

Repentance

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Lecture 3 Logan, Utah

40 years ago yesterday would have been a Friday. That was the day that my friend Ron Mahle asked me to baptize him. The next day was a Saturday, 40 years ago. Today it's a Sunday. I was in the Air Force at the time. I had been in one squadron, and then was reassigned to a different squadron. While I was in the first one, I had a number of buddies I had associated with. These were friends, compadres, one of whom was a fellow named Jimmy Givens. I think Jimmy was from Chicago.

Jimmy was a black airmen, and I was a white airman. As it turns out I still am (white that is, but not an airman). Jimmy and I hung out together a great deal, but then I lost contact with him for a period of months. He and I had been Baptist before my conversion. We had even attended a local Portsmouth, New Hampshire Baptist church together on occasion.

As part of our earlier routine, he and I would go over to the base bowling alley. Because they only sold beer in pitchers, we always bought a pitcher of beer and a pizza to share. That was our thing when we were hungry.

I hadn't seen him for a number of months, and then ran into him. And he said, "Hey let's go over to the bowling alley." And I responded, "Okay, sure." But when we got there I hadn't been thinking that the normal ritual was a pitcher of beer and a pizza. So as it came time to order we ordered the pizza just as we always did. Then to my surprise Jimmy ordered a Pepsi. And I thought, 'well that's good; that relieves me of the responsibility to deal with the pitcher of beer.' So I ordered a Pepsi also. Then Jimmy said, "I don't drink alcohol anymore." And I said, "Oh damn that's funny, I don't either anymore." I said, "For me it's a religious thing." He said, "No kidding! For me it's a religious thing too." And I said, "That's great! What's the religion?" He replied, "I'm a Muslim." I said, "Holy crap, I'm a Mormon!" He said, "You are a blue-eyed devil!" And I said, "No kidding! You were not valiant in the preexistence and you can't hold priesthood!" Both of us had a good laugh about those quirks in these new faiths we had adopted. So there we were, buddies still, in spite of the gulf of religion which then separated us, and it just didn't matter. I don't think he's Jimmy anymore. He's probably Aziz Mohammed something or other. But Jimmy and I remain buddies despite the newly adopted enormous religion gulf that intervened to separate us at that point.

When I became a Latter-day Saint, one of the things that typified, in those days, the Latter-day Saint, was the libraries every member had in their homes. In Exeter, which is another town in the Portsmouth, New Hampshire ward boundaries, there was an elderly woman named Sister Long. She ran, what was back then (we don't have them anymore), The Seventies Bookstore. These were a chain of bookstores where you could purchase LDS materials. Sister Long was the proprietor of the bookstore, which consisted of her covered back porch where her inventory of LDS books was displayed. Since she was an avid reader, Sister Long read her inventory. So whenever you bought from her, you were actually buying a book she had already read, but fortunately had not marked up.

It was my understanding back then that if you were going to be a Latter-day Saint, you needed to acquaint yourself with all kinds of doctrinal and historical information about the faith. As a consequence of that, I began by reading everything I could get my hands on. In those days LeGrand Richards was still alive. The missionary discussions were largely based upon *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*. LeGrand Richards had been the Presiding Bishop of the Church, and was then called into the Quorum of the Twelve. His book, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* was one of the first things I read to better acquaint myself with the doctrine the missionaries had been teaching. I also read all of those early biographies about Wilford

Woodruff, Heber C. Kimball, and John Taylor. *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, which I bought from Sister Long, got entirely used up. I recently had to buy a new one because the one I bought from Sister Long just fell apart. Now I still have it, but if you aren't careful when you open it, it just falls to pieces in your hands. Mormons were by definition in those days, studious, careful, well read, well considered, doctrinally prepared folks who would defend the faith. Therefore, if you were going to run with them, you needed to have a religious education of your own. As a consequence of that, I began at that early stage to acquire a library, because you were not a legitimate believing Latter-day Saint without one back then.

Remember, at the time Marion G. Romney was in the First Presidency, Bruce R McConkie was in the Twelve, Mark E. Peterson was the doctrinal go-to guy in those days, also one of the Twelve. I mean what you got at the time from those church leaders was doctrine, an exposition of doctrine.

Now as we all know Bruce R. McConkie has taken a number of broadsides of late by the church distancing itself from him. When the recent book *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* came out, the behind the scenes criticism leveled at him by other general authorities is documented. Elder Mark E. Peterson noted some approximately 1700 errors found in the first edition of *Mormon Doctrine* that needed to be corrected. As a result of all that has come to public attention of late, Bruce R. McConkie's reputation has suffered somewhat. But in those days he was still considered a sound doctrinal authority. He and his father-in-law (Joseph Fielding Smith) wanted to stabilize the doctrine of the church, and they made an effort to do that. The result included the five volumes, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, which I bought and read. It consisted of Joseph Fielding Smith's answers, as compiled by his son-in-law. Similarly, they produced the three volumes of *Doctrines of Salvation*, which I also read. There was also the *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*. That work was not a Joseph Fielding Smith product edited by Bruce R. McConkie but was instead Bruce R. McConkie's writing. McConkie also wrote *Mormon Doctrine*, which I studied. He had begun publishing his *Mortal Messiah* series. In those days, doctrine really counted. Therefore, I studied doctrine because it was so important a matter in our church then.

Well, last night in Idaho Falls, we talked about faith. Tonight we're going to be talking about repentance. But I want to follow up on something that I did not do last night when we were looking at *The Lectures on Faith*. I can give you the citations if you want to look it up. It is in the second volume of the *Revelations and Translations*, and you can read it beginning on page 565 of that volume. It is a reproduction of 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. The reason I cite the 1835 edition is because it was that edition that got canonized by the vote of the church. It is that edition that, in the preface, Joseph Smith vouched for all the items of doctrine that were contained within *The Lectures on Faith*. In the 1844 edition that would be published later, they would not go through the exercise of re-sustaining *The Lectures on Faith* because they had already been canonized. They simply added to, and elaborated on, the revelations received between then and 1844.

Beginning on page 565 and running through page 567 of the Joseph Smith Papers, 2nd Volume of *Revelations and Translations* there is an account of how *The Lectures on Faith* were canonized on 17 August 1835 when the Doctrine and Covenants was approved by the church as scripture. The account begins with President Cowdery, who was Co-President of the Church at that point.

“President Cowdery arose and introduced the ‘book of doctrine and covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints,’ in behalf of the committee: he was followed by President Rigdon, who explained the manner by which they intended to obtain the voice of the assembly for or against said book: the other two committee, named above, were absent. According to said arrangement W.W. Phelps bore record that the book presented to the assembly, was true. President John Whitmer, also arose, and testified that it was true. Elder John Smith, taking the lead of the high council in Kirtland, bore record that the revelations in the said book were true... Elder Levi Jackman, taking the lead of the high council of the church in

