

October 10th Fireside TPJS

The Gathering of Saints

Section Four 1839-42, p.183

The greatest temporal and spiritual blessings which always come from faithfulness and concerted effort, never attended individual exertion or enterprise. The history of all past ages abundantly attests this fact. In addition to all temporal blessings, there is no other way for the Saints to be saved in these last days, [than by the gathering] as the concurrent testimony of all the holy prophets clearly proves, for it is written--"They shall come from the east, and be gathered from the west; the north shall give up, and the south shall keep not back." "The sons of God shall be gathered from afar, and his daughters from the ends of the earth."

It is also the concurrent testimony of all the prophets, that this gathering together of all the Saints, must take place before the Lord comes to "take vengeance upon the ungodly," and "to be glorified and admired by all those who obey the Gospel." The fiftieth Psalm, from the first to the fifth verse inclusive, describes the glory and majesty of that event. (Jan. 8, 1841.) DHC 4:272.

Blake's Thoughts:

Before I get into the doctrine and principle in this quote, I wanted to highlight a VERY important truth that Joseph is teaching that we may have missed. Notice how Joseph cites the 50th Psalm and then says verses 1-5 "describes the glory and majesty of that event". Joseph is teaching that Psalm 50:1-5 is actually a prophecy of a future, actual gathering to Zion. This is extremely significant because most, if not all Christians, read Psalms as inspirational songs or a recitation of King David's repentance. I think many Latter day Saints do the same thing. In fact, Joseph is teaching that we should look at Psalms through the lens of prophecy. I would encourage you to also look at the book of Psalms in this way as well. You will discover many beautiful teachings.

Psalm 50:1-5 The mighty God, even the LORD, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.

2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

3 Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.

4 He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.

5 Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

These verses give us a clear timeline of how Zion will be built in the latter days. By Zion, Joseph is referring not to the city of Jerusalem in Israel, but the Zion to be "built upon the American continent". That is another significant truth that Joseph teaches that most will not pick up on. So what are the points of reference from these verses?

- Saints make a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice
- The Lord calls both the Saints in the heavens and the earth to gather together unto Him
- A place called Zion will be built
- God will come to Zion in fire and He will shine out of Zion

Notice in this timeline that the Saints first must make a covenant with the Lord and must do so by sacrifice BEFORE Zion is built. Sacrifice is the underlying principle by which all covenants with the Lord are kept.

D&C 97:8 Verily I say unto you, all among them who know their hearts are honest, and are broken, and their spirits contrite, and are willing to observe their covenants by sacrifice—yea, every sacrifice which I, the Lord, shall command—they are accepted of me.

3 Nephi 9:20 And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost...

We must bring a broken heart and contrite spirit into every act we perform as we fulfill our covenant responsibilities. A broken heart and contrite spirit is not obtained or maintained easily. The Lord tells us that we must “needs be chastened and tried, even as Abraham” (D&C 101:4). The life of Abraham teaches us that afflictions are necessary to prepare our hearts in order to make the ultimate sacrifice. For Abraham, an apostate and abusive father, famine, infertility, a jealous wife, people seeking to kill him, and a command to live celestial marriage were stepping stones that prepared him to obey the Lord when He commanded him to sacrifice his covenant son.

These sufferings and sacrifices which create in us a broken heart and contrite spirit bring us together into what Paul called “the fellowship of his suffering”.
 Philippians 3:8-10 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Now the second important doctrine taught by Joseph is that there is no other way for the Saints to be saved in these latter days but by gathering. Of course, this gathering must include a gathering of faithful Saints here on the earth in stakes of Zion (I will talk more about that later in the fireside). But equally important is the “gathering” of God’s Saints on the other side of the veil. The Lord warned Joseph through the prophet Moroni that it was essential for THIS gathering to take place before He came again.

D&C 2 Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

2 And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers.

3 If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.

On another occasion, Joseph taught, “The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead. The Apostle says, “They without us cannot be made perfect;” (Hebrews 11:40) for it is necessary that the sealing power should be in our hands to seal our children and our dead for the fulness of the dispensation of times—a dispensation to meet the promises made by Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world for the salvation of man.

Now, I will speak of them. I will meet Paul half way. I say to you, Paul, you cannot be perfect without us. It is necessary that those who are going before and those who come after us should have salvation in common with us; and thus hath God made it obligatory upon man.” TPJS 356

Lindey’s Thoughts: I think it is helpful if we break down the redemption of Zion and building up of Zion and the gathering to Zion into some parts. To do that I want you to imagine that Independence, Missouri is a port city that will be the designated spot for the center of Zion. The first group to row to shore will be led by Joseph Smith and his crew of young and middle aged men who are both ready and able to clear the ground and begin to lay out the city with it's laws and infrastructure.

More and more boats will row into shore and make port as they are prepared and willing to leave the safety of the old world behind. While I'm not sure exactly sure how they come or even where they will be coming from, members of the lost 10 tribes will fill their life boats with saints who are in desperate need of rescue and they too will gather to Zion Eventually all who refuse to fight against their neighbors will flee to the life boats and find their way to safety in Zion's harbor.

As Joseph said above there is no other way to be saved in these last days but to gather to Zion and the Lord has designated a way and place and time for all of us to gather.

