and was left to be tempted of the devil.* I think we all know of the things that the devil offered him: bread, and He said you shouldn't live by bread alone but every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.

What would have prompted Him to fast? What difference would it make? To show His Father that He was willing to keep His commandments. I think God and Christ are very close anyway so Jesus was giving us an example of what we should do and how we should approach the Father. As I said before He fasted but while He was there I'm sure He prayed. Matthew 26:33, 35-37, 38 says, *Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and said unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray. Then said he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. And he cometh unto the disciples and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Prayer is very important. If we talk about Christ, He says do the things you see me do: fasting, prayer and obedience.*

He came to John the Baptist out of obedience and to fulfill the commandments. In John 1:29 it says, *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and said; Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world! And John bare record of him unto the people, saying, This is he of whom I said; After me cometh a man who is preferred before me; for he was before me, and I knew him, and that he should be made manifest to Israel; therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying; When he was baptized of me, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him; for he who sent me to baptize with water; the same said unto me; Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he who baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.* Jesus commanded that He be baptized and He suffered Himself to be baptized to fulfill the commandments, that all men needed to be baptized.

Jesus showed unto us by His actions by the calling of the priesthood in Matthew 4:17-19. *And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon, called Peter, and Andrew, his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And he said unto them, I am he of whom it is written by the prophets; follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they, believing on his words, left their net, and straightway followed him.* Again, He was showing by example that those who represented Him needed to be called by Him. Jesus was fulfilling the commandments of establishing His church, establishing His church with apostles and prophets and deacons and bishops and elders and the rest of the offices.

One of the things that I have noticed about individuals. They like to be sponges. What does a sponge do? A sponge just absorbs stuff. You clean up the water off the counter. You can use it for cleaning but if you just put a sponge on the counter and pour water on it it just absorbs the water. It seems like people I know just want to be given everything. They don't want to search it out for themselves. They don't want to give anything back. It doesn't do a lot of good for a sponge to sit there full of water unless there's a purpose, a use for it.

Jesus was a teacher. In Matthew 5th chapter starts Jesus Sermon on the Mount. *And Jesus, seeing the multitudes, went up into a mountain; and when he was set down, his disciples came unto him; And he opened his mouth, and taught them. . . (Matthew 5:1-2) And it came to pass when Jesus had ended these sayings with his disciples, the people were astonished at his doctrine; For he taught them as one having authority from God, and not as having authority from the Scribes. (Matthew 7:36-37).* So Jesus spoke with authority. He was commissioned to speak in God's name. In this church we believe that we are also commissioned to speak in God's name by a Holy calling and ordination into the church.

When men are called, the sponge thing doesn't work anymore. We have to return something. It's easy to sit on the sideline and watch. It's difficult to respond and to bring the ministry that is necessary, not being sponges but being the sponge that cleans the neighborhood; being the sponge that goes out and seeks out the fatherless, the widows and those who are hungry. There are people out there that appreciate a



kind word or telling them “hi.” I think I remember reading about an individual who had committed suicide and left a note which read “I’m going to walk to the bridge, (whichever bridge it was) that is 2 miles distant.” The note said that “if someone said ‘hi’ to me in those two miles, you won’t be reading this note.” Evidently no one said ‘hi’ to her or smiled at her in those two miles because they did find the note.

We really don’t know what our actions, our smiles, our interaction with people result in. We are supposed to plant the seeds of Christianity, of goodness in people. We are to be a representative of Christ, to be Christ-like. We are to teach and to educate and to sacrifice which is the next one on the list. In Matthew 6:36-38 it says, *Why is it that ye murmur among yourselves, saying, We cannot obey thy word because ye have not all these things, and seek to excuse yourselves, saying that, After all these things do the Gentiles seek. Behold, I say unto you, that your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. Wherefore, seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* Our main interest is to not be a sponge, to seek out those people who need ministry. That’s our calling, to talk about the things that Christ has done and to look at Christ as an example. Those are the things that He did.

Jesus was the light of the world. In John 1:3-5 it says, *All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made which was made. In him was the gospel, and the gospel was the life, and the life was the light of men; And the light shineth in the world, and the world perceiveth it not.* Matthew 4:13-15 says, *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zebulun, and the land of Nephthalim, in the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw a great light, and unto them that sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up.* As kids we used to sing the song, ‘This Little Light of Mine.’ We should be the light if we are following Christ’s example. The scriptures say that Jesus is the light and life of the world. That’s our calling. How many people does it take to light an area? How many people does it take in our places of work? I am not talking about declaring the gospel. I am not talking about hitting people over the head with scriptures. I am talking about how many people does it take to light up a workplace of 10 people? One person is all it takes.

You’d be amazed at the change I’ve seen in places where certain people are doing their thing or being a light around them, the caring attitude, the seeking for the welfare of the people around them, making sure that things are done that hadn’t been done. You don’t have to talk about the gospel to be a light. You can be joyful. I got a little gift when I left Centerville Vet Clinic. It said, ‘You are my sunshine, my only sunshine’ because I would go around and sing that. Guess what? About half of the people I worked with also started singing it. They thought it was kind of funny but I thought it kind of changed their attitude, from being an unpleasant place to work to where people would kind of have a smile on their face and they wouldn’t take everything so personal.

The Dark Ages is a major example about the light of the world. Who knows about the Dark Ages? Why did it occur? We know the Dark Ages occurred in the area in Europe and that area that was oppressive. What started the Dark Ages? The scriptures say that the gospel was taken from the earth and that would have been after the apostles and prophets of New Testament times had gone astray and left the world without the Spirit of God. I think we can look at our situation now. We think we are going to throw money at things. We think that that’s going to solve everything. We think that we’re going to make a bunch of rules that is going to bring people into communion with each other, to get along with each other. We’re going to force people to accept others. What really does that? It’s the Spirit of God. It’s the Spirit of God in the world and when God removes His Spirit from the world then things go downhill.

Now if we want to talk about the church or other churches, they have kind of lost their way. I think the world has lost it’s way as far as Christianity and spiritual things go. Being a Christian is a bad thing now. They are persecuted. They kick them out of the schools. Why would the Critical Race Theory be taught in the schools? If you don’t have Christianity in the schools, if you don’t have people who follow Christianity, you don’t have to have church in the schools but people who believe and practice their belief, it becomes dark.

Would you say that Christ endured unto the end? I think He stuck with it. He knew what His calling was. He knew why He was there. He fasted 40 days and 40 nights and was tempted of satan but did He fall to the temptations of satan. I’m hungry after fasting 40 days. I would be but He said, ‘You don’t live by bread alone but by every word that falls from the mouth of God.’ When Christ spoke did He speak needlessly? Did everything He say, everything He prophesied come true or will it come true? Yes, otherwise He wouldn’t be Christ. He wouldn’t be the Son of God if everything He prophesied didn’t come true.

