

014 Unbelief Revisited / Priesthood Introduction

By Mike Stroud

Mike: Last week's lesson was on unbelief. And I wanted to add just a couple of little postscripts on that. Lets go to Doctrine and Covenants section 84. In the Doctrine and Covenants, D&C 84. You may remember, as I do, that when President Benson became the president of the church, that the theme of his presidency, I ...I think it must of the main theme of his ministry... Was book of Mormon. And sayings in the book of Mormon. And he quoted this verse in section 84, starts in verse 54. Section 84 verse 54, and section 84 was given in 1832. So the organization of the church is not very old, two years old. And yet a startling thing is mentioned starting in verse 54, the Lord says this to the Latter-day Saints, *"your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief,"* there's that word which is the subject, topic of our discussion. *"Because you have treated lightly the things that you have received –"* So unbelief and because we treat lightly the things the Lord gives us, *"– which vanity and unbelief have brought the whole church under condemnation."* That was in 1832. That was two years after the organization of the church. The Lord says the whole church is under condemnation. Then going on and 56, *"and this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all. And they shall"*, the children of Zion, *"shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant,"* another word for covenant is testament. So whatever we read the Bible where it says the New Testament or the Old Testament you can replace the word testament with covenants; the old covenant and the new covenant. And here he is talking about even a newer covenant than the New Testament new covenant. *"Even the book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written –"* Teaches us to believe in verse 57 that the way we treat things lightly, that we receive from him, which is vanity and unbelief bring the whole church under condemnation, is that we talk about it but we don't do it. We say, notice at the bottom of verse 57, not only to say but to do according to that which I have written. Where is that you you can talk the talk but you can't walk the walk. It is always been a form of hypocrisy throughout the world to say one thing and do something otherwise. That's kind of the definition of hypocrisy, hypocrite. According to the definition the Lord gives the whole church is under condemnation because they have received something from him, and they treated lightly, which they means they talk about it but they don't do it. And one of the things that they treated lightly was the Book of Mormon. And it's a historical fact, you might find this interesting, that for several decades after the organization of the of the church... that for several decades after the organization of the church that the brethren and the elders taught the gospel and the restoration out of the Bible and hardly touched the book of Mormon in their missionary endeavors. Did you know that? And at one time there was a big rally, can't remember where it was, seemed to me it was in Pennsylvania you somewhere maybe Massachusetts, I'd have to look it up. Where the brethren of the first presidency and the quorum of the 12 were invited to address the congregation, and they got up and they used exclusively the Bible to prove the restoration. And Joseph Smith was so upset about that that he stood up and he says if nobody else will preach the Book of Mormon I will, and then gave one of the most fiery discourses on the restoration in the coming forth of modern-day Scripture... Latter-day Scripture that they had ever heard. But it was a real problem that the early members of the church were not using the Book of Mormon to move forward the cause of the church and ultimately the cause of Zion. Now go back to verse 58. See if they talk about it but don't do it, then they can't bring forth the fruit meet for their father's kingdom. Otherwise if we don't start doing instead of just talking... if we remain just talkers or hearers of the words and not doers... look what the Lord says... *"there remaineth a scourge and a judgment to be poured out upon the children of Zion."* Then he asked the question, *"For shall the children of the kingdom pollute my holy land? Verily, I say unto you, nay."* President Benson quoted that many times during his presidency and said, this was in the early to the mid-1980s, that that the church was still on their condemnation because we still not have learned the lesson to not treat lightly the things the Lord has given us, which he calls vanity and unbelief. So we have to ask our question... asked yourself a question, President Benson's last talk was

in 1985 or 86, maybe 1986. His talk, if I remember right, was called 'I testify'. And he got up and bore testimony and it was powerful. The question is: Have we done any better in 2016 than we were doing in 1986? That's the question we have to ask ourselves. And does the Lord still consider the church under any kind of condemnation that's mentioned here in 19 and section 84. And if so, the good news about that is that if we find the church institution, organization's still in a state of condemnation, the good news is, is that individually you don't have to be. We can each individually stand approved of the Lord by learning the lessons that he's talking about here in the Scriptures and not treating lightly with unbelief and vanity the things the Lord gives us. Does that make sense?

Student: sure

Mike: the sobering ... a sobering thought when you consider that less than two years after the organization of the church that the Lord said his church was under condemnation. I hope that we come out from underneath that. I hope that in 2016 that were not still found under condemnation. I will mention though I have not heard, since President Benson, any leader, in any general conference referred to section 84 versus 54 through 58 like President Benson did. So I guess were left on our own to judge as to where we stand as an institution and move forward accordingly. Because one thing you want to do is want to move forward. Now last week we talked about unbelief. Just a quick definition and we mentioned there is a difference between faithlessness and unbelief. You can have faith and unbelief at the same time. I know that sounds contradictory but unbelief is now coming into how you personally view what you can accomplish according to the promises of the Lord. Not what others... you may have faith with others can do and have done but unbelief brings it home to you. That's where you start to looking in the mirror and you start asking yourself the questions... is it possible for me to entertain Angels? Is it possible for me to have that kind of faith where I can call down the powers of heaven and command and control the elements of nature? We read about all these things throughout the Scriptures. And we know that their true and we have the faith that they are true. I have no doubt that in my mind that what I read in the Scriptures others have done actually took place. There's no question. But when I think about me doing some of the things I'm reading about in the Scriptures now I start the waiver. That's a verse the Lord uses, *let him ask in faith... "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not;..." but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is as the wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed."* That's James chapter 1 verses 5 and 6. So where the wavering from Mike Stroud's comes is when he starts to consider what I'm able to do, according to my faith, my priesthood power. What am I able to accomplish. And do I have the faith, that what I read about in the Scriptures can't be duplicated in my own life. If I don't I'm suffering from unbelief. Does that make sense, brothers and sisters? You have any questions or comments on that concept before we look at a couple of Scriptures?[10:01]

Unbelief... it is... it is the great stumbling block to progress for the Latter-day Saints. The great stumbling block. Now present Benson in his talk, 'Pride', said that pride was the universal sin and a great stumbling block to the establishment of Zion. So we look at these kind of things. If you have any questions.

Let's go look at another Scripture. Let's go over to Mormon chapter 9, this is one where Margy and I were reading this this week, and saw it in different light than we've seen it before. Mormon 9. This is Moroni who was reading an epistle of his father, that was given in a synagogue. In Mormon chapter 9 it talks about if miracles ceased it's because of unbelief. Now you can read that whole thing. If you look at the bottom at verse 15, he asked the question, Can you imagine now...can you *"imagine up unto your selves God that can do no miracles"*, this is verse 15, Mormons 9, *"I would ask if you, have all of these things passed, of which I have spoken?"* See, he's looking at all the Scriptures; he's got the brass plates, he's got all the writings from Adams up unto Jeremiah, plus their own experience. So can you imagine your selves a God that can do no miracles... *"Ask if you, have all of these things passed, of which I have spoken? As the end come yet? Behold I say unto you, Nay, and God has not ceased to be a God*

miracles." But go over the page.. so that's the theme that runs through the whole 9th chapter. And I want to now go to verse 20. Mormon 9 verse 20. *"And the reason why he ceaseth to do miracles among the children of men"*, if there's no miracles to be performed. And now this is a great self evaluation for us, brothers and sisters. This is what... this is what we would call an hard saying. So you look at yourself and ask yourself the question: Are you seeing miracles in your life? Are you observing, are you participating in, are you witnessing miracles in your life? Okay. Ask yourself that question. He says, *"the reason why he ceaseth to do miracles among the children of men is because they dwindle in unbelief."* And I thought that word dwindle is a classic book of Mormon word. It so word we find used a lot in the book of Mormon. I don't know... I've had the word search but I don't know if that word is even used in the Bible anywhere. But it is used over and over in the book of Mormon... Dwindle. So I looked it up and in the 1828 Merriam Webster dictionary, which is the dictionary that Joseph Smith had, it says to diminish gradually... Diminish gradually, decrease, become smaller from the original. You get that feeling of going backwards... Dwindle in unbelief. That seems to tell me that this problem of unbelief doesn't come upon you all at once, very few things do, but it begins slowly and subtly. You have to have the gift of discernment, some of the gifts of the spirits, to even know that it's overtaking you. I know of people have said to me, I just don't feel about these things the way I used to. Did you ever have anybody say that to you when you are talking about spiritual things, or about the church, the programs of the church, testimony. I just don't feel the way I used to. They recognize that at some past time they were in a place, where they are not now, and their kind of surprised when they look at their lives, they are surprised, to see where they are now, still being able to remember once they enjoyed. That is a dwindling. That's that feeling... you got a feel for that? So if there are no miracles among the children of men it *"is because they dwindle in unbelief, and depart"*, back to verse 20, *"and depart from the right way,"*... Now, another name for the right way is a righteousness. The word righteousness starts out with the word right. There's no such thing as 'lefteousness', its righteousness, and righteousness means you are traversing the right way. Well unbelief, when you start to dwindle in unbelief, the next step is you *"depart from the right way, and know not the God in whom they should trust."* If they ever did know him, they've lost that knowledge, and is gone backwards. And that's dwindling in unbelief. A process of going backwards, diminishing, decreasing from something greater. Now here's some keys that tie into this. Look at the next first Mormon 9:21, *"Behold, I say unto you that whosoever believeth in Christ,"* ...You ought to triple underline this one, *"doubting nothing,"* there is your big criteria... believe in Christ, doubting nothing, *"whatsoever he shall ask the Father in the name of Christ it shall be granted him. And this promise is given to all, even unto the ends of the earth."* There is no other criteria. If you ask something of Christ, and you doubt nothing, if it's not ask amiss... if it's a righteous desire... then you should be able to realize that. Now go up to verse 25 let's see if Mormon and Moroni is trying to teach us something. Whatsoever... *"Whosoever shall believe in my name, doubting nothing, unto him I will confirm all my words, even the ends of the earth."* There's that doubting nothing against. Down to verse 27 then *"despise not, wonder not, and hearkened unto the... Father in the name of Jesus for what things soever ye stand in need."* of, look, here it is, look, *"Doubt not."* So 3 times in 7 versus, 3 times in 7 versus, the Lord says 'doubt not'. Now he says the reason miracles ceased is because of unbelief. So the opposite of doubting not... doubting is an indicator that you are suffering from unbelief. Of course that makes sense doesn't it? You see these two terms are tied together. *"...but be believing,"* back to verse 27, *"begin at in times of old, and come back unto the Lord with all your heart, and work out your own salvation with fear and trembling Be wise in the days of your probation;"* unbelief... let's look at one more. Any comments or questions on that? This is... this is a huge problem. And again most people believe that unbelief is the same thing as having no faith. It is not. It's different. There are two different terms.

Let's go to Ether chapter 4, just over 2 or 3 pages there. And let me show you... Again Moroni addresses this. Now if... if we can access the gifts of the spirit... the cure for unbelief is to pray for the

gifts of the spirit. And when the gifts of the spirit start to be realized in your life you bring forth fruit. And there is ... and I want to share some of the fruits of doing away with unbelief. Look of verse... look at Ether 4 verse 15. It's a marvelous Scripture. *"Behold when you shall rend that veil of unbelief,"* Boy, here Moroni calls unbelief a veil. Think about that for a minute. There are several different veils. There's not just one veil. There are several different veils. The physical body is a veil. God dwells by his spirit, is mind, power, intelligence inside you. But your physical body veils that. This is why when persons die and lay the physical body down they immediately come into contact with the spiritual realm that's invisible, that's as long as you're in the body. That body is a veil. So back to Moroni, said, and *"when you shall rend that veil of unbelief which doth cause you to remain in that awful state of wickedness, and hardness of heart."* Look at that. And that those are some synonyms to unbelief; wickedness, hardness of heart, blindness of mind ... See those 3 things... all of those are synonyms for unbelief... Wickedness, hardness of heart, blindness of mind. *"Then shall"*... If we can break through the veil, if you can read that veil of unbelief look what is on the other side. *"Then shall the great and marvelous things which have been hid up from the foundation of the world from you – yea, when you shall call upon the Father in my name, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, then shall you know that the Father hath remembered the covenant which he hath made unto your fathers, O house of Israel."* Now, if I want to rend the veil of unbelief... I want to come into a state of grace... having a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Now grace is a power... Grace is strength and power. Whenever Nephi talks about the strength of the Lord, he's referring to the grace of Jesus Christ. Grace and strength, an enabling power, a divine help... so if you come into this state of grace called 'a broken heart and a contrite spirit'... and when you're in that state 'of a broken heart and a contrite spirit' you cannot be in that state and at the same time be in a state of unbelief. You can't do it. [20:15] so if we want to rend the veil of unbelief we should seek to find ourselves in a state of grace that the Scriptures call 'a broken heart and a contrite spirit'. There are two or three other terms that tie into that... meekness, humility, lowliness of heart. All of those things, when you put those together, rend the veil of unbelief. And what he says on the other side of that is great and marvelous things which have been hid up from the foundations of the world... what we call those?... the mysteries. Brothers and sisters, when you start to have the mysteries of God unfolded to your view you are not behind the veil of unbelief. The very fact that there be an unfolded to your view, by Revelation, by the power of the spirit, and by the Holy Ghost is an indicator, is proof, that you are not found behind that veil of unbelief. Thoughts or comments on that. Does that make sense? Any questions or comments?

Well, let's leave that for now. I can't think of anything else I want to add on to unbelief other than it's a great stumbling block. And literally keeps us from the higher things of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It blocks you out from the mysteries of godliness and all of the powers of the priesthood. I'd like to share with you in the last few minutes, last half of the class, some thoughts on priesthood. So I Will end up last week's class on unbelief and kind open the door of little bit for some thoughts on priesthood.

My patriarchal blessing admonishes me to search and study and understand priesthood. And today in church, in the gospel essentials class, the lesson was on the priesthood. So the teacher asked the question, "what is the priesthood?" And a sister missionary, that was there, that raised her hand and she said it's the power and authority of God. And that's true. And that's true. And that's pretty much the standard answer that we give when ever we want to define this term priesthood. We recognize the power and authority to act in the name of God given to man.... We may add that in their... The power and authority of God given to man and acted his name. Those are good definitions. And they are true. But like all things in the gospel there are different levels of understanding of truth. And when you understand a greater levels of truth it doesn't diminish from the lesser level of truth. Because all truth can be circumscribed into one great whole. There's not one truth sitting out here in the periphery and it's not a part of another truth that's right before your eyes. All truth is circumscribed into a whole... And

we hear that in the temple. Let's chat a little bit about priesthood for just a minute. Let me throw some ideas out for you to think about. The Scriptures talk about the right of the priesthood, the rights of the priesthood, talks about the doctrines of the priesthood... The doctrine of the priesthood, singular and plural; talks about the keys of the priesthood. And so all of these different terms are tied in with priesthood but we only have one little basic definition. Thus if we can open this up a little bit further. I look at this, and one day I was pondering this, this is Mike Stroud now, and I took the word priesthood and I broke it up and I noticed the word hood at the end. I had never paid any attention to that before. And then my mind started to go from there to other places and I thought about other words that have the word hood attached to them: brotherhood, and sisterhood, neighborhood, knighthood, motherhood, fatherhood. And all of a sudden a picture starts to evolve, as I think about all these words in my mind that end with the word hood, and what they have together is: that it is a group or a community of like minded things or people. So you have to knighthood... and knight is a person that belongs to a group of other knights, and that belongs to this society where knighthood is experienced. Fatherhood's a group of fathers, motherhood is a group of mothers, neighborhood is a group of neighbors, so with that in mind I took the word priesthood and it's a group of priests. Now instead of talking about a thing or a power, which it is, we are now talking about a group of individuals. If we go into heaven we would talk about the society of priests. How it starts to open up some interesting thoughts as do things we hear in the temple... in the initiatory... and in the Scriptures and Joseph Smith talked about receiving ordinances that make men priests and women priestesses. And when we start talking about that group of people we start talking about I society of exalted men and women that exist in heaven on the other side of the veil. So priesthood, now is not only a power, but you can look at it as a power that comes from a society of priest and priestesses. And if you tap into that power, you enjoy some of the privileges that they enjoy.

Now let's go over to section 121 in the doctrine and covenants for just a minute. Let me just present another thought to you. Just kind of consider these things a little bit. Brother McConkey he comes out and says in his new witness for what is it The Articles of Faith, he comes out and he lists priesthood, faith, and the Holy Spirit; not the Holy Ghost, but the Holy Spirit.... He list those three things says the same thing. So brother McConkey, and we quoted this in another class, brother McConkey he comes out and he says that that the Holy Spirit may well also be faith and priesthood and then he manages one other thing the omniscience of God. Omniscience of God means that he knows all things. Go to verse 36 section 121 verse 36 and let's look at this we have all heard this quoted so many times that most of us can quoted from memory. It actually starts in verse 34, *"there are many called but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, they do not learn this one lesson"* Now here's the lesson to learn. If you learn this lesson you move from called to chosen, and from chosen to elected, and from elected to elected made sure. This is called 'the calling and election made sure.' The two things that keep that from you is: you aspire to the honors of the world of men, and your hearts are set upon the things of this world. Now here's the lesson... here is what he wants... Here is what we should learn in order to move forward. *"that the rights"* RIGHTS not RITES, *"that the rights of the priesthood"* and we ought to ask ourselves a question: what are those rights? What does that mean? We should just read that what other rights well, I guess at this point most of us would say well, the rights are for me to kneel and blessed the sacrament, the rights are for me to give blessings to the sick, the rights are for me to bless and name babies on fast Sunday in church, and those certainly are rights of the priesthood. But look what he says, *"the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven,"* we ought to ask ourselves another question. What is that? Because all of this is talking about priesthood. If we were to take and capitalize the word Power and Heaven... instead of powers with a small p and heavens with a small h. If we put a capital there you now make those proper nouns and they becomes names of people... not some ambiguous thing. Now you're referring to individuals... that are where? In heaven.

So the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with this society of priest and priestesses that dwell behind the veil in an exalted state. If you want to enjoy those rights, you have to tap into this society of men and women who live in heaven. And look at this. *"And the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only by principles of righteousness. That they"* meaning the rights of the priesthood, *"may be conferred upon us, it is true;"* then he talks about when you use unrighteous dominion etc. Amen to the priesthood of that man. Now, brother Nelson last week had some comments on priesthood power and brother McConkey. [30:01] I read you that statement last week from general conference. The whole church is being asked to come up now and access something greater. We've got ordinations well done. We've got that done well. We've got that figured out in the church... Ordained. But were not... were not having the power in the priesthood that should accompany or follow an ordination. There is no power that automatically follows an ordination for the ordination sake. There is no power in the ordination... nothing. This It's an ordinance that is supposed to open the door and give you are right to obtain and achieve something greater. In the lamentation of Boyd K Packer and Brother Nelson, President Nelson is, is that we receive the ordination and become stuck... As priesthood bearers. So we're not enjoying the rights of the priesthood. Now if we are saying that the rights of the priesthood is to perform ordinances and go to the temple and do that, then I guess you could say we are enjoying the rights, but I want you to go with me over to the Joseph Smith translation.

Let me show you some rights of the priesthood that are available to us. Now the Joseph Smith translation is just before the maps and after the Bible dictionary, right? So in the priesthood class today the teacher said, 'would any of you would like to share with us some of the experiences you had with the priesthood, and how the Lord has blessed you with the priesthood.' And we had some great stories. A young man whose baby was very sick and in the hospital and he had been inactive for seven years. And the baby was going to be air evact out and was turning blue and the doctor said we've got to get him out of here, and a bishopric walked in from somewhere, that wasn't his ward and they laid hands on the baby, gave a priesthood blessing. And as they were running the baby down the hall its color started to change in the baby started to look differently. They stopped and said, 'Gee, there is no need to airn evac them out. And that definitely is some priesthood blessings. And you and I've seen that.

But go with me to Genesis chapter 14 in the Joseph Smith Translation and read some rights of the priesthood. Do you see Genesis 14:25 through 40, Genesis 14 verse 30 Joseph Smith translation. And will talk next week about the first half of this, but this says, *"For God having sworn unto Enoch and into his seed with an oath by himself; that everyone being ordained after this order and calling should have power," ... "power, by faith, to break mountains, to divide the seas, to dry up waters, to turn them out of their course;"* I want you to go back, I want to emphasize something. Where it says, *"God having sworn unto and out and unto his seed with an oath by himself;"* here, we go, *"that everyone"* is the one you want to mark. Everyone who's ordained after this order and calling has the right to do these things. It gets better, verse 31 look, here some more, *"to put at defiance the armies of nations,"* now you're going to see that in a coming day. You're going to see individuals, single men, or small groups of men, priesthood bearers, that will raise their arms in sacred signs and will stop armies; and will call down fire from heaven; Will speak in the earth will open up and swallow their enemies; will have a fire coming at them and go around them and leave them unscathed. They're going to see that. You're going to see, brothers and sisters, miracles in coming days that will take the greatest miracles that you can read about in the Scriptures and make them look like child's play. Because if we don't have those miracles in the coming day there will be nobody on earth left to meet the Savior when he comes. So some things have got the change, and I feel that this last conference was a historical turning point on what the priesthood needs to do. Go back to verse 31. *"To put at defiance of the armies of nations, To divide the earth, to break every band, to stand in the presence of God; to do all things according to his will, according to his command, subdue principalities and powers; and this by the will of the son of*

God which was from before the foundation of the world." Now. That priesthood power is available to every man in the church today. It's available. And, if you don't believe that, as a man, you can do that, and if a wife doesn't believe her husband could do that, then you're suffering from what?... Unbelief. Now let me just leave that for just a minute. Those are the those are the great powers of the priesthood that are going to be manifest in a coming day. I don't believe those powers are manifest very much today. Very much, because I think that we think that our ordinations are all that's necessary to give us that power. And they're not. The ordination, again, in and of itself has no power. No ordination, no ordinance in and of itself, has power within itself. You just don't go in and have an ordinance or ordination and think that because of that ritual that somehow you're going to receive power. All ordinations and ordinances do, are open the door and make available to you something you could not have had before the ordinance or the ordination took place. It is the same thing as receiving the Gift of the Holy Ghost. It's an invitation, as brother Bednar said, 'it's a priesthood injunction' which means a command, for you now to go out and obtain the constant companion of the Holy Ghost. So when you're ordained an elder, or 70, or high priest, inherent within that, are certain miracles that can be performed, that belong to that priesthood, but you have to go out and claim those things. And the only way they can be claimed according to section 121, that it is based upon the principles of righteousness. And cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principle of righteousness. Questions or comments on that. Does that sound right?

Student: I feel sometime... In unbelief maybe, you don't want to be that way, but we don't want to be prideful. So, I don't know if that makes sense. I think then we have more confidence we becoming prideful. You understand?

Mike: yup. You hit the word there and the word is confidence. Every time you tap into this power that resides in heaven and can be called down upon yourself through exact ways... Once you tap into that... every time you have success in that, what does it do to your confidence in the Lord? What does it do your faith? You have enough of these experiences in your life and your faith becomes unshaken. Unshaken. So confidence is a key. There in section 121 verse 45 it says, *"Let thy bowels also be full of charity toward all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts and unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God;"* you want to see that in action, you go to the brother of Jared, when he sees the finger of the Lord, at least the hand of the Lord comes through the veil. And Monhanrimoriancomer sees it and falls to the earth. And the Lord said did you see more than this? And the brother of Jared says no Lord show thyself unto me. You talk about confidence. You talk about confidence. And this man's confidence/faith was so strong that the Lord said I could not be kept from within the veil. I couldn't do it. It was impossible for the Lord to hide himself from the brother of Jared because of the confidence. Confidence doesn't come overnight. That comes from a little bit at a time. The point is that we need to be about doing. It goes back to section 84 where the Lord condemns us say, you talk a lot but you don't do. You say but you don't do, and so we are condemned with what he calls vanity and unbelief. Until we start doing we can never have the experiences that increase our confidences to the point of the brother of Jared. And we start to obtain these great blessings that Moroni quoting from his father back there said had been hid from the foundations of the world because of unbelief. They are hid. See, I think we talk in our classes about some of these things, and as we talk about them we start to have more and more experiences. [40:04]

And as you have these experiences you are under an obligation to share these experiences with others, but you have to be careful. I was talking to Marty about it this way it says, don't cast your pearls before swine. Right? You heard that. So when you have these sacred experiences, we all quote that Scripture. That is the Scripture that's quoted when when we say you shouldn't talk about these things. Let's stop and look at the Scripture for just a minute... Read the rest of it. The Lord comes out and says, cast not your pearls before swine, last they turn in rent you. Notice it doesn't say, don't cast your pearls. It says don't cast them before swine. You are supposed to cast your pearls, brothers and sisters. You are

supposed to share your spiritual experiences with others. Here's one of the false doctrines that come up in the church. It's a lot like the one that says 'leave the mysteries alone'. That's damning doctrine. Here's another one... Those that have these experiences don't talk about them and those that don't have these experiences do. That's false doctrine. You are under a commandment to testify of these things. Go with me and let me show you in the Scriptures what I found on that.

Let's go to 3 Nephi chapter 12. Marty and I were in our private Scripture reading about this this week and here's another one of those. I think last week <student> we talked a little bit about that. And I shared with you the experience over there in Moroni chapter 7 where it talks about receiving Angels. We talked about two groups one is called the chosen vessels of the Lord who received these sacred experiences. And then it says they are commanded to testify of these things to others. To what they call what Moroni calls the residue of men so that they might have faith and, up and obtain the same things. There's another one in 3 Nephi 12 verse 1. This is the beginning of what we call the sermon at the temple. It's a re-iteration of the sermon on the mount, but read it carefully now. Let's read carefully, *"And it came to pass"* verse one, *"that when Jesus had spoken these words unto Nephi, and to those who had been called, (now the number of them had been called, and receive power and authority to baptize, was 12) and behold, he stretched forth his hands unto the multitude, and tried into them, saying:"* here it is... the first beatitude. The first beatitude is this. *"Blessed are ye if you shall give heed unto the words of these 12, have chosen from among you to minister unto you, and to your servants; and unto them I have given power that they may baptize you with water; and after that ye"* and this is, everybody, this is the congregation, this is the several thousand people there that are going to be ministered to by the 12. Right? After ye *"are baptized with water;"* by the 12 *"behold, I will baptize you with fire and with the Holy Ghost; therefore Blessed are ye if you shall believe in me and be baptized, after that ye have seen me and know that I am. And again, more blessed are they who shall believe in your words because "* watch, this is the congregation now, that have been baptized by fire, *"more blessed are they who shall believe in your words because that you shall testify that you have seen me, and that you know that I am."* Did you see that? Notice that he's not talking to all these people and says now that you have seen me and know that I am I wanted to keep your mouth shut don't tell anybody about it at all. It's too sacred to talk about. If these people had not gone out and testified about what they had saw you would not have the 200 years of millennial peace that follows the ministry of Christ in America. You would have it. Do you think all the Nephites that it survived those three days of terrible tempest were here at this point in third Nephi 12? You think that every surviving Nephite was there? They weren't. Even though they went out, there were 2500 people on the first day, and they went out that night and noise did a broad so that on the next day... which by the way were not there yet ... because we are still in the first day here, this is the 2500 people that go up one by one and see him. They noised it abroad. So there are many people that were not witnesses to what Christ personally taught on the first day, second day, or on the last day That he was there. I'm sure they continued to come in. The point is, those who saw, and heard, and touched, were commanded to go out and testify to others what they had seen, and heard, and touched. For what purpose? So that the residue who were not there could have faith and be brought up to a point where they could see, and hear, and touch at some later date. So when it says don't cast your pearls before swine, Yah, you better not because if you cast your pearls before those who are not ready for it, who are... who the spirit testifies not to, if you do that they're going to turn in rent you. They're going to persecute you. They're going to revile you. They're going to make fun of sacred things. But you do cast your pearls. This the same things as the Lord says, beware of false prophets. For inwardly they are ravening wolves. And so all of the anti-Mormons, and the anti-Joseph Smith's quote that Scripture is Matthew 7 so that we should believe Joseph Smith. Beware of false prophets. Well the point of this is it doesn't say beware of all prophets, he says beware of false prophets. Now if you've got false prophets, you have to have what?... True prophets. Because there's the opposition. So when it says don't you cast your pearls before swine, it's not saying, 'don't

ever cast your pearls' is just say, be selective, be inspired, under the Revelation who you share these things with. Otherwise if <student> shares with me as sacred experience that she has, what's that going to do to me? If she's inspired to share it with me, what's that going to do to me? I'm going to look at her and say you know, if <student> can have an experience like that, I know I can too. And I'm going to start seeking for that. Whereas, therefore if I think well those things have ceased with that the death of the apostles, we can only read about them in Scripture, or if they're reserved only for the first presidency and the quorum of the 12 and assorted general authorities; I'm never going to get their because I'm not an apostle, and I don't sit in those quorums, therefore, is not available to me. So I need to have somebody share with me, as inspired, their pearls. Because what that does... That starts me on the path seeking God.

I'll share with you an experience in closing the show you how that works. I knew about these doctrines that we've been talking about for the last, oh, 3 weeks... Second comforter doctrine, that we discussed. I knew about the doctrine. I understood it, and I knew that Joseph had taught it. And knew that some of the early brethren in the church had taught it. But everybody I knew that had obtained that were all leaders in the early church, or were apostles in the New Testament, or were prophets etc. etc. So even though I knew the doctrine, I didn't really understand that Mike Stroud could do this. If I don't believe that I can accomplish this there is no need to seek after it. And then I was in the Hong Kong, China and we were attending Hong Kong temple, and I was read the book called the Second Comforter. I had a singular experience. And this was written by a man who is an ordinary member of the church, he's not ever been a general authority. I think the highest position that he's ever had in the church was a high Councilman, and the Sunday school president; convert to the church, joined the church when he was 19 years old in the military. And he wrote a book called the Second Comforter. And the whole book talks about the doctrine. And I understood all the doctrine. And what he was doing was a good refresher course for me... this is what Joseph said, this is what the book of Mormon said, and that I got to the end of that book... got to the end of that book... in the last chapter... I can tell you where I was, I was in the patron housing of the Hong Kong temple. They had bunkbeds and I was laying on the lower bunk, reading the last chapter, and it started out in the chapter said this, 'brothers and sisters, I have seen Jesus Christ. He has ministered to me and commanded that I should write this book.' And I remember that when I read that the Holy Ghost revealed to me and gave me that that could happen to me. And that began that was in 2006. That's been 10 years ago. And that began my quest for all of these things. That doctrine open to other doctrines, things that lead up to... there are certain things that have to take place prior to you obtaining this great blessing... and I learned about those. And one door after it opened and soon as that door was open that the Lord sent information to Margey and I that we never received before. [50:05] It just seemed to flow to us. And one thing came after another, after another thing, after another thing. We started to experience things, we started to have great experiences, spiritual experiences, great pearls that came our way, and it all started because some guy that lives in Sandy, Utah wrote a book and in it testified that he had seen Christ. And he said, 'I don't want to say this, I'm a private person, it goes against everything I believe in to say this, but the Lord has commanded me to say these words.' And irregardless of who this guy is, or his book, when I read that the Holy Ghost testified to me and said, Mike Stroud... you can obtain this, and you should seek for it, and not quit until you have obtained that witness. And that's been in one of the great blessings in my life that some guy testified that he had had this experience. And it was just an ordinary Latter-day Saint like me. And since that time I've talked to and read many examples from Latter-day Saint men and women. Most of them anonymous, but read anonymous examples of people had these experiences, men and women. And it's just been a marvelous experience for me. I have zero unbelief that this can happen to me... zero. I know it can. I know it will, but like in section 88 says, it will be in mine own way, and in mine own time, and according to mine own will. And I'm willing to leave it at that. But I boldly approached the throne of grace daily, boldly. Joseph Smith said this to the Words of Joseph Smith, "*wear the Lord*

until he blesses you." how about that one? "*weary the Lord until he blesses you.*" sometimes the Lord withholds blessings to see how just badly you want them. I found that to be a true thing. I can testify of that.

So next week will talk a little more about priesthood but just some thoughts on that tonight. Some musings. And based on what I feel, this is Mike Stroud, a lot of that on priesthood was me. I usually just give you doctrinal words of the prophets, but shared with you some of my thoughts, but I want to make you understand that they are my thoughts. Comments? As we close, *weary the Lord until he blesses*, go boldly, Paul says, go boldly before the throne of grace.

student: do you... Do you say your prayers out loud

Mike: I don't

student: two things... if you speak out loud the adversary could hear it, if you pray in your mind he doesn't, he can't. Sometimes I do but most the time I'd go silent.

Mike: now the only time I pray vocally is in public. All of my prayers, except for certain times, where the prayer has to be vocal; other than that, very limited times. All of my prayers are in silence. They are in my mind.

Student: Mike

Mike: yes

student: wouldn't it make sense or doesn't it make sense that we should call down the powers of heaven to be around us. This is what I have done. I have called down the powers of heaven to be around me and... that I may speak with him freely and I have felt protective bring that communication... that's my experience.

Mike: amen, amen, and amen. Three amens! I think that's marvelous, that's wonderful. I'll share with you a little experience I had with priesthood in this week. It was interesting. I bought a couple little turkey chicks. Little polts, they are \$7.50 each, and about 3 1/2 inches tall. And is little guys. One of them at the second day, his eyes closed and about the third and fourth day. I was worried because he could find the food, find the water, and he was chirping, and he was in distress, and is bumping against the walls. And for two or three nights I thought... I had to pull him out, hold him in my arms, I'd take a little cotton swab with warm on it and I had just run it over his eyes to see if there may be was some stickiness in there, or something if he had a cold, you know. And it would temporarily help a little bit. But then by the next morning both eyes were just shut. And when I watched that, Margey and I both said, if we don't do something here this little guy's going to die because he can't eat, he's not finding his food, he's not finding his water. I've taken and pushed his little beak down into the water with his head, he would get a little bit of water but it just wasn't enough. So bit by bit I could see this chick starving to death. So I picked them up in my arms and my hands and held him in one hand and I just talked to the father and said, this is your creation, he is here to fulfill measure of its creation, and find joy, but if something doesn't happen is going to die tonight, he won't make it to the next morning. So I said, in the name of Jesus and authority of the Melchizedek priesthood blessing you to be healthy and strong; and your eyes to open up, to survive and be strong and fulfill the measure of your creation. The next morning both eyes were wide open and said no problem since. I know that sounds like a small thing, but for this little bird is the question of my mind that he would be dead by the next morning. No question about it.

Student: fantastic, that's wonderful

Mike: and the Lord, who notices the sparrows fall, and I found out that that can be taken literally. There's not one of his creations, I don't care how insignificant it is, that he is not intimately in touch with. And when a sparrow falls, he does notice the sparrows fall. And so I think that literal. So I took that little chick.. and what you think that does for Mike Stroud's conference? A little thing like that, see? Is that you have been for my thing for my faith? Do anything for my confidence? It really does. So if I can bless a little turkey chick whose eyes are open and sometimes in the future, I have a dying child and there is no medicine, no hospitals, no EMTs, no ambulances... Because I laid hands on a chick and

his eyes is were open, maybe I can have the confidence to raise up the dead, and healed the sick, when there's no other alternative. What you think?

Student: absolutely

Mike: so I really those thoughts with you, and thank you again. Let's have a little closing prayer unless you have a comment or anything. Anybody have something to say?

References:

D&C 84:54-58

James 1:5-6

Mormon 9:20-27

Ether 4:15

D&C 121:36-45

JST, Genesis 14:30 – 31

3 Nephi 12:1

D&C 88

Words of Joseph Smith