

Church of Jesus Christ

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Mount Ayr Restoration Branch NEWSLETTER

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But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. Isaiah 40:31

And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is gathered; or, in other words, whithersoever the saints are gathered, thither will the eagles be gathered together; or, thither will the remainder be gathered together. Luke 17:37



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Reflections on Life
Priest Rodney Bastow
January 16, 2022
Mount Ayr, IA

I want to share Matthew 25:35-40. *Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee; or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in; or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?*

It used to be when the schedule came out I looked to see if I was on it. Now it's not if but when I am on it. That's good. Speaking frequently is a challenge for me. It takes me awhile to come up with new material. About 10 days ago I got to thinking about today and what I might say. I was a big overwhelmed as I knew it was going to be a busy week for me. How would I find the time to come up with something to say? As I was thinking on that all of a sudden it was like I heard this hymn, 'Did You Think to Pray?'

*Did you think to pray?
 In the name of Christ our Savior
 Did you sooth for loving favor
 as a shield today?*

*When you've met with great temptation
 Did you think to pray?
 By his dying love and merit
 Did you claim the Holy Spirit
 as your guide today?*

*When your heart was filled with anger
 Did you think to pray?
 Did you plead for grace my brother
 That you might forgive another
 who had crossed your way*

*Oh, how praying rests the weary
 Prayer will change the night to day
 So when life seems dark and dreary
 Don't forget to pray, don't forget to pray.*

As that song came to me I felt close to the Holy Spirit. I thought, 'What's been going on in my life? What's been happening?' Well, folks, it's kind of sad but almost every day I get on Facebook or I read an email and someone that I have been connected to has passed away. I suppose with Covid and everything, we should be used to that by now but it's difficult for me to understand how that happens all the time like this. I suppose it's because I'm getting older and there's more people that I've known to have this happen to.

As I thought about those people that had passed away recently, I thought about what their lives had meant to me. I had a connection with each one of them and there was something special about them. I thought I could share that. I could share that with you folks this morning and so that's what I intend to do.

I thank God for the blessing of knowing these people, and I thank Him for this opportunity to share about them. I pray that we will be blessed by His Holy Spirit as I share this with you this morning.

The first one I'm going to talk about is Ira Dee. Right before Christmas we lost Ira Dee to Covid. Ira Dee was a first cousin of mine on my Dad's side. It's strange I used to see Ira Dee a lot when I was a kid. Growing up we would see each other at least 3 or 4 times a year but then once Grandpa died when I was about 15 we no longer got together, not as a big group like that. As cousins grew up you just didn't see them any more so I hadn't seen Ira Dee for a long time. A few years ago we had a graveside service that I was in charge of for his oldest brother and he came to that which was kind of a surprise but I was glad to see him.

Ira Dee was a gentle giant, a big guy. I don't know where he got it from on that side of the family because it didn't happen to any of the rest of us Bastows. He was the last of my Aunt Mildred's children. He had two other brothers that both died tragically many years back. This older brother that I told you about hadn't spoken to Ira Dee for a long time. They were not on good terms with each other. Fortunately, right before Eldon died they kind of made up so by the time he died they were on good terms again.

I looked at a lot of tributes to Ira Dee and it didn't look like he had many friends. He did die of Covid which meant that he died alone and that's really sad in my opinion. I am not sure what meaning his life had. I don't know much about his faith. I would have shared my faith with him at his brother's service but I don't know if he knew Jesus. Right toward the end when Ira Dee was fighting for his last breath, literally, his family was on Facebook and they asked for prayers. They wanted a miracle. What does that tell me about them? It tells me if they wanted that that they knew Jesus and Ira Dee probably did too. You know what? I now know that Ira Dee knows Jesus also.

I think it's sad that families aren't as close as what they used to be. It used to be that you knew all your first cousins and you saw them on a regular basis. You knew your second cousins and your great aunts and uncles. You knew those people but it doesn't happen now and I think that's sad.

About the same time that Ira Dee died I had another cousin Becky who lost a daughter. Mary's death was quite a shock because she was only in her 50s. I don't know what happened to Mary other than she died in her sleep. Now I am fairly close to Becky and we see each other every two or three years but I never met Mary. I wish I had because I found a tribute to her that told of how amazing she was. It goes like this: *It's with a heavy heart that I share with you all the passing of my brother's birth mother. Mary's life, in my opinion, would make a great book about the redemption that only Jesus can bring to one's life. When my Mom met her she was a confused 14-year old pregnant girl in her class at*



Lincoln High School. Her life wasn't on a good course. The next couple of years were rocky but with the help of others, Mary's life slowly got turned around. Fast forward a couple more years and Mary received her Master's Degree in Business Management. She worked at a local domestic shelter in Des Moines and even was hired by DMAC to be a trainer for the Department of Education. Talk about full circle. Mary has been called Mom to a countless number of children and adults. She was so welcoming to all. Her latest adoption was to a sweet little girl she even had named after my Mom. She will definitely be leaving a big hole in a lot of hearts that will need our prayers to help them get through this time.

I look back on my journey with Mary and her family and the role my Mom played in it that I got to watch as a young child. It's such a sweet reminder to me to not be afraid to step into the sticky situation. To get right in there and walk the road with others. Often times as Christians we have this beautiful fairy tale in our heads about what leading someone to Christ looks like. The reality is most of the time it's not easy. It's not sunshine and it's not fancy dinners. It's hard, time consuming and maybe just a gallon of milk but the outcome will be beautiful and will be a contribution to God's handiwork. Thank you, God, for bringing Mary into my Mom's classroom. Thank you to my Mom for listening and obeying God to step into Mary's life. Because of that generations will be saved. Thank you most of all for the promise that we will see Mary again some day.

I think we need to be like Mary, to not be afraid to reach out to others, to step into that sticky situation. We need to understand what it looks like to lead people to Christ and it is hard. It is time consuming. Maybe it is just a gallon of milk but the outcome is beautiful and it's a great contribution to God's handiwork.

A week ago I had another shock when I lost a former student. She was also in her 50s and I would like to share a tribute that I wrote to her family. I had Lisa as a student when I taught at Grand Valley. She was a joy to have in class. She was very quiet but always with a twinkle in her eye that made me think she was up to something. I wish I could have had more students like Lisa. The Bible says that the meek will inherit the earth. I think it means that these people are closer to Jesus. Lisa was one of those. We should try to be more like her. Scriptures also say blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted and that's what I am praying for. I hope you will be comforted because of your faith in Jesus and a resurrection. May God bless you during this time.

About the same time that Lisa died Randy passed away. Randy died due to heart problems. By the way of all these people that I am going to tell you about only one of them died from Covid. I thought that was interesting. I first heard of Randy when I was in high school. He was a basketball star for Creston Community College. That tells you how long ago it was. I enjoyed reading the Creston paper because it told about his highlights in the games that he played. To me he was a celebrity, a big star.

Once he graduated though I kind of lost track of him. I didn't know what happened to him. Fast forward about 10-20 years, I was a principal at Rockport and I saw him one

day as a coach at a neighboring school. When I went to West Nodaway I was pleasantly surprised to see that he was on staff there. He was an excellent coach and his players did well for him. The kids loved him, not just his players but all the students. Randy had the ability to take some misfit kid, some kid that couldn't walk and chew gum at the same time and make him feel like a king.

His funeral service in Creston was online. The lady who presided over it did an excellent job. In her message she talked about Randy using his talents and trying to be better every day. She referred to this scripture from Romans 12:3-8 NIV version. For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your[a] faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead,[b] do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

I look at us here today. We all have different gifts. We might be a leader. We might be a presider. We might be a speaker. We might be a singer. We might be a really good prayer. We might be a good teacher. We might be very giving. We might be very good with technology. We might be very good at playing Mr. & Mrs. Santa Claus. We might be a very good pheasant hunter. Wait a minute I don't see that person here. We might be a very good dessert maker. We need to be the best that we can be. We need to do the best we can in serving God.

Ronnie died the same day that Randy did. Ronnie died of a broken heart. When we moved to town Ron and Betty were our next door neighbors. They had an area underneath our shade tree. Their house sat here and their garage sat here and they could sit out here in the shade so a lot of summer nights they would be sitting there and we would go over and talk to them. They became just like family. It was so much fun to go talk to them, to learn about their family, to learn about what Maloy, IA had been like, about all these things.

Then a couple of years later Betty died and Ronnie was devastated. He didn't understand why it couldn't have been him that went first. He had a golf cart and everyday, practically rain or shine, he would take that golf cart across town to the cemetery to visit Betty's grave. We tried to visit with him as often as we could because for a while he would sit out there alone and we would go and try to console him. I think he enjoyed our visits. He told a son-in-law that we were his favorite neighbors.

Sometimes you don't have to do a lot. You just have to spend time with others and show them that you care. I'll miss Ronnie a lot. I learned from Ronnie to love my wife, to love my family and to love my neighbor.



We were all saddened by the loss of Steve Smith. I had known Steve since we were kids and there were several things I liked about him. I liked the beauty he saw in geods and the jewelry that he made. I enjoyed the songs that he composed and sang. Most of all I liked how he found joy in life. Steve walked and talked with God. I have heard him speak under the influence of the Holy Spirit and it was real. We can learn by that. If we were more like Steve I believe Zion would be closer to a reality. We need to have the joy that Steve had that comes with knowing our Heavenly Father.

