

## 1. Beware of Excessive Zeal p.237

President Joseph Smith read the 14th chapter of Ezekiel--said the Lord had declared by the Prophet, that the people should each one stand for himself, and depend on no man or men in that state of corruption of the Jewish church--that righteous persons could only deliver their own souls--applied it to the present state of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints--said if the people departed from the Lord, they must fall--that they were depending on the Prophet, hence were darkened in their minds, in consequence of neglecting the duties devolving upon themselves, envious towards the innocent, while they afflict the virtuous with their shafts of envy.

There is another error which opens for the adversary to enter. As females possess refined feelings and sensitiveness, they are also subject to overmuch zeal, which must ever prove dangerous, and cause them to be rigid in a religious capacity--[they] should be armed with mercy, notwithstanding the iniquity among us.

**Christy's Thoughts:** We need to be spiritually self-sufficient. In the church we talk about self sufficiency all the time when it comes to temporal things, but it's a principle that applies to all things in our lives. When the prophet or our priesthood leaders or the Lord himself isn't telling us exactly what to do or spelling out the doctrine for us, we are still responsible to be up and doing and seeing to our own personal conversion. Our conversion is our responsibility.

### D&C 58:26

**26** For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward.

Our prophet, President Russell M. Nelson, alluded to the same pitfall when he said that “lazy learners and lax disciples will always struggle to muster even a particle of faith.” (Christ Is Risen; Faith in Him Will Move Mountains - Russell M. Nelson - April 2021) We must not casually keep the commandments and then rely on others to drag us up our figurative Mount Sinais. It's against the very nature of God to force us...or drag us...to heaven. If we want to get there, we've got to move our own two feet and exercise our own agency to obtain faith unto life and salvation. “It is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.” (2 Nephi 25:5)

One way we might be tempted to rely on others is by failing to do the work to study and understand doctrine for ourselves. The culture we live in, (NOT gospel culture, but culture among members of the church), is such that it's become almost trendy to look to others. Right now, so many people are looking to others to tell them what they should think about the scriptures, to the point that I can hardly go to church and not hear the same ideas about our “Come Follow Me” lessons repeated over and over again. This isn't usually the result of inspiration, but much of the time, it's because that's what the most popular podcast talked about that week. How sad. Instead of relying on others, we need to do as President Nelson has counseled and become “anchored in Pure Doctrine” for ourselves (.The Future of the Church: Preparing the World for the Savior's Second Coming)

Joseph Fielding Smith:

“The greatest achievement mankind can make in this world is to familiarize themselves with divine truth, so thoroughly, so perfectly, that the example or conduct of no creature living in the world can ever turn them away from the knowledge that they have obtained. ...”

(*Gospel Doctrine*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939, pp. 3–4).

Elder Richard G Scott said: “Profound spiritual truth cannot simply be poured from one mind and heart to another. It takes faith and diligent effort. Precious truth comes a small piece at a time through faith, with great exertion, and at times wrenching struggles. The Lord intends it to be that way so that we can mature and progress.”

.....

In this section Joseph also spoke about the danger of having too much zeal. This is super interesting to me and my first thought was, how is this possible? Is it possible to be too enthusiastic about the gospel? Is it possible to be too obedient or to love the Lord too much? Is that what he’s talking about?

**ZEAL**, *noun* [Gr., Latin ] Passionate ardor in the pursuit of any thing.

It’s sometimes called “the blind conductor of the will.”

It was the zeal of Zennif to inherit the land of his fathers that brought his people into bondage. (See Mosiah 7:21) It was the zeal of the early saints that caused them to go to Zion in haste before they were called by the prophet and before everything had been properly prepared for them.

Enthusiasm for the gospel IS a GOOD thing. Overzealousness is not. When we have unbalanced zeal, we might become so overly anxious to help others that we DO attempt to drag people up the mountain with us, whether they want to come or not. When we do this we fail to live the pattern the Lord taught, which is one of long suffering, persuasion, and love unfeigned.

### **Alma 38:12**

“Use boldness, but not overbearance; and also see that ye bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love;.”

