

I'm going to read a parable to you tonight. This is called "The Parable of the Advanced Placement Student." "There once was a girl who loved to learn. While other kids would be outside playing, she could be found sitting on her porch, eagerly and excitedly reading books on advanced topics.

As she progressed from grade school to middle school to high school, her desire to learn more grew as well.

Unfortunately, it soon became apparent that school wasn't challenging enough for the young woman. Although she read all the textbooks she was supposed to read in school and got good grades, she still wasn't academically fulfilled. One day, she seized the initiative and approached her high school principal about her situation. After she expressed her feelings and frustrations, he leaned back in his chair, looked outside and felt the warmth of the sun shining through his office's windows. After pausing for what seemed like an eternity for the young woman, the principal spoke. His response was both thrilling and disquieting. He said:

"I've been watching you, and have seen you reading and learning wonderful things that don't interest the other kids. I have to say, I am so proud of you, and for the love of learning you have. I have no doubt you are going to go far in life. Now, we have an accredited program just for kids like you. It's a curriculum that's custom-made for you. That means you'll have to keep attending this school and taking the same classes as all the other kids. But after school, you'll be able to log on and study at your own pace, as fast and as far as you can handle. This also means that, provided you pass all your personal curriculum tests, you'll get to graduate early, and with college credits as well.

But I need to warn you of two things: First, I don't think there are any other kids in our city who are taking this online course. You just may be the first. So, if you want to interact with other kids just like you, you'll need to seek them out and find them. You'll probably succeed at this, but you'll find they live in other cities far away from ours. So, don't be surprised if some days you feel alone.

Second, about the other kids here -- they are just as special, and just as wonderful as you are. But they will have a difficult time relating to you, and understanding why you've chosen to study a more customized, accelerated program after school hours. They will think you're weird, maybe even a freak. It'll be even worse if you start telling them about other kids, just like you, in far away cities; they'll likely consider you a member of a group of freaks. You can forget about assuming significant leadership positions like class president or student body president, because not only the kids, but even some of the teachers here in our area will call you names and will question your motives.

On the flip side: First, you will learn things about people, places, nature, even the universe that will excite you, maybe even take your breath away. And although your mom and dad can't take the special curriculum tests you'll have to take, you'll be able to tell them all about what you're learning, and they'll be thrilled to see how their little girl is growing up. I mean, *really* thrilled.

Second, about the kids you'll eventually meet -- you know, the ones in the other cities? They'll totally relate to you, and you to them. They'll tell you the things they're learning, and you'll tell them the things you're learning, and you'll all be really amazed at all the cool things you can learn about, and even do. Not today, and maybe not this year, but over time, a few people here in our city may see a little gleam in your eye and a smile on your face. They'll be genuinely curious about why you're so happy and beaming. Those are the people who will be ready to hear about your after-hours online school.

I can't tell you what to do -- this is your decision."

As the girl sat in her chair across from the principal, she heard a song softly playing on his radio behind his desk...

As the song was ending, the girl looked outside...felt the warmth of the sun on her face...and with a little gleam in her eye...she smiled a huge smile."

I give that for you to think about and see if you discern and can relate to what that's all about.

Today in Church we heard some interesting things. We heard a high counselor get up and say, "The Church leaders are really concerned about the loss of members in the Church. There are a lot of members leaving the Church. Because of that, the brethren had emphasized the Sabbath Day observance to try and curb this. They feel that if people would keep the Sabbath Day holy that this flow of people leaving the Church would be lessened and even halted." Certainly keeping the Sabbath Day holy would be a blessing to all the members of the Church. I'd like you to go with me to Moroni 6, and see what the B of M says about how we can stop this flow. I think the answer is right here in the scriptures for us. I think the cause of the problem is there and the answer to the problem is there. We should be able to go to the B of M and find out all the answers to the challenges that we have in today's society. Moroni 6 talks about church members. It also talks about meetings that are conducted by the power of the Holy Ghost. I'd like to go to vs. 4. You can look at this. It talks about them being baptized in the first 3 verses.