A couple of nights ago as I finished what I was going to say today, we got the call that Debbie had lost a cousin. Most of you know who Tim Tebow is. He's a former quarterback and tried to be a baseball player. He's best known because before kneeling became popular in football, he would kneel to pray. Tim posted this message:

He said the government might be preparing us for a cashless society but it was predicted by the Bible, already designed. If put into place this just means our time is getting closer. I'm not worried about what is going to happen but just looking up and getting ready. While the devil is preparing people for the anti-christ, God is preparing people for the rapture. I don't know when the rapture will take place but I do believe it could be soon. I also believe this is the time that God is giving us to repent and we need to get the gospel message out. Until the good Lord calls me away from this world to go home, I want to make it clear that I believe in Jesus Christ as the true Lord and Savior. I am human. I am broken and I fail a lot. I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. I believe that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins and that He rose from the dead on the 3rd day. He loves us all dearly, far more than we deserve and forgives our sins when we repent. His word in John 3:16 says, . . . Whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life.

In Matthew the 24th chapter we find these words. *But of that day and hour no one knoweth; no, not the angels of God in heaven, but my Father only. But as it was in the days of Noah, so it shall be also at the coming of the Son of Man. For it shall be with them as it was in the days which were before the flood; for until the day that Noah entered into the ark, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. Then shall be fulfilled that which is written, that, In the last days, Two shall be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two shall be grinding at the mill; the one taken and the other left. And what I say unto one, I say unto all men; Watch, therefore, for ye know not at what hour hour Lord doth come. But know this, if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to have been broken up; but would have been ready. Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh. (43-51)*

The Glory of God ***Apostle Kent Pedersen***

February 13, 2022

Lamoni, IA

I have said oftentimes if you want to know what's wrong with the world look in the mirror. I have never stood before a body of people and saw my own reflection back at me so it's going to be a constant reminder to keep my focus and recognize the purpose for which we are assembled.

I want to also say that as I was preparing I ran into scriptures in two places, one's in Proverbs and one's in the Book of Mormon, that say basically teach your children the ways that they should go and when they're old they will not depart from them. They say it in words somewhat differently. Alma was chastising his son Corianton and he said, Teach these things freely to your children so they will know about Jesus and what He's done. Proverbs says to train up a child in the way he should and when he is old he will not depart from it.

The more and more I study, the more and more I am amazed at how many times the Book of Mormon and the Bible have correlated the scriptures. They don't say the same things but they mean the same. Let me show you a set of cards that I have made. I don't have any idea how I got the information, but I made them into little cards that you could stick in your scriptures. It says "The God of the Bible is the God of the Book of Mormon." It says Jesus is God in the flesh; There is only one God; God is without beginning or ending; God does not change; God has never sinned; God is omniscient; God is omnipresent and omnipotent. If you are interested I brought some to give to you. They come in handy. Many times we get in conversations with people and as soon as they hear the words Book of Mormon, they're done. The conversation is over. Let's go on to something else. These scriptures are scriptures that inform people that the Book of Mormon and the Bible tell the same story. They just use different words because they come from different backgrounds. It is a wonderful thing to use when you are sharing with people who don't believe. If you say it comes from the Book of Mormon they are going to cut you off. Henry Shaffer used to say because they hear the words Book of Mormon the ears go closed. He said, 'I use the record of Joseph and then they don't know what you are talking about and they are listening to the words. It works really well.'

I just want to share a little out of Alma about Corianton. He's talking to his son and chastising him for doing some things that are wrong, boasting in his own strength and wisdom, ignoring his ministry. That's a powerful one - ignoring your ministry. He did some pretty awful things and instead of tending to his ministry with which he was entrusted, he did things of the world that weren't good. Now that's the key right there but here's another key that he shares in all of the things that he did wrong. You don't really have to delineate all that you do wrong, not that everybody here couldn't sit and remember and think of things that they did that they wished they hadn't done and would like an opportunity to repent but the person's gone or they're so far away you don't have an opportunity or if you repent, you feel like the memories reinvigorate the fire and irritation.



There's a lot of things that stop us but he says, 'command your children to do good and turn to the Lord.' The bottom line is with his son's ministry, he says that you should have taken time to teach people about Jesus. This was the ministry that he was called to. The purpose of that ministry was to bring people to the Kingdom of God.

Now think about your life and the times you spend thinking. What do you think about when you don't think about anything? What fills your mind? Is it how you are going to get your washer or dryer fixed? How are you going to get the oil changed in your car. What do you have to do tomorrow that's going to keep you moving ahead. We get caught up in all these worldly things. Sometimes those worldly things turn to our condemnation because we forget the ministry because we're caught up in these worldly things.

The worldly things aren't always bad. Now I am blessed. I have a lot of grandchildren and two of my grandsons play basketball at CPRS. I have been telling them that if their team would play together, there is nobody in their league that would beat them. One of my grandsons ended up with a concussion and he has had to miss some games but the biggest thing he missed was practice. Now anybody that's done anything knows that practice is not the most fun thing to do whether you are talking about playing the piano or the trumpet or basketball. It is hard work. The fun comes out on the court.

Well, they had two teams that just absolutely beat them, ran away from them. So I asked my oldest grandson, 'What in the world did you do differently so that you won.' He said, 'We just played like down defense which meant that you had everyone of the 5 guys out on the court do their job.' What would the church be like if everyone that was here in Lamoni right now did their job? That's the purpose of scripture to bring people to Him. Christ came to take away the sins and He came to declare glad tidings unto His people. Then Alma goes on to say, *And now my son, this was the ministry unto which ye were called. . .* (Alma 19:23) That's a scary thing being called out for missing the ministry that you are called to and then because you are doing what you are doing you are drawing people away.

All of these scriptures are designed to teach us. To teach us to remember who we are but more importantly to remember who Jesus is. I think if we contemplate that we're going to come up with a lot of answers but the scriptures have the best answer.

Who can tell me the purpose of the coming of Jesus? He came to die for our sins absolutely and bring salvation to us. He restored a relationship with the Lord. That was His purpose. I don't know how many of you read those little introductory things at the beginning of the chapters in the Bible and the Book of Mormon. They are quite amazing. *Christ died to reconcile man to God.* (Romans 5 Intro.)

Everything we say about repentance is very important but the bottom line is He came to reconcile man to God. Now Lamoni is a small town. I was here for a couple of years in college. Think quickly about a number of people that you know that rattle your cage and irritate you more than others. Which one of those people would you not like to know about the Lord, Jesus Christ and have the opportunity

to be reconciled to their God? Who do you want to tread on? If you really have a heart for God even though you are kind of wishy washy sometimes, you aren't going to find anyone that you want cut out because salvation is the best thing for us. That's why Jesus came to reconcile us to God.

Here's another important concept that just because we are baptized and have had hands laid on us and we have the Holy Ghost within us, and some of us may even preach the gospel, it doesn't mean that we're going to be free from sin. It doesn't mean we're going to be free from saying untoward things and causing problems because of the words that come out of our mouths. It doesn't mean that at all. What it means is that the Spirit of God within you is going to spark something that's going to cause you to want to repent and to apologize and put yourself in their hands.

When you've done something to somebody and hurt them in a way that you didn't intend to and you say, I'm sorry, that's all me. I'm sorry. I am sorry. We taught our kids that phrase, I'm sorry. The next one was, will you forgive me? That's the strongest part of that phrase. If you have offended someone owning up to your offense is a big thing. The world doesn't like to do it but going beyond that, when you put that phrase 'will you forgive me' in there you are now giving them power over you. They don't have to forgive you and it could be really ugly. But you have allowed yourself to do as Jesus did. You stated what was wrong and you offered them opportunity to forgive if they chose to. That's what the scriptures are to teach us. There's no answer to that. That's what we should do. Remember the proverb - train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he won't depart from it. Teach him that when he makes mistakes he should apologize and not only just say, 'I'm sorry' but 'will you forgive me' which puts them in a humble position.

When you think about what the scriptures teach us, that gives us a very strong indication of where we stand if we can come up with 'will you forgive me.' This is what Jesus did and Paul said this, *'God commended His love to us in that while we were yet sinners, He died for us.'* He didn't wait for us to be perfect. His death covers everyone. 'While we were yet sinners.' Now who of us wants to intervene in that path that God has them on that's leading them to Him by doing something even more stupid than you did in the beginning. Life is not easy and it is full of variants and it is full of change and it is sometimes wild.

In Helaman 2:74-75 it says, *And now my sons, remember; remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation, that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds; yea, his shafts in the whirlwind; Yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you, to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build, they can not fall.*

It's amazing the things you learn when you are out traveling and trying to do some ministry. Brian Short and I went to visit this guy that Brian had kept up with for a long time. I grew up in the area and so I knew of this man. I never



really had a lot of conversation with him but he had some difficulties in trying to find where the Lord was preached. He got condemned by some people where he attended before and it was really a struggle for him so when we were up there and talked about the gospel, he just lightened up.