There were several times in the scriptures, baptism was one of them that He said, ‘I come because I am fulfilling the commands of the Father, fulfilling the prophecies of those who have gone before.’ He endured the slight of the Scribes and the Pharisees. They were after Him at all times but Jesus witnessed of the Father in all things. ‘Not my will be done but the will of the Father who is in heaven.’ He healed the sick and these are some of the works that we are supposed to do. He raised the dead. I’ve heard a few testimonies from ministers of the gospel who have raised people from the dead. I would say that if that was necessary that God would also raise people from the dead under the hands of the elders of the church. He was to be baptized and to baptize. He stood up for what His Father stood for and declared the word. We talked a little bit about that this morning. He threw out the moneychangers. I don’t know exactly how they took that but it didn’t seem like He got into big, bad trouble for it. I don’t remember that the moneychangers took Him and persecuted Him for that but He did stand up for what was right. He accepted His crucifixion as a necessity to accomplish the resurrection and eternal life of man. He went to Jerusalem on a donkey knowing the final outcome of the trip, to do His Father’s will.



I know I have kind of gone over a lot of scattered thoughts but if we look at Christ's life and the things which He did, I think we might need to look at our lives a little bit and say, 'Have we done what we need to do?' Are we tired of being a sponge? If you go to Independence and probably around here you could go to a spiritual meeting of some sort every day of the week and you could sit and absorb all of the things that you need to do. You could learn all of it but is that the end? No, that's not the end. The end is we have to do something with it. We have to be the gospel in action and that's what I would encourage each and every one to do is to look at His life, measure our life by His actions and see just where we're at. I know I'm not up there because I don't do everything I should do and sometimes I just want to sit there and be a sponge. I'm looking for Zion, and I'm looking to bring others into the gospel of Christ but I have a long way to go.

With God All Things Are Possible
Priest Rodney Bastow
December 12, 2021
Mount Ayr, IA

For a Call to Worship Elder Ed Anderson read 2nd Nephi 11:96-105. *He doeth not anything save it be for the benefit of the world; for he loveth the world, even that he layeth down his own life, that he may draw all men unto him. Wherefore, he commandeth none that they shall not partake of his salvation. Behold, doth he cry unto any, saying, Depart from me? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; but he saith, Come unto me all ye ends of the earth, buy milk and honey, without money and without price. Behold, hath he commanded any that they should depart out of the synagogues, or out of the houses of worship? Behold, I say unto you, Nay. Hath he commanded any that they should not partake of his salvation? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; but he hath given it free for all men; and he hath commanded his people that they should persuade all men to repentance. Behold, hath the Lord commanded any that they should not partake of his goodness? Behold, I say unto you, Nay.*

I have chosen for my scripture today, I guess you could say, Sandy, this is one of my favorite prophecies of the birth of Christ. It's from Luke 1:26-38. *And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God, unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth. To a virgin, espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her and said, Hail, thou virgin, who art highly favored of the Lord. The Lord is with thee, for thou art chosen and blessed among women. And when she saw the angel, she was troubled at his saying, and pondered in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; And he shall reign over the house of Jacob*

forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel; How can this be? And the angel answered and said unto her, Of the Holy Ghost, and the power of the Highest. Therefore also, that holy child that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she hath also conceived a son, in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her who is called barren. For with God nothing can be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmade of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak. I hope we expect to feel God's Spirit with us. God is with us this morning. May we praise His name for this experience. It's always good to be scheduled at Christmas time. It's easy to get in the spirit. I have a station that I listen to in my tractors and in my pickups. If I am in the car and Jowett is not around I listen to it. It's 107.1 and they play Christmas music constantly and I really enjoy that. It really puts you in a good mood. I like the decorations, Sue. You've gone above and beyond this year. I like seeing the Christmas lights and all the things that have to do with Christmas. It's a fun time of the year.

You know I have kind of talked about this before but when I first learned that a mission would be started at Lamoni and a lot of our group would be leaving, as you know I didn't think these doors could stay open. I didn't see any way that that was ever going to happen. I thought, 'Well, that's no big deal. I'll just go to the church upon the hill. I'll go there with Randy and those people.' I got to talking to Randy and I found out there's not much going on up there on top of the hill. As far as going there it would probably just be he and I a lot of the times so I thought that's not an option. Then I thought well I could go to another local church. I could go to either Wishard Chapel. They have a good group and there's a good group out here at the Presbyterian Baptist Church. But then I thought how different would that be? I would no longer have priesthood responsibilities at those churches. I wasn't sure that I could handle that.

Most of you know I haven't handled retirement real well. I have to stay active. I have to keep doing things. I keep thinking what would it be like to be retired from priesthood duties? I don't think I am ready for that yet. I'm glad to be here. I'm glad that the doors are still open. I think it's because of our prayers that this has happened. I think it's because of the efforts of all of you that have made this happen. I've really enjoyed the services that we've had, the prayer meetings, the soup luncheon that we had, the potluck dinner that we had, the classes. I've enjoyed all of those. I think that God is with us and I have felt a closeness to His Holy Spirit. I think we're coming closer together as a group. It's a good group.

Remember the attendance board? Tony mentioned that this morning. I know at the back of the RLDS Church there was an attendance board and it would say Attendance Today: _____; Attendance Last Week: _____; Offering Today: _____; Offering Last Week: _____. Then down at the bottom it would say membership. I remember that and I remember the membership was usually like 100-102, something like that. Then you'd look at the attendance today and it would be 30 or 40. I'm thinking



where are those other people? Why aren't they here? We have 70 people missing.

Now if we had that attendance board we would have a membership of about 10 or 12 and we could say it's about a 100% each week. That's kind of neat to have 100% attendance. Maynard and Ardna found out if they're not here they will probably get a phone call finding out if things are OK and what's going on. That's good. I really hate to miss and I try harder to be here than I did before. I am doing some things that I hadn't been doing. I miss the old group and I hope that they are doing well. I think they are but I am really very thankful for what we have here.

The result of our new group is that I am reading the scriptures more. I think I can blame Sandy for this. I can't say that I study yet but I do read and the book is open. When it was requested that we read the first chapters of Genesis, I did that. I was really proud of myself for getting that done. Then we didn't talk about it but I continued reading into the next weeks. As I read through there I read about Noah's Ark and I liked that story. We have YouTube on our TV. I don't know how we got it or why it's there. I go to it occasionally just to see certain things. I started using it because they had old Zorro movies on there all the time and I was looking at those. They have some of the local ballgames that you can't get otherwise. A lot of it's trash and probably should be triple X rated on some of the things they have on there. I try to avoid those.