Kim’s Thoughts: Psalms 50:5 – Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual (2002), “Enrichment L: The Law of Consecration and Stewardship,” is a very fantastic read. I don’t want to make this too long by quoting it extensively, but suggest everyone take some time to read and study it.

“Sacrifice is the principle through which the individual is able to practice the law of consecration.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained: “I shall now set forth some of the principles of sacrifice

and consecration to which the true saints must conform if they are ever to go where God and Christ are and have an inheritance with the faithful saints of ages past.

“... The law of sacrifice is a celestial law; so is the law of consecration. ...

“Sacrifice and consecration are inseparably intertwined. The law of consecration is that we consecrate our time, our talents, and our money and property to the cause of the Church; such are to be available to the extent they are needed to further the Lord’s interests on earth.

“The law of sacrifice is that we are willing to sacrifice all that we have for the truth’s sake—our character and reputation; our honor and applause; our good name among men; our houses, lands, and families; all things, even our very lives if need be.

“Joseph Smith said, ‘A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary [to lead] unto life and salvation.’ (Lectures on Faith, p. 58.)

“Now I think it is perfectly clear that the Lord expects far more of us than we sometimes render in response. We are not as other men. We are the saints of God and have the revelations of heaven. Where much is given much is expected. We are to put first in our lives the things of his kingdom.” (In Conference Report, Apr. 1975, pp. 74–76; or Ensign, May 1975, pp. 50–51.)”

I heard something the other day that struck a chord in me. I think it was in a Hugh Nibley video. But it was something along the lines that religion, for the world, is a moral and ethical guidance system. But for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it has to be far more than that. We have to look at all scripture very literally. The Book of Mormon then is not a manual for teaching us moral principles, but is a manual for how the last days will play out. The Laws of Sacrifice and Consecration then aren’t just a set of moral codes, but have to permeate every facet of our lives. I know I’ve had the thought that I am perfectly willing to hand over everything I have to the Church. That doesn’t actually sound bad at all, because we know that we’ll then be given back what we need under a stewardship. It’s easy to see the purpose in that – taking care of the poor, etc. But what if, as Elder McConkie said, we are asked to give up our good name, houses, land, family? I have no problem giving those things to build up the Kingdom of God, but what if we end up losing everything to the Assyrian during our chastisement? That would have a seemingly far less clear-cut purpose. We know the Lord is going to chasten us. Are we willing to submit to everything the Lord sees fit to inflict upon His children?

Back to the Student Manual -

“Read Doctrine and Covenants 101:1–8; 105:1–6 and list the reasons the Saints failed to build Zion. Do any of these problems exist among the Saints today? Or, more to the point, **do you have any of these problems in your own life?** If so, they might hamper your ability to live the law of consecration. If Zion is the pure in heart, where is the best place for you to begin to build Zion?”

D&C 105:3 But behold, they have not learned to be obedient to the things which I required at their hands...

6 And my people must needs be chastened until they learn obedience, if it must needs be, by the things which they suffer.

D&C 101:4 Therefore they must needs be chastened and tried, even as Abraham, who was commanded to offer up his only son. 5 For all those who will not endure chastening, but deny me, cannot be sanctified. 7 They were slow to hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God; therefore, the Lord their God is slow to hearken unto their prayers, to answer them in the day of their trouble. 8 In the day of their peace they esteemed lightly my counsel; but, in the day of their trouble, of necessity they feel after me.

Contrast that with Psalms 50:16 But unto the wicked God saith, What has thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? 17 Seeing thou hatest instruction, and casteth my words behind thee.

Sometimes it's hard (for us) to tell the difference between the wicked who flat reject the words of the Lord and those who have been slow to hear the Lord because of the peace we've had thinking all is well in Zion. The sifting and the chastening occur at the same time, but will have very different results. Some of those we think are sifting themselves out of the Church may actually end up being those that, of necessity, will feel after the Lord, during the chastisement. And some are just plain being sifted. The difference is that one group is slow to hearken and the other group refuses to hearken. In the meantime, I commit everyone to continue lifting up your voice and doing what you can to help people see the importance of listening to the Lord (aka following the prophet!) even if, for now, it seems like your words are not having any effect. I know that the Lord loves ALL His children, and has asked us to partner with Him in the work. And I know that as we turn our frustrations in this area over to the Lord, He will help us recognize what we can do to help those who are slow to hearken to His voice.

The Gospel in England

Section Four 1839-42, p.174

The spread of the Gospel throughout England is certainly pleasing; the contemplation of which cannot but afford feelings of no ordinary kind, in the bosom of those who have borne the heat and burden of the day; and who were its firm supporters and strenuous advocates in infancy, while surrounded with circumstances the most unpropitious, and its destruction threatened on all hands; like the gallant bark that has braved the storm unhurt, spreads her canvas to the breeze, and nobly cuts her way through the yielding wave, more conscious than ever of the strength of her timbers, and the experience and capability of her captain, pilot, and crew.

It is likewise very satisfactory to my mind, that there has been such a good understanding between you, and that the Saints have so cheerfully hearkened to counsel, and vied with each other in this labor of love, and in the promotion of truth and righteousness. This is as it should be in the Church of Jesus Christ; unity is strength. "How pleasing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Let the Saints of the Most High ever cultivate this principle, and the most glorious blessings must result, not only to them individually, but to the whole Church--the order of the

kingdom will be maintained, its officers respected, and its requirements readily and cheerfully obeyed.