We also have to watch that we don’t attempt to run faster than we have strength, but that we do all things in wisdom and order. The world has many counterfeits to this wisdom and order and there are many people who are willing to teach the philosophies of many mingled with scripture when it comes to finding “balance” in life. Many misjudge faithfulness to be over-zealousness. What is the proper order? It might sound counterintuitive because we live and the world and have likely absorbed what they have to say about this. But the proper order is:

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God” (See Matt. 6:33)

And have and “eye single to the glory of God” (D&C 4:5)

This is the discerning factor that divides every counterfeit from every true principal. Is it centered in Jesus Christ? There’s only one way to have the correct balance. We find it when we center our lives on the Savior, Jesus Christ. In him all things hold together. (See Collosians 1:17). I know if we center our lives on the Savior we will be able to bridle our passions and be filled with charity, and that when we do this we will have balance in our lives, we will find greater joy, and we will be far more effective in building Zion.

For “faith, hope, charity and love, with and eye single to the glory of God, qualify (us) for the work. (D&C 4:5)

**Brett's Thoughts:** This might be frustrating for some, right now, with our current “ follow the prophet on the vaccine” thing we got going on. But there is a such thing as “ keep it between the shores”. Depending on the prophet for instruction on shoe tying, is too much. Ignoring him when he speaks is too little. But the thing that keeps us from running aground is asking for ourselves if the prophet is speaking for the Lord. Also note, Joseph Smith was talking about people in the state of corruption in the Jewish church. This church isn't corrupted. Nor will it be. This is the last dispensation. Other dispensations had the luxury of screwing around. We dont. Also, The whole 14th chapter of Ezekiel could be read here, just to drive the points home. But I'll refrain. But here is a bit.

1 Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me.

2 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

3 Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them?

4 Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;

Our own principles may become our idols. This one I struggled with terribly with the mask/vaccine thing. I was almost the only guy in church who didnt wear a mask- Because I was gonna stick to my guns, against this Assyrian control, yadada yadada, yadada. But. With this most recent letter from the 1st Prez. I had to sit back and ask myself deeply. Am I Christian or conservative first? Which master do I serve? Ultimately, my relationship with Christ is how I'll gain exaltation. No political party, or family member can give me this. He holds all the keys. So, even some of my principles and deepest held feelings have to be set on the altar.

**Micah's Thoughts:** A lot of people have run into confusion with this quote and misunderstand it and then teach their misunderstanding to a lot of people. I've seen this quote from Joseph Smith used more time improperly in the last week then I have seen this quote used properly over the course of my lifetime. The best way that I can think to explain this to people in a way that they will understand is to explain this as an example that everyone should be familiar with. An employee for Burger King doesn't mop the floor, doesn't clean the garbage cans etc until the manager or boss says to mop the floor or clean the garbage etc. What would employers say about this individual? They would not think they are a good worker. And they would say “your mind has become darkened because you are relying entirely on me to tell you what to do or what to think and this is because you have neglected the duties resting upon yourself.” So the boss says you all need to know your duties and think for yourselves- when you see a problem you need to solve it. So then the boss walks into the room and says “Hey Hannah, I need you to go to the back and clean out the grills” and then the boss goes back into his office. And Hannah decides “no, that was just a suggestion, what the boss really wants me to do is think for myself and I

think that I should be cleaning the floors.” What an employer think of this employee? I can tell you from experience what such an employer would say, pigheaded, stubborn, doesn’t work well with others, can’t take instruction, etc.

Now you have an employee that whenever the boss isn’t looking or giving commands, they are off cleaning the floors, cleaning the grills, ie. doing what they think needs to be done next and when the boss shows up and says he needs the grills cleaned, they go and clean it. Now the employer would think of that employee “well done thy good and faithful servant thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many” and then they promote them to floor manager. But what is the reaction from the other employees? If we are being honest, many of them will be envious and they will afflict the virtuous employee with their shafts of envy. “You are making us look bad” or “you are a suck up!” etc.

## **2. Order by Which Revelation Comes p.21-22**

I will inform you that it is contrary to the economy of God for any member of the Church, or any one, to receive instruction for those in authority, higher than themselves; therefore you will see the impropriety of giving heed to them; but if any person have a vision or a visitation from a heavenly messenger, it must be for his own benefit and instruction; for the fundamental principles, government, and doctrine of the Church are vested in the keys of the kingdom. Respecting an apostate, or one who has been cut off from the Church, and who wishes to come in again, the law of our Church expressly says that such shall repent, and be baptized, and be admitted as at the first.