I came across this one that was a documentary or video about Noah's Ark. I think it was entitled "Noah's Ark, Fact or Fiction." Maybe you've seen this video. The guy that produced this has several others that he has done. I really enjoyed that because if you read the story of Noah's Ark you think, how was this possible? How could this happen? How could you build a boat that big. How could you collect all those animals. Then the thing that still puzzles me is how could you repopulate the earth after that. He had explanations for all of this. He took you through the scriptures and did a really good job. I guess it was a female that was doing this but I think a man had written it. Anyway it was very good. One thing that was pointed out during the show was that if you don't believe in Genesis, if you don't believe that the book of Genesis is true, if you don't believe that the Ark and Noah was true you can't believe the rest of the Bible. You can't believe that there was a Jesus. I thought that was a good point because a lot of times people say our scriptures are just stories. We know they're not. We know that the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants and the Bible are true and we know that they came from God.

Reading Genesis to me is a little bit depressing. Some of you like those begats, begats. I have to be honest with you. I kind of scan through those a little bit. Some of those names don't stick to me very well and I hurriedly go through them. Kind of what I talked about in class this morning. God was with those people but they were constantly being told to repent. At first when I thought of that I wondered what those people would have to repent of? They didn't have all the distractions that we have today, the cell phones that you talked about, the videos, just all the things that we have that can really take you away from the Lord. Then I thought, what's our main problem today? What are we

still having trouble with today? It's hatred, anger and disobedience to God. The people in Genesis had those too so I guess it's no different.

I was reading a chapter a day in Genesis. By now I should have been up to Chapter 25, somewhere in there but then I saw a thing on Facebook. This was the first of December I saw this post on Facebook that said, 'Luke has 24 chapters. If you read a chapter a day from now until Christmas, you'll read the whole book of Luke.' I thought that that was kind of a neat thing to do so I started reading and I made Debbie start doing it too. We started reading the book of Luke. We're coming along. I am a little bit ahead of her but we're reading it.

One of the first things that I came across in Luke was about Zachariah. Wouldn't you know Sandy talked about Zachariah this morning. When she started talking about Zachariah I'm thinking that is my whole sermon. I'm not going to have anything to talk about because Sandy is going to talk about it all but it worked out well. We know who Zachariah is. We know that he was a priest back in those times. He and his wife Elizabeth were people of God. They believed in the Lord. They were following Him. They were serving Him. They had prayed and I believe this, Sandy. I believe this is what it says. They had prayed for a child. From what I can tell Elizabeth especially was kind of put down, shamed because she hadn't had a child. That is what a woman was supposed to do, to bear her husband's sons and she hadn't done that. They were up in years and that's kind of interesting. You know I think 'up in years' what does that mean? Were they 70? To me that's old. Would they have been 50 which to me that would have been old for child bearing. Then I looked at the ages of some of the people back in Genesis. They were 500 to 600 years old so could they have been in the 100s? I am guessing they were probably in their 50s.

Zachariah, like Sandy said, was in the temple and he was burning the incense as was his job. The angel Gabriel appeared to him and tells him, 'Your wife is going to have a son.' I don't understand this. Why Zachariah didn't believe that was possible because he was a man of God and he should have known that with God all things are possible. He should have known that could happen but he was skeptical. He really didn't believe it and he wanted a sign like Sandy said so Gabriel said, 'OK, you want a sign? I'll give you a sign. You won't be able to speak.'

I don't know if any of you have had that experience. I had one brief episode where I got up one morning and what I tried to say didn't come out the way I thought it had. I thought I was saying one thing and I was saying some different, just gibberish. We have a nephew right now who is one of the youth associate pastors up at Wishard Chapel and he has been suffering now for weeks when he'll get up in the morning and he can't speak. He can't communicate.

That would have been a difficult experience for Zachariah. He had to go nine months and eight days because he didn't get to speak until after the baby had been circumcised at which time they named him. Elizabeth said the baby's name would be John and everybody said that the baby couldn't be called John. It had to be called Zachariah



after his father. Zachariah was finally able to say, ‘No, his name will be John.’

I bring this up because I wonder are we any different than Zachariah? Do we believe our prayers will be answered? Do we believe that with God all things are possible? OR maybe we should be struck dumb.

We talked about Mary this morning too. Mary had a lot of faith. She believed in God and I think God was with her. I’m not sure what to think about this. Mary apparently at that time was only about 14 years old. She was very young. The angel came to her and told her that she was going to have the Christ Child. As the scriptures say she said all right. Your will be done basically is what she said. I am willing to do that. Now I don’t know when she said that if she thought about what the consequences would be because back in that day and age, if you weren’t married or if you got pregnant and weren’t married, they would stone you and the father. I don’t know if she considered that. Even if she did she was still willing to serve.

I like the song, ‘Mary, Did You Know.’ I like to play that. To me it’s a neat song. There are some people that don’t care for it. Their reasoning is kind of strange. You wonder what she thought when she watched that son grow up. Max Lucado had a thing “25 questions for Mary.” It was kindergartners who asked these. They asked some really strange questions such as: when you prayed did he listen, did he ever get in a fight with his brother, but you wondered if she knew that she had given birth to our Savior. You wonder if she knew how great He was going to be, the miracles that He would perform, the things that He could do. It had to have been an awesome experience for her.

As we go through our day-to-day lives, we look at things, we try to stay close to God. We listen for Him and we pray to Him. Every morning when I get up I pray for my wife. I pray for my boys. I pray for my granddaughters and I pray for all of you. I especially pray for you, Sandy, and for Linda but I pray for each one that’s here and the ones that are not here. We haven’t seen Dorothy now for a couple of weeks. Hopefully she is OK. I suspect she might have gone to Michigan because that’s usually the reason she is gone.

Last Wednesday night we added several to our prayer list. We added Melissa, Ardna’s son and grandson, Tony’s friend. You know recently I have had some close relatives, first cousins, that have had some tragic things happen to them. A cousin that is my age lost two of her brothers a year ago, she lost her brother-in-law within the last year and she was going to her daughter’s last week to make Christmas cookies and when she got there she found that her daughter had died in her sleep. I think about Becky and what she is going through right now.

I have another cousin who is a few years younger than I am. He had a kidney transplant about a year ago and I got the notice on Facebook that he’s on a ventilator right now with Covid. That’s another scary situation.

Debbie has a sister whose children have been afflicted with cancer. One son passed away from cancer and four others are still battling it and two are not doing very well. Her youngest son is the one that I referred to that has been having these spells when he can’t speak. It seems like

he is having a stroke or something like that but they can’t find a diagnosis for it and so far he is not being treated for it. She also has another sister who is very much afraid of Covid and keeps herself and her family very isolated. She misses out on a lot of things that she normally would be doing in her life if she weren’t afraid of this happening. We heard this week of the storms in Kentucky. We read a week ago about the shootings in Michigan. There is an unending list of tragedies that are going on in our world. So many people need God in their lives. They need to be reassured that with God all things are possible.

I like this scripture from Romans 8:31-34. *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can prevail against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.* That’s a very reassuring scripture and we’re fortunate that we know that. We know that we don’t have to worry about these things happening that God will help us through difficult and tough times.