Blake's Thoughts:

In my commentary on the first quote, I mentioned one way in which Saints can be united is through suffering. Now, in this quote, Joseph gives us another way in which us as Saints and as a Church can be united. That is through 1) maintaining the order of the kingdom, 2) respecting its officers, and 3) readily and cheerfully obeying the requirements of the kingdom.

First, how is order maintained in the kingdom of God? Order is maintained by the proper acknowledgement AND sustaining of those who hold priesthood keys in the kingdom.

The Church General Handbook section 3.4.1.1 teaches

“Jesus Christ holds all the keys of the priesthood. Under His direction, priesthood keys are given to men to use in specific callings for accomplishing God’s work, as explained below.

The Lord has conferred on each of His Apostles all the keys that pertain to the kingdom of God on earth. The senior living Apostle, the President of the Church, is the only person on earth authorized to exercise all of those priesthood keys (see Doctrine and Covenants 81:1–2; 107:64–67, 91–92; 132:7).

Under the direction of the President of the Church, priesthood leaders are given keys so they can preside in their areas of responsibility. These leaders include:

Stake and district presidents.

Bishops and branch presidents.

Melchizedek and Aaronic Priesthood quorum presidents.

Temple presidents.

Mission presidents and missionary training center presidents.

Church historic site presidents.

These leaders receive priesthood keys when they are set apart to their callings.

Priesthood keys are not given to others, including counselors to local priesthood leaders or presidents of Church organizations. Rather, these leaders are given delegated authority when they are set apart and when they receive assignments under the direction of those who hold priesthood keys. Presidents of Church organizations preside under the direction of those who hold priesthood keys.”

Second, order is maintained by respecting officers of the kingdom of God. The world teaches us that “respect must be earned” before it can be shown. However, in God’s kingdom, respect is readily offered to all of those who hold priesthood keys. To respect the officers of the Church does not mean we idolize them, but rather we acknowledge their responsibility to preside over us and direct us in God’s work.

A lack of respect is most evident when one receives counsel from the prophet or other church leaders with a doubtful heart.

President Marion G. Romney once taught, “Some members assume that one can be in full harmony with the spirit of the gospel, enjoy full fellowship in the Church, and at the same time be out of harmony with the leaders of the Church and the counsel and direction they give. Such a position is wholly inconsistent, because the guidance of this Church comes not alone from the written word but also from continuous revelation, and the Lord gives that revelation to the Church through His chosen prophet. It follows, therefore, that those who profess to accept the gospel and who at the same time criticize and refuse to follow the counsel of the prophet are assuming an indefensible position. Such a spirit leads to apostasy.”

- Marion G. Romney (Unity, April 1983 General Conference)

Third, order is maintained in the kingdom by readily and cheerfully obeying the requirements of the kingdom.

This third requirement and its associated blessings I think is encapsulated perfectly in Alma and his group of followers in the Book of Mormon.

Mosiah 23:26-27 Now it came to pass that the brethren of Alma fled from their fields, and gathered themselves together in the city of Helam; and they were much frightened because of the appearance of the Lamanites.

27 But Alma went forth and stood among them, and exhorted them that they should not be frightened, but that they should remember the Lord their God and he would deliver them.

Mosiah 24:10-12, 15-16 And it came to pass that so great were their afflictions that they began to cry mightily to God.

11 And Amulon commanded them that they should stop their cries; and he put guards over them to watch them, that whosoever should be found calling upon God should be put to death.

12 And Alma and his people did not raise their voices to the Lord their God, but did pour out their hearts to him; and he did know the thoughts of their hearts.

15 And now it came to pass that the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brethren were made light; yea, the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord.

16 And it came to pass that so great was their faith and their patience that the voice of the Lord came unto them again, saying: Be of good comfort, for on the morrow I will deliver you out of bondage.

Lindey's Thoughts:

I love the image of a ship at sea, like a well oiled machine working in exactness and perfect harmony. But I don't know much about boats or sailing so I asked Google what the difference was between a captain and a pilot.

I found that the captain is master of his ship, managing its crew as well as its course and speed. A marine pilot, on the other hand, controls ships when they're in crowded harbors or dangerous waters. While the captain knows his ship well, the pilot is the expert on his particular waterway. I

also found that a captain works with the crew as well as other boats and with the public, while the pilot works primarily with the crew.

Our Lord, through his prophet is at the helm directing his ship but all of us as crew members must learn to rely on the ship's pilot, the holy ghost. He will direct the crew members personally through dangerous waters and crowded harbors. Like the army of helaman we must react to orders with exact and prompt obedience.

Alma 57: 20. ...behold, those two thousand and sixty were firm and undaunted.

21 Yea, and they did obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness; yea, and even according to their faith it was done unto them; and I did remember the words which they said unto me that their mothers had taught them.

Trust their leaders and with faith, which is exact obedience, Good works deliver them.

Kim's Thoughts: Christ requires all to Come unto Him – black or white, male or female, bond or free. We don't have to be exactly the same to be united. Unity in Christ does not mean uniformity. I read a definition online that says that religious unity comes from unity in beliefs, but I would take that a step further and say that unity in religion comes from unity of doctrine. We can have varying beliefs about unimportant things – like whether or not we allow Santa Claus any room in our family traditions at Christmas. BUT – if we skip over the unity of Doctrine – using Christmas again as the example, we have to be unified in Doctrine for Christmas to have any point or purpose – that Jesus was born and lived His life for us. And that His birth only has true purpose because of true doctrine – that He lived, died and was resurrected for us.