The duty of a High Priest is to administer in spiritual and holy things, and to hold communion with God; but not to exercise monarchical government, or to appoint meetings for the Elders without their consent. And again, it is the High Priests' duty to be better qualified to teach principles and doctrines, than the Elders; for the office of Elder is an appendage to the High Priesthood, and it concentrates and centers in one. And again, the process of laboring with members: We are to deal with them precisely as the Scriptures direct. If thy brother trespass against thee, take him between him and thee alone; and, if he make thee satisfaction, thou hast saved thy brother; and if not, proceed to take another with thee, etc., and when there is no Bishop, they are to be tried by the voice of the Church; and if an Elder, or a High Priest be present, he is to take the lead in managing the business; but if not, such as have the highest authority should preside.

With respect to preparing to go to Zion:--First it would be pleasing to the Lord that the church or churches going to Zion should be organized, and a suitable person appointed who is well acquainted with the condition of the church, and he be sent to Kirtland to inform the Bishop, and procure a license from him agreeable to the revelation: by so doing you will prevent confusion and disorder, and escape many difficulties that attend an unorganized band in journeying in the last days.

And again, those in debt, should in all cases pay their debts; and the rich are in no wise to cast out the poor, or leave them behind, for it is said that the poor shall inherit the earth.

You quoted a passage in Jeremiah, with regard to journeying to Zion; the word of the Lord stands sure, so let it be done.

There are two paragraphs in your letter which I do not commend, as they are written blindly. Speaking of the Elders being sent like lightning from the bow of Judah; the second, no secret in the councils of Zion. You mention these as if fear rested upon your mind, otherwise we cannot understand it. And again we never inquire at the hand of God for special revelation only in case of there being no previous revelation to suit the case; and that in a council of High Priests. \* \* \*

It is a great thing to inquire at the hands of God, or to come into His presence; and we feel fearful to approach Him on subjects that are of little or no consequence, to satisfy the queries of individuals, especially about things the knowledge of which men ought to obtain in all sincerity, before God, for themselves, in humility by the prayer of faith; and more especially a teacher or a High Priest in the Church. I speak these things not by way of reproach, but by way of instruction; and I speak as if acquainted with you, whereas we are strangers to each other in the flesh.

I love your soul, and the souls of the children of men, and pray and do all I can for the salvation of all.

I now close by sending you a salutation of peace in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ be and abide with you all. Amen.

JOSEPH SMITH, JUN.

--DHC 1:338, 339.

**Christy's Thoughts:** There were two things that stood out to me from this passage. One, is the idea of the need for order. God's house is a house of order. We belong to His church which is run with order. But, at the end of the day, whether or not a group is ruled by that order really depends on whether every individual in the group is willing to adhere to it. Do we live with respect to the order the Lord has set, or do we rationalize, for one reason or the other, and play musical chairs with Heavenly Father's furniture? Do we recognize the proper order in our homes or are we prone to fashion the way we do things after the manner the world has taught? The better we are at submitting to the Lord's program and the Lord's doctrine on the keys of the priesthood, the straighter our path will be to Zion.

The other thing that stood out to me is the idea of reverence in asking God for revelation. Joseph said, "It is a great thing to inquire at the hands of God, or to come into His presence;" Are we careful when we ask for revelation or are we casual?

Elder Boyd K. Packer taught that "reverence invites revelation."

Back in 2017 Elder Eyring and Elder Holland did a face to face with the youth and they were asked a question about prayer and specifically, how to make your prayers more like a conversation with the Lord. And the answer that Elder Eyring gave totally caught me by surprise. I did not expect it and it actually was something that bothered me for a while, but I have since

come to see the wisdom in this answer and it's something I invite you to consider as well. I couldn't find a transcript, but I went ahead and typed out what he said, more or less.

He said,

“I always worry when someone is speaking in too familiar a way because it is not easy. Heavenly Father's words, his ideas, are not exactly ours. And so the idea of having....a conversation where you're chatting with Heavenly Father is probably a little bit of a lofty goal. My own feeling is....I pray as if he is there, as if he is listening, and he IS listening. I believe he's always sending messages to me. I really do. But sometimes there's long silences, for me at least. And so when she speaks, you see, of a conversation in her prayers, she's making it sound a little more casual than I think it's possible to be. We're dealing with God the Father and His son, Jesus Christ and they are so far above us in terms of their powers...”

And then he said, “....In fact I've been with people who (pray) as if they're chatting and I've heard them pray and thought “You're a little more familiar than I am with that one”.