I found a reading. I don’t think I could give a message without having a reading. I don’t know if this is a song or not. (Editor: it is a song.)

If God Nothing but the Blood

(songwriters-Robert Lowry, Natalie Lauren Sims, Casey J. Hobbs, Jon Webb, Jr.)

What shall
We say to these things?
There's still cancer
And so much disease
What shall
We say to these things?
So much hurting
And broken esteem
So many questions
But still one answer

If God be for me, who can be against me?
If God is with me, whom shall I fear?
If no one knows me, still His heart adores me
I am safe, I am loved, I am healed

What shall
We say to these things?
So much violence
It's getting hard to believe
And what shall
We say to these things?
So many people hurting
With broken esteem
So many questions
But still one answer

If God be for me, who can be against me?
(If God is with me)



If God is with me, whom shall I fear?
 (If no one knows me, yeah)
 If no one knows me, still His heart adores me
 I am safe, I am loved, I am healed

If God be for me, who can be against me?
 (If God is with me)
 If God is with me, whom shall I fear?
 (If no one knows me, yeah)
 If no one knows me, still His heart adores me
 (I am safe)
 I am safe, I am loved, I am healed...

Now what can wash away my sin? (Sing it)
 (Nothing but the blood of Jesus)
 And what can make me whole again?
 (Nothing but the blood of Jesus)
 (We're singing)
 Oh precious is the flow (That)
 That makes me white as snow
 It was no other fount I know
 It was nothing but the blood of Jesus

That I could do, no worse
 That I could say, no price
 That I could pay
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus

Oh, precious is the flow (That)
 That makes me white as snow
 It was no other fount I know
 It was nothing but the blood of Jesus

That we could do, no worse
 That we could say, no price
 That we could pay
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus

It was
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus
 It was
 Nothing but Your blood, my Jesus
 It was
 Nothing but Your blood, my Jesus

If You are for me, who can be against me?
 If You are with me, whom shall I fear?
 If no one knows me, still His heart adores me
 I am safe, I am loved, I am healed
 I am safe, I am loved, I am healed
 I am safe, I am loved, I am healed
 I am safe, I am loved, I am healed

If You are for me, who can be against me?
 If You are with me, whom shall I fear?
 If no one knows me, still Your heart adores me
 We are safe, we are loved, we are healed
 (Can we sing that? Say, if You are for me)

If You are for me, who can be against me?

If You are with me, whom shall I fear?
 (If no one knows me)
 If no one knows me, still Your heart adores me
 (Say I am safe)
 I am safe, I am loved, I am healed

If You are for me, who can be against me?
 If You are with me...

I had another favorite scripture about the prophecy, Sandy. It is from Alma 5:17-21. *But behold, the Spirit hath said this much unto me, saying: Cry unto this people, saying, Repent ye, repent ye and prepare the way of the Lord, and walk in his paths, which are straight: For behold, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and the Son of God cometh upon the face of the earth. And behold, he shall be born of Mary at Jerusalem, which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed, and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God; And he shall go forth, suffering pains, and afflictions, and temptations of every kind; And this that the word might be fulfilled which saith, He will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people.*

Come and See
Elder Doug Smith
January 16, 2022
Lamoni, Iowa

Phillip and Andrew were disciples of John the Baptist. One day when Jesus met John, John said, "Behold, the lamb of God." And so, Phillip and Andrew became followers of Jesus Christ instead of following John the Baptist. They didn't just become followers of Jesus. They went to go tell their good friends about what they had found. Andrew, went to Simon Peter and Phillip went to a man named Nathaniel. I would like to pick up that story starting with John 1:45. *Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip said unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming unto him, and said of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael said unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answering said unto him, Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and said unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. And he said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. (45-51)*

I love the story of Nathaniel because it encapsulates so much of what the gospel means, or can mean, to us in our life. The first thing that this story reminds us of is that God knows us. God knows who we are. He knows where we are.



He knows where we've been. He knows what we've done. He knows everything about us. And not only does he know us, but that even knowing us, he still calls us to come and see.

Now for Nathaniel that was not a bad thing. Right? Jesus says, "Hey, Nathaniel, I know you, you're an Israelite in which there is no guile—there's no evil here. You're doing good things." And so for Nathaniel it probably wasn't all that bad of a thing for Christ to say I know you. But what about the woman at the well? When Jesus said, "I know you too. I know the guy you are with is not your husband and that you have had five husbands." That's a little bit more shocking. But even though Jesus knew both of them very well, and knew where they'd been and what they had been doing, He still was calling them to Himself—calling them to come and to see. The Lord is doing the same for us, and whether it's shocking to us that God knows what we did last night; whether it's something that we're not ashamed of; or whether it's something that we're happy about, God is still calling us, and He calls us with that message to come and see.

Many respond like Nathaniel did initially, right? "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? I mean, you know this God thing, I know God's trying to call me, but really does religion cause any good thing in the world? I mean, most of the wars that we see are religious things: there is Northern Ireland, there are Muslims and Christians from the time of the Crusades up until the terrorism that we see now, and all of this is all tied up in this God thing. So, maybe there is no good thing that comes out of this belief in God or the fact that there may be a God."

But what was the response? Come and see. Come and see if having a relationship with God can be something that is good—something that can be purposeful and good in your life. Come and see, if maybe leaving the sin that so easily besets you might set you free to be able to live in the way that the Lord would lead.

People are so blinded by the things of this world and oftentimes, they can't see what is really true. I saw a quote the other day, "The world is offended by everything except sin." Often, everything else is accepted. It doesn't matter what it is. "Oh, yeah, that's okay. That's okay. You know, let's encourage that." But if someone stands for righteousness, then all of a sudden, it's offensive. "Oh, you're trying to lord it over me. You're trying to be holier than thou. You're trying to try to make me feel bad because I'm not as righteous as you." That really, in a lot of places is the only offense that is left if you're trying to stand for the Lord, and trying to stand for Christ in your life. But the rest of those things, the lies that the world has for us, never lead to happiness.

One of my mom's favorite scriptures was, *Wickedness never was happiness.* (Alma 19:74) I'm sure most of you heard that many times. I know I did and yet, the lies of the world are so strong.

I was working in the ER the other night, and a 19-year-old gentleman came in who had overdosed on narcotics. His family had tried to help him. They called the ambulance and brought him in, but he was gone before they ever started to bring him in. So I started talking to his family about him. And you know, he was not a bad guy. He actually had some Naloxone, the medication that helps reverse an overdose but he was afraid that some of his friends who are also doing

drugs were going to be overdosing, so he had given away his Naloxone so that he could save his other friends. But then he was the one who needed it. He believed the lie that somehow these chemicals that he could put into his body were going to bring him happiness, were going to bring Him joy, were going to bring him the fulfillment that he wanted to have, and so at 19 years old, because he believed that lie, he was gone.

