

Lecture 3: Repentance

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Apparently, in order to get a recording of this tonight, we need to have some approximate two-minute interruption at some point, and they'll flag me—I assume with jumping jacks—so that we have that pause.

It was about 40 years ago today that—you're waving for what purpose? You can't hear me? You...if...if I get real close, can you hear me now? This is good? Okay.

It was about 40 years ago—yesterday would have been a Friday, which was the day on which my friend, Ron Mahle, asked me to baptize him. The following day was a Saturday, 40 years ago. Today it's a Sunday. I was, at the time, in the Air Force, and I had been in one squadron, and then I got reassigned to a different squadron. While I was in the first one, I had a number of buddies that I had associated with—friends, compadres, one of whom was a fellow named Jimmy Givens. Now Wycliffe was from Oakland; I think Jimmy was from Chicago. Anyway, he was a black airman, and I was a white airman. (As it turns out, I still am [audience laughter].) We had hung out together a great deal, but then I lost contact with him for a period of months. He and I would go over to the base bowling alley, and we'd always—because they only sold beer in pitchers—we'd always buy a pitcher of beer to share, and then we'd buy a pizza to share, and 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 to the bowling alley." And I thought, "Okay, yeah, sure." And when we got there, I hadn't been thinking about the fact that the normal ritual was a pitcher of beer and a pizza. And so, as it came time to order, we ordered the pizza that we always got. And then, to my surprise, Jimmy ordered a Pepsi, and I said, "Well, that's good; so that relieves me of the responsibility." So I ordered a Pepsi, also. And Jimmy says, "I don't drink alcohol anymore." And I said, "Well, 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." And I said, "Well, that's great! What's the religion?" He said, "I'm a Muslim." And 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 pre-existence, and you can't hold priesthood!" And so here we were, buddies still, in spite of now the gulf of religion that 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 buds despite the enormous religion gulf that separated 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 that everyone had. In Exeter (which was another town in the Portsmouth, New Hampshire ward), there was Sister Long, and she ran (what was back then—we don't have them anymore), but it was the Seventies Bookstore—Seventies being responsible, I suppose, for establishing a chain of bookstores where you could purchase LDS material—Sister Long was the proprietor. And the bookstore consisted of her covered

back porch—in which all the LDS books were on display (and Sister Long read the inventory; so whenever you bought from her, you were actually buying a book that she already read and handled and, fortunately, had not marked up). But it was my understanding that if you were going to be a Latter-day Saint, you need to acquaint yourself with all kinds of information. So, 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*. He had been the Presiding Bishop of the Church; he had been called into the Quorum of the Twelve, and his book, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, was one of the first things I read to acquaint myself with the doctrine that the missionaries had been teaching. But all of those early biographies about Wilford Woodruff, about Heber C. Kimball, about John Taylor, the *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, which I bought from Sister Long (and used up—I recently had to buy a new one because it 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)—because Mormons were, by definition in those days, studious, careful, well-read, well-considered, doctrinally-prepared folks who would defend the faith; and therefore, if you were gonna run with them, you needed to have an education of your own. And as a consequence of that, I began, at that early stage, to acquire a library, because you were not legitimately a Latter-day Saint without one back then.

Remember, 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—he was in the Twelve. LeGrand Richards was a member of the Twelve in those days. I mean, what you got when you had those folks—

[Speaking to someone else] Hold my calls, will you?—

What you got in those days was doctrine and an exposition of doctrine. Now, as we all know, Bruce R. McConkie has taken a number of broadsides of late by the church distancing—

And when that “Modern Mormonism” (*David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*) came out and the backdrop of criticism that was leveled (the approximate 1700 errors found in the first edition of *Mormon Doctrine* that needed to be corrected)—when all of that came out of late, Bruce R. McConkie's reputation has suffered somewhat. But in those days, he was a doctrinal authority. And he and his father-in-law wanted to try and stabilize the doctrine of the church, and they made an effort to do that. That was, I mean—

It was the five volumes, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, (bought, read that). It was the three volumes of *Doctrines of Salvation*. There was the *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary* (that was not a Joseph Fielding Smith product edited by Bruce R. McConkie; that was Bruce R. McConkie writing that), *Mormon Doctrine*, and he had begun his *Mortal Messiah* series. Those days, doctrine really counted.

Well, last night in Idaho Falls, we talked about faith. Tonight we're going to talk 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*. You can read it, beginning on page 565 of that volume. It is a reproduction of the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. The reason I cite to the 1835 edition is because it was that edition which got canonized by the vote of the church. It is that edition that, in the preface, Joseph Smith vouched for all of the items of doctrine that were contained within the Lectures on Faith. 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 previously been canonized. They simply added to—and elaborated on—the revelations that had been received between then and now.