Missouri bore testimony that the revelations in the said book were true, and that the said High Council in Missouri, bore testimony that the revelations in said book were true, and the said high council of Missouri accepted and acknowledged them as the doctrine and covenants of their faith, by a unanimous vote. President W.W. Phelps then read the written testimony of 12 as follows. ‘The testimony of the witnesses of the book of the Lord's commandments, which he gave to his church through Joseph Smith, jr. who was appointed by the voice of the church for this purpose: we therefore feel willing to bear testimony to all the world of mankind, to every creature upon the face of the earth, and upon the islands of the sea, that the Lord has borne record to our souls, through the Holy Ghost, shed forth upon us, that these commandments were given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for all men, and are verily true... Elder Leonard Rich bore record of the truth of the book, and the Council of the Seventy accepted and acknowledged it as the doctrine and covenants of their faith, by unanimous vote. Bishop Newell K. Whitney bore record of the truth of the book, and with his counselors, accepted and acknowledged it as the doctrine and covenants of their faith, by unanimous vote. Acting Bishop, John Corrill bore record of the truth of the book ... Acting President, John Gould, gave his testimony in favor of the book, and the travelling Elders, accepted and acknowledged it as the doctrine and covenants of their faith, by a unanimous vote. Ira Ames, acting as President of the Priests, gave his testimony in favor of the book, and with the Priests, accepted and acknowledged it as the doctrine and covenants of their faith, by a unanimous vote. Erastus Babbitt, acting President of the Teachers, gave his testimony in favor of the book, and they accepted and acknowledged it as the doctrine and covenants of their faith, by a unanimous vote. William Burgess, acting President of the Deacons, bore record of the truth of the book, and they accepted and acknowledged it as the doctrine and covenants of their faith, by a unanimous vote. The venerable President Thomas Gates, then bore record of the truth of the book, and with his five silver-headed assistants, and the whole congregation, accepted and acknowledged it as the doctrine and covenants of their faith by a unanimous vote. The several authorities, and the general assembly, by a unanimous vote, accepted the labors of the committee.”

So I point that out. If you get a copy of the 1835 edition, you will read all that in the book. It's appended in the printed edition in the back as the very final thing - the testimony of these people. When *The Lectures on Faith* were removed from the scriptures in 1921 by the committee headed by George Richards, including Anthony Ivins, Melvin J. Ballard, James E. Talmage, John A. Widstoe and Joseph Fielding Smith, in addition to not having a vote to remove it from our scriptures (leaving it in the position, in my view, of still being scripture and canonized), they are in essence rejecting not merely the vote that was taken in August 1835 accepting it as canonized scripture for our instruction, but they are rejecting the testimony of all those who were present and bore testimony, whose names I've just read to you as well. So I agree with what Bruce R. McConkie said at BYU on 4 January 1972. *The Lectures on Faith* are eternal scripture. It was written by the power of the Holy Ghost, by the spirit of inspiration, it is scripture, it is true.

This is the reason I turned to *The Lectures on Faith*, commending them to you yesterday. We will look at them a little bit again tonight. In the 1835 compilation of the Doctrine and Covenants, there are sections that are still in our Doctrine and Covenants, but they are numbered differently. I will give you the cross-reference to today's Doctrine and Covenants. But for the purpose of preparing my remarks for tonight, I used the old 1835 edition.

Joseph's doctrines, teachings, revelations, and counsel were supposed to be kept and hearkened to by the church. In the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants section 14 [today Section 43] it says, “Ye have received a commandment for a law unto my church through him who I have appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations from my hand.” [Making it clear that when we get something from Joseph, we as a church were directed by the Lord, to respect what it was that came through him.] In section 32: 2 [today Section 5] it says: “I have entrusted unto you, my servant Joseph, for a wise purpose in me; and it shall be made known unto future generations, but this generation shall have my word

through you.” [Don't read the word "generation" in that context narrowly, because the word "generation" sometimes has varying meanings and the safe meaning in that context, of that statement to Joseph, includes all those who live after the day that Joseph came and bore testimony. Therefore, it would include you.]

In section 46:1-3 [today Section 21] it says: “Behold there shall be a record kept among you, and in it **thou** [meaning Joseph] shalt be called a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church through the will of God the Father, and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ...Wherefore, meaning the church, **thou** [the church, you folks] shall give heed unto all **his** [singular personal pronoun, meaning Joseph's] words, and commandments, which **he** [singular personal pronoun] shall give unto you, as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me: for his word ye shall receive, as if from my own mouth, in all patience and faith; for by doing these things, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you” (emphasis added) [The “gates of hell” will not prevail provided we give heed to Joseph’s words. Not mine. Not another man's. The bastion that is established by the Lord that is the rock upon which the winds and rains can beat without causing any harm to the foundation, is the rock of revelation given to us in this generation through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Everything else turns to sand.] “For thus saith the Lord God, **him**” [a singular personal pronoun, referring to the individual man, the Prophet Joseph Smith. Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah, indeed!] “have I inspired to move the cause of Zion in mighty power for good: and **his** diligence I know, and **his** prayers I have hear; yea, **his** weeping for Zion I have seen, and I will cause that **he** shall mourn for her no longer, for **his** days of rejoicing are come unto the remission of **his** sins, and the manifestation of my blessing upon **his** works” (emphasis added). [It doesn't promise Joseph, Zion. It doesn't promise him anything of the sort. It promises him rejoicing because his sins are remitted. His sins, of course, are not ours. At this point in 1835, you will remember that by 1832 the church was already under condemnation, but Joseph was not. His sins are remitted, and that will cause Joseph to rejoice.] “...they shall believe on **his** words, which are given **him** through me, by the Comforter, which manifesteth that Jesus that was crucified by sinful men for the sins of the world;” (emphasis added).

So as I read the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, sections 14, 32, 46 of that volume, it becomes abundantly apparent that, to the extent that the church was a true and living church at that moment, it was a true and living church because God owned the words that came through Joseph and God was then speaking through him. God vouched for the words that came through Joseph, and God cautioned them, and us, about ignoring the words that come through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Section 51: 2 (today Section 28): “No one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church, excepting **my servant Joseph Smith, jr.** for **he** received with them as Moses; and thou shalt be obedient unto the things which I shall give unto **him**.” (Emphasis added.)

Section 84: 1-4 (today Section 90) Again this is the 1835 edition. This is a revelation given in March 1833 in which Joseph Smith was called by the Lord with the words: “My son... Verily I say unto **you**” [Again a personal individual pronoun, identifying an individual by the name of Joseph Smith.] “the keys of this kingdom shall never be taken from **you**, while **thou** art in the world, neither in the world to come: nevertheless, through **you** shall the oracles be given to another; yea, even unto the church. And all they who receive the oracles of God, let them beware how they hold them, lest they are accounted as a light thing, and they are brought under condemnation thereby, and stumble and fall.” What is the definition of “oracles” to be given by Joseph to the church? Is the definition of “oracles” the transient, changing with every whim program, shifting from day-to-day and person-to-person future alterations made by men? Is it something which allows doctrine vouched for by Joseph to be discarded? Or are the oracles instead the doctrines, the commandments, the revelations, the words contained in what Joseph Smith handed to us in the Book Mormon, *the Lectures on Faith* and the revelations given through him? Be careful about how you interpret the scriptures. Be careful about how flexible you think an unchanging God can be made into

a changeable Being who has given His power unto men. (2 Ne. 28: 5.) Be careful about believing that the God who is the same today, yesterday, and forever is now so whimsical that on one day one thing can be asked of you, and on another day something altogether different can be asked of you. And to the extent that you detect the varying shifting sand beneath your feet, ask yourself why that is so. And ask yourself, where might I go to find the rock upon which to establish my feet, so that the winds and the rains might not mow me down. Because God vouched for Joseph Smith, and God vouched for those things committed to you, through him. When I heard the testimony given by D. Todd Christofferson to BYU Idaho, bearing testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith a week ago, I rejoiced. Would to God we all took that more seriously. I wish we could recognize that if there is a Prophet whose words we need to heed it begins with the primacy of Joseph Smith. All other things, all the revelations, all your attitudes, all your notions - everything ought to be measured against what we received through him. God vouched for his words. I vouch for his words. I know he was a prophet of God. The extent to which my knowledge of Joseph runs allows me to say, I know that man has stood in the presence of God. And I know that God has, and does, vouch for him today.