It is unity in doctrine that lays out a clear line for us when our various cultures and beliefs come into conflict. If the prophet says no tattoos – then one's culture doesn't trump that. God has declared that the true doctrine of marriage is between a man and a woman. Our cultural beliefs, societal norms, or even genetic dispositions or desires of the flesh do not trump that.

When we can come together in unity of doctrine, we can come together as a peaceful body of Saints. If we cannot do that, we will never build Zion. Everyone must be able to put aside cultural differences, accept true doctrine, and then get to work and do their part. But we cannot do that if we have not done our part to KNOW pure doctrine. If we're too busy squabbling with each other over things that should already have been settled and set in stone, then we'll never get Zion.

Ephesians 4:3–6, 11–13

3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Going back to Micah's paper Satan Unites; Jesus Divides – if Satan can unite us in false doctrine, then he wins. If he can unite us in believing all is well in Zion, then he wins. If he can convince us that putting all of our “differences” aside for unity of belief that all is well when we accept everyone and anyone in the depths of any and all sins...then he wins.

2 Ne. 2:13 And if ye shall say there is no law, ye shall also say there is no sin. If ye shall say there is no sin, ye shall also say there is no righteousness.

2 Ne. 28:22 And behold...he flattereth [them] away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them: I am no devil, for there is none...

But Christ divides. He divides the righteous from the wicked. He divides us from our weakness and sins, if we let Him. And He will divide us from the rest of the world to redeem Zion...IF we can all get together behind the same goal. If we do not truly believe in the Redemption of Zion...or if we don't see the building of the New Jerusalem as something tangible that we need to up our game for, then Satan wins because if the holy city is never built, then Christ can never come. (Paraphrasing a Pratt brother.) Letting God Prevail means dividing ourselves from Babylon and promoting the Cause of Zion.

The Cause of God a Common Cause

Section Four 1839-42, p.231

The cause of God is one common cause, in which the Saints are alike all interested; we are all members of the one common body, and all partake of the same spirit, and are baptized into one baptism and possess alike the same glorious hope. The advancement of the cause of God and the building up of Zion is as much one man's business as another's. The only difference is, that one is called to fulfill one duty, and another another duty; "but if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it, and if one member is honored all the rest rejoice with it, and the eye cannot say to the ear, I have no need of thee, nor the head to the foot, I have no need of thee;" party feelings, separate interests, exclusive designs should be lost sight of in the one common cause, in the interest of the whole.

[Blake's Thoughts: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27](#)

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

19 And if they were all one member, where were the body?

20 But now are they many members, yet but one body.

21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.

24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Brothers and Sisters, I want to be very clear here. As members of the body of Christ, we are designed to function together, not separately. There is a natural interdependence, a giving and receiving, that should take place among covenant Saints. We not only give to others temporally and spiritually, but we also receive the succor that others offer us. We all teach, testify, warn, and edify and rejoice when the truth is proclaimed. By following this divine order, we all are blessed.

The opposite of the Lord's system is priestcraft. This is a system whereby others sacrifice and support so that only one person benefits. Priestcraft is a system where only one person does all the teaching and everyone else just sits and listens. Priestcraft is a system where false doctrine and the philosophies of men mingled with scripture create schisms and foster contention while leading everyone carefully down to hell.

Lindey's Thoughts:

My response to this section comes mostly from sister Eubanks conference talk from last October.

"There is a thing that sometimes happens that is hard to achieve and hard to define. It's called "swing." It happens only when all are rowing in such perfect unison that not a single action is out of sync.

Rowers must rein in their fierce independence and at the same time hold true to their individual capabilities. Races are not won by clones. Good crews are good blends—someone to lead the charge, someone to hold something in reserve, someone to fight the fight, someone to make peace. No rower is more valuable than another, all are assets to the boat, but if they are to row well together, each must adjust to the needs and capabilities of the others—the shorter-armed person reaching a little farther, the longer-armed person pulling in just a bit."

Before you get confused and think oh good I can just sit it in the boat with my winning personality and cheer on the rowers on our way to Zion. I want you to realize that everyone in the proverbial boat to redeem Zion is rowing with all of their might. And they are all rowing for the same purpose.

2 Nephi 26:31 teaches us

But the laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion; for if they labor for money (and I will add for status or for the honors of man) they shall perish.

The first group of rowers will experience specific challenges and obstacles as they are paving the way for all those who will follow. They will be tried with strict obedience, a willingness to sacrifice everything they have been given and then consecrate all they have left because of the love they have for others and their dogged persistence to get to Zion. They will continue even into the fourth watch of the night. Because of Micah's videos I'm paying more attention to that phrase. Fourth watch. I don't think it coincidence that in the conference talk last weekend centered specifically on what our focus should be on down the road Elder Alvin F. Meredith III Of the Seventy specially mentioned the fourth watch.