[Speaking to someone else] Could you go get the bottle of water? I forgot....

Beginning on page 565 and running through page 567, there is a recounting of how the Lectures on Faith were canonized on the 17th of August of 1835 when the volume was approved. And it begins with President Cowdery, who was Co-President of the Church at that point. He “introduced the ‘Book of doctrine and covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints,’ in behalf of the committee...” which was headed by Joseph Smith.

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...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 the Twelve as follows. “The testimony of the witnesses to the book of the Lord’s commandments, which he gave to his church through Joseph Smith, jr. [sic] who was appointed by the voice of the church for this purpose: we therefore feel willing to bear testimony to 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 doctrines 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 [did the same

thing]. Wm. Burgess, acting President of the Deacons [did the same thing]. 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." (*The Joseph Smith Papers, Revelations and Translations, Volume 2, Published Revelations*, pp.565-567)

So, I point that out. And if you get a copy of the 1835 edition, you'll read all of that because that is 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 that included Anthony Ivins, Melvin J. Ballard, James E. Talmage, John A. Widtsoe and Joseph Fielding Smith), in addition to not having a vote to remove it from our scriptures (therefore 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 of 1835 accepting it as canonized scripture for our instruction, but they're rejecting the testimony of all those who were present and bore testimony, whose names I've just read to you as well.

And so, I agree with what Bruce R. McConkie said at BYU on the 4th of 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." Hence the reason why I turned to the Lectures on Faith, commending them to you yesterday. And we'll look at 'em a little bit again tonight.

In the 1835 compilation of the Doctrine and Covenants, there are sections there—they're still in our Doctrine and Covenants, but they are differently numbered in ours today. When I get the transcription of this, I'll fill in the cross-reference to today's Doctrine and Covenants. But for purposes of preparing remarks for tonight, I used the old edition. I used the 1835 edition. So I'll be giving you a cite to the section and the verse that appears there.

Joseph's doctrines, teachings, revelations, and counsel was supposed to be kept and hearkened to by the church. In the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants section 41 [14], it says: *Ye have received a commandment for a law unto my church through him whom I have appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations from my hand* (see D&C 43:2), 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, verse 2[3] 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* (see D&C 5:9-10). Don't read the word "generation" in that context narrowly, because the word "generation" has, sometimes, 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 Joseph bore testimony. Therefore, it would include you.

In section 46, verses 1 through 3, it says:

*Behold there shall be a record kept among you, and in it thou [meaning Joseph, thou] 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] shalt give heed unto all **his** [singular, personal pronoun "his," meaning Joseph] words, and commandments, which **he** [singular, personal pronoun] shall give unto you, as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before [Him]: 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. (See D&C 21:1-6, emphasis added)*

"Shall not prevail against **you**," provided you give heed to **his** words—not mine; not another man's. The bastion established by the Lord that is the rock upon which the winds and the rain 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** [singular, personal pronoun; referring to the individual man, the Prophet Joseph Smith—praise to the man who communed with Jehovah, indeed—him!] have I inspired to move the cause of Zion in mighty power for good: and **his** diligence I know, and **his** prayers I have heard; 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 manifestations of my blessing upon **his** works. (See D&C 21:7-8, 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, not ours; because at this point—

This is 1835; 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 was crucified by sinful men for the sins of the world. (See D&C 21:9, emphasis added)*

So, as I read the edition of the Doctrine and Covenants in 1835—sections 14, 32, 46 of that volume—it becomes abundantly apparent that, to the extent that the church was a true and living church, it was a true and living church because God owned the words that came through Joseph, and 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.

[1835] Section 51, verse 2: *No one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church, excepting my servant Joseph Smith, jr. [sic] for he receiveth them as Moses; and thou shalt be obedient unto the things which I shall give unto him* (see D&C 28:2-3).

Section 84, again this is the 1835 edition. Section 84, verse 2—this is a revelation given in March of 1833 in which Joseph Smith was called by the Lord and the words, quoting: *My son... Verily I say unto you* [again—personal, individual pronoun, identifying an individual by the name of Joseph Smith]...