So, let us regard what Joseph vouched for as the important doctrine of salvation, which is what he called *The Lectures on Faith*, as if it were a law unto the church. God's word through Joseph. Words and commandments from God to us, given by the Comforter, to which we must be obedient, so we may avoid condemnation, stumbling, and falling. All those things are in fact, the things which the Lord said about Joseph in revelation that we still find in our scriptures.

We got through the Sixth Lecture on Faith but we didn't touch the Seventh. I want to touch on it briefly tonight. Any treatment of that volume of scripture is always invariably brief. We can't harvest everything that's there. The Seventh Lecture on Faith, second paragraph: "As we have seen in our former lectures that faith was the principle of action and of power in all intelligent beings, both in heaven and on earth..." [It both motivates you to act and it produces power when you act. In that same second paragraph it says:] "... no world has yet been framed that was not framed by faith..." [God operates on a principle of faith. As I pointed out last night, all of us do too. It's just inevitable.]

In paragraph 4: "...it is by reason of this power (faith) that all the hosts of heaven perform their works of wonder, majesty, and glory. Angels move from place to place by virtue of this power..." [And then in paragraph 5 it says:] "...the whole visible creation as it now exists is the effect of faith." [Turn to paragraph 9:] "...what is the difference between a saved man and one who is not saved? We answer: from what we have before seen of the heavenly worlds, they must be persons who can work by faith and who are able, by faith, to be ministering spirits to them who shall be heirs of salvation; and they must have faith to enable them to act in the presence of the Lord, otherwise they cannot be saved."

They have to act. They have to be enabled, as a consequence of their faith, to be able to act in the presence of the Lord. Otherwise, they cannot be saved. Remember when we started this in Boise we were looking at what was said to Joseph in the First Vision about the power of godliness. They have a form but they do not have the power. They lack something because they teach for commandments the doctrines of men. What does it mean to have faith sufficient to enable you to act in the presence of the Lord, otherwise they cannot be saved? Well, Doctrine and Covenants section 93:1: "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;" Every soul who "forsaketh his sins." You are not going to get past your sins until God forgives you. But you need to awaken to the fact that you possess them and turn from them. Because turning from them is repentance, it's turning to face Him. You can still have a load that needs to be dropped because we are all heavy laden with sin. But forsaking your sins means that you would prefer Him over everything else that there is. So turn and face him.

“...cometh unto him...” [Well, the only way you can leave that load behind, is to get down in prayer, seeking Him, and asking Him to free you from the load; to allow you, as Alma recounts in his 36th chapter of the book of Alma, the terrible agony that he felt, and calling upon God to be redeemed. Then when God answered, the pain and distress that he had, was equal to the joy and the exhilaration he felt on the other side of being cleansed.] “...calleth upon my name...” [You have to do that.] “...and obeyeth my voice...” [That would include not merely the things that were given to us by Joseph Smith that you may be neglecting, but obeying His voice in what He tells you here and now. The agenda for you is different than the agenda for me. Your needs are different than mine. Your responsibilities are different than mine. You have your own family, you have your own ward, you have your own neighbors and you have your own issues. Fathers and sons, mothers and daughters – you are part of a community somewhere. And inside of that, all of you need to listen to the voice of God because he loves everyone. He loves that eccentric aunt that you just dread having come around. You can't for the life of you, understand why she thinks cloves should be poked into a turkey on Thanksgiving. You wonder if maybe there should be a procedure that more easily confines her to someplace where they administer psychotropic drugs. God loves her as much as He loves you. God loves all of us. Your agenda, and the people you can affect, and the relief that you can administer, and the needs that are in front of your eyes day by day, are uniquely yours. And the relief that you can grant to those around you, that's yours. It was given to you by God as a gift. Don't harden your heart.]

I was reading about the problems that the early saints experienced in that 1856 - 1858 timeframe. I was reading from the diaries, not the official history, not from the stuff that is made public; these are the private diaries and journals. I was reading from that material in sacrament meeting earlier today. We went home and we attended our church meetings this morning, and I literally cried as I read what they were called upon to go through. I am disinclined to be critical and non-appreciative of the fact that those who went before us suffered as they did in order to preserve and make possible for us today the programs and the scriptures. They would not allow the restoration, through Joseph, to lapse into silence and neglect. It doesn't matter to me that they made mistakes. We make mistakes too, every one of us. If you've lived a perfect life you wouldn't be here. The fact is we all are broken, and we are all in need of repair. There was valiance among the early saints and I am appreciative of all the struggles and hard lessons they were taught. I have learned so much from studying them. Those who believe I dismiss them are utterly wrong. Trying to understand God's hand sometimes requires us to look troubling events squarely and to realize how failure is not only part of our past, but it is an important part of it. We can and will fail too, and their struggles will be in vain, if we are so arrogant as to not deal with these events truthfully.

“...come to him...” [Because the only repairman that exists in the universe inside of this matrix, is Christ whose assignment it is to repair and redeem and heal us.] “...obey his voice...” [No matter how much it may disagree with the flow of all that goes on around you. People thought I was a madman, teaching gospel doctrine when we got to the King Benjamin talk about not allowing beggars to go by and neglecting them. (Mosiah 4: 16) I got push back every four years when we got through that material because I was and am saying you don't judge the beggars. You really don't have any right to do that. And then you have Paul's statement about being careful to entertain strangers because angels sometimes come among you unawares. (Heb. 13: 2.)]

Let's assume for arguments sake, that John the Beloved lingers still (see D&C 7: 3-4). And let's assume for argument sake, that John would like to know your heart. How might he best do that? I would suggest coming to you as a beggar, smelling foul and in obvious need, asking you for relief is the perfect way to find out if that same spirit animates you as animated King Benjamin, when King Benjamin said not to suffer the beggar to put up their petition to you in vain. Because are we not all beggars? And of course, that is not merely a rhetorical question. Are we not all beggars? Well, it's self-evident, isn't it?

“...obeyeth my voice and keep my commandments...” [*My commandments*, given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, entrusted to you, should be respected by you. They were given by the voice of the Spirit to you, asking you to help those around you. The relief that people need sometimes can only come from one source, and that is you. Under the inspiration of the Spirit, you can relieve the burdens of those around you. Why do you think God cares about the widows and the orphans and the poor and the infirm?]

Who at Bountiful appreciated His coming the most? Was it those who were called to preside, who names were given to us because they were recorded in the record? Or was the nameless group He had brought to Him to be healed? All of those in need of healing were brought forward and healed. (3 Ne. 17: 9.) We read the record and say, I’ve got name here. I’ve got Timothy. I’ve got a name here. I’ve got a Nephi. I have a name here, and this must be someone big and great and important. (3 Ne. 19: 4.) But unto whom did the Lord minister more? And who was it in Bountiful who appreciated more what the Lord had come to do?

Be like your Master. Do what you can for those around you who are infirm. They are here in abundance; the brokenhearted, the families who are in need. If you want to be saved, help the Lord save others. Not by preaching and clamoring and demanding they view the world like you do, but by giving them a helping and charitable hand. Your most powerful sermon can be in the effort you make, and the time you take to let people know you care about them. If you would like to repent of your sins, take a look around at those in need and do what you can for them. That is the first step. When your heart is like His, then you open up so that He can enter in. And when your heart is unlike Him, well, there's no room for His love of others until He breaks break it; which He will do.