Not all of us will be able and some are even unwilling to get in the first boats. But that doesn't mean we should stop preparing. In fact we should be looking at the first group and trying to emulate their examples and do our own preparations to secure a boat and fill it with others who are willing to row to shore with us. If you aren't sure where to start conference told you what to do. Read your scriptures and say your prayers and keep working out your salvation with faith and repentance. And what ever you do don't stop rowing until your boat makes it in. I imagine the rescue boats will pick up the ones who are trying to get there before the ones who are eating and drinking in the cities is Babylon.

Kim's Thoughts: I think I covered this in the last one. I'm just going to cheat a bit and add two quick thoughts from a talk I'm writing for Stake Conference. 1. In our most recent General Conference, Sister Bonnie H. Cordon said that President Nelson reminded her of "...two simple truths that are foundational to our grand and glorious work." The first is that our children need to know WHO they are, and the second that they need to know THEIR PURPOSE. The world has plenty of causes that distort the message of who we truly are. The world would have us take on other labels - if we do not teach our children the eternal truth of their nature as a child of God, and give them correct and eternal principles to fight for, we will lose them to the philosophies of the world. And 2. The Lord needs us, right now, and He needs our children even more so. We do not live in a vacuum. If we do not teach truth and the pure doctrine of Christ to our family, the world will fill in the void. We have a correct and eternal cause to fight for – the redemption and building up of Zion. I KNOW that as we wake up, learn and teach only the pure doctrine of Christ, that the Savior will sanctify our efforts to make our homes a holy place in which we can make our stand in His holy cause.

All Things to Be Gathered in One

Section Four 1839-42, p.231

The building up of Zion is a cause that has interested the people of God in every age; it is a theme upon which prophets, priests and kings have dwelt with peculiar delight; they have looked forward with joyful anticipation to the day in which we live; and fired with heavenly and joyful anticipations they have sung and written and prophesied of this our day; but they died without the sight; we are the favored people that God has made choice of to bring about the Latter-day glory; it is left for us to see, participate in and help to roll forward the Latter-day glory, "the dispensation of the fulness of times, when God will gather together all things that are in heaven, and all things that are upon the earth," "even in one," when the Saints of God will be gathered in one from every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue, when the Jews will be gathered together into one, the wicked will also be gathered together to be destroyed, as spoken of by the prophets; the Spirit of God will also dwell with His people, and be withdrawn from the rest of the nations, and all things whether in heaven or on earth will be in one, even in Christ. The heavenly Priesthood will unite with the earthly, to bring about those great purposes; and whilst we are thus united in one common cause, to roll forth the kingdom of God, the heavenly Priesthood are not idle spectators, the Spirit of God will be showered down from above, and it will dwell in our midst. The blessings of the Most High will rest upon our tabernacles, and our name will be handed down to future ages; our children will rise up and call us blessed; and generations yet unborn will dwell with peculiar delight upon the scenes that we have passed through, the privations that we have endured; the untiring zeal that we have manifested; the all but insurmountable difficulties that we have overcome in laying the foundation of a work that brought about the glory and blessing which they will realize; a work that God and angels have contemplated with delight for generations past; that fired the souls of the ancient patriarchs and prophets; a work that is destined to bring about the destruction of the powers of darkness, the renovation of the earth, the glory of God, and the salvation of the human family. (May 2, 1842.) DHC 4:608-610.

Blake's Thoughts: This is the phrase in this quote that stuck out to me

“our name will be handed down to future ages; our children will rise up and call us blessed; and generations yet unborn will dwell with peculiar delight upon the scenes that we have passed through, the privations that we have endured; the untiring zeal that we have manifested; the all but insurmountable difficulties that we have overcome in laying the foundation of a work that brought about the glory and blessing which they will realize”

Joseph clearly states that it is him and his generation, those Saints living in 1842, who suffered and toiled to lay the foundation for Zion or the New Jerusalem. That foundation exists and blesses us today. Those of us who descend from these early Saints should rise up as their children and call them blessed for accomplishing what they were able to accomplish.

We must also dwell upon and learn from their struggles as well as their failures. It is in examining their failures that we ourselves learn how to bring about the glory and blessing of Zion.

As we examine their struggles, we can learn that there are two main errors the early Saints made.

The first error is highlighted by the Lord in D&C 101:6

Behold, I say unto you, there were jarrings, and contentions, and envyings, and strifes, and lustful and covetous desires among them; therefore by these things they polluted their inheritances.

To sum it up. The early Saints were prideful and covetous. So, how do avoid the same outcome? King Benjamin gives us the answer:

Mosiah 4:9, 10,13, 16

9 Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend.

10 And again, believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you; and now, if you believe all these things see that ye do them.

He then goes on to give us some specific “dos” and “donts”

And ye will not have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably, and to render to every man according to that which is his due.

And also, ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of your succor; ye will administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need; and ye will not suffer that the beggar putteth up his petition to you in vain, and turn him out to perish.

The second error made by the early Saints and which we must also avoid is in D&C 101:7

They were slow to hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God.

Put aside your pride. Put aside your fears. Follow the voice of the Lord as it is given to us through His servants the prophets. If you haven't yet gotten “the jab”, I invite you to schedule a time to consult with your doctor and determine whether you have any medical conditions which prevent you from getting the jab. If it is determined there are not any conditions preventing you from getting the jab, then submit yourselves to the will of the Lord and get the jab. I promise if you follow this counsel you will experience a greater endowment of the Spirit in your life. Your ability to distinguish right from wrong will be clearer and you will be better able to withstand the pressures of the world.