Verily I say unto you 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 are brought under condemnation thereby, and stumble and fall. (See D&C 90:3-5)

What is the definition of oracles? Is the definition of “oracles” a transient, changing-with-every-whim program that can shift from day-to-day and person-to-person? Or are the oracles the documents, the commandments, the revelations, the words that are contained in what Joseph Smith handed to us in the Book Mormon and the revelations given through him? Be careful about how you interpret the scriptures. Be careful about how flexible you think an unchanging God will be. Be careful about that God (who is the same yesterday, today, and forever) being so whimsically different that on one day, one thing can be asked of you, and on another, something altogether different can be asked of you. And to the extent that you detect a 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, 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**. And so, when I read (actually, when I heard—because it hasn’t been reduced to a transcript) the testimony given by D. Todd Christofferson to BYU-Idaho, bearing testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith this week ago, I rejoiced. Would to God we all took that more seriously and recognized that if there is a Prophet whose words we need to give heed to, it begins with the primacy of Joseph Smith—and that all other things, all other revelations, all of your attitudes, all of 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 **still** 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. Because

all of those things are, in fact, the things which the Lord said about Joseph in revelation that we find still in our scriptures.

We got through the Sixth Lecture on Faith, but we didn't touch the Seventh. And so I want to touch it briefly tonight because 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.

All the hosts of heaven... This is 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 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, verse 1, says: *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're not gonna 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—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 there is. So turn and face Him.

Cometh unto me—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, and 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 and then, when God answered, he could remember the pain—the distress that he had—was equaled by the joy and the exhilaration he felt on the other side of that)—being cleansed.

Calleth on 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, because your agenda is different from mine. Your needs are different from mine. Your responsibilities are different from mine. You have your own family; you have your own ward; you have your own neighbors; you have your own issues. Fathers and sons, mothers and daughters—you're 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. And you can't, for the life of you, understand why she thinks cloves should be poked into a turkey on Thanksgiving. And you wonder if maybe there shouldn't be a procedure that more easily confines her to someplace where they administer psychotropic drugs [audience laughter]. God loves her as much as He loves you. God loves all of us. And the agenda that you have, and the people you can affect, and the relief that you can administer, and the needs that go 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 1857/1856/1858 timeframe—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 in sacrament (we went home, and I attended my church meetings this morning), and I literally cried as I read what they were called upon to go through. I am very disinclined to be critical and non-appreciative of the fact that those who went before us suffered as they suffered, in order to preserve and make possible for us today the programs, the scriptures—the fact that they would not allow the restoration, through Joseph, to lapse into silence and neglect. It doesn't matter that they made mistakes. We make mistakes, too—every one of us. If you'd lived a perfect life, you wouldn't be here. The fact is, we **all** are broken, and we are **all** in need of repair.

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 to heal us. Obey His voice, no matter how much it may disagree with the flow of that that goes on all 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. And I got push-back, every four years, when we got through that material because I'm 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.

Let's assume, for argument's sake, that John lingers still. And let's assume, for argument's sake, that John would like to know your heart. How might he do that best? I would suggest, coming to you as a beggar, smelling foul and in 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, 'Don't suffer the beggar to put up their petition to you in vain because are we not all beggars?' And of course, that's not merely a rhetorical question. Are we not all beggars? Well, it's self-evident—yeah.

Obeeyeth my voice and keepeth my commandments—"My commandments," given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, entrusted to you, should be respected by you; given by the voice of the Spirit to you, asking you to help those around you, because the relief that people need sometimes can only come from one source, and that is you; under the inspiration of the Spirit, relieving the burdens of those around you. Why do you think God cares about the widows and the orphans and the poor and the infirm? And who at Bountiful appreciated His coming the most? Was it those that were called to preside, whose names are given to us because they were recorded in the record? Or was it those that He said—the nameless group—"Bring them up here, and let me heal them"? And all of those in need of healing were brought forward and healed. We read the record and say, "I got a name here; I got a Timothy. I got a name here; I got a Nephi. I got a name here, and this must be someone big and great and important." 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 that are in need. If you want to be saved, help the Lord save others—not by preaching and clamoring and demanding that they view the world like you do, but by giving them a hand. Your most powerful sermon can be in the effort that you make and the time that you take to let people know that 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, because you've begun the first step. When your heart is like Him, then you open up so that He can enter in. And when your heart is unlike Him, well, there's no room except if He break it—which He will do. You do these things, *you shall see my face and know that I am*—**know**; not believe, but know.

This is still that paragraph 9 of the Lectures on Faith, seventh lecture about—I don't know; it looks like it's only a third of the way down; it's a long paragraph. (By the way, in that 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants section 76, which in our current edition is like 118 verses, I think it's 8 verses there. So, if you're gonna memorize a verse in those days, dude, you're like Gettysburg-Address-worthy. I mean, it's *formidable*. *Formidable*, depending on what part of the country you reckon from.) Okay, so about a third of the way down, it says—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, **he** is the prototype or standard of salvation; or, in other words, **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. (emphasis added)*

So, according to the Lectures on Faith, if you would be saved, you have to be **exactly, precisely** what Christ is **and nothing else**. Now, you've been told all your life that that's an impossibility. Well, it's an impossibility, in one sense, and it's a mandatory requirement, in another sense. It's an impossibility because, as it turns out, we all err. All of us err; we always have. And that's what the atonement was designed to fix—because He picks that burden up, and He carries it for us.