After Elder Eyring's remarks, Elder Holland chimed in and gave an example of reverent prayer. He talked about something that President David O. McKay would sometimes do. He would first make sure he was dressed appropriately, he would go into a darkened room with the curtains drawn, kneel in the center of the room so he wasn't leaning on anything, and then, before he even began to pray, he would sit in silence until he felt worthy to approach the throne of God.

President Eyring then told of His own experiences at times where he would dress up and prepare to give a priesthood blessing and the miracles that happened as he took those things seriously. He then said,

“Some prayers need to be that carefully prepared, to go before deity....I'm absolutely convinced if we will prepare and see ourselves as coming to the throne of God, then remarkable things can come.”

#### (Face to Face with President Eyring and Elder Holland)

As Special Witnesses of Jesus Christ, these men KNOW, more than most of us do, the sacred nature of speaking with God. Every prayer can't be as special as those “David O. McKay's prayers” that Elder Holland described. But some of our prayers can and should be. We need to be careful not to mistake casualness for closeness. I invite you to find ways to make your prayers more sacred. I'm really excited to implement this in my own life because I know the Lord loves and rewards effort.

#### **Brett's Thoughts:**

The first part about the organization of revelation receipt is pretty clear and straight forward. Second- JS states “You quoted a passage in Jeremiah, with regard to journeying to Zion; the word of the Lord stands sure, so let it be done” Which verse is he talking about? Possible candidates are:

3:14 14 Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:.

Look at the numbers. That is us. Sifting, anyone? Or possibly:

4:6 6 Set up the standard toward Zion: retire, stay not: for I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction.

Flee before the Great Northern Army gets here. Also implies that Zion is built already. As a bonus, relating back to the last section.

8:19 19 Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country: Is not the LORD in Zion? is not her king in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities?

Idolatry.

Or is it 50:5? 5 They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.

### **Micah's Thoughts:**

- The order and right of revelation through the keys is laid forth in the first paragraph
- Dealing with those that trespass against you alone and to the side first and only going public if things can't be worked out is laid out in the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph. This is solid advice
- Over and over again the Lord with respect to Zion, with respect to the Heavenly kingdom organization and order are key to the system working. The fact that this organization and order etc is found in the same teaching under revelation is something that people should pay attention to. Zion is not built by a million different men following their own fingers, Zion is not built by a million different direct strings from men to the Father. There are hundreds if not thousands of strings that bind us together and that bind us to the prophets which then bind us to the Savior which then binds us to the Father. No man is saved as an island.
- Those that have debt should in all cases pay their debt, which is why they were to come after. But the rich were in no wise to leave behind the poor. This was the order laid out. Those forsaking their debts and fleeing to Zion in their destitute condition is what caused Zion to fail.
- There are no secret councils in Zion. I'm so tired of hearing of secret chambers of great Godly knowledge. The Father is organized, is straightforward, is plain to the understanding.
- Tying back to the first quote we went over, we go to the Father through the keys over serious matters. Trivial matters should be left to lower keys or individuals. Meaning when higher keys tell us/counsel us to do something, we should take double notice of it.

### **3. A Key to Mysteries p.156**

I will give you one of the Keys of the mysteries of the Kingdom. It is an eternal principle, that has existed with God from all eternity: That man who rises up to condemn other, finding fault with the Church, saying that they are out of the way, while he himself is righteous, then know assuredly, that that man is in the high road to apostasy; and if he does not repent, will apostatize, as God lives. The principle is as correct as the one that Jesus put forth in saying that he who seeketh a sign is an adulterous person; and that principle is eternal, undeviating, and firm as the pillars of heaven; for whenever you see a man seeking after a sign, you may set it down that he is an adulterous man.

**Christy's Thoughts:** The Children of Israel found fault with Moses and were quick to complain against him. This hard heartedness and propensity to murmur, was what kept them wandering in the wilderness while they could have been enjoying a promised land. That journey should have taken months, not 40 years. Pitting your will against the Lord's anointed, finding fault with leaders, and failing to sustain and obey the prophet brings suffering AND apostasy.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that "the moment we rebel against anything that comes from God, the devil takes power."

We can see this played out again and again and again in the scriptures, so often, that if we have read them at all, this should be entirely obvious.

Cain, The people at the tower of Babel, Lot's wife, the priests who steadied the ark, Laman and Lemuel, King Noah's wicked priests, The Zoramites, the Nephites before they were destroyed, and on and on all the way to our time where the same eternal laws apply.