You do these things, and “you shall see my face and know that I am.” That is “know,” not merely believe, but know. This is still that same paragraph 9 in *The Lectures on Faith*, seventh lecture about the third of the way down. [By the way, in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine Covenants, section 76 is about 8 verses. In our current edition it is 119 verses. So if you were going to memorize a verse in those days, well, you are like Gettysburg-address-worthy. It is formidable.] Okay, so about a third of the way down, it poses the question: “...where shall we find a saved being? For if we can find a saved being, we may ascertain without much difficulty what all others must be in order to be saved. We think that it will not be a matter of dispute, that two beings who are unlike each other cannot both be saved; for whatever constitutes the salvation of one will constitute the salvation of every creature which will be saved; and if we find one saved being in all existence, we may see what all others must be, or else not be saved. We ask, then, where is the prototype? Or, where is the saved being? We conclude, as to the answer of this question, there will be no dispute among those who believe the Bible, that it is Christ: all will agree in this, that he is the prototype or standard of salvation; or, in other words, that he is a saved being.” [Skipping down a couple of lines:] “...if he were anything different from what he is, he would not be saved; for his salvation depends on his being precisely what he is and nothing else...”

So, according to *The Lectures on Faith*, if you would be saved, you have to be exactly, precisely what Christ is, and nothing else. You have been told all your life that is impossible. Well, it is impossible in one sense, and it is a mandatory requirement in another sense. It is impossible because, as it turns out, we all err. We always have. That is what the atonement was designed to fix. He picks that burden up and He carries it for us.

However, the fact that He will carry that burden for us does not relieve us, from the moment it is taken away, from then going forward to do good. You *can* be Christ-like. You can administer relief to those around you. You can, as He said, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, visit those who are in prison. (Matt. 25: 34-40.) Some of the most profound, deepest, spiritual experiences I have had recounted to me by people I know, came from those who go out to the State Penitentiary in Bluffdale, Utah and hold family home evening with prison inmates. That ministration, that service, elevates the servant. Their heart gets moved with compassion. Your heart needs to be like Christ’s heart; moved with compassion for others.

And the way you do that is imitative at first. Then it is informed by the experience later, when you have acted consistent with His laws. What begins as imitation, and merely that, finds room within to have genuine compassion for the needs of others. Christ is the prototype, but you *can* be like Him. There are godly people walking around, many of them are elderly. Many of them have long since forgotten their own needs and they spend their lives in service of others. You can find that within the church with many Relief Society Presidents. You can find that within the church with people who fill legitimate needs with home teaching. You do not have to go find another church in which to serve. You don't have to find new neighbors, and you do not have to have a new family. That eccentric group of people, that tribe into which you were born - you belong there as an example of Christ's love and compassion.

The reason Christ says in the Sermon on the Mount they are going to speak all manner of evil against you falsely for His name's sake (Matt. 5: 11-12), is not because of anything you have done. It is because down here no one believes. No one believes the genuine thing exists. Everyone's heart has been disappointed by what men prove through their unworthiness. Everyone says the man I thought was going to be so great has turned out to be just be another broken ship-wreck. Their skepticism of you has been earned in this environment by everyone they have ever met. Therefore, you have got to be different. And you have got to expect their broken hopes are going to be taken out on you. Until at last, and it may require your life to do it, you need to show as Christ did, that faith can yet exist here. Let it exist here in you. Let it live and breathe in you. You needn't look for another life, another opportunity somewhere else far away. It is right here, it is in your lap, it is in your family, it is in your home, it is in your community, it is among all those egotistical, hardheaded, stubborn Gentiles that include us, lauding one another and talking about what great things we are. Serve them. Submit to their rule. Do it in a way that will touch their hearts and be the real thing. Be the real thing, and finally at last there will be those who are worthy to lead. You need to be like Christ. It is precise, it is exact.

So let's turn to a few scriptures and interrupt this for a moment, because we want to repent after all. We want to change what we are. Let's go to the Doctrine and Covenants section 84: 33. Now I'm simply going to allow you to entertain your present views on some things for tonight. But we're going to have to deconstruct a bunch of junk later and we will do that in Utah County, November 2nd. Beginning at verse 33 of Section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants: "For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies. They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God." ["Sons" and "seed;" it is necessary that you become that in order that you become "the church and kingdom, the elect of God." It is a family belonging to God. This is about a return to the earth of a Heavenly Family. As we saw in the statements made to Joseph Smith, the hearts have to be turned to the fathers.]

Verse 35: "And also all they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord;" Now many of you read verse 35 and you think it means if you fetch this priesthood by ordination, *ipso facto*, you have fetched Jesus. Praise Jesus! [And by way, Joel Olsteen is coming to the E Center. You are not going to want to miss that. It's a mega church. It's a mega church in transit. It is going to come to the E Center. SUNDAY, SUNDAY, SUNDAY. I'm sorry. I get worked up when the evangelicals show up on the horizon. He had some nice things to say about Mormons though. So Joel Olsteen has kind of crept into the positive column for me, as of late.]

I want to suggest that verse 35 can also be read exactly as D&C 93: 1 is read. That is to say, if you are going to receive this priesthood you're going to get it from Him. That is you enter into His presence, you receive Him, if you have it. And when you have it, as a consequence of having it, you receive Him.

Verse 36: "For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me;" I want to suggest that throughout scripture, almost invariably, the word "servants" is referring to angelic ministrants. So angels minister, that would

be Aaronic. Then Christ ministers, that would be sons of Moses. Verse 37: "And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father;"

It is the purpose of the Son to bear record of the Father. It is the purpose of the Son to bring others to the Father so that there might be many sons of God. Verse 38: "And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him."

You cannot go where the Father is without entering into, and receiving an inheritance. You know one of the things that we tend to think is that if you get something, this is based upon statements made in 132, but if you get something here, and you get it by covenant, that you are automatically entitled to take it into the next world. What if the covenant you are required to receive in order to obtain that inheritance in the next world does not reckon merely from something handled by ordinance, but instead the ordinance is pointing you to something higher and more holy? What if the thing that secures for you the inheritance in the next life is not the ordinance, but what the ordinance testifies of. That is, embracing the Lord through the veil. Then having conversed with Him, entering into His presence. Then having entered into His presence, being ministered to and taught. What if it means all that?

Doctrine and Covenants 84: 39-42: "And this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood. Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved. But whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come. And wo unto all those who come not unto this priesthood which ye have received, which I now confirm upon you who are present this day, by mine own voice out of the heavens; and even I have given the heavenly hosts and mine angels charge concerning you." You know that verse 42, the oath and covenant of the priesthood - you ought to take a look at the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis 14: 29, talking about the priesthood given after the Order of the Son of God. It says it was delivered unto men by the calling of His own voice, according to His own will, unto as many as believed on His name.

And so we have in section 76 a testimony given, and justification for the translation Joseph rendered of Genesis chapter 14 dealing with the priesthood and qualifying it as coming from the voice of God.

Take a look at Doctrine and Covenants 93: 36: "The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth. Light and truth forsake that evil one." What if, instead of repentance being related to your misdeeds, which are so plentiful and persistent, and will continue; instead it is related to the acquisition of light of truth - that is intelligence? What if repentance requires you to take whatever it is you have that is a foolish error, a vain tradition, or a false notion and replace it with truth?

My suspicion is, that whatever it is that is troubling you, will trouble you considerably less if you begin to fill yourself with light and truth. Until at last you arrive at a point you look back upon your sins and you say. "I have no more disposition for that. Now I know enough not to do that anymore because I prefer the light. I prefer God's intelligence and glory over that which I used to trade, or substitute for it." You see repentance may have a whole lot more to do with your own feeble education in the things of God than it has to do with the time you spend wasted, looking at some vile picture or other. We have these Victorian sexual mores that everyone in Wall Street tacks against. Like when you're in a sailboat and there's a head wind you "tack" against it. By using this cultural background they get instant attention by showing something sexually suggestive to sell you beer, or fast food, shoes, ships, sealing wax and cabbages.