But the fact that He will carry that burden for us doesn't relieve **us**—from the moment that He's taken that 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. Some of the most profound, deepest, spiritual experiences that I have had recounted to me by people I know, came from people who go out to the prison in Bluffdale and hold family home evenings with prison inmates. That ministrations/service elevates the servant. Their heart gets moved with compassion. Your heart needs to be like Christ's—moved with compassion for others.

And the way you do that is imitative at first. And then it is informed by the experience later. 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 even within the church with Relief Society Presidents. You can find that within the church with people who do legitimate-needs home teaching. You don't have to go find another church in which to serve. You don't have to find new neighbors, and you don't have to have a new family. That eccentric group of people, that tribe into which you were born—you belong there. You belong there as an example—as an example of love and compassion.

And you know, the reason why (in the Sermon on the Mount) He says they're going to speak *all manner of evil against you falsely, for my [name's] sake* (Matthew 5:11) is not because of anything you've done. It's because down here, no one believes. No one believes the genuine thing exists. Everyone's heart has been broken; everyone has been disappointed. Everyone says, "The man I thought was going to be so great has turned out, instead, to be just another broken ship-wreck." Their skepticism of you has been earned in this environment by everyone they've ever met. Therefore, you've got to be different. And you've got to expect their broken heart is going to be taken out on you until you, at

last—and it may require your life to do it—until you, at last, show 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 to go. It's right here; it's in your lap; it's in your family; it's in your home; it's in your community; it's among all those egotistical, hard-headed, stubborn Gentiles that we parade around, 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 Doctrine and Covenants section 84, and let's look, beginning at verse 33. Now, I'm simply gonna allow you to entertain your present views on some things for tonight. But we're gonna have to deconstruct a bunch of junk later, and we'll do that down in Spanish Fork, I think.

Beginning at verse 33 of Section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining of 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...seed—and it's necessary that you become that in order that you become *the church and kingdom, ...the elect of God*. Because as we saw in the statements made to Joseph Smith, the hearts have to be turned to the fathers because this is going to be reconstructing a Holy Family at some point.

And also all they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord (D&C 84:35). Now, many of you read that verse 35 and you think that what that means is: If you fetch this priesthood by ordination, *ipso facto*, you have fetched Jesus. Praise Jesus! (And by the way, Joel Olsteen is coming to the E Center—you're not gonna want to miss that. "It's a mega church! It's a mega church in transit! It's gonna 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 creeped a little more on the positive column for me of late.)

I want to suggest that verse 35 can also be read exactly as D&C section 93, verse 1 (that we were reading a moment ago) is read. And that is to say, if you're gonna receive this priesthood, you're gonna get it from Him; that is, you enter into His presence—you receive Him. **If** you have it, then **when** you have it—as a consequence **of** having it—you receive Him.

Oh... *For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me* (ibid, vs 36). I want to suggest that throughout scripture, almost invariably, the word "servants" is referring to angelic ministrants. And so, angels minister—that would be Aaronic. And then Christ ministers—that would be sons of Moses. *And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father* (ibid, vs. 37)—because 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*—‘cause you can’t 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 a covenant) that you are automatically entitled to take it into the next world. But what if the covenant that you are to receive in order to obtain that inheritance in the next world doesn’t reckon merely from something handled by ordinance but that 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 to—that is, embracing the Lord through the veil? And then, having conversed with Him, entering into His presence? And then, having entered into His presence, being ministered to and taught? What if it means all that?

*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. [Oh,] 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. (D&C 84:39-42, emphasis added)*

You know, that verse 42 of the oath and covenant of the priesthood—you ought to take a look at Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis chapter 14, verse 29, talking about the priesthood that was 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 section 93, verse 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—what if, instead, it is related to the acquisition of light and truth—that is,

intelligence? What if repentance requires you to take whatever it is that you have that is a foolish error/a vain tradition/a false notion and replace it with the truth?

My suspicion is that whatever it is that is troubling you, it will trouble you considerably less if you begin to fill yourself with light and truth, until at last you arrive at a point where you look back upon your sins and you say, "I have no more disposition for that because I, frankly, know enough not to do that anymore and because I prefer the light and because I prefer God's intelligence and glory over that which I used to trade/to 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 does have to do with the time you spend wasted, looking at some vile picture or other.