I defy anyone to find one...just one example...of someone who murmured against the Lord and disobeyed His appointed mouthpiece, the prophet, who did not repent, and who had things turn out well for them. I challenge you to find me just one. You can't do it. Fault finding breeds rebellion. And the rebellious are not of the blood of Ephraim, they are not the children of the birthright, and they will not have an inheritance in Zion.

But I know that if we are willing to let God prevail, whatever the challenges at hand, the God of Israel our Savior Jesus Christ, will have our backs and he will honour His covenants. Stay firmly on the right side of the line, follow the keys, have charity for their imperfections, and I bear you my testimony that God will bless you. He is at the helm.

### **Brett's Thoughts:**

Again. More sifting. When people insist that they are right, and that the mouthpiece of God is wrong, are they setting themselves up as idols? Worship me, believe me. Also, with the second half of the quote, regarding adultery. In TPJS it reads. The Sign Seeker When I was preaching in Philadelphia, a Quaker called out for a sign. I told him to be still. After the sermon, he again asked for a sign. I told the congregation the man was an adulterer; that a wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign;<sup>3</sup> and that the Lord had said to me in a revelation, that any man who wanted a sign was an adulterous person.<sup>4</sup> "It is true," cried one, "for I caught him in the

very act,” which the man afterwards confessed when he was baptized.<sup>5</sup> (Feb. 9, 1843.) DHC 5:268.

### **Micah’s Thoughts:**

"George Q. Cannon (“Satan Hates a United People,” Gospel Truth, Vol. 1, p. 210–11)

Whenever you see a man disobeying the counsel of the Lord through the Holy Priesthood, you may know that unless he repents, he will apostatize. It is a sure sign of apostasy. A man may be an Apostle, a Seventy, a High Priest, an Elder or a Bishop, yet if he tries to divide the people and persuades them to disobey the Prophet of God, he will surely fall, unless he repents with all his heart. The Lord asks us to obey Him. He tells us how to do so. He does not ask for blind obedience, because He gives His Holy Spirit to all who ask for it to show them that it is right to obey.”

The reason why George Q Cannon can say this is because he had read the teaching by Joseph Smith we just read. If you fight against the doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints the light of Christ and the Holy Ghost will leave you. But if you fight against the keys the light of Christ and the Holy Ghost flee from you. As President Eyring taught, “ The choice not to take prophetic counsel changes the very ground upon which we stand. It becomes more dangerous. The failure to take prophetic counsel lessens our power to take inspired counsel in the future. The best time to have decided to help Noah build the ark was the first time he asked. Each time he asked after that, each failure to respond would have lessened sensitivity to the Spirit. And so each time his request would have seemed more foolish, until the rain came. And then it was too late.”( Finding Safety in Counsel)

## **4. Happiness the Design of Existence p.255-256**

Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God. But we cannot keep all the commandments without first knowing them, and we cannot expect to know all, or more than we now know unless we comply with or keep those we have already received. That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be, and often is, right under another.

God said, "Thou shalt not kill;" at another time He said, "Thou shalt utterly destroy." This is the principle on which the government of heaven is conducted--by revelation adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed. Whatever God requires is right, no matter what it is, although we may not see the reason thereof till long after the events transpire. If we seek first the kingdom of God, all good things will be added. So with Solomon: first he asked wisdom, and God gave it him, and with it every desire of his heart, even things which might be considered abominable to all who understand the order of heaven only in part, but which in reality were right because God gave and sanctioned by special revelation.

A parent may whip a child, and justly, too, because he stole an apple; whereas if the child had asked for the apple, and the parent had given it, the child would have eaten it with a better

appetite; there would have been no stripes; all the pleasure of the apple would have been secured, all the misery of stealing lost.

**Christy's Thoughts:** The path that leads to happiness is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God. If we don't understand the nature of God, that he loves us and has given these commandments for our benefit and blessing, we will always have a difficult time with obedience. Satan has done a spectacular job of making evil look palatable, but we know that, "Wickedness never was happiness." With that said, God's ways are higher than our ways and as Joseph taught, sometimes a thing is wrong in one circumstance and right in another. There may be times when the Lord commands us to do something that seems wrong. Abraham was commanded to kill his son. The Spirit constrained Nephi to kill Laban to obtain the plates of Brass. Joseph Smith knew something about this issue, because the Lord required Him to do things that were against his initial sense of right and wrong. Living plural marriage is one example of this and I think Joseph knew very well that he was sacrificing his reputation to do it. But he knew the Lord commanded it, therefore it was right, therefore Joseph obeyed. These three prophets, and others who were told to do similar things, had to have an actual knowledge that they were following the Lord's will in order to righteously obey such commandments. "...for whatsoever *is* not of [faith](#) is [sin](#)." (Romans 14:23) These righteous men were not taking a shot in the dark and hoping they weren't following a strange spirit. We need that same knowledge if we are to remain faithful. How do we know we are following the Lord's will in such circumstances? The Lord has provided the answers to this.