One of the stories he told was that in World War II he was on a deck of a battleship. Anybody that knows history knows the Japanese used Kamikaze pilots and they would load up their planes with bombs and fly them into the ships to destroy them. Even though they were getting shot down they would fly into the ship and blow it up. He was out on deck when all this was happening. He was just standing there doing whatever had to be done as calmly and collectedly as anybody ever did. One of his buddies said, 'How can you remain so calm?' He said, 'Because I committed to memory this scripture.' *And now my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation, that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds; yea, his shafts in the whirlwind; Yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you, to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build, they can not fall.* (2 Helaman 2:74-75) He repeated that to the man on the ship. To him it was awesome but that guy didn't even hear that.

You see when we root ourselves in God and we establish ourselves upon the rock of Jesus Christ, it doesn't matter what happens. You make mistakes, it's OK. You repent. You ask people to forgive you. You move on knowing that the power of God is working for you. The whole purpose of the scriptures is to get us to be God-like, the whole purpose. Because when you know the truth everything else that seems to be a bother to you goes away. It leaves.

Some of my kids get so tired of me quoting different scriptures. Proverbs 25:2 is one of my favorites, *It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honor of kings is to search out a matter.* The glory of God is to hide up a thing and it is the honor of kings to search out the matter. Why do you think it's the glory of God to hide up something? So He can reveal things to us. How does He do that? He reveals it to our minds. He reveals it through somebody's words but He also reveals Himself through the scriptures.

God says I am a jealous God. We know all those stories about jealous husbands and wives and what are they wanting more from the people that are around them. What does a king want more than anything else from his subjects: to be loved, to be honored, to be thought of. God is a jealous God. He wants to be loved. He wants to be thought of. He wants us to have communication with Him and so when we are doing those things we are doing what He wants us to do. If we search Him out, guess what? He is going to show Himself to us. Now does that automatically transfer over to doing? No. There is a process but eventually you get to the point where you recognize the things that you are doing. If they aren't honoring God, you are going to quit doing them. That's what Alma told Corianton. 'Look what you did. It's a terrible thing. It's a very abhorrent thing because the people stopped listening to me because of your deeds. They don't

have opportunity to hear the words of salvation because they have shut their ears due to your doings.'

The purpose of our life here is to represent God. Jesus came to reconcile us to His God. Proverbs also in 16:9 says, *A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps.* Now think back over your life. It doesn't always have to be something that's magnificent and wonderful and fantastic. Sometimes it is just mundane. Although I don't want my wife to think I'm calling her mundane but my last year coming back to Graceland I was told, 'This year you will find the woman that you will marry.' Sometime in October I actually met Cheri and by April we were engaged and a year from that next May we were married. Did God speak truth to me?

There are so many times that things like that happen. I don't even give it a thought. I'm not thinking about it and all of a sudden here it is. It doesn't hurt anybody to sit back and reflect on their lives and as you reflect you are going to come across little stories and think, 'Oh, yeah I remember that,' and think if it hadn't been for that I wouldn't have been there. I went to another college for 3 years and flunked out and became a teacher. If I hadn't flunked out of college and had a change of heart I wouldn't have ended up at Graceland pursuing an education degree. I wouldn't have ended up at Graceland finding my wife.

That's pretty amazing. I've always heard that girls went to Graceland to get their MRS degree but a lot of guys go to Graceland to look for a woman to marry. It's kind of interesting because Graceland for years was thought of as the church college and where would you go find somebody that would be a mate for you except at a church assembly. That's one of the things that we could do to change this world is to make that college a light upon a hill. We have kind of turned away from that path.

We know that God wants to reconcile us to Him. Think of the children of Israel. They had finally been released from Egypt, and the Egyptians were so glad to get rid of them, they gave them money, gold, silver. They piled it on them. Then they are in the dessert and they find out that Pharaoh's army is chasing them. Pharaoh's army was the strongest army in the world at the time, at least the known world. So they were fleeing and got to this big body of water called the Red Sea. They were fearful because their lives were at stake. What was going to happen? Moses finally said, 'Shut up. Just watch! See the salvation of the Lord,' and all of a sudden the waters parted and it dried up and they went across on dry ground.

Do you remember what they did on the other side? They built an altar and sang praises to God to their God who just saved them. Dave Wilkinson ministered in the bad sections of New York City and established a church and converted many souls. He said it was wonderful that they sang the song of praise but they sang it on the wrong side of the Red Sea. Why do we have to wait to see the hand of the Lord before we praise Him? A man's heart devises his ways but God directs his steps in all ways and in all things. God wants us to come back to Him. He wants us to praise Him. Why don't we praise Him knowing that He is going to do



something for us. It needs to be done instead of waiting to see.

The Egyptian side of the Red Sea was ignorance and the other side of the Red Sea was knowledge. Does God want us to praise Him because we know Him or does he want us to speak to Him and then turn our faith into knowledge because of the things that we have seen Him do for us. That's what the scriptures are trying to do. They are trying to teach us this.

Do you remember the conversation that Enoch was having with God? He said, 'God, why are you crying. Look at all this stuff you have. Look at all the people that you have created. Look at all the worlds you have. Why are you crying?' 'Because of the attitude of my people they are going to have to be in prison.' That's why He was crying because they didn't listen. In Genesis 7:40 He says to Enoch, *And in the garden of Eden gave I unto man his agency; and unto thy brethren have I said, and also gave commandment, that they should love one another; and that they should choose me their Father.* Two things He required and that is a golden thread that runs throughout the scriptures. Two things - they should love one another and then they should choose God as their Father. Think about it, if we loved one another, (even atheists love one another,) but God requires of His people and He says it's a commandment but He's not going to change your agency. Choose Me your Father. Where would that take us? Would it take us to the football game on Sunday? Would it take us to the baseball game Saturday night? Would it take us to the home of a widow who has no one to talk with? How many times do we hear and shake our heads and say how terrible it is. God does things for a purpose. Good men are taken from us for a purpose although it is hard for us to see it.

Then in the 6th chapter of Genesis verse 61, *Therefore I give unto you a commandment, to teach these things freely unto your children. . . .* And what are they? They're the things of life. They're the things that are important. All men everywhere must repent or they can in no wise inherit the Kingdom of God.

We're like the children of Israel because we haven't really totally understood the Kingdom of God but we know that the Kingdom of God can be within us. Think of Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 13 that we call the chapter of love. It was told us that charity does not think evil. I confess there are a lot of times I end up not thinking fairly because I let the world interfere with my love for my fellow man. It says, *Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth (vaunting yourself is putting yourself above others) not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.*(4-6) Here's the real kicker because we all have an understanding of what's right and what's not right, in the 7th verse it says, *Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.* How much does all encompass?

Which one of your fellowman is not included in ALL. I'm not saying that there are not people that have ulterior motives but we believe in the righteousness of

people. We believe, and if they're not doing something righteous and they're trying to do something against us and we don't hold it against them, who's hurt? Who gets hurt when we are jealous of others or have a problem with others? We do. Very much so because that seed gets in there and it grows and it cankers and it destroys. Does that absolve the person that is doing whatever he is doing? No.

It doesn't absolve them from doing that. What it does is it cleanses you. If we walk with the Lord then there's going to be nothing but hope. That doesn't mean you won't have problems. I have had two knee replacements. I have had Covid. I have had prostate surgery. Go down the list of things you have had. Go back to Helaman 2:74-75. Fasten yourself to the rock of Jesus Christ who is your Redeemer and when the devil brings his storms and he will bring his storms, try to do something good. Even though it rains on our parade and we have forgotten our umbrella and raincoat and the adversary brings his armies against, we have no need of fear because greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world.

Genesis 6:53 says, *And he also said unto him, If thou wilt, turn unto me and hearken unto my voice, and believe, and repent of all thy transgressions, and be baptized, even in water, in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth, which is Jesus Christ, the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, asking all things in his name, and whatsoever ye shall ask it shall be given you.*

There's another part in here where it calls that Holy Ghost the record of heaven. Think of it! What is a record? What would the record of heaven be and what is the purpose of that? Genesis 6:64 says, *Therefore it is given to abide in you, the record of heaven. . . .* God has revealed enough to us so that we can represent Him so that the world would learn about His salvation and grace. That's our job. There isn't a person that's been baptized or a person that's been taught by a parent who understands that is not a missionary. We're all supposed to be sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ and to that end Paul writes in Romans after all this stuff we have, all this stuff God has done for us, all the love that we receive because of His graciousness and His goodness and His mercy, we sin. Paul, instead of talking about all our sins, just jumps right to it. In the 1st verse of chapter 6 of Romans he says, *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death. . . .*

Do you grab the analogy? You can't be a seed forever without producing something or you die. There are seeds that don't do anything. You plant them in the ground and you water them and get fertilizer. They are supposed to be productive but occasionally there are seeds that say, 'I don't want to become something else. I want to stay a seed.' What happens to that seed? It dies. A seed that responds to the nature that is within it will produce a plant and that plant will produce something that will benefit the world and all mankind. So be a seed, be willing, be planted and recognize



that you are planted buried by baptism. Not just any baptism but by His baptism.