Lindey's Thoughts:

Hebrews 6

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

God wants all of his children to return to him and he wants us to do the work so that we aren't just reunited with him but we are like him. The temple shows us how and the covenants we make there are the way.

Kim's Thoughts: Can you imagine how deep Joseph's joy would have been if he and the early Saints would have been able to see "...the Spirit of God...showered down from above and...dwell in [their] midst?" The early Saints certainly deserve every generation to rise up and call them blessed because of the privations and insurmountable difficulties they overcame to lay down the foundation of the great work. We, as a Church, should be rising up and blessing their names! We should be honoring and venerating the early Brethren. They had none of the ease of life that we enjoy, and very little of the massive amounts of doctrine that we have, but they managed a 1,000 times more zeal for the work than we do – as a Church – today. Sadly, people IN OUR CHURCH are turning their hearts against the early Brethren, WHO WERE THE ONES TO BUILD UP THE WORK TO BEGIN WITH! It boggles the mind.

And yet, we are the ones that get to witness what Nephi only saw in vision. (Paraphrasing Pres. Nelson.) Unfortunately, it's a little heartbreaking to know that it's only because Christ has run out of time, not because we (as a Church) have proven ourselves worthy of it. BUT. What if it's not too late? What if we can double down on our commitment to do ALL that we can to build up Zion? Joseph Smith said, "The building up of Zion is a cause that has interested the people of God in every age..." Is that true of the age we live in? I almost feel like it's true of every age EXCEPT ours – and yet President Nelson has told us that those of us living now WILL be the ones to see all that Nephi saw brought to pass. We WILL be the ones to bring about Zion and usher in Jesus Christ. It will be a much more amazing and beautiful thing if we choose to humble ourselves to the dust than if we are compelled to be humble. And I know that as we do humble ourselves, and study the scriptures that speak of the Cause of Zion, we will have the same zeal fall upon us that will fire our souls.

Hearts of Children Turn to Fathers

Section Four 1839-42, p.160

The hearts of the children of men will have to be turned to the fathers, and the fathers to the children, living or dead, to prepare them for the coming of the Son of Man. If Elijah did not come, the whole earth would be smitten.

There will be here and there a Stake [of Zion] for the gathering of the Saints. Some may have cried peace, but the Saints and the world will have little peace from henceforth. Let this not hinder us from going to the Stakes; for God has told us to flee, not dallying, or we shall be scattered, one here, and another there. There your children shall be blessed, and you in the midst of friends where you may be blessed. The Gospel net gathers of every kind.

I prophesy, that that man who tarries after he has an opportunity of going, will be afflicted by the devil. Wars are at hand; we must not delay; but are not required to sacrifice. We ought to have the building up of Zion as our greatest object. When wars come, we shall have to flee to Zion. The cry is to make haste. The last revelation says, Ye shall not have time to have gone over the earth, until these things come. It will come as did the cholera, war, fires, and earthquakes; one pestilence after another, until the Ancient of Days comes, then judgment will be given to the Saints.

Blake's Thoughts:

The quote Micah read before is from a discourse given by Joseph Smith on August 4, 1839. By this time, the Saints have been expelled from Jackson County, Zion's Camp has been assembled and disbanded, and the Saints have been kicked out of Missouri.

One may be tempted to think, based on this quote, that Joseph had given up on the New Jerusalem. He mentions stakes of Zion, but nowhere does he mention Jackson County or the New Jerusalem. Why? To answer this question, I think it is helpful to go back and review what the Lord said about "how" the New Jerusalem was to be built.

D&C 45:63-71 (Revelation given in 1831) Ye hear of wars in foreign lands; but, behold, I say unto you, they are nigh, even at your doors, and not many years hence ye shall hear of wars in your own lands.

64 Wherefore I, the Lord, have said, gather ye out from the eastern lands, assemble ye yourselves together ye elders of my church; go ye forth into the western countries, call upon the inhabitants to repent, and inasmuch as they do repent, build up churches unto me.

65 And with one heart and with one mind, gather up your riches that ye may purchase an inheritance which shall hereafter be appointed unto you.

66 And it shall be called the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the Most High God;

67 And the glory of the Lord shall be there, and the terror of the Lord also shall be there, insomuch that the wicked will not come unto it, and it shall be called Zion.

68 And it shall come to pass among the wicked, that every man that will not take his sword against his neighbor must needs flee unto Zion for safety.

69 And there shall be gathered unto it out of every nation under heaven; and it shall be the only people that shall not be at war one with another.

70 And it shall be said among the wicked: Let us not go up to battle against Zion, for the inhabitants of Zion are terrible; wherefore we cannot stand.

71 And it shall come to pass that the righteous shall be gathered out from among all nations, and shall come to Zion, singing with songs of everlasting joy.

Remember, the first commandment given by the Lord was to gather, call others to repent, and to establish churches (or as we know them now, stakes). The gathering and building of stakes WAS the Lord's commandment and plan for Zion all along, not just some backup plan. These "stakes of Zion" are THE places of safety mentioned in D&C 45:66. Stakes of Zion are surely among of the "holy places" mentioned in D&C 45:32. Remember also what the Lord says in D&C 115.

D&C 115:6 And that the gathering together upon the land of Zion, and upon her stakes, may be for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth.