He told Nephi:

"...I will also be your [light](#) in the wilderness; and I will prepare the way before you, if it so be that ye shall keep my commandments; wherefore, inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall be led towards the [promised land](#); and ye shall [know](#) that it is by me that ye are led." (1 Nephi 17:13)

First thing we can see is that we need to keep the commandments that we have, then we are promised that the Lord will be our light and when the Lord is our light we will KNOW that we are being led by Him.

Alma taught: "...whatsoever is light, is [good](#), because it is discernible, therefore ye must know that it is good" (Alma 32:36)

These scriptures, and many, many others, teach us that following the Savior shouldn't be guess work. The Laws upon which this blessing is predicated are plainly taught in the scriptures.

If we want to be prepared to be obedient and be faithful in any circumstance, we NEED to know that we are doing the Lord's will. That means we need to obtain a testimony that the man we call our living prophet, who is President Russell M. Nelson right now, IS God's prophet. We need to know and have a clear understanding of the doctrine that the Lord does, in fact, require us to follow the prophet, and that the spirit will not lead us contrary to that prophet. Beyond that, we need to know the Lord well enough to trust that whatever he asks of us is right and that our

eternal happiness is his purpose. If we go to the Lord with a broken heart and contrite spirit, the Lord will teach us, in His own way, who he is. And once he does that, you won't have a problem letting God prevail any more. Once, when I was going through one of the most difficult trials in my life, I struggled to say the words "Thy Will be Done" and the revelation that came was, "If you knew me, you would NOT be afraid". I bear you my testimony that that is true. Seek to know Jesus, seek to know His love for you, seek to know His doctrine. When you do, you will be able to press forward in faith, and with dogged persistence, and say in faith the words, "Thy will be done" no matter what the Lord asks of you. If you do these things you will find peace in this life and eternal life, even a fullness of joy, in the world to come.

### **Brett's Thoughts:**

Seek first the kingdom of God is the central theme to this. Not money. Not cars. Not friends. Not spouses. Not houses. In being willing to put all things on the altar, and doing it when needed, then we become faithful servants. Faithful servants are the most valued by their master, so they receive inheritance. This - God said, "Thou shalt not kill;" at another time He said, "Thou shalt utterly destroy." means we cannot have an absolute set of principles. Again, if principles become our idol, then we will invariably be at odds with God, at some point.

### **Micah's Thoughts:**

#### **D&C 82:2-4, 8-10**

2 Nevertheless, there are those among you who have sinned exceedingly; yea, even all of you have sinned; but verily I say unto you, beware from henceforth, and refrain from sin, lest sore judgments fall upon your heads.

3 For of him unto whom much is given much is required; and he who sins against the greater light shall receive the greater condemnation.

4 Ye call upon my name for revelations, and I give them unto you; and inasmuch as ye keep not my sayings, which I give unto you, ye become transgressors; and justice and judgment are the penalty which is affixed unto my law.(edited)

8 And again, I say unto you, I give unto you a new commandment, that you may understand my will concerning you;

9 Or, in other words, I give unto you directions how you may act before me, that it may turn to you for your salvation.

10 I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.

"The principles of Plural Marriage were revealed for the benefit and exaltation of the children of men, but how much unhappiness has arisen through failure, on the part of some who have contracted this order of marriage, to conform to the laws that govern it! But does it arise through any defect in the order of the marriage system? O no; but from ignorance and the folly and wickedness of those individuals who enter into it, who abuse, rather than righteously obey, it. So

in regard to the principles of the United Order. Its principles too are sacred, and I assure you we will never go back to Jackson County, Missouri, there to build up the new Jerusalem of the latter days, until there is a perfect willingness on our part to conform to its rules and principles. Many years have transpired since we received the revelation of the United Order, and in one sense that long period of time bespeaks negligence on our part in not more fully obeying it. The very principles of that order, in my estimation, were given for our temporal and spiritual salvation. In order to derive the benefit that God designed should flow from them, they must be established and systematized on the principle of righteousness, each person learning to love his neighbor as himself. For us to undertake to deal with them on any other principle would virtually open the way to bitter disappointment.” (Lorenzo Snow, April 5 1877, Journal of Discourses, 18:375)