Let's dwell on that just a little bit. For he that is dead to sin is freed from sin. How much power does sin have over our lives when we have given it up to the Lord? When we recognize that that which is within us is greater than that which is in the world, what power does anything have over us except we give it power.

What's the purpose of that? What's the purpose of raising up a body of people who know God so well that they know before they even start: #1 it's going to be a blessing and #2 whatever comes at us is going to be able to be handled by the power of the Holy Ghost that is within us. If we have nothing to fear why do we fear? Isaiah tells us in 41:10 *Fear thou not; for I am with thee.* . . . What a powerful statement and who is that given to? It's given to everyone that has taken the name of Jesus Christ upon them. Peter says, 'If God be for us who can be against us?'

Every place I go I find people like you guys, wonderful people who know the scriptures, want to live their lives but something serious happens and all of a sudden they fall apart. Zion wasn't built by a bunch of people that didn't have confidence that God was going to be there to help them and that He would fight their battles.

Lamoni was a Stake in the church at one time and it was a very prominent place and very prominent people came here. Elbert A. Smith I think was the editor of The Herald and his wife was involved in the newspaper too. They were here putting out that newspaper. Elbert A. Smith was one of the most impressive patriarchs the church has ever had. He understood. There was a man by the name of Joseph Smith III that lived just down the street. This city has been blessed by powerful men and can you imagine that those men that lived here at one time did not pray for the likes of you? Can you imagine that you are set here in Lamoni on your own, just by the blowing of the wind and that you are here just because it is a good place to land? Can you not imagine that you are here because God wants you here and if you understand that the question is - what does God want you to do? Repent and turn unto Him and teach people His ways. Start with your own children. He says, . . . *for this is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality, and eternal life of man.* (D & C 22:23b) That's God's word.

Who do you work for? God. Shouldn't it be your work. Shouldn't it be my work. The only time we receive the ministry is from the pulpit. Have you ever tried to do ministry for other people on the most unusual places. God wants us to speak His name. He wants us to speak His name and demonstrate by our walk in life that we understand what humility and sacrifice is and what charity is. He says that man should be anxiously engaged in a good work so He's not only telling us what to do He's telling us what we need to do with it.

The hardest part is teaching our children. We know all their words and sometimes we use their words to give them a hard time but you know what? They weren't given to anybody else. They were given to us. Our children are ours. It's our responsibility to do with them what we can do with them and when we can't do anything more for them, we can

pray. There isn't a family alive I'll bet, well that's a horrible thing to say, that hasn't had someone in their family do some things that they don't like.

We have a son that ran away from the Lord, ran away from his priesthood before he ever accepted it. He just gave up and he chased the world. Remember, a man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps and now that young man has just recently received and accepted a priesthood call. To a father it's amazing to see the transformation because now he isn't absorbed in himself. He is starting to think of others and he corrects his dad when I say and do some stuff I shouldn't do not because he's in the priesthood but because he's starting to think like God.

The word of warning comes to each of us. It's never too late as long as you're drawing a breath and have the opportunity. Believe me it's not always easy. I was in the hospital for 10 days with Covid. I thought it was pretty ridiculous that they were keeping me there. I thought at one point I was just bound down. I was in darkness. I couldn't do anything. I did have a phone and one day Cheri called me and I told her I was ready to check out and go home. I was done. She said, 'Have you talked to God about it?' I almost gave her the smart aleck answer that the Brother of Jared went 7 years without talking to God but then I understood immediately.

One time we had a difference. It was a tough one. I was a new pastor and I knew I couldn't do what I had to do without her. I knew we had this issue between us and I knew exactly what she was going to say. I was laying there and I said, 'OK, Lord, with your help I can do this so I turned over and said what I needed to say and she said exactly what I knew she was going to say and it just drove me up a wall. I finally came to my senses and said, 'God, I thought I could do this with your help but I can't. You've got to do it for me.'

You know that God of ours is such a merciful loving God that He will do for us what we need to have done until we can do it for ourselves. He wants us to be taught. He wants us to yearn for Him and be as excited over Him as we are over the birth of a new baby or the marriage of a child. He wants the finest things for us as His children but He wants us to recognize Him. He said, 'Against no one is my anger kindled except those who do not recognize me in all things.'

So Paul and all his writings were there to tell you, get over yourself and understand you belong to God and start doing what you know God wants you to do so that all the blessings you have you can be purveyors of those blessings to other people. That's our purpose and that's our glory to be God's emissaries in this world. It doesn't matter where you come from and it doesn't matter if you make mistakes.

I'd like to read Psalm 103:17. It's one of my favorites. *But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.* Earlier on it says, *The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide; neither will he keep his anger forever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*



(8-10) That's hard for us to swallow because we know what we've done but He hasn't dealt with us according to those. *For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.* (11-14)

If we have made the choice to love Jesus and parents have taught their children to love Jesus thereby learning to love the Lord, these promises are ours. So what if we haven't done that? What if we haven't been the kind of person we needed to be all the time. What's He say? Repent and turn unto me and all these blessings will be yours because inside of you is the record of heaven and He will teach you and He will show you the record so that you can speak that record to others. That's the glory of God. That He takes people like us and He makes us honorable people because we have chosen His Son Jesus Christ.

It doesn't matter where we were. It matters where we're going and when we recognize our heritage and we attempt to do things to be a blessing to others because of that heritage, do you think He's going to ignore it or ignore us. He's already told us He's not.

Psalm 103. You get in trouble and start worrying read that one because every person that has been baptized has an opportunity to be restored and returned every time.

Lessons from Psalm 139

Elder Gordon Winkler

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Mount Ayr, IA

Ed Anderson shared Alma 16:171-172 as a Call to Worship. And *because of your diligence, and your faith, and your patience with the word, in nourishing it, that it may take root in you, behold, by and by, ye shall pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious, which is sweet above all that is sweet, and which is white above all that is white; yea, and pure above all that is pure; And ye shall feast upon this fruit, even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst.*

I am going to read this morning from Jacob 3:9-15. *Behold, great and marvelous are the works of the Lord. How unsearchable are the depths of the mysteries of him; and it is impossible that man should find out all his ways. And no man knoweth of his ways, save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God. For behold, by the power of his word, man came upon the face of the earth; which earth was created by the power of his word. Wherefore, if God, being able to speak, and the world was; and to speak, and man was created, O then, why not able to command the earth, or the workmanship of his hands upon the face of it, according to his will and pleasure. Wherefore, brethren, seek not to counsel the Lord, but to take counsel from his hand. For behold, ye yourselves know, that he*

counseleth in wisdom, and in justice, and in great mercy, over all his works.

It is good to see each of you here this morning. I remember a few Sundays ago when I kind of pinch hit for Rodney doing morning worship and I was thinking maybe he'd remember that and return the favor and pinch hit for me this morning. But I never did hear from him. Then he explained that he spoke in December and last Sunday and he's in charge of the service next Sunday so I really couldn't have expected him to give me a call.

Well, I want to start off this morning by stating I'm a fairly simple person. I look at things from a simple point of few, fundamental and basic. I look for the simplest solutions. In my experience that means easiest to explain, easiest to understand, easiest to implement and easiest to accept. In the time that I spent in health care administration, a very complex field of work, I found that to be a good guiding principle in addressing the many things that I had to deal with there.

Let me give you an example of what I'm talking about. Linda gave me a new watch as a gift a while back and it sat unused for a long time. Why? Because it was complex to set up. In order to use the watch I needed to go out to the App Store (how many of you know what the app store is?) and download the setup to the watch and complete the data entry in the options selections in order to use the watch. Now, the watch is a great watch. It will display the time by AM or PM or on a 24-hour mode. It even talks about a military setting. I assume Tony might know the difference between a 24-hour clock and military clock but I'm not familiar with that. It has date and day and digital display. It monitors my heart rate and has several wellness functions like counting my daily steps. There is a stop watch feature with splits available so if you were at a track meet you could get everybody in a relay's splits and more functions that I have not figured out. The simple truth is I use the watch to tell time.

I look at the gospel the same way with simplicity and when I read the scriptures, the ones that stick with me are those that are easiest to explain, easiest to understand, easiest to implement and easiest to get accepted. The gospel to me is praise and trust God, keep His commandments, believe in Jesus and love one another.

Nephi talks in several places about the plain and precious truths, the plainness of the gospel. In Deuteronomy 5:1 says *And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep and do them.* Then he gave them 10 commandments, one for each finger. His people and the peoples of the world since have struggled to learn, keep and live by 10 commandments.

The things that stand between us and God is not God, it's us. It is hard to keep focused in a world of distractions for satan is hard at work trying to discourage and deceive us. Satan has gone to great links to fool and trick all of society into thinking and believing that God is not the same as He once was or that God's not real or doesn't exist. Because if He were real why would He allow things to happen and to get so out of control in this world. Satan wants you to believe



that entering a relationship with God means you have to forfeit everything else. Live in this world. There is no heaven. The list is long and Satan's fabricated lies are too many to count but the truth is no matter what you've done, you can't escape God's love or God's plans He has for you and always will have for you.