Quite frankly, I find most of the marketing exploitation of sex to be boring, not titillating. Some of the more graphic use of sex is somewhat medical, but it's not enticing. From a certain perspective, if you will acquire enough light and truth, you're not going to be contaminated by exposure to the things that are degrading.

The Book of Mormon was abridged by a man who lived in an environment filled with sex and violence. He was untouched by it. He was a man of righteousness. Why is it that he could preserve himself in such an abhorrent environment? Because he was filled with light and truth. He educated himself, and had learned the things that are true. When you minister to someone who is suffering, their sins ought not to shock you. They should cause compassion to well up in you. People struggle with some very difficult, very challenging things. You need to try and overcome that by the light within you. The glory of God is intelligence. Be intelligent.

At one point Christ talking to Abraham said He was more intelligent than them all. (Abr. 3: 19.) One will be more intelligent than another. These two things exist, that if there be two beings, one will be more intelligent than the other. I am more intelligent than them all! That's what Christ said. And Joseph Smith talking about the Holy Ghost says, "I am learned, and know more than all the world put together. The Holy Ghost does, anyhow, and He is within me, and comprehends more than all the world: and I will associate myself with Him." (*TPJS* p. 350.)

The fact of the matter is that you *can* fill yourself with the mind of God. If you fill yourself with the mind of God, you are going to find yourself in a position where you, like the scriptures recite, have no more disposition to do evil, but only to do good continually. (Mos. 5: 2.) That kind of repentance is as a consequence of the things of you know. That repentance comes as a consequence of the light and truth within you. That repentance doesn't require you to spend time saying, 'I'm not, I'm not, I'm not going to watch porn on the Internet anymore.' The temptation just disappears.

There was a big announcement from Google on April 17, 2013 about the fiber internet upgrade coming to Provo, Utah. They are bringing the Internet upgrade to Provo, Utah to really speed up the access of the Internet. That was based on a lot of statistical studies about consumption of on-line pornography in Utah County. (See *Utah is No. 1 –for online pornography consumption*, Salt Lake Tribune study Mar 2, 2009.) So it is a great target audience. And we say well, shame on them. Why are they watching so much of that in Provo? Well, it is because there is a bigger population attending Brigham Young University than attending Utah State University here in Logan. So numerically there are more of them down south.

But the problem is not that God has built within you the desires, appetites and passions which He does not intend to have you filled. He intends for you to eat. He intends for you to sleep. He intends for you to reproduce. He intends for all of the appetites and passions put within you to be intelligently organized and gratified in a sacred manner, in which the purposes of God are advanced; so that you may find within yourself holiness in everything that you do. Love and understanding in everything you do. Repentance is the process of figuring out exactly how and why God made all the things available to you that he made available to you. Each of the things provided to us is to be used with prudence and with skill, including what we eat. (See, e.g., Section 89: 7-11.)

Well turn to section 132: 19, about halfway down. It is talking about conditions you need to fill and covenants you need to have. "Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; and if it be after the first resurrection, in the next resurrection ..." [Which is, by the way, one of the proofs that this is a revelation given by God to Joseph Smith, and it's one of the things that vouches for this being God, not man writing this stuff. If it were Joseph, he would be worried about coming forth in the first resurrection. But since God is giving a commandment here through Joseph intended to survive into the end of the Millennium, God is anticipating, He foresees that there will be generations that arise even after the Millennium and after the first resurrection has been sounded. Therefore this revelation anticipates those who live following the first resurrection; or in other words those who live during the Millennium.] Continuing, these "shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths--" [Well these are not just words. These are descriptions of various levels of activity that take place in the

afterlife. The “throne” is not the same as a “kingdom,” nor the “kingdom” the same as a “principality.” A “power” is not same as a “dominion.” These are describing different things, different levels. Until finally you arrive up to the state of the seraphim which dwell in fire. These are the flaming ones. Doctrine and Covenants 109: 79 has something to say about that: “And also this church, to put upon it thy name. And help us by the power of thy Spirit, that we may mingle our voices with those bright, shining seraphs around thy throne.” You see, “around the throne” is a place of everlasting, eternal burnings. Therefore the seraphs who gather there have to be “the flaming ones.” They have mounted up to that point.]

There was a verse I alluded to in Boise in Isaiah chapter 6. This is an incident I alluded to, I even gave the scripture but I didn’t talk about it. Isaiah 6: 1: “IN the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.” [The Lord sitting upon the throne would be this condition of glory.] Verse 2: “Above it stood the seraphims:” [The seraphim are ones who are flaming, the ones who dwell in this everlasting burnings.] “each one had six wings;” [This is metaphor. These folks have climbed through six stages of the ladder, Jacob’s ladder, to arrive where they were.] Verse 3: “And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory.” And then Isaiah said: “Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:” [Now we usually read that he took the tongs, and with the tongs he touched the lips, but it doesn’t say that. He took the tongs to get it off the altar and brought it in his hand. Being one of the flaming ones, he is able to bear this kind of heat because of his glory.] Verse 7: “And he laid *it* upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.”

This is an incident in which one of the Seraphs improvised an ordinance, by using the coals upon the prayer altar. This would be the golden altar before the Holy of Holies, upon which incense was burning with the ascending smoke, which is a symbol of the prayers that ascend to heaven. These prayers are the worthy speech uttered by all the faithful in faith which ascends to heaven. The altar with these coals symbolized these things. The flame, the coals, and the incense put upon it builds a column of smoke that upward where the ceiling spreads out the cloud, rather like the Tree of Life which it symbolized. The column of smoke like the trunk, the spreading cloud like the branches and leaves atop the column. All of this was located in the temple of Solomon. Isaiah’s vision takes place in this location, where an ordinance is performed by one of the flaming ones who dwells in burning glory. The ordinance removes the uncleanness from Isaiah’s lips.

Take a look at Doctrine and Covenants section 128. You ought to be looking into all this stuff. If you look at all the stuff, you don’t have time to waste on that crap that besets you. This is a lot more interesting than the junk that you fill your skulls with. Go here, do this stuff. Doctrine and Covenants 128:21: “And again, the voice of God in the chamber of old Father Whitmer, in Fayette, Seneca county, and at sundry times, and in divers places through all the travels and tribulations of this Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints!” [The voice of God has been present throughout it all, mind you, at many occasions.] “And the voice of Michael, the archangel; the voice of Gabriel, and of Raphael,…” [Micha-EL, Gabri-EL, Rapha-EL, who are among the EL, or in the plural form they are the Eloheim.] “...and of divers angels, from Michael or Adam down to the present time, all declaring their dispensation...” [Is declaring a dispensation the same thing as conferring it? Can they declare it and still possess it? If they declared it, and they declare it unto me, do I possess it? Or do they retain it?] “...their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their priesthood; giving line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little; giving us consolation by holding forth that which is to come, confirming our hope!”

I would suggest that in order to obtain any key, in order to obtain any right, in order to obtain any honor, in order to obtain any priesthood you have to perform, because it is merely inert until you perform. I don't care what key it is that you think you possess, until you act in conformity with the law upon which it is predicated, it is not yet yours. When you do perform, you lay hold of the blessing at the hand of God. That is when it belongs to you and is eternally yours to claim. This is why Joseph did not surrender, having opened this dispensation, the keys of this dispensation, because he did what he did. By doing what he did, he laid hold upon it. Therefore go do something for God. Go open the way. Go preach, teach, exhort, and expound, as is the responsibility of every member, brothers and sisters!