“Hence we learn that the Saints in Jackson County and other localities, refused to comply with the order of consecration, consequently they were allowed to be driven from their inheritances; and should not return until they were better prepared to keep the law of God, by being more perfectly taught in reference to their duties, and learn through experience the necessity of obedience. And I think we are not justified in anticipating the privilege of returning to build up the Center Stake of Zion, until we shall have shown obedience to the law of consecration. One thing, however, is certain, we shall not be permitted to enter the land from whence we were expelled, till our hearts are prepared to honor this law, and we become sanctified through the practice of the truth.” (Lorenzo Snow, October 7 1873, Journal of Discourses, 16:276)

### **5. A Warning to Zion p.18-19**

Repent, repent, is the voice of God to Zion; and strange as it may appear, yet it is true, mankind will persist in self-justification until all their iniquity is exposed, and their character past being redeemed, and that which is treasured up in their hearts be exposed to the gaze of mankind. I say to you (and what I say to you I say to all), hear the warning voice of God, lest Zion fall, and the Lord swear in His wrath the inhabitants of Zion shall not enter into His rest.

The brethren in Kirtland pray for you unceasingly, for, knowing the terrors of the Lord, they greatly fear for you. You will see that the Lord commanded us, in Kirtland, to build a house of God, and establish a school for the Prophets, this is the word of the Lord to us, and we must, yea, the Lord helping us, we will obey: as on conditions of our obedience He has promised us great things; yea, even a visit from the heavens to honor us with His own presence. We greatly fear before the Lord lest we should fail of this great honor, which our Master proposes to confer on us; we are seeking for humility and great faith lest we be ashamed in His presence. Our hearts are greatly grieved at the spirit which is breathed both in your letter and that of Brother Gilbert's, the very spirit which is wasting the strength of Zion like a pestilence; and if it is not detected and driven from you, it will ripen Zion for the threatened judgments of God. Remember God sees the secret springs of human action, and knows the hearts of all living.

Brother, suffer us to speak plainly, for God has respect to the feelings of His Saints, and He will not suffer them to be tantalized with impunity. \* \* \* All we can say by way of conclusion is, if

the fountain of our tears be not dried up, we will still weep for Zion. This from your brother who trembles for Zion, and for the wrath of heaven, which awaits her if she repents not.

(Signed) JOSEPH SMITH, JUN.

Christy's Thoughts:

### **Mormon 9:27**

The prophet, Mormon, invites: “come unto the Lord with all your heart, and work out your own salvation with fear and trembling before him.”

We talked at the beginning about the need for every person to take charge of their own salvation and to use their agency to obtain the gift of Eternal life. We also talked about approaching the throne of God with reverence. Both of these things apply to what Joseph taught here about Zion as well. To approach Zion IS to approach the throne of God. Casualness in our individual approaches to living the commandments will lead to our failure as a group. These warnings are not to be taken lightly. Satan might not have convinced you that all is well in Zion. But, has he convinced you that all is well in your own heart? Has he convinced you that you would never fall away? That you are not prone to serious sin the way some other people are? If you feel you can be casual in keeping commandments and following the Lord in any measure and not fall away, you are grossly underestimating the power and the tenacity of our enemy, who desires to make all men miserable like unto himself. And once you underestimate him, you will be easily misled. He's like a card shark. He holds back just enough to make you think he's not a real threat, but his intentions are to take you for a fool and rob you of your eternal destiny. A while ago I did a scripture study on rationalization and it was eye opening how incredibly adept at rationalizing I'd been in the past. I have learned that we human beings can rationalize ANYTHING we want, and almost effortlessly convince ourselves and others we're right. It really isn't that hard. We often allow ourselves to be deceived because it's more comfortable than being corrected. A lot of the time we don't want to hear that we let the Lord down, because we do want to please Him. But we might mistakenly think that because we believe we WANT to please the Lord, we are justified in making small shifts in our obedience.

“And there shall also be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God—he will justify in committing a little sin; yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this; and do all these things, for tomorrow we die; and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God.”” (2 Nephi 28:8)

Don't let Satan convince YOU to do those things. He will attempt to weary us. He will accuse us and weigh us down with thoughts that we are too weak and the standards for Zion are too high. He will make the goal look impossible. But the scriptures refute that idea with clarity.