You know, we have this Victorian sexual mores that everyone in Wall Street tacks against—like when you're in a sailboat and there's a headwind, you "tack" against it. Quite frankly, I find most of that stuff boring and not titillating. Some of it's medical, but it's not enticing. And 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 inside an environment that was filled with sex and violence. And he was untouched by it—a man of righteousness. And why is it that he could preserve himself? Because what was in him was light and truth. He had educated himself; he had learned about the things that are true so that when you minister to someone who is suffering, their sins ought not shock you. They ought to 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—says He is more intelligent than them all. One will be more intelligent than another. *These two [things] exist, [if there be two beings], one [will be] more intelligent than the other...I am more intelligent than [them] all* (Abraham 3:19). That's what Christ said. And Joseph Smith, talking about the Holy Ghost, says, "I... know more than all the world... [or] the Holy Ghost does, anyhow, and...[it's in] me" (*TPJS*, 350).

The fact of the matter is that you **can** fill yourself **with the mind of God**. And if you fill yourself with the mind of God, you're gonna find yourself in a position where you, like the scriptures recite, have no more disposition to do evil but to only do good continually. **That** repentance is as a consequence of the things that 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." They're bringing that new—

There was a big announcement about the Internet upgrade coming to Provo, Utah, and they're bringing the Internet upgrade to Provo, Utah to really speed up the access of the Internet. That was based upon a lot of statistical studies about the consumption of certain

things online that are degrading and unwholesome. And so, it's a great target audience. And we say, "Well, shame on them." And why are they watching so much of that crap down in Provo? Well, it's because there is a bigger population attending Brigham Young University than attending Utah State, and so statistically, there's more of them.

But the problem is not that God has built within you the desires, appetites, and passions which He does not intend to have you fill. 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, and you find within yourself holiness in everything 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 one to be used with prudence and with skill—[D&C] section 89.

Well, turn to section 132. (I'm just going to tiptoe here because I know the enthusiasm with which some folks look at this stuff.) Go about halfway down in verse 19 of section 132—there's a dash, and after the dash it says (and it's talking about conditions that you need to fulfill and covenants that you need to have)—it says: *Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; and if it be after the first resurrection, in the next resurrection* (D&C 132:19), 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. Because if it were Joseph, he'd be worried about coming forth in the first resurrection. But since God is giving a commandment here, through Joseph, that was intended to survive on into the end of the Millennium, God's anticipating (He foresees) that there will be generations that arise even after the Millennium and after the first resurrection has been sounded. And so, God's saying: Yeah, for those people, if it be after the first resurrection, in the next resurrection.

And [it says:] 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. A *throne* is not the same thing as a *kingdom*, nor a *kingdom* the same as a *principality*, nor a *power* the same thing 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. They are the flaming ones.

Doctrine and Covenants section 109 has something to say about that. I'll look at that. Section 109, verse 79: *As 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.* See, "around the throne" it 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.

You know, there was a verse I alluded to in Boise. (I've left it marked because I never—I move the marks up here when I... and it's never moved, and it's still got that—see that orange tab? That was Boise.) Isaiah chapter 6. This is an incident I alluded to—I even, I

think, gave the scripture, but I didn't talk about it, using the scripture in front of me—Isaiah chapter 6, beginning at verse 1:

IN the year that king Uzziah died I saw 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]. Above it stood the seraphims [the Seraphims are the ones who are flaming, the ones who dwell in this everlasting burning]: each one had six wings [this is metaphor—because these folks have climbed through six stages of the ladder, Jacob's ladder, to arrive where they were. And they cry out], ...Holy, holy, holy...And the posts of the door moved.... [And Isaiah says in verse 5:] Woe is me! ...I'm undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, ...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 [seraphim] 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 as “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 he brought it in his hand. Because being one of the flaming ones, he is able to bear this kind of glory. *And...laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged*—improvising an ordinance using the prayer altar—the altar with the ascending smoke, which is a symbol of the prayers that ascend to heaven—that worthy speech uttered by you, in faith, that ascends to heaven, that the altar symbolized—the flame, the coals, the incense put upon it to build a column of smoke that reaches, then, the roof, and it spreads out, rather like the Tree of Life that it symbolizes—all of this stuff taking place in the temple of Solomon, and the ordinance being improvised by one of the flaming ones that dwells in these conditions of burning in glory.

Take a look at Doctrine and Covenants section 128. (And you ought to be looking into all this stuff—because if you look into all the stuff, you don't have time to waste on that crap that besets you. And this is a lot more interesting than the junk that you fill your skulls with. Go **here!** Do **this** stuff!)