Did you know that "member" is an office in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? That office is conferred upon you whether you are male or female. Every one of you has a responsibility to preach, teach, exhort, and expound. You are burdened also with the law that I am no longer burdened by, and so I needn't give heed to some things that you still do, but I honor you. I respect you. I loved every minute of my membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I did not lose that because of my own volition. Some things get asked of you and they require you to lay even the things you love most on the altar. You have to choose. Each of you must choose for yourself the things that you prefer. But if you do not give primacy to the voice of God speaking to you, and if all you do is what some man tells you to do, you will never lay hold upon any key, any blessing, any right, any priesthood. Until you listen to God and do what God tells you to do, you will never lay hold upon anything that gives you the ability to declare your own rights, keys, honor, majesty, glory, and power of your own priesthood.

Notice however, that once again you have this statement in 21 about a variety of things. Not merely one. It is not merely unitary. The purpose of the restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith was to begin a process of walking backwards, to that point when it was all unitary, as it was in the beginning. It has been fractured and fragmented. It has been spread apart through generations. Now we need to walk our way back to the beginning, back to the point in which it was unified as it was at the start.

We had a bunch of enthusiasm when the missionary success in Kirtland took place and we brought on board this enormous aneurysm of converts. It's like a skinny snake swallowing a huge pig. There's this gosh awful lump there. That was the Kirtland experience with the conversion of the Campbellites, Sidney Rigdon and Parley Pratt. They came on board and they distorted what happened thereafter in the restoration. Long before meeting Mormon missionaries their goal was to have a New Testament church. That is what they demanded from Joseph Smith after they began to follow him, despite Joseph's encouragement to look for something else. And that is what they got through Joseph Smith. This is one of the reasons Ezekiel 14 was a subject or topic or lessons he taught early and he taught again late when talking to the Saints. He warned them about how they get through the Prophet, what they want and deserve. It's not necessarily what God wants. For example, you can see in section 107 two tracks, and they are very evident. One track is trying to figure out church government, and you get that revealed in Section 107. But the other track talks about the very beginning. It talks about Adam-ondi-Ahman. It talks about a dispensation at the beginning, where all of this started. You can see that the church, the converts, the people who wanted a church government got what they were asking for. You can see God pleading for another topic, another subject, and another return to something much more ancient.

We are going to spend some time this year trying to get us there. Tonight we are just trying to figure out how it is we move from wherever we are back to a state of being repentant. That requires you to exercise your effort to learn and obtain glory from God, which is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth. (D&C 93: 36, see also verse 28.) Not darkness, dimness, error, missteps, or incomplete and inadequate information. You are going to have to face the truth, and you're going to have to face it with some amount of courage. We all labor with a good deal of tradition that has been inflicted on our minds and on our hearts. Things that we may love, but if they don't conform to the glory of God, intelligence or light and truth, may have to be discarded too. Because what God wants to do is bring you back into a state of

reconciliation with Him. This comes only from bravely facing light and truth, the glory of God, or the power of godliness, if you will. The very thing that Christ said was missing as an ingredient in the Christian world at the time that He talked to Joseph in the First Vision.

Finishing up with Lecture 7, paragraph 9: "...salvation consists in the glory, authority, majesty, power and dominion which Jehovah possesses and in nothing else; and no being can possess it but himself or one like him." [Glory, intelligence or the light and truth, thrones, kingdom, principalities, powers, heights and depths, these words get used in the Doctrine and Covenants Section 132. We have read those. The glory of God is intelligence, section 93: 36. Dispensations, rights, keys, honors, majesty, glory, priesthood. We have looked at that. All of these words are related to the underlying notion of priesthood. And all of them are related to the oath and covenant of the priesthood that we looked at in section 84. We will discuss that in Utah County.]

In paragraph 10 Joseph translates, or Joseph refers to, a statement in the New Testament by the Savior, "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." That will change in the Sermon in Bountiful and Christ will say in 3 Nephi, "Be ye therefore perfect even as I, or your Father in heaven is perfect." By the time he preached in Bountiful, He had finished the climb up the ladder. I want to remind you of a statement that we read in Boise made by Joseph, found in *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* on page 348: "When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the Gospel--you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But *it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them.*" (Emphasis added.) Well isn't that interesting? So now you have to pass through the veil to learn some things. It's not all to be comprehended in this world.

Lecture 7 paragraph 10: "If any should ask, why all these sayings? The answer is to be found from what is before quoted from John's epistle, that when he (the Lord) shall appear, the saints will be like him; and if they are not holy, as he is holy, and perfect, as he is perfect, they cannot be like him; for no being can enjoy his glory without possessing his perfections and holiness, no more than they could reign in his kingdom without his power." When He appears, you need to be like Him. Lay down the burden of guilt, lay down the burden of sin, stop focusing on that stuff, and become like Him. You become like Him by doing His works. And you do His works by serving other; by ministering to the needs of others. When you do that, it is a natural by-product of that process, ordained by laws established before the foundation of the world that light and truth will grow within you. You will have compassion when you minister to the needs of others with compassion. Your heart will open too and receive within it light and truth, when your conduct reflects the same conduct as a merciful, holy and just God, whom you claim to worship. Worship Him by imitating Him. Worship Him by doing His works. Worship Him by making a living sacrifice. Set aside the junk that occupies you and go do something that is holy for someone else. However mundane and trivial it may seem to you, when you relieve the suffering of other people something changes in you. You become different. You become better. You become more like our Lord, because when you give whatever it is you give away, you get more in return. But make sure that what you give goes to relieve the suffering of others.

You are going to have a finish that path. You're going to have to rise up. If you expect to be in His presence when He returns (and He is coming in judgment), then you're going to have to be like Him. If you are not like Him, you will not be able to endure His presence. Take it seriously. Study it through. Seek to be like Him whom you worship. It is possible, but not while you are carrying a load of sins that trouble you and worry you and distract you. But that's what the Lord will remove from you. He can take all that away, but it is entirely up to you to choose, and then to do something to draw near to Him. He can't do that because that would violate your free will. *You* have to choose to be like Him. Although He

may remove all the stains upon you, you have to go forward and not stain yourself again. He cannot stop you from doing that. You're free to choose. Therefore choose the better part.

The atonement isn't like Tinkerbell spreading some magic dust that will make you rise up. The atonement will erase your sins and mistakes, but *you* must rise up. You must acquire those virtues. The glory of God is intelligence. Repentance requires you to acquire that intelligence, that glory of God. You acquire it by the things that you do in His name and for His sake. Those who are here and in need, they represent Him. And when you do it to even the least of them, He will credit that as having been done for Him. No good deed will go unnoticed with Him. He even notices when the sparrows fall. (Matt. 10: 29.) So is He not going to notice when your knee bends with compassion, praying for His mercy for someone that has offended you? And when you pray for those who have offended you, do you think for one moment that doesn't change your own heart?

The reason to rejoice and be exceeding glad when they say all manner of evil against you falsely is because it affords you the opportunity for compassion. Be like our Lord who forgave those in the act of killing him, not their brutality, but their ignorance. When the day arrives that they see things aright and they realize what offense they gave out they will be shocked. They had no intention of offending their Redeemer. They were carrying out the execution of a criminal. He had compassion on them for their ignorance. You have compassion for all those around you who are ignorant. If you think you know a little more than they do, then use gentleness and meekness to persuade them. (D&C 121: 41-42.) Sometimes what you try to persuade them of is going to offend them. Couple it with your own testimony of the truth. Don't let them simply go away offended. Let them know that when you give offense, and you surely will give offense, that you did it because of your love for them, your love of God, and your faith in the things which God is doing. When you offend, do it kindly, and while bearing testimony of the truth and with the compassion that should hail from a position of greater light and truth or intelligence. (D&C 121: 43.) They don't know what they're doing. They don't understand it yet. So help them.