4. And after they had been received unto baptism, and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost, they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ; (That's interesting that we've all been through that up to this point, and you have an LDS Church identification number.) and their names were taken, that they might

be remembered (That's the purpose of record keeping in the church, so that no one drops between the cracks and that we're remembered, and it's off these records and others, that home teaching/visiting teaching assignments are made so that those not attending church can be remembered by those that are, that we can do something to help them. Now, here's your key: "that they might be remembered, and this right here:) and nourished by the good word of God, (1) to keep them in the right way, (2) to keep them continually watchful unto prayer, (3) relying alone upon the merits of Christ, who was the author and the finisher of their faith.

Mike: I think that that is the absolute key to activity and success as a member of the Church. I think that if you are not nourished by the "good word of God", whatever that means, that eventually you are going to go somewhere else. If you can't come here and be spiritually nourished, you're going to go somewhere else and seek to find that nourishment. I think that we are, as members, in many places, are being spiritually starved to death. Look what happens, and see if this is right. Look what happens in the next lines that follow. Look at the 3 promises here, after nourished by the good word of God. If that happens, look what the results are. (1) "to keep them in the right way"

Mike: There's your answer right there, to keep from inactivity and apostasy in the Church. People who are leaving the Church are not being kept in the right way. Nourishing them will do that. Look at the next one: (2) "to keep them continually watchful unto prayer".

We've talked to some length about warrior that takes place in the telestial world. Anciently, what the Lord used to do was build up walls to protect communities, to protect crops and properties, to protect vineyards. On these walls were watch towers. They even divided the night into various "watches". They measured the 12 hrs from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. into (4) 3 hour watches: the first, second, third and fourth watch. The people who were on the towers were called "watchmen". So, when it says to keep them continually watchful unto prayer, that word "watchful" refers to "detecting the enemy", understanding what their strategies are, and be able to defeat the enemy and come off conqueror and victorious. So, notice if you're nourished by the good word of God, not only will you stay in the right way, but you'll be kept watchful unto prayer. You'll realize the importance of prayer in escaping the hands of the enemy, and you'll develop prayer habits that go beyond the primary prayer we say in the Church. You'll go into something mightier than that.

Then the third promise of being nourished by the good word of God, if that happens, you will rely alone. I've got to circle that word "alone". (3) "relying alone upon the merits of Christ, who was the author and the finisher of their faith."

In other words you don't do as Nephi says in 2 Nephi 4. You won't put your trust in man. "Ye, cursed is he who putteth his trust in man. Cursed is he that maketh flesh his arm."

You will rely alone on Christ because being nourished by the good word of God, the absolute by-product of that nourishment is a mighty change of heart, you're transformed and develop the characteristics of the Master. Until eventually, look at the wording, "relying alone upon the merits of Christ who is the author and the finisher of their faith."

Isn't that an interesting statement? That comes out of Hebrews 12:2 where that exact statement is said, "the author and the finisher of their faith."

What do you think about "the finisher of their faith"? It goes from being exposed to the author of their faith to where their faith is finished. And where their faith is finished, what takes the place of "finished faith"? PERFECT KNOWLEDGE. So, you go from being behind the veil to where the veil parts, and you see the Son of God, the author of your faith, you see Him face to face.

I was asked by a grandson the other day, (And Margie and I are fasting often, we feel that once a month fast doesn't fit the criteria that the scriptures talk about to fast and pray oft, I understand that the minimal "praying oft" prayer is 3 times a day, according to the B of M--morning, mid-day and evening. What does it mean to fast oft? Because if you fast oft and pray oft, you end up being endowed with the spirit of revelation and the spirit of prophecy, and when you teach, you teach with great power and authority. So Margie and I are fasting oft. We did this once in the Philippines for 8 months, and the result of this 8 months was dreams and visions, inspiration, and marvelous things that the Lord opened up because we were willing to give up those meals on a more often basis.)

So, my grandson who is with us right now preparing to go on a mission, every morning we get together and we have a scripture study--the three of us. We were mentioning about fasting, we had a little lesson on that. We took Isaiah 58 as our text. We mentioned to him how oft we were fasting and he said he wanted to join us in that. Later on he said, "Why are you fasting so oft, Grandpa?" And I said, "Because I want to see the face of God in this life." The author and the finisher of our faith...

Then in Moroni 6:5 it says, 5 And the church did meet together oft, to fast and to pray, and to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls.

So, brothers and sisters, I think the B of M has provided us with the answer to the general apostasy that we see in the Church, and to which the Brethren are rightly concerned. Very concerned. I'm also convinced that keeping the Sabbath

day holy will be a great way to strengthen the Saints, and bring down the blessings of heaven upon their head. Here's another one you've heard me talk about many times, by Bro. Packer, where he said: "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. ... That is why we stress so forcefully the study of the doctrines of the gospel".

In tonight's Priesthood meeting the over-riding theme that went through that was "rescue". If you go on a MLS mission, which is "Member Leadership Support Mission", like Margie and I served in the Philippines, if you go on that, your primary responsibility will be to go out and rescue people who are members of the Church, that are no longer attending church. And there is no end of programs that have been designed, and it seems like we are always developing a new program to help bring them back. In reality, they won't leave if they are nourished by the good word of God, and that takes them from faith to "finished faith" with knowledge, and then they aren't going anywhere. But, once they've left, what's a good way to bring them back? Well, it's the same principle that we see in Moroni 6:4. Bro. Packer said, "True doctrine understood changes attitudes and behavior."

So what do we do to get them back? We go out and find them, and we nourish them with the good word of God. We don't tell cutesie little stories and we don't tell long experiences about where we've been and what we've done. We try as soon as possible to immerse them one more time in God's word.

Let's go to Alma 31:5 and let me show you the power of this. Alma understood this. This is one of the great messages of the B o M. How does this apply to us? Do you have children or grandchildren or a spouse, or a loved one who has left activity in the Church for whatever reason? Maybe they've had their feelings offended or they've had a crisis of faith. How do we get them back? If you're like me, every chance you got talking to these folks, you would talk to them about coming back to church. Come back to church. Come back to church....It seemed that the more I talked to them about coming back to church, the more it seemed to drive them away, until we discovered these little things that are in the scriptures. Now the context of this scripture is that Alma was the Chief Judge and also the High Priest over the Church, so he fulfilled a dual calling. Because of the massive apostasy that was taking place among the Nephites at this time in history at 74 B.C., not unlike 2016 A.D. in the Church today, there was just not enough time to be involved in the ministry and also to manage the affairs of the people politically, so he gives up the judgment seat to a righteous man and dedicates himself whole-heartedly to preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He puts into practice what Bro. Packer said. "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. ... That is why we stress so forcefully the study of the doctrines of the gospel".

The rest of Bro. Packer's quote is that the more you talk about bad behavior, the more bad behavior you get. So, talking about it creates more. So, look what Alma says in vs. 5:

5 And now, as the preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just—yea, it had had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else, which had happened unto them—therefore Alma thought it was expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God.

What's he doing? He's nourishing the people with the good word of God. Keyword there of virtue. Another word for virtue in the scriptures is power. Now, since we have the B of M and Joseph said this, "A man would get closer to God by reading this book and abiding by its principles than by any other book." And it seems to me that when we want to help people come back, that the B of M should be the prime volume that we use in helping them understand true doctrine and be nourished by the good word of God. I can testify to you that this works. We practiced it in 3 missions and we've never had it fail us. Where we started going off in our own knowledge and our own logic, in our own persuasion, in our experiences, and in our own stories, we had less success than if we went straight to the Word of God and quoted it right off the page or from memory. The affect was dramatic and here's why. God's word is truth and light. His word, whether it's on a written page or whether it's spoken from His own mouth, it doesn't matter. His word is food for the spirit. So, when we talk about being nourished, think about that. Being nourished is literally feeding your spirit with the fruit of the spirit, which is truth and light. Just as physical food nourishes the body, truth and light and glory and intelligence--which are all synonymous (meaning the same thing), any one of those 3 things describe the fourth (from Section 93), glory, intelligence, light, truth--all the same thing--those things feed the spirit and transform the man into a man or woman of Christ. Nothing invites the Spirit of the Lord quicker into a discussion than quoting His word from the scriptures or from memory. Better than that, having the person read the word out loud, out of their own scriptures, there's something magical that takes place with that.