Doctrine and Covenants section 128, verse 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 [the] Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [because the voice of God has been present throughout it all, mind you, at many occasions—and does still]! ...the voice of Michael, the archangel; the voice of Gabriel, and of Raphael [Micha-EL, Gabri-EL, Rapha-EL—the El or the Elohim], and of divers angels, from Michael or Adam down to the present time, all declaring their dispensation[s]...

Is declaring a dispensation the same thing as conferring it? Can they declare it and still possess it? If they declare 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. And I don't care what key it is you think you possess—until you act in conformity with the law upon which it is predicated, it ain't yours. But when you do, and you lay hold of a blessing at the hand of God, that is yours and eternally so. Which is why Joseph did not surrender—having opened this dispensation—the keys of this dispensation, because he did what he did. And 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? And that that office is conferred upon you whether you're male or female? And that every one of you have a responsibility to preach, teach, exhort, and expound? You are burdened, also, with a law that I'm no longer burdened by, and so I needn't give heed to some things that you still do; but I honor you, and I respect you, and 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 that require you to lay even the things you love most on the altar. And you have to choose. Each of you must choose for yourself the things that you would prefer. But if you don't give primacy to the voice of God speaking to you, you'll never lay hold upon any key, any blessing, any right, any priesthood. If all you do is what some man tells you to do—

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.

(Well, okay, now we're on a countdown, I don't want to interrupt myself mid-sentence.)

Notice, however, that once again you have this statement in 21 about a variety of things and not merely one. It's 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. Because it's been fractured, it's been fragmented, and it's been spread apart through generations. And 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 success in Kirtland took place—and we brought on board this enormous aneurysm. (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, Parley Pratt. And they came on board, and they distorted

what happened in the restoration. And so **their** goal was to have a New Testament church. And that's what they wanted through Joseph Smith; that's what they demanded through Joseph Smith; and despite Joseph's encouragement to look for something else, that's what they got through Joseph Smith. Which is one of the reasons why Ezekiel 14 was a subject or topic or lesson that he had early and he had late in talking to the Saints about how they get, through the Prophet, what they want. And it's not necessarily what God wants.

You can see (in section 107) two tracks, and they are very evident. One track: they're trying to figure out church government, and you get that. But the other track is talking about the very beginning, and it's talking about Adam-ondi-Ahman, and it's talking about a dispensation at the beginning, where all this started. And you can see that the church, the converts, the people that wanted a church government got what they were asking for. But you can see God pleading for another topic, another subject, and another return.

We're gonna spend some time this year trying to get there. Tonight, we're just trying to figure out how it is we move from wherever we are back to a state of being repentant. And that requires you to exercise your effort to learn and obtain glory from God, which is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth—not darkness, dimness, error, missteps, incomplete and inadequate information. You're gonna have to face it, and you're gonna have to face it with some amount of courage. Because we all labor with a good deal of tradition that had been inflicted upon our minds and upon our hearts. And things that we may love, if they don't conform to the glory of God—intelligence or light and truth—they have to be discarded, too. Because what God wants to do is to bring you back into a state of reconciliation with Him, which comes only from bravely facing light and truth, the glory of God, 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.

So, why don't we change the discs?

[Break to change the recording discs.]

Okay well, maybe we should do that all the time. Maybe we should take a break every time we get going.

Well, finishing up with that Lecture 7, paragraph 9: The... *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* (Lectures on Faith 7:9).

Glory—intelligence or the light of truth—thrones, kingdoms, principalities, powers, heights, depths—these words get used in the Doctrine and Covenants section 132. We've read those. Glory of God and intelligence, [D&C] section 93:36. We looked at that. Dispensations, rights, keys, honors, majesty, glory, priesthood—we've looked at that. All of these words: *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*. All of these words are related to an underlying notion of priesthood. And all of them are

related to that oath and the covenant of the priesthood that we looked at in section 84.

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* (Matthew 5:48). 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 [which] is in heaven is perfect* (3 Nephi 12:48). Because by the time He preached in Bountiful, He had finished the climb up the ladder. And I want to remind you of a statement that we read in Boise that Joseph gave, found in the *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* on page 348:

When you climb... 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 [pass] 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.

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. (Lectures on Faith 7:10)

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. And you become like Him by doing His works. And you do His works by serving others, by ministering to the needs of others. And 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 **with** compassion to the needs of others. Your heart will open to—and receive within it—light and truth when your conduct reflects the same conduct as a merciful and 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. ***Relieve the suffering of others.***

You're going to have to 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; because 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—not while you're 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 of that away, but it is entirely up to you to choose **then** to do something to draw nearer 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 of the stains upon you, you have to go forward and not stain yourself again, because He can't 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. And repentance requires you to acquire that intelligence—that glory of God. And you acquire it by the things that you do in His name and for His sake. And those that are here with you 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. And no good deed will be gone unnoticed with Him. He even notices when the sparrows fall. 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 that doesn't change your own heart?