In verse 11 of the Seventh Lecture: "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one..." This is long before Nauvoo. Joseph is declaring the possibility of unification between God and man. The potential for oneness of God and man. This is foreshadowing teachings that he will give in the King Follett discourse and it is right there in *The Lectures on Faith*. The same is true in paragraph 13. Christ wanted His disciples, all of them, including you, to be as Himself and the Father. Just as He and the Father were one, we all might be one with them.

This is marvelous language. It is in the 1835 scriptures, subsequently eliminated by the committee in 1921. It was removed without a vote of the saints, and therefore, I suggest that it belongs in your scriptures still.

Paragraph 15: "...the glory which the Father and the Son have is because they are just and holy beings; and that if they were lacking in one attribute or perfection which they have, the glory which they have never could be enjoyed by them, for it requires them to be precisely what they are in order to enjoy it..." [There is the word again – "*precisely*." Verse 16:] "These teachings of the Saviour most clearly show unto us the nature of salvation, and what he proposed unto the human family when he proposed to save them—that he proposed to make them like unto himself, and he was like the Father, the great prototype of all saved beings; and for any portion of the human family to be assimilated into their likeness is to be saved; and to be unlike them is to be destroyed; and on this hinge turns the door of salvation." [No human can be saved until that human is like God. And God intends to make us like Him. That is His work. (Moses 1: 39) His work can go on worlds without end, until they at last become like Him. (D&C 76: 112)

Notwithstanding the absolute requirement to be like God, look at what you can do in this world that affords you the opportunity to do just that. There are mothers here with little children. We can hear a child crying in the distance, there is a mother with him. Every infant comes into this world in profound need. There isn't a mother alive who has held a needy infant and not experienced the love of God. That child's existence is dependent upon her. Keep in mind that these opportunities exist everywhere around us all.]

Paragraph 17: “That it was a system of faith—it begins with faith, and continues by faith; and every blessing which is obtained in relation to it is the effect of faith, whether it pertains to this life or that which is to come. To this, all the revelations of God bear witness. If there were children of promise, they were the effects of faith, not even the Saviour of the world excepted.” [The entry of our Savior into this estate was the effect of an act of faith.]

Continuing with paragraph 17: “And through the whole history of the scheme of life and salvation, it is a matter of faith: every man received according to his faith—according as his faith was, so were his blessings and privileges; and nothing was withheld from him when his faith was sufficient to receive it.” [This is the way God is no respecter of persons. This is the way you, if you will lay down your ignorance, if you will repent and turn to God, can find yourself the inheritor of blessings and privileges that God will not withhold from anyone who understands and gathers to themselves the light in the truth that comes through obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paragraph 17:] “By their faith they could obtain heavenly visions, the ministering of angels, have knowledge of the spirits of just men made perfect, of the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, of God the judge of all, of Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and become familiar with the third heavens, see and hear things which were not only unutterable, but were unlawful to utter (Hebrew 11-12).”

Later Joseph Smith made a comment about Paul. Paul said he knew a man who is caught up in the third heaven, but Joseph knew a man who was caught up into the seventh heaven. It is sufficient however, if you commune with those beings.

Paragraph 18: “. . .how were they to obtain the knowledge of God? (For there is a great difference between believing in God and knowing him—knowledge implies more than faith. And notice, that all things that pertain to life and godliness were given through the knowledge of God) the answer is given—through faith they were to obtain this knowledge; and, having power by faith to obtain the knowledge of God, they could with it obtain all other things which pertain to life and godliness.” [It is knowledge that saves. Consequently, it is knowledge that you need, to repent and obtain. "Knowledge saves a man," said Joseph Smith. "A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge," said Joseph Smith. Knowledge and salvation, knowledge and repentance, they are all related. But knowledge is not given so that you can take prideful advantage of the fact that you possess something. If you have it, it is given to make you a minister, a servant. Someone the Lord might be able to employ to raise others up. If you cannot elevate others, then you failed in your effort to be like Him. He came to serve. You serve too.]

Verse 20: “Because to obtain the faith by which he could enjoy the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord, he had to suffer the loss of all things. This is the reason that the Former-day Saints knew more, and understood more, of heaven and of heavenly things than all others beside, because this information is the effect of faith — to be obtained by no other means. . . . For where faith is, there will the knowledge of God be also, with all things which pertain thereto — revelations, visions, and dreams, as well as every necessary thing, in order that the possessors of faith may be perfected, and obtain salvation; for God must change, otherwise faith will prevail with him. And he who possesses it will, through it, obtain all necessary knowledge and wisdom, until he shall know God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, whom He has sent — whom to know is eternal life. Amen.”

That is the purpose of the Gospel - to give you knowledge. Therefore the way to get knowledge is to repent. It is to search into, lay hold upon, and obtain for yourself knowledge that saves. Not mere theory. Not mere recitations of these symbols in the temple endowment. We are not enlightened merely because we understand some symbol in the temple represents these eight items. 'This symbol represents this, and this stands for that' is NOT what we must seek. Trivia is not light and truth. Light and truth will exalt you. Trivia can make you prideful.

In the talk I gave about the temple during the temple studies conference, I showed the difference between the effort made by Margaret Barker in expounding upon the temple (particularly between the First and Second Temple period) because she is a Methodist minister and the knowledge she brings comes at a price. She is criticized by her peers. On the other hand Latter-day Saint scholars expound with an air of pride about their temples, because we own them and our scholars are respected among us. Margaret Barker has suffered an enormous amount of criticism in a lot of circles, but she still brought forth a message that resonates with Latter-day Saints because she re-creates that history in a way that conforms exactly with the way we would expect it from having the Book of Mormon. Latter-day Saints can look down our nose at the Christians that don't own such sacred edifices, and it all becomes one mass of pride and vanity.

You have to sacrifice, and you have to serve the Lord. And you have to have Him, and Him only as the reason for what you do, what you say, how you act. He is the one who is going to judge you. There will be no peer review. There will be no panel of scholars. Nobody will say, "I think you should beef-up your bibliography a bit more because it does not pass muster, and you will not be awarded your PhD until you add more gibberish."

If knowledge saves, then it follows that repentance requires us to learn something. You must begin with the first and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation.

Get out Doctrine and Covenants 130:18-21: "Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection." [Now understand, we have looked at the definition of intelligence. It is the glory of God, or in other words light and truth. So let's do that. Whatever principle of light and truth we attain to this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.] "And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come. There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated." [These laws cannot be changed, cannot be altered, cannot be fought against with any success. It can be learned. It can be conformed to. It can be harvested.]

But blessings from God are obtained by diligence in what? Obedience to what? Knowledge and intelligence. Diligent at exactly what? Obedient to who? Were the Nazis both diligent and obedient? Are the jihadists both diligent and obedient? Are the drug cartels both diligent and obedient? Are the masters of the universe on Wall Street diligent and obedient?

I have a law suit currently pending where, as a team of lawyers we meet with co-counsel as a team, because there are too many parties. We avoid legally impermissible conflicts of interest by putting a team together. One of the co-counselors is located in downtown Salt Lake. Inside the building, one of the big beneficiaries of a number of federal programs involving billions and billions of taxpayer dollars has their office. In order to enter the building, both the client and I have to go to the guards at front desk, show ID, have the attorneys we are to meet with call down to the front desk and vouch for us. Then the guards give us a little ticket which permits us to pass through security to enter the building. Above all other things, those who protect the financial interests in this country are diligent and obedient.

But none of these examples are gaining intelligence, and what will rise with these in the resurrection will leave them poor and weak and miserable. They are not pursuing that which gives to them the glory of God. But you can. Virtues are meaningless apart from righteousness. You must have both otherwise you cannot even begin to repent.