Satan bellows the message of "there is no hope." With God there IS always hope and Satan knows this better than anyone because he has tasted the goodness of God and has never forgotten the experience of being with God. He may try to con everyone into believing otherwise but he knows better. Our hope is eternal and resides with God through Jesus Christ.

One day C.H. Spurgeon, an old English preacher, was walking through the English countryside with a friend. As they walked along the evangelist noticed a barn with a weather vane on its roof. At the top of the vane were these words: God is Love. Spurgeon remarked to his traveling companion that he thought this was a rather inappropriate place for such a message. "Weather vanes are changeable," he said, "but God's love is constant." "I don't agree with you about these words," replied his friend. "You misunderstand the meaning. The sign is indicating a truth. Regardless of which way the wind blows God is love."

The book of Psalms is a collection of poems, prayers and songs and writings mostly attributed to David. Some of them are directed to a specific person but most are written to express praise and thankfulness to God. Some of the Psalms describe the thoughts and struggles David himself experienced. He wrote about professing his faith and expressed the majesty and power of God in his life.

Psalms 139 is one of those personal prayers and a song of praise to God. It is a prayer well suited to be adopted by all of us. I want to read that to you. *O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. For thou hast possessed my reins; thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet I knew none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto*

me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with thee. Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God; depart from me therefore, ye bloody men. For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain. Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them mine enemies. Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

So what is the purpose of this psalm? Why did David pen those words? Psalm 139 reflects David's prayerful meditation of God's omnipresence and omniscience and the effects those characteristics of God have on the human heart. I just finished telling you that I am a simplistic person and I had those two big words here. Well omnipresence means God is everywhere simultaneously. Omniscience means God is all knowing. His knowledge is not limited. Knowing God creates gratitude and praise for who He is and what He does for us. We are made to glorify God. Knowledge of God directly affects our reactions, our response in times of hardship, injustice, pain and suffering. David's heartfelt journey with God through the good, the bad and the challenging remains alive and relatable through this psalm.

Who God is allows us to understand who and whose we are. Life within the love of Jesus Christ changes our hearts forever and continually until we arrive home to His loving presence. The journey of each human heart is unique, purposeful and intimately known by God. So what can we learn from David's psalm? What are the lessons we can apply to our lives in our relationship with God? What is here that can strengthen our hearts? I have five lessons.

Lesson 1. We are intimately known. In verse 13 David wrote *For thou hast possessed my reins; thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.* Before we were known to our mothers', God was forming every intricate detail and fabric of who we are. We often default to the critical view of others and ourselves. This psalm tells us to see ourselves and others through God's perspective, not just color, ethnicity, disability. Every trait and characteristic were crafted by our purposeful God. Nothing about us is accidental. So Sue and Sandy and Dorothy and Linda and Debbie when you became a mother you experienced love on another level. Remember the first time you held your newborn son or daughter, how indescribable in that moment was the love you felt. Yet, you only carried your babies into this world. God gave them life and cares for them infinitely more. We are all loved by God this way. We are His sons and His daughters. *God has a perfect knowledge of us,* Matthew Henry wrote *and all our thoughts and actions are open before Him.*

We cannot control the thoughts popping into our minds all day long every day. How often have you said to yourself, 'Where did that thought come from?' But we do have some say over what happens to them once they arrive. Scripture advises us to take our thoughts captive. Some thoughts that enter our minds are absolutely crazy. Maybe I should just speak for myself but some of the thoughts that



come to my mind, I just think ‘Where in the world did that come from?’

We are intimately known by God not just outwardly but inwardly. When the heart is mentioned in scripture, it often refers to the seat of our souls and a place from which we make decisions and harbor our beliefs. That’s where God lives. He is not surprised by our physical, mental or emotional struggles. Being intimately known by God means we are not hidden nor should we feel compelled or convinced by guilt or shame to hide from Him in any way. David reminds us that God is acquainted with all our ways.

Further, David makes it clear that you cannot hide from God. *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?* If you ascend to heaven, God is there. If you make your bed in hell, God is there. The uttermost parts of the sea? God is there David says. Wherever you go God’s right hand will hold you.

The sacrifice Jesus made on the cross negated the shame which compelled Adam and Eve to hide from God in the Garden. Though our sins may lead us to want to do the same, run and hide, God made a way for us through Jesus to bring our sin before Him and confess and repent of it. God’s forgiveness, His mercies and the grace available to us through Jesus sustain us every day.

Lesson 2. We are purposefully made. In verse 14 David wrote *I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.* We were made with purpose to bring glory to God. Each talent, gift and occupation have a place in the workforce of the Kingdom of God. Who we are is meant to bring reverence to God, not a fear to be afraid of but a respectful reverence for God. When people look at the lives of those who follow Christ, they should witness His countenance in their daily lives, in our daily lives.

According to Google “wonderfully” means “in a way that inspires admiration.” We aren’t made wonderful in the eyes of the world but from the heart of God to bring glory to His name. We have each been intentionally set apart different from the world. In the midst of daily life we would do well to remind ourselves of what Mildred Smith used to say, ‘Remember whose you are not just who you are.’ Most of the doubts, anxieties and fears that we experience can be attributed to a lack of trust in God. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, *Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.* Jeremiah says, *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.* (Jeremiah 17:7)

God moves through our earthly lives using us to spread the gospel. His desire is not to leave behind even one. This desire is expressed in the 18th chapter of Matthew or you can find it also in the 15th chapter of Luke in the parable of the lost sheep. Matthew says this, *For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost, and to call sinners to repentance . . .* (Matthew 18:11)

Lesson 3. God is in control. In verse 16 David tells us that all the days ordained for us were written in God’s book before one of them came to be. There is infinitely more happening in the world and in our lives than we can plausibly see but God’s view is limitless, transcending time and space.

He has numbered our days and nothing can change or alter His good plan for our lives. His will trumps what we want. It is hard to comprehend God is in control of a world spinning off of it’s rails. So much tragedy and heartbreak surround everyday circumstances worldwide.

Even devout Christians gaze up to wonder where God is during these tumultuous times. *God’s sovereign control is complete and not partial*, says John Piper. He’s a Baptist minister. *Whether it’s more or less direct or more or less indirect, more or less active intrusion or more or less by tactical permission. However it is God controls it and the control is complete and pervasive. Nothing in the universe is random without design and purpose.*

In the 29th chapter of Jeremiah it is written, *For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost, and to call sinners to repentance.* (11) God has an expected end in mind for each one of us. God is in control. He has an expected end.

Lesson 4. We are never alone. One of the biggest tricks and deceits of satan is to isolate and convince us we are alone. Especially in today’s society as the world endures a global pandemic, isolation has become a reality we experience for long periods of time. Even when we are out in society, masks and plastic barriers isolate us from each other. Quarantine puts us in our rooms alone for weeks but even when the physical presence of others is absent from our lives, we are never alone. God is always and forever with us. God is impossible to escape from.

I was reminded of a hymn that expresses the assurance that we are never alone. I am certain that it is familiar to most of you, if not all of you. The song is simply entitled *Never Alone*.

*I’ve seen the lightning flashing,
and heard the thunder roll,
I’ve felt sins breakers dashing,
trying to control my soul:
I’ve heard the voice of my Savior,
telling me still to fight on,
He promised never to leave me,
Never to leave me alone.*

*The world’s fierce winds are blowing,
Temptations sharp and keen,
I have a peace in knowing
my Savior stands between-
He stands to shield me from danger,
When earthly friends are gone,
He promised never to leave me,
Never to leave me alone.*

*When in affliction’s valley
I’m treading the road of care,
My Savior helps to carry
My cross when heavy to bear,
Though all around me is darkness,
Earthly joys have flown.
My Savior whispers His promise,
“I’ll never leave you alone.”*

*He died for me on the mountain,
For me they pierced His side,*



*For me He opened the fountain,
The crimson cleansing tide;
For me He's waiting in glory,
Seated upon His throne,
He promised never to leave me,
Never to leave me alone.*

*No, never alone,
No, never alone;
He promised never to leave me,
Never to leave me alone.*

Lesson 5. Judgment belongs to God. Much of the psalms teach us to love our enemies and pray to God on their behalf. David's words were inspired and point prophetically to Jesus Christ. Listen to Jesus teachings as recorded in Matthew the 5th chapter verses 45-50. *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love only them which love you, what reward have you? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans the same? Ye are therefore commanded to be perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.*

David concludes the psalm with a request, *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* We are to pray for our enemies and the enemies of God in beseeching (which means asking fervently). God searches our souls as well. He knows our enemies and He knows ourselves better than we do. When we pray this verse God faithfully answers.

I would like to end my speaking this morning with a prayer so if you would bow with me. Heavenly Father, praise be to you for all you are and all you have made, for the creation surrounding us, to each hair on our heads. Your intentionality is unmatched. Your care and love for us is like nothing else. Thank you for sending Jesus from Heaven to defeat death on the cross. Though the world is hard and dark at times you can only be light. You can only be good. It is who you are and we are yours. So, Father, may we remember these truths David divinely penned in Psalm 139. Cover our lives with them like a blanket of comfort. You are our strength, God, in you alone we have peace, joy, love, forgiveness and mercy. May our lives bring glory to your name. Bless our enemies and search out our heart. May we simply trust in you. In Jesus name. Amen.