Jesus wants us to know the truth. He wants us to know where true happiness could be. Might it be that we can find that joy without having to use drugs? The Lord says, Come and see. Come and try it out. See if a new way of life is better than the life that you've been living. See if there's a pathway to happiness that maybe you've not ever even imagined. Phillip was willing. He decided he'd go and see what was going on. That was Phillip's first step. When he was given the challenge to come and see he said, "Okay, I want to talk to your friend Jesus, I'll see what this is all about." And so, since he believed that it might be true, he decided to go and see what he could find.

So why is it that so often we decide not to go and see, to not try out this God thing? One thing that it takes is something called humility. That's a really hard thing because if we are going to really test God to find out what life with Him is like, then we have to admit that we are not in control. If there is a God who created you, and who has a plan for your life, and who has a way that He would like for you to live your life, then that means the control of your life just went somewhere else if you decide you're going to try to follow what that plan is. And while the control that we feel we have of our lives is really another lie—another transitory thing—it still is very, very hard to give up: the idea that I get to decide what is right, I get to decide what is real. And so we have to overcome that desire that we have. You have to acknowledge that you are not the most important thing in the universe.

As little children grow, they go through a phase where everything is about what's coming to them. If I am not getting what I think I want to have, then it's time for a temper tantrum, and I'm going to stand here and yell until I get what it is that is coming to me. It doesn't matter what else is going on in the world. The only thing that matters is that I want something and I'm not getting it, and so you need to give it to me. Hopefully we grow out of that phase, but in reality, sometimes that phase stays with us for a very long time, and so to be able to come to God, we have to get over believing that we are the most important thing. If we are going to come to Him, we have to let Him tell us what to do. We have to let him decide what is good and what is right in our lives. Some people say, "Well, you know, once I asked God to do something for me, and it didn't happen. If God can't do just that one small thing that I asked Him to do, then I'm not going to believe in Him. I don't want to have anything to do with God if He won't do what I tell Him to do." Do you see the problem with that? If the creator of the universe, this all powerful, omnipotent being doesn't let me be in charge of Him, then I'm going to reject Him and live my life away from Him because I can't be in charge.

It's kind of hard when you put it in those terms, but that's really what we're saying when we say, "I wanted God



to do something, and He didn't do it." If God just did things because a human being told Him to do them, then what would the world be like? Because this guy wants it to rain and that guy doesn't want it to rain, all reality would be destroyed because each reality would just be for the person that God is doing His things for. So, we have to get the bigger picture. If we are going to come to God, we have to recognize it is going to be God telling us what to do and not us telling God what to do. Others say, "Well God knows where I am. If He wants me, He'll come and get me. I'm not going to come and do anything—I'm not going to come and see—I'm sitting under a fig tree. And if Jesus knows I am there, then He ought to come to me and introduce Himself to me. (Which he certainly can do.)"

I was talking to the granddaughter of Oscar Case who goes to our congregation in Lexington, and she was telling me about Oscar's experience where that was kind of the way he was. People would say, "Oscar, God has a work for you to do." "Well if God wants me, He knows I'm here." Sure enough, Oscar was at a reunion and the Lord spoke to him in tongues, and told him what he needed to do, and it came with such power and authority that Oscar said, "Okay, I have to go do that."

So God can do that. But in the majority of cases, if you are going to sit there and say, "Well, God could just come to me," again, who's in charge? That's not the humility that we are looking for when we are talking about allowing God to work in our lives, because we're willing to come and see who God is—not to tell God who He is or who we want Him to be. If Nathaniel had had that attitude, he would still be sitting under a fig tree, and we never would have heard his name, and he would not be a famous person in the Bible, because he never would have had the experience and the joy of being associated with Jesus Christ.

Now we can't go to a place and say, "Okay, Jesus is in Lamoni this morning, so I'm going to go to Lamoni and meet Jesus. Come and see." We don't have a specific place that we can go and say, we're going to meet Jesus, but He still calls us to come and see nevertheless. He invites us to know Him and the Scriptures tell us how we can know Him.

How can we come and see? By doing what He tells us to do, so that He can bless us as He promises to bless us. This is called "keeping His commandments." If we keep the commandments that He has given us, then He has blessings that are associated with those commandments. By doing those things, and seeing the results of that in our lives, then we come to know Him. I John 2:3-5 is very interesting: *And hereby, we do know that we know him.* (In other words, this is the test. If you want to know if you know Jesus Christ) *if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him.*

He tells us that the way that we feel His love, the way that we know He is real, the way that we know Him and who He is, is by keeping His commandments. And when we don't keep the commandments, we keep Him away from us, so that He cannot show us His love. Remember when the kids were young and you had to tell them "No" sometimes? It was devastating and they didn't want to hear "no." And so I

was like, you know, "I really feel bad for you. I'm so sorry. Let me just give you a big hug." [Doug simulated a young child crying and warding off the parent.] And I'm trying to reach them, but they're pushing me away. It's not that I love them any less. But I can't show them that love because they're pushing me away. That's exactly what we do when we refuse to keep the commands of God. We keep Him at arm's length. We won't let Him show us His love. We won't let Him show us what our lives could be if we would just listen to Him and live our life the way that He wants us to. That is the way that we can "come and see." And when we keep his commandments, then we have this promise from him. Doctrine and Covenants 6:9b tells us: *Be faithful and diligent in keeping the commandments of God, and I will encircle thee in the arms of my love.*

What a wonderful promise! Would you like to feel the love of God with His arms encircling you? His promise is that if you will keep His commandments, and be diligent and faithful in that, you will feel Him. You will know Him and you will know His love. He is just calling to us, come and see, come and see what I will do. He wants to show you all of that love if you'll just allow Him to. As he told Nathaniel, you'll see even greater things. Doctrine and Covenants 77:4a-b: *Verily, verily I say unto you, Ye are little children, and ye have not as yet understood how great blessings the Father has in his own hands, and prepared for you; and ye can not bear all things now; nevertheless be of good cheer, for I will lead you along; the kingdom is yours and the blessings thereof are yours; and the riches of eternity are yours.*

That is what God wants you to have—just like He told Nathaniel—if you'll just come and see, you may be impressed with some small thing that you see. But will you see what I have prepared for you in my hands—gifts with your name written on them? See what the riches of eternity will be like in your life and in your heart. Jesus promised that Nathaniel would see miracles