Let's go to 2 Nephi 30:8-15. I want to remind you that it is knowledge that defines the millennial glory of man. "And it shall come to pass that the Lord God shall commence his work among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, to bring about the restoration of his people upon the earth. And with righteousness shall the Lord God judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. For the time speedily cometh that the Lord God shall cause a great division among the people, and the wicked will he destroy; and he will spare his people, yea, even if it so be that he must destroy the wicked by fire. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. And then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb; and the leopard shall lie with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling, together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

Would you like to stand in that day? Would you like to survive that burning which is to come? Then the way to obtain that, and the means to preserve yourself is to obtain that knowledge which saves. Why is it possible? 2 Nephi 30:16-18: "Wherefore, the things of all nations shall be made known; yea, all things shall be made known unto the children of men. There is nothing which is secret save it shall be revealed; there is no work of darkness save it shall be made manifest in the light; and there is nothing which is sealed upon the earth save it shall be loosed. Wherefore, all things which have been revealed unto the children of men shall at that day be revealed; and Satan shall have power over the hearts of the children of men no more, for a long time. And now, my beloved brethren, I make an end of my sayings."

Why is it possible for such things to be revealed in that day? Why do they have such faith? What must you do in order to qualify to be among them? Does anyone other than you have the ability to prepare you? This is your dispensation. What are you going to do with it?

The Lord can lament in the First Vision to Joseph, that all around there are those that have merely a form of godliness - insubstantial, unredeeming, incapable of saving. The Lord can lament that. You have to do something about that. The angel Moroni can say these are the things God intends to have happen. The culmination of all the prophecies are going to wrap up following the ministry of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Soon to come. Not yet, but soon. And here we are. What are you going to do about it? The prophecies cannot be fulfilled unless those who are free to choose, choose to repent and do something about. What great things lay in store, and therefore, you need to know *how* great things the Lord intends to do.

I'm thirty percent of way the through an agenda tonight. I cannot tell you how relieved I am of that. Every time we get another evening done, I feel lighter by the moment. We are going to pick up again in Centerville, and our next topic is going to will be trying to figure out the subject of covenants. They bear on much of what the Lord intends now to fulfill. I wish someone else were doing this. I wish none of you had ever heard my name. I wish I were an obscure trial attorney doing what I enjoy doing. I confess that in the perversity of my heart I do like trial work.

George C. Scott won an Oscar for the movie *Patton*. And there is a scene where he goes over and he kisses this soldier in this middle of this gosh awful battlefield where tanks are smoldering and dead bodies

are strewn, and there's this young man who is still alive. He kisses him and he looks around he says, "God help me, I do love it so!" In the courtroom there are times when I look around and say to myself, 'God help me, I do really enjoy trial work.' It's an intellectual endeavor, and someone is always trying to shoot me down and present the other side. I'm good with that. I actually enjoy the difficulty of that kind of wrestling. I don't enjoy this. I really don't. If I could hand this off to one of you and say, "Okay now you take it and you run with this, and I will just cheer you on from the sidelines," I would never do more than whatever I could to support you. But it apparently falls to me to accomplish. So I proceed.

Somehow, for some reason, here we are 190 years on, and we're just still bogged down with the endless, trivial, abuse of our time. The Gospel was intended to be delicious, exciting, awe-inspiring, filled with wonder, rejoicing, causing you to sing in your soul a song of redeeming love for him who has rescued you. And what do we have?

Oh, let me read you what we have. Joseph writing from Liberty Jail in a passage that belongs somewhere between Section 121 and 123 but never made its way into our scriptures. If we are going to take out by fiat, *The Lectures on Faith*, why can't we at least put this in? Anyway, here's where we are: "...the things of God are of deep import; and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Thy mind, O man! if thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss, and the broad expanse of eternity--thou must commune with God. How much more dignified and noble are the thoughts of God, than the vain imaginations of the human heart! None but fools will trifle with the souls of men. How vain and trifling have been our spirits, our conferences, our councils, our meetings, our private as well as public conversations--too low, too mean, too vulgar, too condescending for the dignified characters of the called and chosen of God." (*TPJS*, page 137.)

That's Joseph's lament. What are you doing with your time? What are you doing when you are called upon to teach? What are you doing when your teacher abuses your time and everyone else's with something that is too low, too mean, too vulgar, too condescending for those called of God? The Gospel is delicious. And we ought to return to it. The glory of God is intelligence and we are absolutely unintelligent. Dumber I might add, with our curriculum year-by-year. I don't know how we endure it. Unless like me, you bring a very good book to church with you every week.

Let me end by affirming that I have loved, loved every minute, from the moment I found the Gospel of Jesus Christ, I have loved it above all else. I have learned more in the last 90 days - information flows geometrically, light grows constantly.

Nephi pondered about the things that he had seen and heard. He constantly meditated upon that, and wrote some 40 years after the fact. The revelations that Joseph Smith received, including that one that he received in the sacred grove was not all to be comprehended in the first pass through.

The things of God are of deep import. Why did God reveal what He revealed when He revealed it? Why did He reveal it in the order in which He revealed it? What was He building upon? Why in the first revelation did He go there? Why in the next did He go to that point? If you think Joseph's mind wasn't caught up in the things that he had seen and heard, just as yours should be about the things that you've seen and heard, then you need to think again, because the things of God are of deep import, and time and care and careful and solemn and ponderous thoughts are the only way in which you, or anyone can find them out. That applies especially to you because you control you. You determine how much light and truth you will receive. And it is predicated upon a law that was ordained before the foundation of the world. Anyone of you can obey it. God is no respecter of persons, and you are authorized to exercise faith in Him unto salvation. You are authorized to exercise faith in Him, until you know Him. You are authorized to see His face and know that He is; everyone of you.

If you intend to survive His return, you are going to have to be able to bear His presence. Hence, the need to talk about this material in the agenda that we are on in these series of talks. We introduced it. We talked about faith, we talked about repentance and we are going to talk about covenants next.

I know not everybody comes to all of these. I don't expect people to. I don't even expect you to get the disks and listen to them. I'm trying to transcribe them and fill in with the things that I'm thinking about even if I do not give you the scriptures. They will be up on the Internet and available for you to read.

I am introducing things. I am trying to provoke you to study. I am trying to provoke you to look into this stuff. But I cannot babysit you, and shouldn't. I would only make you weak if I attempt to do that. You need to take this as the beginning point and go on and discover for yourself, *how* great things the Lord intends to do. One of the neglected volumes of scripture you need to spend some time with is *The Lectures on Faith*. They remain Scripture.

I told you how the Lord vouched for Joseph Smith. The Lord vouches for Joseph Smith again. If nobody will say it, I will declare to you. If you ignore Joseph words, you ignore them at your peril. If you allow any man, or men, if you allow any committee, any institution, or organization to claim that they have the right to alter, neglect, or discard the words of revelation given by God through the Prophet Joseph Smith, they will damn you if you listen to them. And they will surely be damned for doing so. No one has the right to do that.

God's work is the same yesterday, today and forever. Those who would like to throw you about by every wind of doctrine are teaching you merely the commandments of men, as if they were doctrine and they aren't! When God spoke through Joseph and we forget him, then we have no right to expect collectively, that He's going to move anything forward for us. The first order of repentance is to remember what God gave to us through Joseph. You do that, and then you find God is perfectly willing to pick it up and move it forward. You don't do that, and God will simply wait for you to get around to discharge the duty that is devolving upon you. God vouched for Joseph Smith. God spoke through him. I don't have the right to move one of his words. But I do have the right to listen to him, to follow what came through him, and to lay hold upon the blessings that were promised as a consequence of remembering him. To remember the words of Joseph is to remember your Lord. Remember Him. And do not let anyone tell you that they hold some authority that allows them to neglect, change, discard, veto, forget, or contradict what God told you through the voice of the Prophet.

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.