The Principle of Power
Priest Levi Vickery
January 20, 2022
Lamoni, IA

For a scripture reading I would like to read from the book of Enos in the Book of Mormon. *Behold, it came to pass that I, Enos, knowing my father, that he was a just man: for he taught me in his language, and also in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And blessed be the name of my God for it. And I will tell you of the wrestle which I had before God, before I received a remission of my sins; Behold I went to hunt beasts in the forest; and the words which I had often heard my father speak, concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart. And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication, for mine own soul; And all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came, I did still raise my voice high, that it reached the heavens. And there came a voice unto me saying, Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed. And I, Enos, knew that God could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away. And I said, Lord, how is it done? And he said unto me, because of thy faith in Christ, whom thou hast never before heard nor seen. And many years pass away, before he shall manifest himself in the flesh; wherefore, go to, thy faith hath made thee whole. Now, it came to pass that when I had heard these words, I began to feel a desire for the welfare of my brethren, the Nephites; wherefore, I did pour out my whole soul unto God for them. And while I was thus struggling in the spirit, behold, the voice of the Lord came unto my mind again, saying, I will visit thy brethren, according to their diligence in keeping my commandments. I have given unto them this land; and it is a holy land; and I curse it not, save it be for the cause of iniquity; Wherefore, I will visit thy brethren; according as I have said; and their transgressions will I bring down with sorrow upon their own heads. And after I, Enos, had heard these words, my faith began to be unshaken in the Lord; and I prayed unto him with many long strugglings for my brethren, the Lamanites. And it came to pass, that after I had prayed, and labored with all diligence, the Lord said unto me, I will grant unto thee according to thy desires, because of thy faith. And now behold, this was the desire which I desired of him: that if it should so be, that my people, the Nephites, should fall into transgression, and by any means be destroyed, and the Lamanites should not be destroyed, that the Lord God would preserve a record of my people, the Nephites; Even if it so be, by the power*



of his holy arm, that it might be brought forth, at some future day, unto the Lamanites, that perhaps they might be brought unto salvation: For at the present, our strugglings were vain, in restoring them to the true faith. And they swore in their wrath, that if it were possible, they would destroy our records and us; and, also, all the traditions of our fathers. Wherefore, I knowing that the Lord God was able to preserve our records, I cried unto him continually; For he had said unto me, Whatsoever thing ye shall ask in faith, believing that ye shall receive in the name of Christ, ye shall receive it. And I had faith, and I did cry unto God, that he would preserve the records; And he covenanted with me that he would bring them forth unto the Lamanites, in his own due time. And I, Enos, knew it would be according to the covenant which he had made; wherefore, my soul did rest. And the Lord said unto me, Thy fathers have also required of me this thing; and it shall be done unto them according to their faith, for their faith was like unto thine. And now it came to pass, that I, Enos, went about among the people of Nephi, prophesying of things to come, and testifying of the things which I had heard and seen. And I bear record that the people of Nephi did seek diligently to restore the Lamanites unto the true faith in God. But our labors were vain; their hatred was fixed, and they were led by their evil nature, that they became wild, and ferocious, and a bloodthirsty people; full of idolatry, and filthiness; Feeding upon beasts of prey, dwelling in tents, and wandering about in the wilderness, with a short skin girted about their loins, and their heads shaven; and their skill was in the bow, and the cimeter, and the ax. And many of them did eat nothing save it was raw meat; and they were continually seeking to destroy us. And it came to pass that the people of Nephi did till the land, and raise all manner of grain, and of fruit, and flocks of herds, and flocks of all manner of cattle, of every kind, and goats, and wild goats, and also many horses. And there were exceeding many prophets among us. And the people were a stiff-necked people, hard to understand. And there was nothing save it was exceeding harshness, preaching and prophesying of wars, and contentions, and destructions, and continually reminding them of death, and the duration of eternity, and the judgments and the power of God; And all these things stirring them up continually, to keep them in the fear of the Lord. I say there was

nothing short of these things, and exceeding great plainness of speech, would keep them from going down speedily to destruction. And after this manner do I write concerning them. And I saw wars between the Nephites and the Lamanites, in the course of my days. And it came to pass that I began to be old, and an hundred and seventy and nine years had passed away from the time that our father Lehi left Jerusalem. And as I saw that I must soon go down to my grave, having been wrought upon by the power of God that I must preach and prophesy unto this people, and declare the word according to the truth which is in Christ. And I have declared it, in all my days; and have rejoiced in it, above that of the world. And I soon go to the place of my rest, which is with my Redeemer; for I know that in him I shall rest: And I rejoice in the day when my mortal shall put on immortality, and shall stand before him: then shall I see his face with pleasure, and he will say unto me, Come unto me ye blessed, there is a place prepared for you in the mansions of my Father. Amen.

I would like to mention my gratitude to you. I am moved by the commitment you have shown on my behalf, and I thank you for your prayers for me and your hospitality. As my brother mentioned, I consider you my family. I have known many of you for a long time. Actually, many of you have known me for longer than I have known you. It truly is a joy to have the opportunity to meet with you and to share with you. I hope that I can meet the challenge that the Lord has placed on me.

I would like to expound a little bit on the principle of power. It has several different names that could be used, but that is the one I am going to use for now. In this account that Enos has given us, there are a few points that I would like to point out. He starts out by saying that because he was taught by his father, who he knew was a just man, and because he was just, he believed that he was taught justly. He received the admonition of the Lord through that teaching. There were many words that he had heard his father speak about salvation—we would probably associate that with the word, “gospel”—and he came to a point in his life where they were piercing to him.

One day he went out to hunt—he did not go out to pray—he went out to hunt—he was out there for a specific purpose—but this other thing that had been working in his heart had grown to the point where he



couldn't stay focussed on the task that he went out there to perform. This other thing was too important, and he takes that conviction and goes to the Lord. There are several things he says about that that I find interesting.

Enos begins: "as I kneeled down before my Maker..." This gives some insight into the background of where he stood. First, he believed that there was a God. He knelt down before his Maker, and he knew that he was created by God. And as he goes on, "he cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for the welfare of [his] own soul," and he continued, all through the day. So he went out in the morning to go hunting, decided that wasn't worth his time at the moment. Right? There was something more important. And he followed that prompting, and put his focus on God, that this is really concerning to me, I need to know where I stand with you. All through the day, and all through the evening, and into the night, he's praying, until he finally hears the voice of the Lord say, because of your faith, you've been forgiven, and a joy swept over him. Why? Because he knew that God could not lie.

How did he know that? So that gives you a little more insight into what his feeling was with God before he entered into this session with him. He knew something about God. He believed what he had been taught by his father was the truth, and that eventually worked into the conviction for him to find a greater connection with the Father so that he himself would have that testimony. Instead of just hearing someone else say, "Well, okay, he said that, and maybe it's true, maybe it's not," moving on with their life. Or, "yeah, sure, I believe, yeah," and then continuing on— just life as usual. It drove him to a point where he said, "No, I've really got to know for myself now." Not because he doubted. He didn't go out there saying, "Well, God, if there is a God, reveal yourself unto me." He didn't do that. He went out there saying, "I know you're out there, and I need some answers and I know that you can give them to me. So I'm coming to you with this hope, that I will receive the answers to my questions."

He exercised power—power that he received from the testimony of others. And he went on to receive forgiveness. And when he received that, he received the joy from the Spirit washing over Him because he knew God couldn't lie and he accepted it. When God said, "This is where you stand with me." He goes, "I feel that

to be true. Okay." He accepted it. Then he continued on: "Okay. I've got more questions" and he expanded it.

First, he got himself right with God. That's the main thing in that first part. He went out there to make sure he was right with God, and then it extended to his family the Nephites – a big family – and he received an assurance from God that if they would keep God's commandments and exercise faith that they would also be blessed. He had a concern for those people that he loved and cared about. And because he had received the Lord's admonition to him that he was okay, that strengthened his position of faith, and he applied himself to a greater project. And then as it goes on, he talks about the Lamanites, because his faith "began to be unshaken."

The principle of power was used to accomplish something. We find this principle all over everywhere. I'd like to go to James 1:2-4. *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into many afflictions; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.* Have you ever thought about what patience is? A lot of people seem to think that it means tolerance of things. You tolerate things that you don't like. Just be patient. Just hold on a little bit longer. It'll all work out eventually, just give it time. But I've come to discover that that is not patience. For something to be true patience, it requires rejoicing in the truth. You must rejoice in the truth of the Word of God for it to really be patience. You will persevere, you will meet the challenge of what takes place and succeed if you are rejoicing in the Word of God. I don't have time to go into what rejoicing means. My intent today is to speak about power and how we unlock that power within ourselves to accomplish the will of the Lord. You can unlock that power to accomplish something and bring your own destruction. I don't advise that. That is a poor way to go. Patience is the fruit of applying the principle of power—of applying faith—because if you're truly applying faith, or the power of God in your life correctly, the result is that you begin to rejoice in the Lord.

If you go further on in Enos' story, it gets to a point after the Lord has revealed that he was going to take care of the issue with the Lamanites that he would keep that record of the Nephites and bring it forth. It says, "and my soul did rest." Enos' soul was at rest.