Nephi said that “..the Lord giveth no commandment unto the children of men save he shall prepare a way for them to accomplish the thing which he has commanded them.”

And what is that way that has been provided?

Jesus Christ taught: "I am the way"

The message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is, that if we are yoked to the Savior through covenants, He will forgive our sins of weakness as we repent, and He will enable us, by and by, to overcome those weaknesses and be prepared to meet him when He comes. He is the way we have been given to sanctify ourselves. He is the WAY to Zion!

This is our task. Zion is a group of individuals and it cannot be achieved with just one or two righteous people. We need to have a group that is unified in obedience to and love for the Savior. We need a group of consecrated individuals who recognize that we are at war with a very real and powerful adversary. You are those individuals. The Lord sent us here at this time because he knows we can establish Zion and see it redeemed and he expects us to do just that. I pray, as the prophet Joseph Smith did, that we do not fail and I commit you to do everything within your power to be worthy of the precious promise of Zion. I know the Lord has His eye on this generation. I know if we follow the prophet and commit ourselves to living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, we will be victorious and before we are through, we will stand in Zion with Joseph and Hyrum and Brigham and even with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

### **Brett's Thoughts:**

This. is. Us. Also, just noticed this-- God commanded to build Zion, with building a temple, and establishing a school of the prophets. Dual fulfilment? Also, - Our hearts are greatly grieved at the spirit which is breathed both in your letter and that of Brother Gilbert's, the very spirit which is wasting the strength of Zion like a pestilence; -- What was in that letter? Ill see if I can find it in the JSP before the fireside. If I find it, Ill read it on the fireside, post it here later.

### **Micah's Thoughts:**

The very first thing I will say is that every time the word fear comes up modern Latter-day Saints without a spine will say "oh, we shouldn't fear the Lord, what that really means is respect the Lord"- that is utter pish posh. One cannot read this quote with that false understanding of "fearing the Lord" and have this quote make any sense.

Jacob, the brother of Nephi, teaches us a correct understanding of "fearing the Lord" in Jacob chapter 2 when he taught "if ye persist in [these wicked] things [the Lord's] judgments must speedily come unto you. O that he would show you that he can pierce you, and with one glance of his eye he can smite you to the dust!"

The Lord taught and warned of the precepts of men replacing the correct teaching and understanding of "fearing the Lord" in Doctrine and Covenants 45 when he said: "And when the times of the Gentiles is come in, a light shall break forth among them that sit in darkness, and it shall be the fulness of my gospel; But they receive it not; for they perceive not the light, and they turn their hearts from me because of the precepts of men." but the Lord also taught in 3 Nephi 24 that when the Saints found themselves in this position that "...they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard; and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be

mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." The Lord also confirmed that the "you" that is returning here is Joseph Smith Jr. back in 2 Nephi 27 when He taught:

"And again it shall come to pass that the Lord shall say unto him that shall read the words that shall be delivered him: Forasmuch as this people draw near unto me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their hearts far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the precepts of men— Therefore, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, yea, a marvelous work and a wonder, for the wisdom of their wise and learned shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent shall be hid. And wo unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord! And their works are in the dark; and they say: Who seeth us, and who knoweth us? And they also say: Surely, your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay. But behold, I will show unto them, saith the Lord of Hosts, that I know all their works. For shall the work say of him that made it, he made me not? Or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, he had no understanding?

Brothers and sisters, let carry with us the Spirit of Zion and follow the keys, let us shed the very spirit which is wasting the strength of Zion like a pestilence; for if it is not detected and driven from us, it will ripen Zion for the threatened judgments of God. Remember God sees the secret springs of human action, and knows the hearts of all living. I know that as we carry that Spirit of Zion by obedience to the Lord, we will shed the evil spirit which is wasting the strength of Zion like a pestilence and we will redeem Zion and build the New Jerusalem for as the Lord said:

"But behold, saith the Lord of Hosts: I will show unto the children of men that it is yet a very little while and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field; and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest. And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness. And the meek also shall increase, and their joy shall be in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. For assuredly as the Lord liveth they shall see that the terrible one is brought to naught, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off; And they that make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of naught. Therefore, thus saith the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob: Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale. But when he seeth his children, the work of my hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel. They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine."