

Podcast 008: Baptism of Fire and the Holy Ghost

-An all mission training given by Mike Stroud, in New Jersey, with Mission President Paul Taggart, in 2015-

(Handout and worksheet that accompanied this training are located at the end of this transcript.)

Elder Reynolds: We'll proceed by hearing some opening remarks by President and Sister Taggart. Then we'll move to Elder Stroud's training.

Pres Taggart: Thank you Elder Reynolds. Thank you Elder [unintelligible] for the prayer. I pray completely that the Spirit will be here, that we will be able to use and receive revelation for ourselves and for our people that we teach. Elders and Sisters, that's really what this is all about today. Sister Taggart and I went over to visit the Stroud's one morning. We don't get to see the senior couples very often. And so, we had one of those rare moments where we had a chance to connect with them. As we started talking, Elder Stroud brought up a question of a reality that there are a lot of people in the church who come to the church, receive a testimony of the gospel, but then for one reason or another, decide to leave. We've had about 21-22% activity going on here in New Jersey. That means 78%, 79% of the people who join the church no longer participate. So, you start talking about that and it's not good. It's an issue. It's kind of a problem. And Elder Stroud said, "Well I know what the problem is. It's in the scriptures..." And as we started talking about it, he enlightened Sister Taggart and I on the difference between receiving the Gift of the Holy Ghost, which is something we get after we are baptized, and actually being given the Gift of the Holy Ghost and receiving it in our heart and having what is called the Baptism of Fire. And if you think about it, it's pretty logical and scripturally backed. So, who is it that baptizes us? Sister Scott, who baptized you?

Sister Scott: My dad.

Pres. Taggart: Your dad. Your dad- most of us probably our dad or our brother, or *somebody* baptized us. Then who gave you the Gift of the Holy Ghost? Sister Kauffman, who laid their hands on your head and gave you the Gift of the Holy Ghost?

Sister Kauffman: My bishop.

Pres. Taggart: Your bishop. So your dad is a man. Your bishop is also a man. Those are the people who give us the baptism, do the baptismal ordinance and give us the Gift of the Holy Ghost. Well Elders and Sisters, who gives us the Baptism of Fire? The Holy Ghost. Where does that come from?

Sister: From God.

Pres. Taggart: From God. The Baptism of Fire comes from God, not from man. I testify to you that those people who receive, who actually receive the Holy Ghost, the Baptism of Fire, don't leave the church. If they continue to feel that Spirit, feel the Holy Ghost, which has sunk deep into their hearts, something they received from our Father in Heaven, they stay strong. Their testimony, their conversion if you will, is solid, steadfast, unshakable, immovable. THAT'S why, Elders and Sisters, it's so important, it's so important that we understand this doctrine, we know this doctrine, and are able to teach this doctrine- that it's not over when we are baptized. It's not over when we receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost, or are *given* the Gift of the Holy Ghost. It's like having a really nice Christmas present that's been under the tree for a week and it's sitting there in this great box and you're going, 'Ah! What's in that box? That is a cool gift! Who gets that gift?' And instead, on Christmas morning they hand you the gift and they say, 'Here it is! It's yours.' Then all of a sudden there's an emergency and you all leave, and you have to get out of the house. You know- and then a month has gone by and you have that gift sitting there and it's yours. It's yours. You get it, but you never had a chance to open it. You never really had a chance to take the gift and celebrate what was inside that box. So, we need to open the box.

I pray, Elders and Sisters, that as we are instructed today... Let me just say this: Elder Stroud is a very humble man, but I will say this, he's very qualified to teach this. He has lot of experience and he knows what he's talking about. He's had many years of experience doing this. But I testify that as we listen today, as we are taught by the Spirit, and we allow the

Holy Spirit to guide us, as we sang in the opening song- it says right here: "Let the Spirit heal our hearts through His quiet, gentle power. May we purify our lives to receive Him hour by hour." I testify that as we do this, Elders and Sisters, our lives will change. Sister Taggart and I's purpose here, our main- I would say our main mission, we've told you this before and we'll tell you again- is you. It's you! We're not here to baptize our neighbors and the people who live next door, the people who we meet, which aren't very many. We spend most of our time with the members, or with you. OUR purpose here is to help you receive the Holy Ghost and become converted, truly, genuinely converted, and receive the Baptism by Fire and the Holy Ghost. So that YOU will go home with a rock solid testimony of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That is our purpose. That's why we're here today. So, please open your hearts. Open your souls to what we share today and allow the Holy Ghost to touch your heart. I testify that this is real. I testify that this is the Kingdom of God on the earth. And I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

We're going to turn the time over to Elder Stroud now and let's be edified.

Mike: Did you all get a worksheet? Everybody here have a worksheet? Ok, raise your hands if you don't have a worksheet...

Brothers and Sisters I'm grateful to be here today. What we're going to be discussing today is...

The one that Sister Taggart has, Brothers and Sisters, will be emailed to you. It's kind of a summary of what we're going to do today. The one that you have is just one sheet written on both sides and that's a worksheet that we want to use in our seminar this morning. I guess we call this a seminar- whatever you call it. Okay? So, thank you very much.

In John 15:16, you don't have to turn to that- it says this, you know the scripture because you use it in some of your teaching: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit..." You're all familiar with that aren't you? Aren't you in the business of bringing forth fruit? That's what we're doing, but we don't read the next part. The next part is sobering. "...and that your fruit should remain." That's the part I want to talk to you about today. We've had lots of discussion on bringing forth fruit. We want to talk about, "That your fruit should remain." Because, my young friends, WAY too many people are leaving the church. WAY too many. You heard the statistic given by President Taggart. We served a mission in Mongolia and in Mongolia the percentage of activity is about 27%. Then we served a mission in the Philippines, and the Philippines percentage- this is a mission with 900,000 people that's been in existence for 50 years, has 17- how many missions? 20 plus missions in it, something like that. 800,000 members, 3 temples, and have 12% activity. That means 88% of the membership of the church in the Philippines don't come to church anymore. So, something is happening here and this is not acceptable. There's not a one of you in this room tonight, or today, that plan on going home and leaving the church. Not a one of you. But if we don't do something about the statistics that's a current [unintelligible], a certain percentage of you, when you go home, will leave activity in the church. That's the church statistics. Every one of you here are probably familiar with a return missionary that doesn't attend church anymore. There's a reason for that and it's subtle and it's kind of slipped in on us and that's what we want to address today.

Now, you're going to have questions. If you'll let me make a presentation and then at the end of the presentation, write down your questions, and we'll be glad to field those as best we can. A word of warning: I'm deaf. I have double hearing aids on...this country shooting guns all my life and people warned me 'Cover your ears up?' ...well nobody ever warned me and I'm popping 45's with nothing to protect my ears. So, I'm deafer than a cob up here. Now, ladies, I especially don't hear your voices. Now, my wife says that's selective hearing, but I don't hear women's voices very well. So, when you respond will you just speak up. You notice I'm not using a microphone and you're not having any trouble hearing me are you, back there, Brethren? You can hear me see, so if you'll respond to me like that...

On your worksheet, we start out- and I want to refer to a statement made by President Packer years ago, that I think is the key to what we are trying to do here. And I'd like to see this reinstated. It's in Preach My Gospel, but I don't think it's receiving the time and thought and pondering that it needs. Throughout the church and later on in your families, you're going to counsel. And in the counsel you're going to be discussing the behavior of people you love or people that you have responsibility for. In almost all of our counsels we spend an inordinate amount of time talking about unacceptable behavior. 'Oh, we're not getting our home teaching statistics- they're not done. The visiting teaching is not done. The

tithes are not up. The people are not living the Word of Wisdom. How do we get people to attend the temple? How do we get more people to accept callings?' And we spend all this time talking about what needs to be done and President Packer has a little clue for us. Let's go to his statement- watch. Right up at the front. "True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior." You ought to underline that because I testify to you that this is a true principle. Now, what I'm teaching you today, I've tried, I've done, and it works every time. This is tried and tested and it's never failed. That's pretty good, isn't it? That's a pretty good record. "True doctrine, understood..." catch the 'understood' part, "... True doctrine..." make sure it's understood, "changes... behavior." The rest of the quote says, "The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior. Preoccupation with unworthy behavior can lead to unworthy behavior..." It's a vicious cycle. So, what we do is, we spend all of our time in counsels in the church and in your families, as husbands and wives, mothers and fathers in the future, talking about the behavior of your children. And the more you discuss inappropriate behavior, what does it do? It encourages inappropriate behavior. It's a vicious cycle. So, what's the answer? That is why we stress so forcefully the study of the doctrines of the gospel. I think this is a key priesthood principle that you need to really take a look at.

So, what do we do? Only discuss behavior to the degree that you can identify the behavior that's unacceptable. Then, stop talking about it. Once you've identified it, whatever it is, then go to the word of God, go to the scriptures. Find the doctrine that ties to that behavior and teach it. And as you teach that doctrine, the word of God that has power and virtue in it, according to Alma 31:5- there's virtue in the word of God. If you'll teach that, the Holy Ghost will carry the word of God, that doctrine, into the heart of the person and the Holy Ghost will change the behavior. You see that cycle right there? So that's the take-off today. "True doctrine, understood, changes...behavior." I testify to you that that is true.

Now, let's go to the next part up here. We have something that's not- that's a little misunderstood. It's the baptismal ordinance of the church. And the baptismal ordinance of the church has 3 parts to it. The first part is the baptism by water. You're all familiar with that. You've seen that. You've gone through it. Second part is confirmation by the laying on of hands. And the third part is the baptism with fire and with the Holy Ghost. Here's the problem. We're stuck right here as a church membership. We're stuck with the baptism of water and the confirmation by the laying on of hands. The wording and the verbiage of certain Articles of Faith and priesthood ordinances causes us to miss the point and, as President Taggart said, never get to open up the present. We get stuck. Let me explain...

Baptism of water is a token covenant. It's a token. All covenants have tokens that are along with that. That token you can study. It's has to do with all kinds of things- a rebirth, a burial, a resurrection- all kinds of things, but it's a token. In the church, however, we think that there is a remission of sins that takes place at the baptism of water. Let me ask you 2 questions and then we'll think about this. As members of the church, if I were to ask you these 2 questions, how would you answer them? Number one: Where does the remission of sins take place? First question. And most members- just think about it- I'll throw that out to you. And number two: When do you place your feet upon the strait and narrow path? Where does that take place? My experience is most members of the church, the majority of the church, are going to answer that it takes place right here: when you're baptized by water and the following Sunday somebody lays their hands on their head and says, "Receive the Holy Ghost." At that point we think the ordinance is complete. We think the baptismal ordinance is complete. We think that when we say, "Receive the Holy Ghost," that the Baptism of Fire and the Holy Ghost takes place at that time.

Pres. Taggart: And it might.

Mike: It can.

Pres. Taggart: It might with some people.

Mike: It can. But, generally speaking, the majority of the membership of the church are going to have this part, the Baptism of Fire and the Holy Ghost, this part of the baptismal ordinance, take place sometime in the future, after the water baptism and the confirmation. What's the confirmation then? What's going on there? You're laying your hands on their head and you're saying, "Receive the Holy Ghost."

Let's see what Elder or President Uchtdorf says. Go down here on your worksheet. This is a talk given in 2012...

Sister Stroud: Bednar.

Mike: ...what did I say? Bednar! Uchtdorf? Bednar. Elder Bednar. Thank you. This is my damage control over here and boy, she's does a dang good job! I pulled the excerpts out of this talk that pertain to what we're talking about. The Brethren, in particular Elder Bednar, are trying to help us correct this misunderstanding and it's church wide. And again, I believe, the problem with people leaving the church, again, is that we are not getting to the last part of the baptismal ordinance. And yet people *think* they are. That's the challenge. If you think you're already in possession of something, why would you seek for it? You see that?

So let's look at Elder Bednar's quotes here. "These four words- 'Receive the Holy Ghost' – are not a passive pronouncement; rather, they constitute a priesthood injunction..." Do you know what that word injunction means? It's a command. A priesthood command. "...an authoritative admonition to act and not by simply acted upon."

So when you do this, "Receive the Holy Ghost," what you're doing is you're turning a key and pronouncing an injunction on that person, 'Now go, from this point, go and receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost.' We think that it's happening right there... and it can, but generally not.

Look what else he says, "My message focuses on the importance of striving in our daily lives to actually receive the Holy Ghost..." Actually have it happen. We're thinking that when we say those words, it does. He's saying it has to actually happen. "...The gift of the Holy Ghost is bestowed only after proper and authorized baptism and by the laying on of hands by those holding the Melchizedek Priesthood." That's your confirmation. That's the key that opens the door for the Baptism of Fire and the Holy Ghost. The Baptism of Fire and the Holy Ghost is not going to come without these two other steps.

Go on down and it says, "Baptism by immersion is the introductory ordinance of the gospel, and must be followed by baptism of the Spirit/Fire in order to be complete.

"The ordinance of confirming a new member of the church and bestowing the gift of the Holy Ghost is both simple and profound..."

Now watch this next statement because this next paragraph contains the heart of what we're talking about here. "...The simplicity of this ordinance may cause us to overlook its significance. These four words- "Receive the Holy Ghost" –are not a passive pronouncement; rather, they constitute a priesthood injunction –an authoritative admonition to act and not simply be acted upon..." This part right here: "...The Holy Ghost does not become operative in our lives merely because hands are placed upon our heads and those four important words are spoken..." You ought to underline that because I think that's exactly what we think happens. I think that we think that when we say those words, it's almost like a command for the Holy Ghost to come in now and become the constant companion of that person who's being confirmed. And Elder Bednar says that's not correct and I testify to you that it's not correct. But we think that, and I'll show you why in just a minute. "...As we receive this ordinance, each of us accepts a sacred and **ongoing** responsibility..." See! It's moving down the road. They key is turned, now go out "...to desire, to seek, to work, and to so live that we indeed "receive the Holy Ghost" and its attendant spiritual gifts." Does this make sense? Do you see where we're going with this today? Can you see that we're just a little bit off in our thinking here? And we're just making a little course correction. But, that little course correction, I believe, and I believe that President Taggart believes, is going to make all the difference in the world and you stay, like was said in the last General Conference, 'in the boat.' ...and not taking a walk, okay? "...We more readily receive and recognize the Spirit of the Lord as we appropriately invite Him into our lives. We cannot..." Here we go- "...We cannot compel, coerce, or command the Holy Ghost. Rather, we should invite Him into our lives with the same gentleness and tenderness by which He entreats us.

"Praying, studying, gathering, worshipping, serving, and obeying are not isolated and independent items on a lengthy gospel checklist of things to do. Rather, each of these righteous practices is an important element in an overarching spiritual quest to fulfill the mandate to receive the Holy Ghost." That's the pathway. He just outlined the pathway for you. See that? Praying, studying, gathering –that's the pathway to the Baptism of Fire. I pray we will sincerely desire

and appropriately invite the Holy Ghost into our lives. And I also pray that each of us will faithfully obey God's commandments **and in reality**—and in reality receive the Holy Ghost. That's not being done.

So, generally speaking, here's the problem. Generally speaking, and not specifically, our brothers and sisters in the gospel whose fruits are not remaining, it's because we are not completing the baptismal ordinance. We're getting the first part of it and we think we've got it all, and we don't. So, when the heat of the day comes up and when the adversities and the trials...and you think of anything that's in the path of something, wait until you see what's coming! You guys are going to need to have this for the coming day, or you won't be able to stand the heat of the day. You need to have this conversion. Now let me give you names that are different names for the Baptism of Fire and the Holy Ghost. They all mean the same thing. Here's one: 'the Gift of the Holy Ghost' is referring to the Baptism of Fire. So, when you use the term 'the Gift of the Holy Ghost,' this is what you're talking about. Here's another one: 'a mighty change of heart.' Another one: 'born again,' 'sanctified by the Spirit,' ...any of these terms we are talking about refer to this completion of the baptismal ordinance. Does this make sense? Are you starting to get a feel for this?

Now, I'd like to say that this is a process. My hope is, today, you would ask yourself this question as a result of what we're doing: 'Has this happened to me?' Because first and foremost, like President Taggart says, you're his main stewardship. His main concern is you young men and young women. You're going to be with him for 18 months to 2 years and then you're going to go home. His concern is what's going to happen to you when you leave here. And I can tell you he's concerned about that, and we all are. So, what are you going to do to ensure that YOU remain? Because I'll tell you that there are forces at work that want to take you away. And this is the key to remaining.

I have a friend of mine who's a pastor in the Assembly of God church back where I live and I went to one of his meetings and he gave a talk. And he said, "The difference between life and death is 14 inches." And I go- 'What the heck are you talking about?' He paused for affect. And he said, "It's the difference between here..." and he pointed to his head, "... and here," and he pointed to his heart: 14 inches. It's the difference between life and death. In the church we have what we call testimony. Testimony is a precursor to something deeper called **conversion**. Conversion is another word for the Baptism of Fire and the Holy Ghost. Testimony gets you to the point where you make the covenants and you enter the water and you're confirmed. That's testimony. You've received a message from God. He's spoken to you and as a result of that you're willing to enter into a covenant, which you do. But that's not enough.

Over on the back of this next sheet, the same sheet, go on the back. Joseph Smith quote... I love this quote: "You might as well baptize a bag of sand as a man, if not done in view of the remission of sins and getting of the Holy Ghost..." See that? Look at the next part: "...Baptism by water is but half a baptism, and is..." -you ought to underline this- "...good for nothing..." -pretty bold words! "...good for nothing without the other half—that is, the baptism of the Holy Ghost." President Taggart, would you like to add anything to this point?

Pres. Taggart: Well, and I think, Elders and Sisters, you may be thinking, 'Wow! Has this happened to me? Have I actually received this?' Realize that this is a process. If you've received this, you would know. You would know that. You would feel that in your heart. You know, I'm 3 times as old as you are. I've lived 3 of your life-times and I'm still striving, still working to have this in my life. It's a continual process. It will always be there. But, once you've received it and once it comes, you want to keep receiving it. You want to keep it coming, you know? And we all have ups and downs and challenges and problems, you know? We have a lot of adversity that we face. Satan is the last person on the planet that wants you to have this and know this and understand it. He is trying really hard to divert us and counterfeit. So, realize that it's a process that you go through. Purification, sanctification; that process that allows the Holy Ghost to touch us, you know, is a process that Elder [unintelligible] is still working on. I'm working on it...we're all working on it. So, you know, don't be discouraged or dissuaded if you don't feel like, 'Wow! I have this fire in my belly and I've received this miraculous revelation...' We're going to talk about how we receive the Holy Ghost as well, and how it speaks to us. And I think most of you've probably felt this or had this. Now it's a matter of how strong and how converted are we? And we're going to talk more about that, too, as we get into the scriptures.

Mike: Thank you. If you have a testimony, and I know you all do, or you wouldn't be here, but if you don't have a conversion – if your testimony has not moved into conversion, you're not going to make it. You're going to take a walk. It's that simple.

Elder Eyring says this, "We must take the pure gospel of Jesus Christ from our heads and sink it way down deep into our hearts." THAT'S what we're talking about here. 14 inches: the difference between life and death; activity and inactivity; fruits that remain and those that don't. That's the difference. Now let's take a look at some wording here in your 4th Article of Faith. Let me ask you a question. When does the remission of sins take place and in your 4th Article of Faith is says 'baptism by emersion for the remission of sins.' So according to that, when does the remission of sins take place? Right here. That's not correct, but our 4th Article of Faith... because we put 'for' in there we think that when you're baptized by emersion that your sins are remitted. You're going to see today from the scriptures that that's not correct. So, we've got to twist our thinking a little bit. So, are we teaching false doctrine? No. We're just not quite understanding it the way the Lord wants us to understand it. I talked to some Sister missionaries the other day and they said, "Elder Stroud, are we teaching false doctrine?" I said, "No. Just go forth now and teach what you've learned. Don't worry about it." Brothers and Sisters, you can't teach above the level of your own individual conversion. So we're always growing here. And as you grow, you're going to have an effect on people to a greater degree as you grow in the gospel and the Spirit takes place in your heart. So don't be worried about where you're at right now. Don't be concerned with that. But, be asking yourself some questions. I'm going to give you some keys from the Book of Mormon – how you can tell – has this happened to me today? And you can measure where you're at. It's not enough to tell you what needs to be done. We know that the church... we know what we should be. We know where we should be. The big question is: How do we get there? Has it happened to me and how do we get there? Now, we're going to talk about that today, so you can measure it.

Alright, let's go to section 20 in the Doctrine and Covenants and let's start looking at a scripture chain. This is where we'll get into the scriptures now... And remember the 2 questions: Where does the remission of sins come from? And when do I begin walking on the strait and narrow path? And it's my belief that the majority of us in the church believe that it takes place in this area here. Now, President Taggart mentioned something else that's interesting. Baptism by water and confirmation by the laying on of hands is performed by mortal hands. It's mortals who perform that and the record of that part of that ordinance is kept in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It's your membership record number. There's a record there, right? When you get over to this part, to complete the baptismal ordinance, this is not performed by mortals. This is done by immortals and there is no earthly record that this has taken place. There is a record and it's called the record of those who are the Sanctified. And you can read about it in the 2nd verse of section 88. And you can just write that up. So, there's a record kept, when this happens to you, in heaven. There's no person on earth that's going to have an earthly record that you've received the Baptism of Fire and the Holy Ghost.

So, let's go to section 20 verse 41 and look at our first scripture here. These are just a few. Once you're tuned onto this... once you start to see this, you're going to see it everywhere. It's everywhere, but it's one of those things that you just have to have somebody show it to you, like it was me. Can I tell you that I taught seminary for many, many years... I never taught this in seminary. I didn't know it. I didn't know it. And now that I've learned it, I want to pass it on to you, so you don't have to wait until you're 70 years old to figure this out, right? So, now let's go to verse 41: "And to confirm those who are baptized..." There's your first 2 steps. There's your confirmation, your baptism by water. "...to confirm those who are baptized...by the laying on of hands **for** the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost..." There's all 3 parts of the baptismal ordinance. There it is.

Let's go to section 33 for a minute. Let me just say that I made some places on your handout, there, for notes. I would encourage you that as the Spirit and the Holy Ghost speak to you and reveals to your mind and to your heart, things... you'll have thoughts that will come into your mind, feelings in your heart. Write those down because that's the Spirit talking to you about what you need to know concerning this ordinance and where you are at this point in your personal progression and journey back to the Father. So, write it down! This is a time to receive revelation. It will come to your mind, in the way of thoughts, and to your heart in the way of feelings. Write those down, okay? Section 33, let's go up to verse 11. "...repent and be baptized, every one of you, for a remission of your sins; yea, be baptized even by water, and **then** cometh the baptism by fire and of the Holy Ghost." There's your sequence again. See you're going to see this

everywhere. Look at the next verse. “Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel...” What you see on the board here, and right here, is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Want a definition of the gospel? There it is. Repentance, baptism by water, confirmation by the laying on of hands, and the baptism by fire and the Holy Ghost... that is the gospel of Jesus Christ in its simplicity and its foundation. That’s it. Look what else it says. Verse 13, “...upon this rock I will build my church; yea, upon this rock ye are built, and if ye **continue**...” You ought to underline that. **If you continue**...because we’re not continuing. We’re getting stuck. We’re stuck right here as a general church membership, so our fruit’s not remaining and we’re not continuing. Continuing what? Notice these arrows are pointing in a direction. They’re going this way. Continue over to here. If you continue to here, your fruits will remain and you will also.

Verse 15, “And whoso having faith you shall confirm in my church, by the laying on of hands, and **I**...” Circle that! “**I** will bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost upon them.” Now you thought, you thought that the gift of the Holy Ghost was bestowed by who? The person that said what? Said what?

Missionary: Receive the Holy Ghost.

Mike: Receive the Holy Ghost. You thought that’s when that took place. It’s not. Who bestows... who’s speaking here in section 33 that says, “I will bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost?” Who is this? It’s **Christ**. So, now we’re getting over into here, like President Taggart said. This part of the ordinance is bestowed and performed by immortals. We’ll see some more. Let’s go to another one. Let’s go over to 3 Nephi chapter 9. Now, the Book of Mormon teaches this doctrine in its plainness and its simplicity. If I were trying to teach what we’re doing today, out of the Bible today, it couldn’t be done. Absolutely could not do it. You can’t do this. You can pretty good out of the Doctrine and Covenants, but if you want to **REALLY** find this doctrine you go to the Book of Mormon because this is core foundation doctrine of the Book of Mormon. So let’s go to 3 Nephi chapter 9. Context for this: it’s dark...in the chapter heading, “In the darkness the voice of Christ proclaims...” see? They hear the voice of Christ... and let’s go to verse 18. “I am the light and the life of the world...” 19: Here He discontinues 4,000 years of sacrifice by the shedding of blood. “...ye shall offer up unto me *no more* the shedding of blood...” Verse 20: here’s where we want to go. Watch —a new dispensation, a new sacrifice. “And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit...” That is the key to the beginning of the baptism of fire. Want to know what you have to do to do this? Here’s the key. And then look what the Lord says, “...whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit him will...” Here it is again! “**I**...” Who’s speaking? Jesus Christ. “...him will **I** baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost...” President.

Pres. Taggart: You know, this is a very, very profound connection to everything that we do, Elders and Sisters. If you look at our monthly scriptures, it’s interesting. The scriptures that we have today completely and totally tie into this. Listen to what it says. You wax stronger and stronger, firmer and firmer in your humility. How do you wax stronger and stronger? You perfect. You grow. You enlarge. You enlarge your humility. What does it do? It does exactly what Elder Stroud is talking about, what the scripture talks about. A broken heart and a contrite spirit. Are we willing to yield our will to the will of the Father? Are we willing to yield? Do we have...have we broken our pride, eliminated pride in our life? What we want verses what He wants? That is a key element here. Firmer and firmer in the faith. If we’re humble, if we seek the Spirit, THEN the Holy Ghost can come to you. Then, and only then. If we’re proud, if what we want is more important than what He wants, we’re blocking. We’re blocking. We’re damned. He can’t help us. And when we do anything that blocks that Spirit, or that Power, our progress is damned. I don’t know about you, but I need all the forward progress I can get. I need to have a broken heart and contrite spirit.

Mike: Thank you. Helaman chapter, 3 verse 35 is the Baptism of Fire and the Holy Ghost.

Pres. Taggart: Yeah, sanctification, joy and consolation that comes only through the Holy Ghost.

Mike: How inspired you are to have that. Let’s go to 3 Nephi, chapter 12, and in 2 verses, verses 1 and 2... we’re not going to read the whole first verse. Go about half way... go up to the top of your page on page 431 and down one line where it says, “...Blessed are ye...” that’s in verse 1, do you see that? “...Blessed are ye...” Are we all there? This is the Savior now. This is not His voice. This is a Second Comforter experience. He’s there in person. 2,500 people have now gone up and seen and heard and **touched** something. This is not a vision, this is a **visitation**. And He’s talking to them and He says, “...Blessed are ye if ye give heed unto the words of these twelve whom I have chosen from among you to

minister unto you, and to be your servants; and unto them I have given power..." Here we go. Watch, "...power that they may baptize you with water; and after that ye are baptized with water, behold..." Here we go again, "...I will baptize you with fire and with the Holy Ghost..." See? It's everywhere in here. Let's go down to verse 2, "And again more blessed are *they*..." Now He's talking about everybody that listens to and believes the words of the Twelve, which includes US! So verse 2 is now talking to us in 2015. "...blessed are they who shall believe in your words because that ye shall testify that ye have seen me, and that ye know that I am. Yea, blessed are they who shall believe in your words, and come down into the depths of humility and be baptized..." with water, "...for they shall be visited with fire and with the Holy Ghost..." And now here's a new addition: "...and shall receive a remission of sins." Remember the question I asked you at the beginning? When do we receive the remission of sins? Majority of the membership of the church will tell you that it happens right here, in particular, at the water baptism. As though when you come out of the water you can see the scum floating on the top. All your sins have been washed away, see? I know you have taught that and thought that. I know you have because I did. And it's a common thought. That's a token of the covenant. That sin being remitted... here's your key...no remission of sin UNTIL the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost and that's the doctrine.

Now, there's a difference between forgiveness of sin and remission of sin. You can get a forgiveness of sin and you can have that, that's spoken of... and we won't go into that today. But, a remission of sin takes place right here and it is a *HEALING* process. It not only justifies you, so the law of justice has no demands on you, but it *HEALS* everything that's broken in you. If you're a victim, remission of sins heals that. If you're a perpetrator of a crime, it heals that. So, the baptism of fire and the remission of sins makes everything *WHOLE*. W-H-O-L-E /*slash*/ *HOLY*. That's what takes place with a remission.

Okay, let's think of a couple of other ones. Let's go over to Mosiah chapter 4 and let's start talking about: What do we need to do to obtain this? And how can we tell if we've got it? Let's go to Mosiah chapter 4. I would invite you to go home after today, sometime in the next few days, read again, in context with what we've talked about, read again Mosiah chapter 4 and 5. Read those two chapters because it contains the keys of 'How do you obtain the Baptism of Fire and the Holy Ghost and *RETAIN* a remission of your sins, and how can I tell if it's happened to me?' ...which is what we really want to know, right? You want to know where you're at on the pathway back to the Father. You want to know, 'where am I at right now in March of 2015?' If you know where you're at you can move forward with power. Otherwise if there's a question mark there's no movement. Or if there is, it's backward. So let's go to chapter 4, verse 2. Would somebody like to read verse 2 for me? Yeah, Elder... 4 verse 2.

Elder: "And they had viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even less than the dust of the earth. And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified; for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things; who shall come down among the children of men."

Mike: So what is it they want? They are asking for 2 things. What do you see that they're looking for here?

Elder: Mercy.

Mike: Use the words of the scripture. What are they looking for?

Elder: Have mercy and apply the atoning blood of Christ.

Mike: That's the vehicle to get what they want. What is it they're looking for? Two things. What?

Sister: A forgiveness of their sins...

Mike: A forgiveness of their sins and what?

Elder: Purified heart.

Mike: Purified hearts. Now there's a key: when you hear the word heart, you're starting to talk about things that pertain to the baptism of fire. Anything you see moving towards...in the Book of Mormon, moving towards the heart, you're now moving into the deeper things of the gospel where the Lord really wants you to be. Actually, Brothers and Sisters,

the Lord only really wants one thing from you. After it's all said and done, He wants one thing from you. He wants your heart! That's what He wants. And it's the hardest thing to give. Now, let's see if they got what they wanted. Go down to verse 3. Elder, read verse 3 for us. Did they receive their desire?

Elder: "And it came to pass that after they had spoken these words the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience, because of the exceeding faith which they had in Jesus Christ who should come, according to the words which king Benjamin had spoken unto them."

Mike: Did they receive the 2 things in verse 3 that they wanted in verse 2? Did they get it? They did. How did it come to them? Back up to verse 2. What was the vehicle? The atoning blood of Jesus Christ. Now, there's a law in heaven that God seldom answers questions that are unasked; seldom. I'm not going to tell Him what He can and cannot do. But, it's my experience that if you don't ask a question, you're not going to get an answer when it comes to the Lord. So how many time have you seen this? Ask and ye shall...what?

Missionaries: Receive.

Mike: Receive. Seek and ye shall...?

Missionaries: Find.

Mike: Find. Section 88 has an interesting thing to it. The only place in the scriptures it says seek ME and ye shall find ME. Interesting! What's the other one?

Missionaries: Knock.

Mike: Knock...?

Missionaries: ...and it shall be opened unto you.

Mike: '...and it shall be opened to you' has interesting temple implications. How many times have you seen these scriptures? They're everywhere, aren't they? It's the key! So now watch. What do you think the Lord is trying to tell us? Is He trying to teach us something here? So, your first key to obtain is: tonight, when you get on your knees and in the name of Christ, you approach the Father and say, 'Heavenly Father...' ask Him 2 questions. Number 1: Have I received the Baptism of Fire and the Holy Ghost? And then wait until you receive a *feeling or thought* on that. If your feeling and your thought is that you have not received this completion of the baptismal ordinance then ASK HIM to complete it for you. And He will. He will. It's not happening because we're not asking. There's your first key.

Now, let's look at a couple of things here. Let's go over... for the sake of time, if you'll read over chapter 4 and look for these things... What kind of person do I need to be, according to King Benjamin's discourse, that the angel gave to him...

This is King Benjamin repeating what an angel gave him the night before. So what kind of a person does he say I need to be to have this endowment of the baptism of fire? And you'll see it in chapter 4. Now, go over to chapter 5 and let's look at a couple of things. Now, how do you know it's happened to you? Let me give you 5 markers along the way. You can ask yourself this question...5 markers along the way. Chapter 5, verse 2. You want to read that for me? Elder, you're a great reader. You've got a good, loud voice. I hear you loud and clear. Go ahead. 5 verse 2...

Elder: "And they all cried with one voice, saying: Yea, we believe all the words which thou hast spoken unto us; and also, we know of their surety and truth, because of the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually."

Mike: So was there a change wrought? Yeah. Where does the change take place? In the heart. And what was the fruit of the change?

Elder: No more disposition to do evil.

Mike: No more disposition to do evil, but to do good... how long? Continually! Now, the word disposition, brothers and sisters, is interesting. It doesn't mean that you're not going to sin anymore. This doesn't mean that repentance is not going to play a role anymore. It just means that you're not disposed to do it. You're still going to make mistakes, but here's the difference. You don't WANT to. You don't want to. Your disposition has changed because your heart has changed. This isn't about fear. We're now talking down in this area here. Ok. Let's look at the next verse. Look at verse 3. Elder...

Elder: "And we, ourselves, also, through the infinite goodness of God, and the manifestations of his Spirit, have great views of that which is to come; and were it expedient, we could prophesy of all things."

Mike: Here's your second marker. Great views! You want to circle that. We have now, because of this, great views. Your view of everything in this world changes. You do not view anything the same anymore. You don't see yourself the same. You don't see your relationship with God the same. Repentance takes on a different view. It's a joy! Service is not a duty, it's a privilege. I mean, everything changes because your heart has changed, the views change. President, you want to make a comment on that?

Pres. Taggart: Yeah, this principle that Elder Stroud is talking about, it's essential that we understand that. It's essential that our people understand that. It all has to come down to one thing, and one thing only. What is our destiny? What is the purpose of life? What is your destiny? Where are you going? What do you want out of life? You're here in New Jersey for 18 months or 2 years, right? And I promise you, I've told you this before: This is your proving ground. This is your boot camp for the rest of your life. What you do here, what you establish here, the kind of person you become here will set the stage for the rest of your life; for eternity. For eternity. This is Heavenly Father's plan to prepare you for the rest of your life. You. You individually. Because every single one of you in this room will have a completely different experience than the person sitting next to you. Totally. You'll have different companions. You'll have different people you teach. So, this is what this is about. They had a different *view* of life. Their hearts changed. They saw the big picture. Please, see the big picture! What you desire and what you want out of life changes. The kind of music you listen to; the kind of movies you'll watch; the kind of activities, the jokes you listen to; the kind of conversations you have; the kind of language you use -will change. The study of the doctrines, the teachings of the doctrines will change behavior way more than the study of behavior will change behavior. Please understand this. Put it to use in your own life. *That's why we're having this meeting today.* That's why we're having this meeting today. Please, please, please -I beg of you, focus on this! Let this sink into your heart. Ask yourself, "What is this that Elder Stroud is teaching, that is here in the scriptures, trying to tell ME as an individual?" -and apply that.

Mike: Let's go to 5, verse 5. Here's another marker. Another marker. This is the big one! Each one of these is building on each one. You see? It gets more glorious and more grand. Verse 5- you know you've had the baptism of fire if you, "...are willing to enter into a covenant with our God, to do his will, and be obedient to his commandments in **all** things..." I'd circle ALL things, "...that he shall command us, **all** the remainder of our days, that we not bring upon ourselves a never-ending torment..." So, see, if this happens to you, with this mighty change of heart -with this baptism of fire- you're going to feel a desire to now enter into a covenant with the Lord. I testify to you, that's true. And you will. It'll make all the difference in your life. This is a marker along the way.

Let's look at another one. Go to verse 7. Something interesting happens through this process. "And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters..." Look who becomes your Father. Jesus Christ now becomes your Father. He's the Father of your spiritual re-birth. That's what the Baptism of Fire and the Holy Ghost is. That's what Christ was talking about with Nicodemus. "Except a man be born of water and of the **spirit** he cannot enter into the kingdom of God..." This is a birth. And Christ is the Father of this magnificent change of heart. And, by the way, nothing is ever the same again. Nothing. Will you slip and go backwards? Yes. But you're not the same. Here's another marker. Before you have the baptism by fire, you sin and you repent, but there's a tendency to justify your sinning. There's a tendency to prolong your repentance. There's a tendency to hide it in the dark and just pray that it will go away. That disappears with this. Now when you commit sin, your repentance is NOW. There's something else. Prior to this, you are the victim. Prior to this you are the victim, it's everybody else's fault, what's going

wrong in your life. When this happens to you, you readily and willingly accept full responsibility for your actions. You say, like in the Book of Mormon, 'My sins are mine and I know them.' Oh yeah. And your repentance takes place when?

Missionary: Immediately.

Mike: NOW! There's no hiding. There's no justification. And there's no delay. These are the markers. So, where are you? As you look at these markers, how are you doing? If you're falling short on these, okay, that's alright. At least now you're being made aware so that you can DO something about this. You know there's something more glorious and more grand out there that you never conceived possible. Now we go seek for that. Look what else it says in verse 7, "...for this day he has spiritually begotten you; for ye say..." -Here it is again, "...that your hearts are changed through faith in his name; therefore..." That word 'therefore'...because your heart has been changed, "...therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters." That's where you want to be. I testify to you, when that happens to you, you will not go away. It is unlikely that you will leave.

Like the Savior, He preached some hard doctrine and a lot of people took a walk. You can read about this. And the Twelve turned to Him and said, 'This is a hard thing, who can bear it?' And He looked at all the other people walking away and He said to the Twelve, 'Will you go away also?' And Peter spoke up and said, 'Where will we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.' And that's you.

I'm going to testify to you – you're going to have stuff hit you that's going to try and drag you away, and it will, unless you have this foundation. Your foundation isn't in the church, Brothers and Sisters. Your foundation is on Christ. You know that scripture, 'Now my sons, **remember, remember**, that it's on the rock of our Redeemer that we must build...' Our foundation is Christ the Lord. 'When the devil will send forth his mighty winds and all his hail, and his might storm shall beat upon you, it will have no power over you to drag you down to gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the foundation upon which you are built...' Now that's what we're talking about. This is the foundation, '...the foundation whereon if men and women build, they cannot fall...' And your fruits remain.

Let's look at a couple other things. Uh, I think we've covered that well enough. Let's go to 2 Nephi as we wrap up, and let me show you my favorite of all on this. This has all been used right now to lead up to this point. 2 Nephi 31 and I remember when I saw this, I just rejoiced! I said, "How have I missed this?! I don't know how, after reading all of these things, I missed this." Verse 2, 2 Nephi 31:2. Nephi is an old man. He's in his 70's and he's wrapping up his life. And this is a summation of his life and his doctrine and his teachings. You're getting here what he's spent a lifetime...now think what he's done and what he's accomplished. What he's going to give you in these next 2 verses, is: 'I'm going to show you HOW I've accomplished what I've accomplished.' This is what it is. This is a "how to" booklet. So, look in verse 2, "Wherefore, the things which I have written sufficeth me, save it be a few words which I must speak concerning..." -now this is the part you want to underline, "...the **doctrine of Christ**;" Now go over your page, 2 Nephi 32:6 and it says, "Behold, this is the **doctrine of Christ**..." So those 26 verses between 2 Nephi 31:2 and 2 Nephi 32:5 or 6 contain everything you need to go back to the Father and complete your journey in 26 verses. Only Nephi could have done this for us. Only he could have done this for us –everything you need is in here. Let me show you some secrets. Go with me to 13 and 14. Just kind of glance through 13 and 14 and just look and see if you can see the things we've talked about, thus far today. Just scan those 2 verses. Everything we've talked about is right there in those 2 verses. It's all there isn't it? Now go down to verse 17. Let's go to verse 17, "Wherefore, do the things which I have told you I have seen that your Lord and your Redeemer should do; for, for this cause have they been shown unto me, that ye might know **the gate**..." Remember the 2 questions I asked you- When do you receive a remission of sins? And when do your feet begin to tread the strait and narrow path? Those are the questions we started out with today, right? We're going to answer those right now. He answers that question for us, "...For the gate by which you should enter is repentance and baptism by water; ..." -semi-colon- "...**AND THEN cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost.**" There's the first part. You haven't even passed through the *gate* until you've received the baptism of fire and the remission of sins. That **IS** the gate. The baptismal ordinance we've been talking about is the gate.

Now put your finger here and let's go back to 2 Nephi 9 and see something else about this gate. 2 Nephi 9:41. I know that most of us have thought that the gate was baptism. At least I did. Now let's find out in verse 41, are you there? 2

Nephi 9:41, "O then, my beloved brethren, come unto the Lord, the Holy One. Remember that his paths are righteous. Behold, the way for man is narrow, and lieth in a straight course before him..." –there's your strait and narrow- "...and the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name." You can lie to your Bishop and get away with it, as far as your Bishop goes. You can lie to him and he won't know it. You can lie to a Stake President and he may not know. You can lie to a General Authority and he may not catch it. But you cannot lie to the Holy Ghost, nor to the Holy One of Israel, who is the keeper of the gate. That's why he's the keeper because what's on the other side of the gate is so glorious and so fantastic that you have to have a broken heart and a contrite spirit, honor and integrity to get to that point to receive the present President Taggart is talking about.

Back over to 31. Watch 18. 2 Nephi 31:18, "**And then...**" –see that? See the sequence? This, this, and then, and then, and then...here's, "...**And then** are ye in this strait and narrow path that leads to eternal life;..." When do you get on the strait and narrow path? When you complete the baptismal ordinance. When it's completed –both the mortal part and the immortal part. You receive a remission of your sins and you're on the strait and narrow. Fantastic! How did we miss this? Maybe you didn't. I did – for years. 18, 19, and 20 tell you the things the Lord is going to give you. These are gifts and attributes and characteristics that come now, after the baptism of fire that lead up to the promise in verse 20. Just read those verses. See what you're going to have. Is it all finished? Have you all done it when you pass through the gate... "Wherefore, ye must press forward with steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope..." See, push forward, and He gives you gifts to do that. One of the gifts is that you speak with the tongue of angels. That comes with the baptism of fire. The ministry of angels now becomes personal and sometimes veil-less. That's what's on the other side. He's just waiting for us. Now look at verse 20. "...ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope..." –you can't do that, you cannot have any of these things in verse 20 without the baptism of fire. They are reserved for those people who are on the strait and narrow. "...a love of God and all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father..." –and this is where the very few, I think one or two places in all of scripture where the Father's voice is recorded, because the Father just doesn't do much in the telestial world. That's the realm of the Holy Ghost and angels, and Christ sometimes; but, He's terrestrial. "...thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life." That is something called "calling and election made sure through the more sure word of prophesy." At this point, according to 2 Peter, you cannot fall. Interesting, huh? You see the sequence? Build, build, build, until you get to a point... the whole purpose of all this is to get you to where your fruit remains and you don't walk away. President...

Pres. Taggart: There's an important principle here, too, to press forward. Press forward. What that means, Elders and Sisters, don't look to the past. Don't be weighed down by things, silly things, or stupid things you've done. We've ALL made mistakes. We're not perfect. We've all sinned, every one of us. Too many of us get bogged down by the things we've done in the past because we're not leaving it. They're haunting us. Press forward. Move forward. Don't be weight inhibited, -weighed down by that. Alright? That's really important. Really important. Look to the future and *know* that a remission of your sins alleviates you from those sins. "I, the Lord, remember them no more." Believe Him when he tells you that! Allow yourselves to move forward. Keep progressing. Don't look back. You know we talk about being 'normal.' When you go home... some of you are going to go home soon, and it's like people are going to ask you, "How long before you become 'normal'?" You know? "How long is it going to take for you to become a 'normal human being' again?" You don't want to be a 'normal human being!' The answer that you're going to give these people is, "I will never be normal again! I'm not normal! I went out on a mission to be NOT normal, as the world see it. I don't ever want to be normal again." Don't apologize for that. Don't fall into the trap that, 'Oh it's uncool to be good. It's not cool to be good.' I'm here to tell you, I'm here to tell you and I testify IT IS COOL TO BE GOOD! It is **REALLY** cool to be good! Really good, all the time. This is what the Lord wants. This is what He has in store for you. Take the shackles off of you and soar! Okay, I testify that that's true.

Mike: Let's end up in 2 Nephi 32 verse 6. Please look at these 26 verses. Please look at these 26 verses with NEW eyes and with NEW light. "...this is the doctrine of Christ, and there will be no more doctrine given until he..." –Christ- "...shall manifest himself unto you..." This is talking about a Second Comforter experience. Second Comforter is a visitation from the Savior. He wants to do that. That's what Nephi is talking about. He had it and he wants you to have it. "...And when

he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh, the things which he shall say unto you shall ye observe to do.” He’s got a message for you. There’s an agenda. It’s specific and intimate and it’s just for you.

Now look at verse 7, “Now I, Nephi, cannot say more...” He wants to, but he can’t. “...the Spirit stoppeth mine utterance, and I am left to mourn...” He had something...he wanted to put more down here. But the Lord said, ‘No, that’s enough.’ This is for you. This is not for people outside the church. People outside the church aren’t reading this. The Book of Mormon is for you! ‘I want to tell you something more, but the Spirit said ‘no, that’s enough. Let them work on what they’ve got and when I come to them I’ll tell them more. This is enough until I come and manifest myself unto them in the flesh.’” Then he says, “...I am left to mourn because of the unbelief, and the wickedness, and the ignorance, and the stiffneckedness of men...” That’s an indictment against us, if we’re not moving towards this. You don’t think for a minute that that’s talking about gentile, non-Mormons. That’s you that’s being referred to. “...for they will not search knowledge, nor understand great knowledge, when it is given unto them in plainness, even as plain as word can be.” And I pray that this has been plain today. We prayed a lot about this because we know how critical this is for you.

I’ve got a cousin of mine, she struggles with activity. I’ve been teaching her the doctrine of Christ for the last year and her behavior has changed mightily. I taught her about the Baptism of Fire and the Holy Ghost and here’s what she said. This email is just 48 hours old. I want to share it with you. She’s a single mom in her late 40’s, early 50’s... “I listened to the two sessions...” I sent them a couple recordings of this stuff and the sheets of paper- “...over and over. I had to give a talk in Sacrament last week. I prayed about topics and gave it on the baptism of fire.” When I read that I was so overjoyed! I was just thrilled for her. “...I worried how it would be received, but so interesting were the responses from the ward members. The Spirit guided me through my talk. I have a couple living next to me who, after 50 years, have decided to come back to church. The husband is an old cowboy with a heart of gold...” She lives in Tooele, Utah. Some of you know where Tooele is. “...and has such a sweet wife. He said he was in tears and really moved by what he heard. I’m so thankful the Lord used me for a vessel of this message. Another member said it was something he thought a Bishop would tell his ward. I only hope I can leap into conversion. I know, like you Mike, I have been at my wit’s end and cried, literally, to the Lord for help. Sometimes we as members don’t feel worthy to ask: Can I really reach into this realm? What do I need to do after repentance and forgiveness?” True doctrine understood changes behavior.

We have WAY too many people leaving the church. I believe this is the answer and I believe it’s been before us all along. And I believe now the Lord is coming to a point where we need to be awakened and “...rise up, O men of Israel...” and you sweetheart ladies. These men have understanding, but they have no wisdom. Can I tell you that? If you want to take the roles of men and women, here’s what I’ve learned over my life: The number one attribute for men is understanding. The number one attribute for women is wisdom. That’s why a man and a woman together are complete. One without the other is un-whole. I testify to you the truth of these things. I’m grateful for the Spirit of the Lord. I pray that you’ve been touched and this will begin a new study and a new adventure for you, because truly the greatest things of the gospel of Christ are hidden. If you’re bored in church and in the gospel, it’s YOUR fault because this is flat exciting! I testify so in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. President, do you want to field some questions? President Taggart and I will field some questions here and we wanted to take a little time for you to ask some questions. Time’s up. You had your chance.

Pres. Taggart: Elder Class-

Elder Class: So, basically my question then would be how do you proceed after you’ve received the baptism of fire, after you’ve received the Holy Ghost? The spirit is strong, but in the process we’re obviously going to make mistakes. So, would it be [unintelligible] then to theorize that you have to receive the baptism of fire multiple times when you’ve messed up and you have to receive it again, or try to get back to that same level where you reached before?

Mike: It’s possible to cycle in and out of this. You can lose it. But, you’re way back is quicker because your repentance is quicker. It is possible for you to slack out and lose some of these gifts. Just persevere. Each time you have this spiritual experience, it changes you so that you’re not ever the same. Will you still make mistakes and slip back? Yes, but the recovery is quicker and more complete.

Pres. Taggart: Just look at it like this: It's a process and it's a ladder. I've drawn this for a lot of missionaries... you know, this is your ladder. You start out... I'm going to say this is your missionary life. You start out here and maybe this is the 2 year mark. You start out- you have ups and downs, peaks and valleys. And some of them are bigger than others. You have times when you feel the Spirit. You have times when you're being guided and directed. You have times when you're like, 'I don't feel anything. I'm as low as a whale turd at the bottom of the ocean.' You're not happy. So Elder Class, the point is, you're going to have these the rest of your life. Some of them get real big and some not so big. That's just the way life is. You have 3 or 4 kids... you have a kid go haywire... you're going to have a pretty big dip. Trust me, the challenges in your life you're having right now are nothing compared to what they're going to be and what they can be. So, recognize that once you've had this baptism by fire, you KNOW, you know the path, you're on the path. So, you've got to get back to the path. And climbing all these pits is just getting back on the path. Elder Packer...

Elder Packer: So, our goal now is that baptism of fire. The next step is the Second Comforter? Is there something in between that?

Mike: Now there's a whole other lesson that we won't go into today. The next steps are interesting things called 'calling and election made sure,' 'more sure word of prophesy,' 'translation,' 'Second Comforter,' I mean on and on. Let's just stay right here for a minute.

Pres. Taggart: But, there are people that that happens to. They used to publish those names in the Church News way back in the day. It happens and it CAN happen. I think the important thing to know is that it's not impossible. And if you seek that and you want that and you're worthy for that, that can happen. It is absolutely within your reach, within our reach, to have that happen. People become sanctified enough that they receive the Second Comforter, which is an actual ordinance given by the Savior.

Mike: Let me give you a reference real quick. Go to your Joseph Smith Translation. Look at Genesis 14, not now...later. Look at Genesis 14 and it will tell you what's available to you when you come to this level in your progression. JST Genesis 14 lays it out. That's what you can and should do.

Pres. Taggart: Elder Packer, here's the thing. Look at what's going on here. It's your trajectory. It's your trajectory that matters. It's not where you are on these dips and these peaks and valleys. It's understanding that your life, every single minute, every single hour, every single day of your life is designed for you to grow, to learn, to overcome adversity, to overcome challenges that this earth gives you. To overcome evil and Satan, so that someday you can return to our Heavenly Father, who live up here. It's your perspective. The vision Elder Stroud talked about. You have a new vision. Your vision changes. What you want, what's important to you changes. We talk about obedience in the mission -you want to be obedient because you want to be up here. That's your goal. That's your vision. You don't want to do whacky things here that prevent you from getting there. You, in your heart, have changed. Elder Dunn...

Elder Dunn: This has been a wonderful presentation! Don't you wish that when we were missionaries in England, we would have gotten this at this age?

Pres. Taggart: Yep!

Elder Dunn: Instead of, like you said, at 3 times their age and we've had to learn along the way. You've gotten some great stuff here today. You know, modern theology today teaches that being born again is an event. "I've been born again!" President Taggart repeatedly said today that it is a process. The scriptures teach us, the Brethren teach us that we have drops put in our lamp day by day as we are studying the gospel, as we are testifying and praying to repent and go to church, and all of these things...these are adding drops to our lamp and they don't stay there. When you go home you are going to rely on some of those drops that you've put into your reservoir. And when you hit some of these low spots, like President Taggart said, you've got to have the reserve there. And if you use the reserve and you don't continually, by enduring to the end, keep putting drops in, pretty soon your lamp is going to be empty. And you will have forgotten all that you had in that spiritual reservoir. So, this is enduring to the end, to keep going, not giving up. You've got to keep replenishing the drops in the lamp.

Pres. Taggart: Well, remember 2 Nephi chapter 2... opposition in all things. The opposition in all things is the eternal law. We cannot experience the joy, the happiness, the highs, unless we experience these dips. They come together. You think about Joseph Smith and Jesus Christ, you know, their dips were like this- they had the highest of highs and the lowest of lows. Why? That's part of the gospel doctrine- opposition in all things. The more severe your trials, the more intense your trials, probably the more intense your joy. That's just an eternal law. So when you're having these times... you have them on your mission. Many of you have these on your mission. When you're having these times, realize and recognize what they're for, why you're having them, and celebrate the day that the sun will come up in the morning. It will come up. Any other questions? Elder Davis...

Elder Davis: So, with the Gift of the Holy Ghost, we teach about the companionship of the Holy Ghost and how as long as they stay worthy they will have the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost to guide and protect them spiritually and physically. So, that falls under the same category with...

Mike: The term 'Gift of the Holy Ghost,' which means the constant companionship of that member of the Godhead, is the Baptism of Fire and the Holy Ghost. Those are synonymous terms. There is something in section 109. I put it down here, if you look at the bottom of the page under 'conclusion.' Section 109, verse 15 mentions something called 'the Fullness of the Holy Ghost.' You want to write down scriptural references I'll give to you with that, where you can see the culminating experience of what we're talking about here. Look in Helaman 5. That's Nephi and Lehi are in the Lamanite prison in Middoni, remember that? And look at 3 Nephi 19, which I believe is the Holy of Holies of the Book of Mormon.

Pres. Taggart: Elder Davis, in answer to your question, let me ask you this: Have any of you in this room, any of you... I'm talking about Elder Stroud and even Elder Botts and Elder Pitson or Sister Pitson, have any of you received or felt the Holy Ghost continually, constantly? I haven't. We're entitled to that, Elder Davis. That could happen at some point in our lives, but very rarely is that a reality. You know, it just doesn't happen, so recognize that. Try not to be disappointed when you're not feeling inspired every minute of every day. It comes and it goes. And the more we can feel it the better off we are. And the way we feel it is how? Through what? How can we feel it?

Elder: The fundamentals.

Pres. Taggart: The basic fundamentals... One particular thing is determining whether we feel the Holy Ghost or not. What is it?

Elder: Repentance.

Pres. Taggart: Perfection? No. I'm not perfect. No one's perfect.

Elder: I said REPENTANCE.

Pres. Taggart: Oh! Repentance! I thought you said perfection. What do we have to be in order to receive the Holy Ghost?

Sister: Obedient.

Elder: Worthy.

Pres. Taggart: Worthy! We need to be righteous. Worthiness and righteousness is what allows us to become sanctified, or pure. That means obedience. That means following the Savior and doing what He does. And that business, that 14 inches between the head and the heart... our hearts need to become pure and clean, so that the spirit of the Holy Ghost can actually dwell in us. Elder Wells...

Elder Wells: So, what is something that would keep us out of the routine of just, like, say like some of our converts, are just coming to church, taking the sacrament, because that's what we're *supposed* to do... what is something we can do to stay out of that?

Pres. Taggart: Wow! That's a great question. That is a great question. Let's answer that. What is it? What is the answer to Elder Wells' question? That's a great question! Elder....

Elder: Somebody asked me, 'how do I know if I'm [unintelligible] how do you know if your activity is good or not? [unintelligible]

Pres. Stroud: ...what you're thinking about when you're taking the Sacrament. That's very good. What you think about day to day. What you do day to day. That's very important. What are some things you can actually do? That's what Elder Wells is asking. What are some things you can actually do on a day to day basis when you're back to the real world, you're in college, or you get married, you've got kids and you're in the real world? Well, what do you do? What are the things you do to stay active and not just go to church as a habit?

[Sister Bentley's comments unintelligible]

Pres. Taggart: Sister Bentley just said a couple of really good things and I don't know if she knows how significant they are. She said 3 things. Teach ourselves the doctrine. Keep studying! Now, I don't know about you, I mean, talk to Sister Taggart... I get up at 5:30 in the morning because that was MY time. I would feast on the scriptures. I'd find manuals and they came out with these new subtitled scriptures...they came out with the new scriptures in 1978 where they had all the cross references... I ate that up! It was like, "Oh! This is so exciting!" And I just feasted on the scriptures. Teach yourself the scriptures. Keep studying. Joseph said to help others. Help others to study the scriptures. Do that. And then keep the Sabbath day holy. I will tell you right now, Elders and Sisters, the Sabbath day and honoring the Sabbath day, and the doctrine of the Sabbath day, we don't understand. That could be a whole other topic. We could spend an hour on the Sabbath day and the blessings that are inherent and accompany Sabbath day observance. There are promises, like unbelievable promises that come with Sabbath day observance! You know, and we have the church of the NFL in this country, which is really... you think about Satan and... well I'm not going to get into this, but the Sabbath day observance –understand what it means! Understand what Sabbath day observance means, Elder Wells. And if you obey the Sabbath day, unbelievable blessings come and part of those blessings are that you are close to the Spirit. So that's another one. My advice... and we don't have a lot of time left, but in answer to your question: Stay connected to your Heavenly Father. Now how do you do that? Pray- real, true, genuine, connecting prayers. You have to make time for that. It may take time. Prayer is work. Prayer is work. It takes time. You can't just kneel down and in 3 minutes go, 'mumble, mumble, mumble, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen,' and be edified by that prayer. It doesn't work!

Sister Taggart: It's a wrestle.

Pres. Taggart: It's a wrestle! Wrestle with the Lord. Make time for it. If you don't make time for it, I'm telling you right now, if you don't do it in the morning when you wake up, you probably won't do it. You probably won't do it, that's why you need to get up early. That's why in the mission they teach you to get up early and get going. Those are things you can do. Make sure you have really connecting prayers... good ones. Make sure you study. Feast upon the scriptures. Serve others. Sister Bentley also said that. Serve people. Forget yourself and go do things for other people. Be engaged, anxiously engaged. And when you have a calling, magnify your calling. Talk to Elder Dunn about home teaching. How many people go home teaching? REALLY home teach, or visit teach the way the Savior would do it... ministering. Be a great minister in your calling. If you do those things you won't just be going to church to go to church. You'll be progressing on that scale. I testify to that.

Mike: So can we put our money where our mouth is for a minute here? This is all good, but you asked a question that addresses behavior. See that? So what have we been talking about here today? Are we going to endlessly talk about the behavior, or are we going to find the doctrine that addresses the behavior? So the question is how are you going to stay in the church, how are you going to maintain, how are you going to keep from falling away? So let's go to 1 Nephi 15:24. Let's find the doctrine. Otherwise we end up counseling endlessly again, and what does it do? Preoccupation with behavior encourages what? Unworthy behavior. This is 2 unworthy men asking a question. This is Laman and Lemuel. Rather than seek, they go to Nephi. They don't ask questions. 1 Nephi 15:24, starts with 23. They say, "What meaneth the rod of iron which our father saw?" Watch, here's the answer. Here's the answer to your question, "I said unto them that it was the word of God..." You determine what that means. That's a ponderable. "...whoso would hearken unto the word of God, and would hold fast unto it..." –promise number 1- "...would never perish." Well, there you go. And promise number 2, "...neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary overpower them

unto blindness..." See, the promise is, if you will hearken to, hold fast to, the word of God, you won't take a walk. And number 2, the temptations of the devil have no power over you. How about that one? Let's go to one more: Moroni 6. Moroni struggled with this problem. It's the same among the Nephites. They didn't have good home teachers. Okay? Now look for the answer. When you find the answer that addresses the problem, what do you do with it? What do you do with it? You teach it. You're teachers. Teach it. And when you teach the word of God that has virtue and power, it changes behavior. Verse 4, "And after they had been received unto baptism..." –that's all of us- "...and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost..." –we're talking about that- "...they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ..." –See, they've got records. They're not letting them drop. This is membership records, see? "...that they might be remembered and..." –here we go- "...nourished by the good word of God." Throughout the world, President Hinckley gave 3 things that every member needs in order to keep our fruits from going away. What were they? Tell me. Number 1?... 3 things...

Missionaries: A friend.

Mike: Okay, you need a friend. Number 2?

Missionaries: A calling.

Mike: You need a calling, number 2. Number 3?

Missionaries: Nourishment by the good word of God.

Mike: I've asked that on 3 continents and I've only had one or two people who could tell me what that 3rd thing was. And that's the reason we have problems. That's the missing link. We all know about the friend. We all know about the calling. It's the nourished by the good word of God... now, look at the promise. If they're nourished, watch... here we go, 3 promises, "...nourished by the good word of God..." –comma- number 1, "...to keep them in the right way..." –and that's what we're talking about. Number 2, "...to keep them continually watchful unto prayer..." –and number 3, "...relying wholly upon the merits of Christ, who is the author and finisher of their faith." These are people who don't walk away. And by the way, how do you finish faith? When I faith finished? If He's the author and finisher of your faith, when is faith finished? When it's replaced with what?

Missionaries: Knowledge.

Mike: What kind of knowledge?

Missionaries: Perfect knowledge.

Mike: *Perfect* knowledge. And that happens when you stand in His presence. Your faith is done. It's a process.

Pres. Taggart: That's what Elder Packer was talking about.

Mike: So there's the answer to your question. It's in the scriptures. So teach it and live it and you won't go away.

Pres. Taggart: Elders and Sisters, we pray that each one of you will feel the Spirit that is here, present right now. It's here in this room, very strong. That you comprehend, that you understand what you've been given today. That you allow this to sink deep into your heart and that you become different from this day forward. Being given this information, that you now seek and have a clear vision, a clear picture of what you, as an individual, as a son or daughter of Heavenly Father, must do to get back into His presence. Take this information. Embrace it! Celebrate it! And watch what happens to your life. Watch how your heart changes. Your motives change. How you address and attack adversity and opposition. It will change because you trust that the Savior has your back, that He knows what He doing. He knows your path. He knows your heart. And he knows where you're going. And you believe in Him and you know no matter what it is, no matter how bad it can get, that you can get through it and you'll be stronger as a result of it. And you're entitled to receive and feel the Gift of the Holy Ghost. I promise you, I testify to you in the name of Jesus Christ, if you come to Him and do this, you will find joy and happiness... here, now, in New Jersey, and for the rest of your life. And that this will be the foundation of your faith. The foundation of how you live. The foundation for your children, your

wife or your husband, as you progress throughout life. I'm grateful for Elder Stroud. I'm grateful for him revealing this to us, for sharing this with us. I testify of these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Baptismal Ordinance



“True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior.”

“The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior. Preoccupation with unworthy behavior can lead to unworthy behavior. That is why we stress so forcefully the study of the doctrines of the gospel.” *Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. (“Little Children,” Ensign, Nov. 1986, 17).*

“Receive the Holy Ghost”

by David A. Bednar

These four words—“Receive the Holy Ghost”—are not a passive pronouncement; rather, they constitute a priesthood injunction—an authoritative admonition to act and not simply to be acted upon.

My message focuses on the importance of striving in our daily lives to actually receive the Holy Ghost.

The gift of the Holy Ghost is bestowed only after proper and authorized baptism and by the laying on of hands by those holding the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Baptism by immersion is “the introductory ordinance of the gospel, and must be followed by baptism of the Spirit in order to be complete” (Bible Dictionary, “Baptism”).

The ordinance of confirming a new member of the Church and bestowing the gift of the Holy Ghost is both simple and profound

The simplicity of this ordinance may cause us to overlook its significance. These four words—“Receive the Holy Ghost”—are not a passive pronouncement; rather, they constitute a priesthood injunction—an authoritative admonition to act and not simply to be acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:26). The Holy Ghost does not become operative in our lives merely because hands are placed upon our heads and those four important words are spoken. As we receive this ordinance, each of us accepts a sacred and ongoing responsibility to desire, to seek, to work, and to so live that we indeed “receive the Holy Ghost” and its attendant spiritual gifts.

We more readily receive and recognize the Spirit of the Lord as we appropriately invite Him into our lives. We cannot compel, coerce, or command the Holy Ghost. Rather, we should invite Him into our lives with the same gentleness and tenderness by which He entreats us (see D&C 42:14).

Praying, studying, gathering, worshipping, serving, and obeying are not isolated and independent items on a lengthy gospel checklist of things to do. Rather, each of these righteous practices is an important element in an overarching spiritual quest to fulfill the mandate to receive the Holy Ghost.

I pray we will sincerely desire and appropriately invite the Holy Ghost into our daily lives. I also pray each of us will faithfully obey God’s commandments and in reality receive the Holy Ghost. (*David A. Bednar, “Receive the Holy Ghost,” Ensign, Oct. 2012*)



Baptism with Fire and with the Holy Ghost

“You might as well baptize a bag of sand as a man, if not done in view of the remission of sins and getting of the Holy Ghost. Baptism by water is but half a baptism, and is good for nothing without the other half—that is, the baptism of the Holy Ghost.”
Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 314.

(Make notes below as The Spirit directs)

D&C 20:41 Baptism with Water - Confirmation - Baptism with Fire and with the Holy Ghost
3 Nephi 9:20 Baptism with Fire and with the Holy Ghost
3 Nephi 11:32-35 Baptism with Water and with Fire and with the Holy Ghost
3 Nephi 12:1-2 Baptism with Water and with Fire and with the Holy Ghost for a Remission of Sins
Mosiah 4 & 5 How to obtain and retain a Remission of Sins.

The Doctrine of Christ

2 Nephi 31:2 through 2 Nephi 32:6

2 Nephi 31:4-5, 7, 11-17	Baptism with water.
2 Nephi 31:13-14, 17-18	Baptism with fire and with The Holy Ghost.
2 Nephi 31:9-18	The gate and the strait and narrow path.
2 Nephi 32:4, 7	Why we don't receive the Baptism with Fire and with the Holy Ghost.
2 Nephi 31:19-20	The fruits of the Baptism with Fire and with the Holy Ghost.
2 Nephi 31:13-14, 32:2-3	Speak with the tongue of angels.
2 Nephi 31:15	Calling and Election made Sure by the more sure word of prophecy.
2 Nephi 32:6	The Second Comforter.

Conclusion

Moroni 6:1-4 D&C 109:15 3 Nephi 19