Miracles are a big draw to a lot of people. It would sure be nice to see that miraculous thing happen and know that God was there. He could show me in a way that I just couldn't deny. I remember one time I was the pastor at a reunion. I thought it would be really nice if we could have some outpouring of the Spirit, and I particularly wanted to see the gift of tongues. I thought that would be a wonderful miracle for us to have at this reunion, and so I was fasting and praying the whole reunion. I had been fasting since it started. It was Thursday morning and I was just saying, "Lord, Lord, just please give us the gift of tongues this week. I want to see this miracle." Thursday morning, as I was praying, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, "Doug, what would you do if I gave that gift of tongues?" I thought, "Oh, Lord, can you imagine how good I would feel? I mean, I would just be justified in all the things that I believe. I would know that I went to the right group, and that I am working in the way you want me to work, and I would just feel so warm and fuzzy inside because it would mean that everything I read in the Scriptures about tongues was true. All my doubts would go away, and I would just be..." Do you see my problem? I had an "I" problem, right? "Lord, this would be so wonderful for me, I would just feel so fantastic. It would just



be so wonderful." And the Lord said, "Would you tell everyone about it?" I was like, "Oh, Lord...everyone?" You know, I'm a doctor and I work at a clinic and there are people there who are kind of scientific. When I go back and they say, "Doug, how was your vacation?" And I would say, "Oh, it was wonderful. We went to this campground. And then God spoke to somebody, but He made Him speak in a language that nobody understood. And then someone else gave the interpretation. And so this is what God said to us... Well, Lord, you know, I mean, I have a little bit of a reputation. And I don't want people to think I'm crazy. And my patients might be saying, "Well, Doug Smith is just a little bit on the outside there. Maybe we need to go to another doctor."

And I said, "Lord, do you really mean I need to tell everybody? I mean, I can tell like, my friends and the people in the church." But I got to thinking, "You know, this is such a fantastic miracle. It's such a wonderful thing. Yes, Lord, I would I would tell everyone. Okay, Lord, if you'll give us the gift of tongues, I will tell everyone what you did."

The spirit said, "Doug, haven't I ever done anything in your life?" I thought, "Of course, you have, Lord, You healed me when I was 12 years old and I was told I would never walk again. You've done all these things for me. You have blessed me. You have given me..." And the Spirit said, "Go and tell them what I've already done. And then I'll give you more." That was the message that I gave to the reunion. "Brothers and sisters, The Lord isn't going to do this miracle that I required of Him. But He has promised that if we will do what He's told us to do, more will be coming. We'll share what God has already done. Then more will happen."

And that was certainly my experience. As I changed my attitude to life, I recognized that I needed to be telling everybody about what God had already done. The Lord began to use me in ways that I had never seen before. And yes, I have seen the gift of tongues many times, but also many other gifts: healings, blessings and many others. I had to come and see. I had to do what the Lord was telling me to do, and then He could lead me forward.

Maybe you're looking for a miracle today. A lot of people are willing to pay money for miracles. In Kenya, they have a guy that sells oil. For 6000 shillings (about \$60), you can get healing oil to put on. There are people on TV who are selling miracles. You're looking for miracles? Let me assure you today that you are a miracle. In this world of sin and death, you are alive. God has brought you to this place today so that you can receive Him and know Him.

There was a gentleman that Ron and I met when we were in Kenya one time whose name was Hosea Ilandango. Hosea was 114 years old—at least he said he was—he didn't have a birth certificate, but he was a veteran of both World War One and World War Two, so he must have been pretty close. He was a witch doctor and made his living by putting curses on people. And if that didn't work, he poisoned them. And then if they came and paid him, he would give them an antidote. If they didn't, then they would die. He had killed many people in his life and he was trying to force his son to become a witch doctor also. So his son Caleb had come to Ron and I and said, "I have to quit being a Christian." "Why quit being a Christian?" "Well, because I

lost my job, I don't have any money, I don't have any way to support myself, and my father won't let me go back to my home place unless I agree to accept the spirits of my ancestors and become a witch doctor." He said, "I have talked to my Christian friends and they say to do both. You know, you can be Christian, and you can still have these other spirits," he said, "but I really don't think that the Holy Spirit is going to be with me if I have these other spirits in my life."

And we agreed with him there. We said, "The Lord says that if you can seek first the kingdom of God, all these things will be added unto you, and so if you will seek first His kingdom, then the Lord will give you those things. You don't need to deny Him to get the things you need in this world." Caleb said he would think about it. He come back the next day very happy. "I have decided to stay a Christian." We said, "Great, fantastic!" He said, "But I'd like to have you do something for me." "What's that?" "I want you to go to my father's house. He has a pot where he keeps his things that give him power as a witch doctor, and I want you to burn his pot." We said, "Caleb, we can't go steal your father's stuff and break it. But we would be glad to talk to him." He said, "Okay."

So we drove up to Kakamega some distance away and we went in to see him. He was a very slight man, very small. They told us stories on the way up, about how sometimes when he would get the Spirit's taking possession, sometimes it would take eight or nine people to hold him down. And obviously, there was some fear about the power that he had. We kept reassuring them that Jesus had more power. Caleb was concerned that his father was going to kick him out. When we got there. He said, "Well, my father said, he will talk to us. So it's not a war. He is not going to physically beat me up. It will be a war of words and so whatever you guys say to him will determine what's going to happen.

We went in to talk to Hosea. We started off by telling him that God loved him and He had created him and created everything in the world. God knew him and that God wanted him to be part of His kingdom. He listened to us as we shared some things. And then he said, "Okay, I think this is good. So I am going to bring my pot out. I want you to put some money on the pot, and then I'll take the money, and then you can take my pot and do whatever you want to with it. Because I'll have money. Because if I don't, if I don't have my pot, then I can't make money. So you give me money, and I will give you my pot. Beyond that, there is a plot of land outside here. You guys can build a church right here on my property."

Ron and I looked at each other and said, "There is something really wrong here. He is missing the whole point. So Ron said "Tell him the story of king Lamoni's father." We went back to the scriptures and told him how Ammon had gone to talk to King Lamoni's father and told him about the choice that he could make to be with Christ and how King Lamoni's father prayed this prayer found in Alma 13:52-53. *O God, Aaron hath told me that there is a God; And if there is a God, and if thou art God, wilt thou make thyself known unto me, and I will give away all my sins to know thee, and that I may be raised from the dead, and be saved at the last*



day. He had offered Ammon his kingdom. He said, *I will give you this kingdom so that I can have this joy.* And Ammon said, *God doesn't want your kingdom. He wants your heart.* So that is what we told Hosea: "God doesn't want your pot, he doesn't want your money. He doesn't want your land. He wants your heart."

We continued to share with him for a while. Finally Hosea said, "I have been a veteran of World War One and World War Two, and I have killed many people. The thing that's bothering me is that I think I am close to death, and the spirits of all these people I have killed are haunting me, and I am afraid to die. And so we told him that he could have forgiveness of all those things that he had done. That's why Jesus came and died for him. Hosea, said he wanted to be baptized. We took him down to the river. He was small enough that his son actually picked him up and handed him down the bank to Ron who was in the water. On the way down to the river, all the villagers from around there came saying "What's going on? What is the old man doing? He's going down to the water? Is he going to curse the water?" "No, he's going to be baptized." "Baptized, whoa!"