Think back to March 2020 when COVID-19 hit. What was it that helped us to continue to worship and remain connected to the Church even when we went months without meeting in person? It was key holders in stakes of Zion that received revelation and continued to direct the work. Our willingness to follow their counsel as well as the counsel we had previously been given concerning ministering and CFM provided refuge from the storm.

Brothers and Sisters, THE city of refuge (The New Jerusalem) will be built, but it will not be Zion unless we are of one heart and one mind and we cease to take up our sword against our neighbors right now. How do we do this? We can begin right now in our own stakes of Zion to minister to the temporal and spiritual needs of others. We can begin right now to sacrifice and consecrate all that we possess to the Lord, including all of our hearts. Don't sit around waiting and wishing for the prophet to say "back your bags, we are going back to Missouri!" Make Zion right now in your ward and stake! Then, when the call does come you will be prepared.

Lindey's Thoughts:

Samuel the Lamanite's warning in chapter 15 of the book of Helaman is just as applicable to us at it was for the Nephites just prior to Christ's birth.

1 And now, my beloved brethren, behold, I declare unto you that except ye shall repent your houses shall be left unto you desolate.

2 Yea, except ye repent, your women shall have great cause to mourn in the day that they shall give suck; for ye shall attempt to flee and there shall be no place for refuge; yea, and wo unto them which are with child, for they shall be heavy and cannot flee; therefore, they shall be trodden down and shall be left to perish.

If none of us are willing to get in a boat and row their will be no Zion to flee to and all of this work on earth will have been good for nothing.

Kim's Thoughts: I find the link here between turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and vice versa and the fleeing to the stakes of Zion interesting. It almost seems as though he is linking doing temple work with fleeing to Zion, and that if we wait in our efforts to do that work, when we've had the opportunity of going to the temple, then we will be afflicted by the devil. Which would make a lot of sense combined with Joseph's prophesy of the fowls lodged in the mustard tree – with the fowls being our kindred dead.

Joseph then goes on to say that building up of Zion should be our greatest object. Which is interesting because at various times in his life and ministry, he said the greatest work was missionary work, and another time he said it was completing ordinances for the dead. Obviously, those all end up being one and the same. D&C 97 tells us that to be a Zion people, we have to have a temple.

10 Verily I say unto you, that it is my will that a house should be built unto me in the land of Zion, like unto the pattern which I have given you.

11 Yea, let it be built speedily, by the tithing of my people.

12 Behold, this is the tithing and the sacrifice which I, the Lord, require at their hands, that there may be a house built unto me for the salvation of Zion—

13 For a place of thanksgiving for all saints, and for a place of instruction for all those who are called to the work of the ministry in all their several callings and offices;

14 That they may be perfected in the understanding of their ministry, in theory, in principle, and in doctrine, in all things pertaining to the kingdom of God on the earth, the keys of which kingdom have been conferred upon you.

15 And inasmuch as my people build a house unto me in the name of the Lord, and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled, my glory shall rest upon it;

16 Yea, and my presence shall be there, for I will come into it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God.

17 But if it be defiled I will not come into it, and my glory shall not be there; for I will not come into unholy temples.

18 And, now, behold, if Zion do these things she shall prosper, and spread herself and become very glorious, very great, and very terrible.

19 And the nations of the earth shall honor her, and shall say: Surely Zion is the city of our God, and surely Zion cannot fall, neither be moved out of her place, for God is there, and the hand of the Lord is there;

But we also read in D&C 82:14-15 14 For Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness; her borders must be enlarged; her stakes must be strengthened; yea, verily I say unto you, Zion must arise and put on her beautiful garments.

15 Therefore, I give unto you this commandment, that ye bind yourselves by this covenant, and it shall be done according to the laws of the Lord.

And how do we do this? Continuing in vs 19 Every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God.

So doing temple work, and living the Law of Consecration are intimately tied into the cause of Zion.

If we want to escape the worst of the tribulation, and not have to take up the sword against our neighbor, we NEED Zion. We can prepare ourselves for becoming a Zion people by preparing

ourselves to live the Laws of Sacrifice and Consecration, and by making the sacrifice to be in the temple and doing temple work,

A Blessing to the Covenant People p.163

Brethren, you are in the pathway to eternal fame, and immortal glory; and inasmuch as you feel interested for the covenant people of the Lord, the God of their fathers shall bless you. Do not be discouraged on account of the greatness of the work; only be humble and faithful, and then you can say, "What art thou, O great mountain! before Zerubbabel shalt thou be brought down." He who scattered Israel has promised to gather them; therefore inasmuch as you are to be instrumental in this great work, He will endow you with power, wisdom, might and intelligence, and every qualification necessary; while your minds will expand wider and wider, until you can circumscribe the earth and the heavens, reach forth into eternity, and contemplate the mighty acts of Jehovah in all their variety and glory.

Blake's Thoughts + Testimony/Commitment:

This statement that Joseph makes about Zerubbabel is very interesting but can seem a little out of place unless you understand who Zerubbabel was and what he commanded by the Lord to do. Then this reference becomes extremely powerful.

Zerubbabel was the son of Shealtiel. He is believed to have been a political ruler of a group of Jews who had already returned to the promised land from Babylon. After Zerubbabel and the Jews had returned to the promised land, they began to rebuild the temple and walls of Jerusalem which had previously been destroyed. They were successful in erecting and dedicating an altar of sacrifice.