Remember he was struggling before that. He was deliberating with the Lord and struggling about these things that really had him concerned. But he also rejoiced in the word through all of that. If you go back and start picking out verse by verse and line by line, you start to see that pattern. Because he was applying the word, he said, "I know this is true. Therefore I accept what God just told me. Because this is how God must be."

He had accepted who God was, and that allowed him to continue to accept what God told him. That strengthened his faith. And the result was, he came to a point where he rested. And when you come to a point where you are at peace within yourself, knowing that you are at peace with God, the power available to you moves mountains, stops the violence of fire, raises the dead, heals the sick, stops the mouths of lions. You can also be stoned to death and get up and walk away. We have a couple of apostles that experienced that. You can have every bone in your feet broken while you sing hymns of praise and then walk out of the prison that just fell down around you.

Have you ever thought about those stories and how the apostles handled every single one of those things that we look at and go, "Wow. Glad I wasn't in their shoes." They exercised faith. They had the power and they exercised it. By that power, and through all of those tribulations, hardships, and struggles, they were found singing praises and rejoicing in the Lord. Their faith was firm. It was unshakable, immovable. As Enos said, his faith began to be unshaken.

Is your faith unshaken? Do you know where you stand? Have you applied the principle of power in your life? How much do you rejoice in what the Lord has done and what the Lord is doing and what the Lord is going to do? I've come to learn that when you start to rejoice in the word, that you begin to be much more Christ-centered because it is the truth. When you apply that power in your life, and rejoice in it, things stop bothering you the way they used to, and miraculous things start to happen. If you pray for something to happen, with full confidence in God, the next thing you do is to step out in faith. You act as though it's already happened. What do you do when something you were working on finally comes together? You thank the Lord. You rejoice. You go, "It worked." Right? So what was the fruit of applying faith? Rejoicing. Rejoicing in the

truth that God did what He said He was going to do, because I asked Him to do it.

And I knew when I asked Him that He wanted to do that. A lot of times, we don't believe that. We say we do. Honestly, I'm not going to lie to you. I see this all around the world. The oppression of fear. I mentioned this when Joel and I were driving up this morning. There is a fear among the world right now that has gotten in people's heads. It's not just the world. A lot of the people in the church have also fallen victim to this fear. We have different names for it. We call it by different things depending on who we are and what our backgrounds are. Most of us I don't think realize just what it is, and what kind of a hold it has on us. We have our blinders on. We haven't sought the Lord out enough to be unshaken in the truth, to know how to recognize it for what it is. I'm not pointing fingers, because I'm just as guilty. I've struggled with fear my whole life for various different things. We are each on a journey to move forward. The question is whether we're going to accept the power to do that, or not.

What is stepping out in faith? Hebrews 11:1 says: *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* We have grown up in a church culture where we use terminology, and we assume that everybody understands what those words mean. Well, what does Hebrews 11:1 mean? Well, the assurance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. Have you ever broken it down and looked up those words? Have you ever gone that extra step and say, "Well, what does this really mean?"

I was sitting in an evening service at a reunion several years ago, and [Ron Smith] was up there preaching. He started out by saying that he was going to talk about what faith was. He said—and it may have been in jest, I don't know—"I'm not sure how faith works. You probably have to talk to [Arturo Gomez] to find that out. But I want to talk to you about what it is." That sparked something in me. Because at the time I took his comments seriously. You don't know how it works—interesting. I started thinking about that. And you know what? I don't know how it works so I set out to find out. How does faith work? This was a long time ago for me. Maybe not so long for him. But a long time for me. Over the course of the next 14 or 15 years, I began to look at things a little differently. I began to seek out: What is faith? How does it work? One of the things that



the Lord has been teaching me on that was right here in James. I love the book of James. It's got so much packed in there, boiled down to layman's terms, in my opinion. It is the practical application of the gospel. To me, it just brings it all down and so I spend a lot of time looking at James. I kept being brought back to these first few verses about rejoicing when we fall into afflictions and that faith worketh patience. Patience, I mean, if that's what faith does, if that's the fruit of applying faith then what am I doing? How do I get that? What is that that I'm looking for? What I have come to understand is that when you rejoice in the word, more faith comes.

That's how it works. Faith comes by hearing, right? We'll turn to that one. Romans 10:13-16, *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Faith comes by hearing. You hear in two ways. You can hear with physical ears: by me telling you the truth and you can hear with your spiritual ears: by the Spirit telling you the truth. Hearing also means putting it into practice so it also means applying it in your life. Just because it came to you doesn't mean you used it. You can have all the faith in the world and never use a bit of it and be lost because you chose not to accept it and apply it. You can claim, 'Well, yes, I believe all that.' But it's a claim that must be backed up by action. What is rejoicing in the word? It's an action—an action that backs up the claim.

Yesterday I burned my finger. I burned my thumb here. I said, "Lord, heal my finger." And then I rejoiced in the word as though it had already been done. "Praise the Lord. I'm healed. It's fine." I know what you're thinking: Yeah, but you have got to go put something on there. Some kind of ointment, whatever. I want to show you something. [Levi held up his hand so we could see his fingers.] They are fine. They are still marked. You can touch it. There is a little bit of a different sensation. It was an accident. I didn't specifically sow the seed of burning myself—not that I'm aware of because you reap what you sow. Right? But

guess what? I know this guy who is so powerful that He can forgive sin. He is so powerful that He can create me from the dust of the earth and He happens to be my friend. So I got burned. Oh, that's hot. That is really hot. It kind of bothers me. Lord—that's my friend— 'I would like a blessing, please. Thank you for the healing that you've already given me.' And I began within myself to rejoice for that. In a couple days you won't be able to tell that I was burned—or sooner. He is a miraculous God. He moves mountains, He raises nations. He creates solar systems and keeps it all in balance in the palms of His hands.

You think He can't fix a little thing like that? It might be a big thing to you. Maybe you broke your leg. Maybe you got cancer or something else? Little, little things compared to His awesome greatness and the power that He wields. And the beautiful thing about it is that He has offered all of that power to us. He said, hey, I want you to be my children and I don't want you to suffer. Here's how you don't do that. Here's how you not suffer. If anything does happen to you, count it for joy. Knowing this, that if you are steadfast and immovable in faith, that I will deliver you. That's His promise to us. That's the power that He is offering to us through His Word.

So when you hear the truth, choose to exercise that truth. That's what Enos did. He took what he heard and he said, "All right, I think I believe this. Let's put it to work." He applied the power. He received the blessing of knowledge. Not a complete perfect knowledge in everything, but a greater knowledge than what he was exercising to start with. Then he built on that and said, Okay, great. What's next? And he moved on and strengthened his faith, he increased his faith, he knew about surety, his faith began to be unshaken. So you know what? Not only did God not lie to Enos, he's done this for me already. Which means He can do it for me again, and it continues to increase power to power to power, or grace to grace to grace, mercy to mercy to mercy. He desperately wants to pour out that power in your lives so that you can be healed and free from everything. It doesn't matter what it is. It doesn't matter how long you've dealt with it. If you apply faith if you apply the principles of power in your life in the way that He said to apply it, you will come out on the other side whole, you will come out on the other side rejoicing and full of life and perfected in His will.



Let's go back to faith for a minute. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen." Alma gives a little bit different account of faith. Alma 16:143 says, *And now as I said concerning faith: Faith, is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore if ye have faith, ye hope for things which are not seen, which are true.* A lot of people talk about blind faith. There is no such thing. Faith isn't blind. God's not blind. God is a God of faith. God's power is not blind.

Faith—true faith—we are not talking about false faith and feigned faith—reality is, it's just not faith, period. Faith is hope in things which are true. It has to be true, or it's not faith. So now we get into another realm. Which truth are you talking about? There is relative truth and absolute truth. We're talking about absolute truth because if it can change, you can't place trust in it and that voids the ability to really exercise that power.

In Romans 1:16, Paul said, *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.* It is power. It is faith, it is the principle of power there. But God will not force you to use it. You must apply it in your life. You must choose to say yes, I accept this power, and now I will use this power to become more saved than I am. You begin to have that firmness of the word and you experiment with that power, and start seeing the results. And the more you rejoice in the word, the more you begin to apply that word. And the greater your firmness in the word becomes. Pretty soon you find you are not so easily tossed to and fro like the waves on the sea. Pretty soon, you start looking at the world a little differently. You quit worrying about things so much. You say, "If I do get something, God will take care of it. If I do have something happen, He will take care of it. He will help me through that, because I'll apply the word." And the more you know of that truth and the reality of who God really is, the less you care about what happens in this world, because your focus shifts to Christ and the world to come in building up the kingdom.

I know I'm repeating things a little bit but that's that's how I was taught to speak. I blame my dad. He's not here so I can get away with saying that. But it's so important that we grasp this concept. Because the only thing that's keeping us from receiving the fullness of the

blessings of God is whether we apply the faith that we have or not. If you are suffering there's a way out from that suffering. It doesn't matter what the suffering is. There's a way out through Christ Jesus, through applying that faith.