And so we had people along the banks of the river and over the bridge and all the whole village watching to see what was going to happen. We got back up to the house and a neighbor lady came by who was also a witch doctor. She said, "What's going on?" I said, "Hosea was baptized." She said, "That's nothing. Hosea has already been baptized." Sure enough, back in the 1920s, when the Catholic Church had first come to Kakamega, one of the first converts was Hosea, And he had even given them land on which to build the Catholic church, but he never gave up being a witch doctor.

But before he was baptized this time, he pulled his pot out from underneath his bed. There was a cow horn in the top with a rope wrapped around it that he used to speak to the spirits. He took that out. He had his son go and get a bucket of water, and he poured the water into the pot. There must have been some kind of acid inside there because it made fizzy noises as he poured the water in. Then he got a rock and he smashed the pot. There was a little pouch inside of animal skin which had some bones and things. He took that and had his son burn it, and he said, "Now I am ready to be baptized." And so they told the neighbor lady, "Yes, but today Hosea broke his pot." She was just flabbergasted. In their tradition, if a witch doctor broke his pot, he had 24 hours to live. Everything that they knew—all of his tradition—said he was going to die that day. But it was worth it to him to have that joy, to have that forgiveness that would come.

After Hosea was confirmed, we asked him, "How do you feel?" He said, "I have no doubt that God has allowed me to live these 114 years so that I could be here today, when the missionaries would come and tell me about this gospel."

Brothers and sisters, do not doubt that the Lord has allowed you to live every minute of your life so that you could hear and understand the gospel and let it be a part of your life to come and see. God has chosen you to know about His kingdom and your place in it, and of the covenant that you can make that will allow you to be part of the Kingdom. Matthew 5:4-5 says: *Yea, blessed are they who shall believe on your words, and come down into the depth of humility, and be baptized in my name; for they shall be visited with fire*

and the Holy Ghost, and shall receive a remission of their sins. Yea, blessed are the poor in spirit, who come unto me; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

God has given you the opportunity to know His promises, to know Him as you keep the commandments and to now His love, but you still have to come and see. You still have to be willing to allow the Lord to tell you what to do, and be willing to do it.

I had a cousin who has passed on now. Her name was Marsha. Marsha shared the testimony one night about how they were at home. It was evening and some of them had finished supper and were sitting around. She said the Holy Spirit told her they needed to go to the cemetery. "The cemetery? Why go to the cemetery—at night?"

But she said the spirit was so strong that she should go to the cemetery. So she told her husband, "We need to go to the cemetery." They got in their car and drove to the town cemetery. When they got there, they found a couple sitting in the cemetery. They were from Tennessee. They were driving through and their car had broken down. It was night and they didn't know what to do. They thought maybe the grass of the cemetery might be a little bit softer than some other places they could stay, and maybe they wouldn't be bothered there. So they had gone to sleep in the cemetery that night until the morning when they could get somebody to take a look at their car and see what they could do. So when Marsha and Dave showed up, they said, "Hi, how are you doing? What are you doing here?" "Well, God told us to come to the cemetery so it must have been for you." They invited them back to their house. It took them three days to get the car finished, and during that time Marsha and her husband were able to share with them about the Lord, and they made some wonderful friends.

Why did that wonderful miracle happen? Because they were willing to follow what the Lord said to do. That's what the Lord is calling us to do so that we can come and see His power.

So do we have to do it though? I mean, can we be good and really not do what God tells us to do? Can't we do good things and still hold on to those things that we'd like to do that aren't really of God? Well, no. You can do good things but you cannot be righteous unless you are willing to do the things of God. I John 3:7-10 tells us this: *Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that continueth in sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not continue in sin; for the Spirit of God remaineth in him; and he cannot continue in sin, because he is born of God, having received that holy Spirit of promise. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.*

Can you know Jesus, and still be complacent in your sin? If we love our sin more than we love Jesus, then we are in trouble. Romans 3:28 tells us *The wages of sin is death.* That's the opposite of what Jesus came to bring us. That's why we need to enter into a new covenant—because all of us sin. All of us sin and fall short of the glory of God. So what



am I saying here? I'm saying that we can't be righteous, we can't be of God, if we're going to have sin, but we all have sin. So what do we do? Jesus said, "Come and make a covenant with me—a covenant that you will strive to keep my commandments. And I will give you my Holy Spirit. If you allow that Spirit to run in your life, that Spirit will give you the strength to overcome those things that are in your life. That Holy Spirit will give you the power to allow me to do my work in you, and to get rid of that sin that's in your life, that Holy Spirit of promise that will make it so that you can no longer sin." Jesus says He will give us His righteousness. It doesn't mean that He gives us something that we don't have. It means that He, by His power, allows us to be righteous. So can any of us keep this covenant? No. If it were possible, if I could just decide tomorrow to not sin, then Jesus didn't need to come. If you said well, how can I be righteous? He could just say, "Well, go be like Doug Smith."

But He can't do that, because none of us is without sin, and so Jesus had to come. If I say, how can I be righteous? He says, go be like Jesus. Do what Jesus did. And if you are willing, then come and see. Do what I'm telling you to do. See the difference it makes in your life.

So like, Nathaniel, we have to make the decision. What do we want to do? Are we willing? Are we really willing this morning to keep that covenant that we have made? My prayer today is that we are. But what can we do?

I have a question for you. What has the Lord put on your heart this morning? As you have been sitting here listening to these words going out of my mouth, what has the Lord put on your heart this morning? Has He reminded you of something that you need to be doing that you're not? Or has He reminded you of something that you are doing that you need to not be doing?

Then go and do it. See what happens if you will do it, or stop doing it. Just because Jesus told you this morning that you needed to do it, you will see your knowledge of Him grow. You will see your relationship with Him grow. The knowledge that you get won't be book knowledge. It won't be catechism or knowing all the scriptures that say something. It will be your personal knowledge of Him and His love for you and that love will grow and develop. Like Nathaniel, you will see the miracles He will perform in your life and nothing will be able to take that testimony from you. Alma 17:47-48 says: *But if ye keep the commandments of God, and do with these things which are sacred, according to that which the Lord doth command you (for you must appeal unto the Lord for all things whatsoever ye must do with them), behold no power of earth or hell can take them from you, for God is powerful to the fulfilling of all his words: For he will fulfill all his promises which he shall make unto you, for he has fulfilled his promises which he has made unto our fathers.*

Brothers and sisters, your time has come. It's time for you to take your place with the Master. It's time for you to take your place in the kingdom. **Come and see.**

The Empty Bobbin *Dorothy Phipps*

For a time our family lived in Afton, Iowa, which was just 10 miles east of Creston, Iowa. I remember one time when I was growing up and visited my grandparents in Tingley, that we came to Creston to attend church. It was a small group who met in the Public Library on Sunday mornings since they did not have a church building. Of course, when we moved to Afton we started attending the group there. About the same time we moved to Afton, another family (Harry Propst family) moved to Creston. We drove over every Sunday morning and back again at night for study class.