Once the altar was dedicated, the Jews began to experience great opposition. Opposition first came from the Samaritans. The Samaritans were both Israelite and Gentile and it showed in their religious belief and observance. They sought to worship God, but still clung to Babylon.

After the Jews returned from Babylon, the Samaritans claimed a right also to worship in the temple in Jerusalem but were denied that right. They became bitter and discouraged the Jewish people from rebuilding the temple. We see the effect the Samaritans (and Babylon) had on the Jews from the writings of Haggai:

Haggai 1:4-6

4 Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?

5 Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

6 Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.

The Samaritans also started spreading false rumors about Zerubbabel and the Jews to the Persians who governed the area. They falsely claimed that the Jews were attempting to rebel against the Persians. Artaxerxes, the Persian ruler who governed the area, when he heard these reports threatened to use force to stop the Jews from continuing to build and finish the temple and the walls of Jerusalem (Ezra 4:23-24).

This is where the prophets Haggai and Zechariah enter the scene. They prophesy not only that the temple will be rebuilt, but that Zerubbabel will be the person responsible for doing so. I am certain this knowledge fueled Zerubbabel to accomplish his mission. But more than that, Zerubbabel was endowed with the Lord's Spirit.

Zechariah 4:6-10

6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

7 Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.

8 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

9 The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you.

10 For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the servants of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

I hope that in this account of Zerubbabel you can see parallels to our own dispensation. Through the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we all have been called out of Babylon. Joseph Smith, THE prophet of this dispensation was endowed by God's Spirit which enabled him to establish the foundations of Zion and the New Jerusalem. Due to persecution and the Saints unwillingness to let go of Babylon, the New Jerusalem remains unfinished even today. There are great mountains which loom before us and which stand in the way of us achieving Zion. I testify that Joseph Smith, just like Zerubbabel, will return, these mountains will become plains before him, and "his hands shall also finish it". If we are a people who "despises the day of small things", then we too can be with Joseph when he stands in Zion to finish building the temple.

I invite you to remove all forms of Babylon and pride from your life. Babylon and pride prevent you from hearing the Lord's voice when He asks you to lay everything on the altar of sacrifice. As you bid Babylon farewell, I promise your heart will be open and better prepared to receive the comfort and lessons He will teach you through your sufferings. These sufferings will make you into a new creature, one prepared to dwell in Zion. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Lindey's Thoughts + Testimony/Commitment:

I mentioned above that the laborers in Zion will be called to row into the fourth watch. I hope that if you are listening to this fireside that not only are you awake and in the boat but that you have rowed into the first hour and have learned to listen and respond quickly and with exactness to the prophet at our helm. Doing so is what qualifies one for the holy ghost and we will not pass

the troubling waters that lie ahead without it. I think as we row into the second watch we will be required to understand and demonstrate the law of sacrifice. And if you can hear me I beg of you to pick up a paddle and row, those who do not labor for Zion will soon be kicked out of the boat. This sacrifice will cause most of us great pain but, if we look to the scriptures we learn that angels administered to and visited those that learned to sacrifice anything and everything the Lord required of them.

I want to leave you with 2 specific commitments. First study the law of sacrifice. Don't wait for Micah or someone else to make a video on sacrifice for you, open your scriptures and do the work.

And secondly look down the road to the third, fourth watches. Study the law of chastity, the law of concretion in conjunction with the crowning new and everlasting covenant of marriage. Section 109 is a great place to start to understand the blessings the Lord promises us if we keep our covenants. I testify that as we follow President Nelson's last instructions to go to the temple and contemplate the covenants you make in those holy walls we will be armed with power, we will be one with Christ, we will have his glory and his angels round about us, the Lord will fight our battles and no pit or wickness will prevail upon us. In the name of Jesus Christ amen.

Kim's Thoughts: + Testimony/Commitment: Joseph Smith was the king of inspirational speeches! D&C 128:22 Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory! Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad. Let the earth break forth into singing. Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained, before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free.

23 Let the mountains shout for joy, and all ye valleys cry aloud; and all ye seas and dry lands tell the wonders of your Eternal King! And ye rivers, and brooks, and rills, flow down with gladness. Let the woods and all the trees of the field praise the Lord; and ye solid brocks weep for joy! And let the sun, moon, and the morning stars sing together, and let all the sons of God shout for joy! And let the eternal creations declare his name forever and ever! And again I say, how glorious is the voice we hear from heaven, proclaiming in our ears, glory, and salvation, and honor, and immortality, and eternal life; kingdoms, principalities, and powers!

24 Behold, the great day of the Lord is at hand; and who can abide the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appeareth? For he is like a ce finer's fire, and like fuller's soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an goffering in righteousness. Let us, therefore, as a church and a people, and as Latter-day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; and let us present in his holy temple, when it is finished, a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptation.

25 Brethren, I have many things to say to you on the subject; but shall now close for the present, and continue the subject another time. I am, as ever, your humble servant and never deviating friend...

I am so grateful to know that Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ (and Joseph Smith!) have such great faith in us. I know that if we will have reciprocal faith in Them, we will be filled with the fire to redeem Zion. No sacrifice will be too large to get to live with Them for eternity. I invite all of us

to go do whatever it takes to turn our hearts completely over to the Lord so that He can fill us with the determination and power to give our all for Zion. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.