The reason to rejoice and be exceedingly glad when they “say all manner of evil against you falsely” is because it affords you the opportunity, with compassion (like our Lord, who forgave even those who were in the act of killing Him—not their brutality, but their ignorance; because when the day arrives that they see things aright finally, and they realize what offense they gave out—they had no intention of offending their Redeemer. They were carrying out the execution of a criminal. And so, 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 them, then use gentleness and meekness to persuade them. 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), let them know that you did it because of your love for them, your love of God, and your faith in the things that 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. They don't know what they're doing. They don't understand it yet. So help them.

In verse 11 of the Seventh Lecture, in the middle there: *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 oneness of God and man. This is foreshadowing teachings that he will give in the King Follett Discourse, and it's right there in the Lectures on Faith. The same is true in paragraph 13: *He wanted his disciples, even all of them, to be as himself and [as] the Father: for as he and the Father were one, so they might*

be one with them.

This is marvelous language. It's in the 1835 scriptures (that have been eliminated as a result of a committee in 1921—and it was removed without a vote of the saints, and therefore, I would suggest 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's that word again—"precisely". 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. (Emphasis added)*

No human can be saved until that human is like God. There is so much you can do, in this world, that affords you the opportunity to be like God. There are mothers over here with little children. There's a child crying in the distance that has a mother with him. Every infant comes into this world in a condition of profound need. There isn't a mother alive who hasn't held a needy infant and not experienced the love of God because that child's existence is dependent upon her. Keep in mind that these opportunities exist everywhere—everywhere.

Still... (this is a long paragraph. This is paragraph 17, about—I don't know—a third of the way down):

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 Savior was produced as an act of faith]... 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 in which God is no respecter of persons. **This** is the way in which you—if you will lay down your ignorance, if you will repent and turn to God—this is the way in which you can find yourself, also, the inheritor of blessings and privileges which God will not withhold from **anyone** who understands and gathers to themselves the light and the truth that comes through obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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. (ibid)

Later, Joseph Smith made a comment about—Paul said he knew a man who was caught up to the third heaven, but I know a man who was caught up to the seventh heaven (see *DHC*, volume 5). I'll give you the cite on that in the transcript. 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...obtain all other things which pertain to life and godliness. (Emphasis added)*

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 (*DHC*, 4:588, 10 April 1842). 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 in order to raise up others. Because if you can't elevate others, then you've failed in your effort to be like Him. He came to serve. You serve, too.

20: *To obtain the faith*— and this is a ways into that paragraph,

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...heavenly things than all others beside, because this information is the effect of faith—to be obtained by no other means. ...where faith is, there will the knowledge of God...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.

That's the purpose of the Gospel—to give you knowledge. Therefore, the way to get knowledge is to repent. It's 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 stand for this eight items, and that stands for this, and this stands for that.” Trivia is not light and truth. Light and truth will exalt you. Trivia can make you prideful.

When I gave that talk about the temple studies (and when I’m done there’s going to be an announcement about another temple studies thing)—

There’s a difference between the effort that is made by Margaret Barker in expounding upon the temple (and in particular, the difference between the First and Second Temple period) because Margaret Barker, as a Methodist minister, brings the knowledge that she brings at a price to herself. She has suffered an enormous amount of criticism in a lot of circles. And she’s still brought forth a message that resonates with Latter-day Saints because she recreates that history in a way that conforms exactly with the way we would expect it from having the Book of Mormon. And then Latter-day Saint scholars come along, and they expound upon the temple and the temple studies, and there’s an air of pride about the Latter-day Saints because “we own them,” you see. And so we 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. Because He’s the one that’s going to judge you. There’s not gonna be a peer review. There’s not gonna be a panel of scholars. There aren’t gonna be people who say, “I wish you’d beef-up your bibliography a bit more because it doesn’t pass muster, and you will not be awarded your Ph.D. 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 section 130. Doctrine and Covenants section 130, beginning at verse 18: *Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.* Now understand that we’ve looked at the definition of intelligence. It’s the glory of God, or in other words, light and truth. So let’s do that. Whatever principle of light and truth we attain unto in 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.

Can’t be changed, can’t be altered, can’t be fought against with any success. It can be **learned**. It can be **conformed** to. It can be **harvested**. But it’s by diligence in what? And 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?