We had a small group, but there we met some of the most wonderful people who became our life-long friends. Among these were the Dick and Ruth Outhouse family. We had small children along with several other families. It soon was evident that we needed our own church building where our little families could worship and fellowship together. We began to look into building or buying a church. Most of us were not affluent and so it would mean of lot of hard work to come up with enough money to do anything. There were 12 people in the congregation who were bread winners. We began to make plans. Eventually a lot was purchased at the corner of Elm and Prairie Sts. As I recall, I think we had a total of \$750 so purchased the lot with that amount. Then we began raising funds with the hope of being able to raise enough to build a basement for the time being and then continue to raise funds until we had enough to build the main floor on top of the basement.

Some of the men went out to the businesses and solicited funds from those who would like to contribute. Many were favorable. The ladies decided we would have a bake sale every month plus a bazaar twice a year to raise money. It was amazing the amount of food such a few people could produce, each one contributing whatever they did best. Some made chicken pies, some chicken and noodles, some cakes, pies, bread, rolls, cinnamon rolls and donuts. We always sold out completely. We had regular customers who would buy every month.

My parents had chickens so they often furnished chickens for some of the ladies who would make chicken and noodles. I well remember on one occasion when my mother and I were delivering two chickens to some of the ladies who made noodles. We always tied the two chickens' legs together and put them in the trunk of the car and drove into Creston to deliver them. Mama parked the car and we got out of it. She opened the trunk and somehow those chickens had gotten the rope that held them together loose, so that when the truck was opened they flew out in a flurry. They ran across the street and between the houses with Mama and I in close pursuit. What a time! Those chicken could run faster (and fly) faster than we could. We must have been quite a sight. I think we must have chased them for about 10 minutes before we finally cornered them and they were captured. I have thought of that many times as my mother wasn't really well at that time, but we never gave up. Those chickens were going to accompany those noodles at almost any price.



Mama and I along with some others made angel food cakes which were always in demand. But Mama and my specialty were our raised donuts. We each made about 12 dozen donuts every month plus 8 loaves of bread plus several dozen cookies. I would plan to have the donuts ready when the children came in from school so they could help dip the donuts. At first they loved it but I think it eventually got to be a chore. Twelve dozen = 144 donuts. That is a lot of dipping. I made the glaze from powdered sugar and hot water. After dipping the donuts into the glaze they were hung on dowels to drip dry. Then they would dry with a nice glaze and would melt in your mouth.

It was indeed a sacrifice as buying that many ingredients mounted up each month but we were all trying to sacrifice, even the children. They would give up something so they could give their nickel to buy another brick for the church. I think sometimes I was not too wise as I would not let the family eat very many of the goodies so we could have more to take to the sale. I have regretted this over the years.

We worked hard getting ready for the bizzarres too. Our sewing machines were running night and day. Ruth Outhouse came up with the idea to have apron sales, so we all worked on making really nice aprons which sold very well. Ruth also made darling stuffed sock dolls. She had several started that needed to be dressed so I volunteered to help with them. I would sew late into the night as that was about the only time left in the day. I was trying to finish sewing some of the little nightgowns for the dolls on this particular night as the sale was the next day. It was very late and I was getting so tired. I sewed up one of the little gowns and was almost to the end of the same when the bobbin ran out and then I also found out that I had sewn the gown wrong side out so now I would have to rip out that seam. I ripped out the seam and sewed it again properly. When I finished, it occurred to me that I had not refilled the bobbin yet the seam was sewn. I took the bobbin out and sure enough it was still empty, but that seam was sewn. God gave us lots of little miracles to let us know He was aware of our efforts to serve Him

One of our ladies, (Alice Noftsgger) did beautiful embroidery work. She had made a lovely cut work embroidered card table cloth. It was really exquisite. She sent it to the sale with a price tag of \$125.00. That was a lot of money even though she did have many hours of work in it. We just didn't have many people who came to our sales who could spend that kind of money. Lots of people admired it that morning of the sale but no buyer.

Our sale was held in the old ISU building and it was so cold in there. It was almost noon and the sale was almost to come to an end when someone decided we should have a little prayer meeting to see what to do about selling that cloth. It would mean so much to the building fund. Well, after a few minutes someone came to the conclusion that I should take the cloth and walk about four blocks to Dr. Paragus' office and show him the cloth and see if I could sell it to him. I was no sales person. At that time I was very shy. I took the cloth and started walking. I told the Lord I didn't know what to say, as if He didn't already know that.

I reached the doctor's office and walked up to the receptionist desk and told her I would like to speak with the

doctor. I had never met him personally so didn't know him. She asked me what my name was and went into his office. When she returned she said he would speak to me in a few minutes. In a short time he invited me into his office. I was shaking in my boots. I said, "O.K., Lord, what do I do now?" I took the cloth out of the box and explained that one of our ladies had made this and showed him what fine work she had done and now we wanted to sell it for our church building fund. He said, "Oh my wife's birthday is tomorrow and I am getting her a new car but this would be a little something nice to give her too." He sat down and wrote a check out for the amount. I thanked him and ran almost all the way back to the sale where the ladies were waiting. There was much rejoicing for we knew the Lord had answered our prayers.



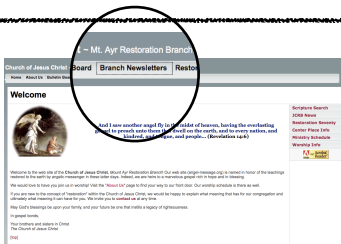
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And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for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

Editor's Thoughts

The Power of Your Words

Recently I came across a booklet God's Creative Power for Healing by Charles Capps. One of the things I found most interesting as I read this book was his statement that many people that want to be healed talk sickness and suffering until they establish that image in themselves. The thoughts and words they use produce a vivid image and they live within the bounds and limits of that image. He wrote about an article "Patient Knows Best" in the August 1991 Reader's Digest. More than 2800 men and women 65 years and older were asked if their health was excellent, good, fair or poor? They found that those who rated their health as poor were 4 to 5 times more likely to die in the next four years compared to those who said their health was excellent. People who think they are in poor health will talk about poor health and seem to live out that reality of themselves even unto death. D & C 119:9a says to *cease to complain of pain and sickness and distress of body*.

I got to thinking about myself and how I respond when people ask me how I am feeling. I think many times I start listing all the things that I am feeling that are negative. Charles Capps claims that **words are the most powerful thing in the universe**.

It is not just health that words affect but everything in our lives. If we constantly are negative about what could happen in a given situation, most of the time if you look back it has happened.

I've decided that this next month before I say anything I am going to take the time to think if it is positive and if not, I will keep it to myself. Hopefully, others of you will join me in this exercise to see if we can curb our words and only share positive, uplifting words. *Life and death are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.* (Proverbs 18:21)