If you need healing from something, God wants you healed. He does not want you to suffer. That is not the truth. That is a lie: that you have to suffer through it. You have to forbear. Like, "Well, the Lord must not want me to be healed because I got prayed for one time by these elders and they anointed me and I didn't see any results." No, you're doubting. You're doubting the word. And you're preventing that healing from breaking through when you continually doubt because you didn't see the results you thought you wanted to see right then. The result I wanted to see when I burned my finger yesterday was to be feeling all right. I wanted to be able to say, "Look, see, it's all fine." But that was not the result that I got. The immediate result I got from my confidence in Christ was that it would be taken care of and as I began to rejoice in that, I quit feeling pain. Our words are powerful and you can speak faith into yourself just as well as someone else can speak faith into you.

Did you know that? If you keep declaring, "Oh, well, you know, I'm hurt, I'm hurt," your body is going to believe that you're hurt. "I'm sick. No, no, I'm terribly sick." You are sowing doubt into your flesh, your flesh will receive what your spirit tells it. But if you declare the word over yourself immediately. If you stay firm in that, and don't waver, your body does some amazing things a whole lot quicker than it's supposed to. I've seen it. Sometimes you don't have enough faith, and the challenge is growing your faith, increasing the power that you have, so that you can fully use that in your life.

Growing up, I'm number six of eleven children. I have five younger siblings and two of my younger siblings were four and seven I think. They were four and seven, I think. My parents were really concerned because their baby teeth were rotting out of their mouths at the same time, and they were three years apart. So my parents were praying to the Lord about what do we do? You know? How do we take care of this? And my dad had an experience where he was praying to the Lord, "Why is this happening?" The Lord didn't tell him why it was happening. He said, "If you anoint their teeth with oil every night, I will fix their teeth." So that's



what we did. As a family. We all prayed for my sisters. We anointed with oil. I mean, we dosed those teeth up with consecrated oil that we had in the house. We did this as believers and we were diligent because God said, “Do this, and I will take care of it.” He didn't say for how long. It was open-ended.

As a family, we began to pray together for that purpose. That's really important to me, because that really strengthened me in the Gospel growing up. I felt hands on participation in this thing that was going on, and I saw the results as they happened. I learned a lot about the power of God through that experience. It's taken me 20 years to understand it. I still don't think I understood it all. But over the course of several months, we did this religiously every night. If somebody was gone we still did it. It didn't matter who was home. Whoever was home got together and prayed for my sisters' teeth. We began to rejoice for the healing that was going to come because God said “Do this and it will come.” We just didn't know when. There was an age gap of three years. But one by one, their rotten teeth fell out of their mouths at the same time. Four, seven, baby teeth falling out at the same time, and in their place, their adult teeth grew in.

One of the most amazing things about that, to me, is their adult teeth came in straight and even. If you look at their smiles—they have beautiful smiles—and they're the only two children out of eleven of us that have straight teeth. Four years old, started growing in their adult teeth. Seven years old started growing adult teeth at the same time. Bad teeth fell out at the same time, new teeth grew in at the same time. He doesn't respect these boundaries that we've placed on ourselves of how the human body works. He created the body, He can do what He wants with it. It's called supernatural.

God is amazing. I could continue to tell you stories like that from my life growing up. I look back at that and say, “I know God can do it.” I just don't always know how to apply the power to do it. But if you want your prayers to be answered, you're going to have to learn to be charitable. You have to learn to take care of other people. Learn to be a servant to them not to receive anything back, but without expectation of getting anything back because it's the right thing to do. Take care of the poor and the needy, the sick and afflicted. We find that later in Alma 16:220-225, *Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may*

prosper in them: cry over the flocks of your fields, that they may increase. But this is not all: ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness; Yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you. And now behold, my brethren, I say unto you, Do not suppose that this is all; for after ye have done all these things, if ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance if ye have, to those who stand in need; I say unto you, If ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing, and ye are as hypocrites who do deny the faith; Therefore if ye do not remember to be charitable, ye are as dross, which the refiners do cast out, (it being of no worth,) and is trodden under foot of men.

Ever been stomped on? I don't like how that feels. Now I'm a small guy. I can't take a whole lot of beating. Okay? That doesn't sound like fun. This is what Ron said, this is the application of the word. You do these things and the Lord will hear your prayer. If your prayer is in truth, which means it lines up with what He has already said His will is—which we've got three books of Scripture that tell us what that is—then you will receive the fullest blessings of the Lord, as you rejoice in Him. And you will continue to unlock that power more and more in your life until you become somebody like Moses, who had to wear a veil because he was too bright.

I'm sure I've gone beyond the time I was supposed to have so I'm going to leave you with some faith, two scriptures. The first is Doctrine and Covenants 83:11. *In my name they shall do many wonderful works; in my name they shall cast out devils: in my name they shall heal the sick: in my name they shall open the eyes of the blind, and unstop the ears of the deaf: and the tongue of the dumb shall speak; and if any man shall administer poison unto them, it shall not hurt them: and the poison of a serpent shall not have power to harm them. But a commandment I give unto them, that they shall not boast themselves of these things, neither speak them before the world: for these things are given unto you for your profit and for salvation.*



That list is found at least two other places in our scriptures. And it says, “Whosoever believeth shall...” Are you a whosoever? I am. It means anybody that does this is one of these people that applies the faith of Christ.

The last one that I will leave you with is Doctrine and Covenants 90:1-3. *Verily, thus saith the Lord, It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face, and know that I am, and that I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world; and that I am in the Father and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one; the Father because he gave me of his fullness; and the Son because I was in the world and made flesh my tabernacle, and dwelt among the sons of men. I was in the world and received of my Father, and the works of him were plainly manifest; and John saw and bore record of the fullness of my glory; and the fullness of John's record is hereafter to be revealed. And he bore record saying, I saw his glory that he was in the beginning before the world was; therefore, in the beginning the Word was; for he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation, the light and the Redeemer of the world; the Spirit of truth, who came into the world because the world was made by him; and in him was the life of men and the light of men. The worlds were made by him. Men were made by him. All things were made by him, and through him, and of him. And I, John, bear record that I beheld his glory, as the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; even the Spirit of truth which came and dwelt in the flesh, and dwelt among us. And I, John, saw that he received not of the fullness at the first, but received grace for grace; and he received not of the fullness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fullness; and thus he was called the Son of God, because he received not of the fullness at the first.*

Are we called to be sons of God? He is setting the pattern for us. *And I, John, bare record, and lo, the heavens were opened and the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove, and sat upon him, and there came a voice out of heaven saying, This is my beloved Son. And I, John, bare record that he received a fullness of the glory of the Father; and he received all power, both in heaven and on earth; and the glory of the*

Father was with him, for he dwelt in him. And it shall come to pass, that if you are faithful, you shall receive the fullness of the record of John. I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fullness, for if you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fullness and be glorified in me as I am in the Father: therefore, I say unto you, You shall receive grace for grace.

I pray the Lord's blessings be with you always, and that you choose to apply the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Not just for your own salvation, but for the salvation of those around you, and to receive a fullness of healing and blessings in your life.

Doug Patterson's Testimony

Brother Patterson testified about stewardship of finances and time. “My wife and I have always paid our tithing and offerings, but we were not accountable. When we became serious about our accounting, we determined our monthly bills and the tithing owed with the first check.

We wrote checks for the bills until we got to the last bill. The amount owed was the same as the tithing we owed for that period. We discussed what to do and we decided to pay the tithing. The Lord blessed us with money, which unexpectedly came in before the bill was late. We honored God in our tithing, and he took care of us.

“My other testimony has to do with time. I had been invited to do some ministry on the Navajo reservation every year for five years. The Navajo reunion is held in the summertime. Being self-employed it was difficult to take time off and the summers were very busy. I couldn't afford to take off work, but the next year I was again offered the opportunity because they needed somebody to teach some classes. I decided to accept the offer and I went to the reunion. I was gone for two weeks, and my business didn't suffer.

“The next year I was gone for ten weeks doing missionary work and still my business didn't suffer. You cannot out-give God.”

(This testimony was taken from The Latter Day Saints' Beacon, Volume 13, Issue 4.)

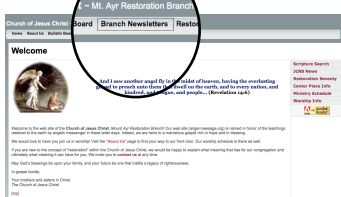


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Grandpa Ron and his great granddaughter.



Editor's Thoughts

The Importance of Tithing

The first few months of each year is a time to reflect on making an accounting and paying our tithing in part or in full. In Malachi and again in 3rd Nephi we are admonished to bring all the tithing into the storehouse. *Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed; for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts.* (Malachi 3:10-12) Third Nephi tells us basically the same thing so it must be an important part of our walk with the Lord.

It is exciting to think of the possibilities if we as Christ's church followed this admonition each year. Not only would the church be blessed but we as individuals and families would be blessed. I remember filing my first tithing statement before I was even baptized, but then later in our marriage for about 15 years we stopped attending church and didn't pay our tithing. Once we began attending again, the Lord kept telling me that we needed to file our tithing and pay it. We held off for a while but finally we filed a New Start tithing statement. I thought there was no way we would be able to