We have a case currently pending in which we go to co-counsel as a team of lawyers because there's too many parties so that there aren't legally impermissible conflicts of interest, and so there has to be co-counsel. One of the co-counsel is located at a building in downtown Salt Lake. And inside the building, there is one of the big beneficiaries of a number of federal programs that involve billions and billions of taxpayer dollars. And so, in order to enter the building, both the client I represent and myself, as co-counsel, have to go to the front desk, show ID. They have to call down; they have to vouch for us. Then they give us a little ticket, and we get to pass by security and enter the building because, above all other things, the financial interests—and those that protect them in this country—are **diligent and obedient**. But they are not getting intelligence, and what will rise with them in the resurrection will leave them poor and weak and miserable because 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 can't even begin to repent.

Let's go to Second Nephi chapter 30. I want to remind you that it is knowledge which defines the millennial glory of man. Begin at verse 8 of Second Nephi chapter 30:

*It shall come to pass that the Lord 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. Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb; and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling, together; and [the] little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed; and their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the suck[ing] child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put forth 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. (2 Nephi 30:8-15, emphasis added)*

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 through that—is to obtain that knowledge which saves. Why is it possible? Beginning at verse 16:

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; 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. Now, my beloved brethren, I make an end of my sayings. (ibid, vs. 16-18)

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**—this is your dispensation. **This**. 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 which God intends to have happen. The culmination of all the prophecies are going to wrap up in a time following the ministration of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Soon to come. Soon to come. Not yet, but soon. And here we are. What are you gonna do about it? The prophecies cannot be fulfilled unless those who are free to choose, **choose** to repent and to 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 the way through an agenda tonight. I can't tell you how relieved I am of that. Every time we get another evening done, I feel lighter by the moment. We're going to pick up again in Centerville, and our next topic is going to be trying to figure out the subject of covenants because 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 enjoying what it is—

In the perversity of my heart, I do like trial work. There's a scene—George C. Scott won an Oscar for the movie *Patton*—there's a scene where he goes over and he kisses this soldier in the middle of this gosh-awful battlefield, where tanks are smoldering and dead bodies are strewn; and there's this young man who still survived. He kisses him, and he looks around, and he says, "God help me, I do love it so!" And in the courtroom, there are times when I look around and say, "Oh, God help me; I really do enjoy trial work." I mean, it's an intellectual endeavor, and someone's always trying to shout me down and present the other side. And 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 and you run with this, and I'll just cheer you on from the sidelines," I would never do anything more than whatever I could to support you.

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, 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 in. I mean, if we are gonna take out (by fiat) the Lectures on Faith, why can't we put this in, at least? 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," [Denver pauses to listen to a passing motorcycle] Not a Harley,

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*, 137)

That's Joseph's lament. What are **you** doing with your time? What are **you** doing when you're called upon to teach? What are **you** doing when a teacher abuses yours and everyone else's time 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 (and dumber, I might add, with our curriculum year-by-year). I don't know how we endure it unless you, like me, bring a very good book to church with you each week [audience laughter].

Well, let me end by affirming: 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.

When Moroni, excuse me, when Nephi (Second Nephi chapter 9, verse 14-ish)—about how the things that he had seen and heard, he constantly meditated upon that, writing 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 have 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. And that applies especially to you because you control you. You determine how much light and truth you will receive. And it's 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—every one of you.

Because if you intend to survive His return, you're going to have to be able to bear His presence.

Hence, the need to now talk about this stuff; and hence, the agenda that we're on. We introduced it; we talked about faith; we talked about repentance; we're going to talk about covenants next.

I know not all of you come to all of these. I don't expect you to. I don't even expect you to get the disks and listen to them. But I'm trying to transcribe them and fill in the things that I'm thinking about, even if I don't give you the scriptures. And they're up, and they'll be on the Internet and available for you to read.

I'm introducing things. I'm trying to provoke you to study. I try to provoke you to go look into this stuff. But I can't babysit you and shouldn't. I'll only make you weak and not strong 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. And 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. And if no one else will say it, I'll declare it to you:

If you ignore Joseph's words, you ignore it at your peril. And 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 to the Prophet Joseph Smith, they will damn you if you listen to them. And they will surely be damned for doing so because no one has the right to do that.

God's work is the same yesterday, today, and forever. And those who would like to throw you about by every whim of doctrine are teaching you merely the commandments of men as if they were doctrine—and they aren't! When God speaks 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'll find God's 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's devolving upon you.

God vouched for Joseph Smith. God spoke through him. And 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. Because to remember the words of Joseph is to remember your Lord. Remember Him. And don't 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 a Prophet.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.