So I think that in our meetings and in the Church and various places, we spend a lot of time coming up with the latest program when it appears to me the Lord has already given us the answer, and it's in the B of M. I'm studying the Book of Isaiah, I felt impressed to go through that, all 60+ chapters. I've been doing that in my morning studies. The other morning I read this scripture: "My people perish for want of knowledge." In another place it says, "Where the people have no vision, they perish." This knowledge is things as they are, as they were, and as they will become, which is the definition of truth. So, we need to realign ourselves now and start looking at things a bit more seriously at that

whole thing. Let's go to Section 121. I'll share with you a couple of thoughts. Just some random things tonight.

The problem with that solution of "true doctrine understood changes behavior..." the problem with that is, if you are going to be an instrument in the hands of the Lord, in helping someone's behavior be modified, it's going to require you to know the doctrine. If you don't know the doctrines, you're going to be hard-pressed to help a person understand the truth of any particular doctrine. So, it's going to require you to be a scribe. You are going to need to know what's in the scriptures. Hence, you're going to need to be able to read the scriptures everyday. If we want to be an instrument in the Lord's hands in helping people come back home, or once they're baptized, stay there, stay in the right way, we're going to have to know the doctrines of the Church. And we're going to have to teach those doctrines and not get caught up in spiritual twinkies and fried spiritual froth (?) which we hear too often. We need to get back to the things that change behavior and strengthen the soul.

Let me read to you a couple of things from the Prophet Joseph Smith. I love these statements. He says, "If we start right, it's easy for us to go right all the time. If we start wrong, we may go wrong, and it's a hard matter to get right again." These next are statements that change people behavior.

"If men do not comprehend the character of God, they do not comprehend their own character." Think about that for just a minute. In order for you to know who you are, you need to know who your creator is. The more that you understand God, your Heavenly Father, the more you are going to understand yourself.

Joseph said, "I'm going to enquire after God, because I want you to know God and be familiar with him." Why can't we teach these kinds of things? Go with me over to 2 Nephi 25. Here's a pattern I would just love to see us develop more in the Church. Instead of talking about ward councils so much, and different things like that,--administrative deals. Why don't we do like the Nephites who had obtained an aliveness in Christ. Look at vs. 25. This is talking about the Law of Moses:

25 For, for this end was the law given; wherefore the law hath become dead unto us, and we are made alive in Christ because of our faith; yet we keep the law because of the commandments.

Now look at this in vs. 26. I feel convinced that we need to do this. Maybe when you're asked to teach, and maybe when you're asked to testify, or speak in Church, maybe you can look at vs. 26 and it will be a little reminder.

26 And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ,"

Margie and I went to the Assembly of God and attended their meetings a couple of weeks ago. I tell you, when I went out of there I was edified. I was just flat edified, because their whole meeting was centered in Jesus Christ. It didn't matter that they are Mormons, it didn't matter that they don't have the "gift of the Holy Ghost". It doesn't matter that they don't have restored priesthood. But just everything they said was rejoicing in the Savior. Then vs. 26 goes on: "we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins."

Let's be more Christ-centered. Let's talk about him more. Let's do it more. Then Joseph comes on and he says, "What kind of a being was God in the beginning? First God, himself, who sits enthroned in yonder heavens, was a man like unto one of yourselves."

If you ask this question, "What's the first principle of the gospel?" As a member of the Church, we're going to go to Article of Faith #4. The first principle of the gospel is "faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ". The second is "repentance", and so on through the principles and ordinances of the gospel that's in A of F #4, but listen to what Joseph Smith says 3 months before he was murdered in the Carthage Jail. He was before 21,000 people on April 7, 1844. He said, "The first principle of truth and of the gospel is to know for a certainty the character of God, and that we may converse with Him the same as one man with another, and that He was once a man like one of us and that God, himself, the father of us all, once dwelled on an earth the same as Jesus Christ himself did in the flesh, and like us."

Now, those are the kinds of doctrines that start to transform. That's the kinds of stuff that change behavior. When you start to learn about who God is, then you start to learn about who you are, and that relationship between the two of you becomes strengthened. But you have to learn these kinds of things. And unless we're talking about these things, how are we ever going to learn them, if they're not taught? How are we ever going to learn them? So, let's go back over to Section 121:34 for a minute. Let me show you a couple little things here. Section 121 is the Priesthood section for men, that the Lord has restored for men, on how to honor and magnify their priesthood and have what we call "power in the Priesthood."

34 Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen?

Let's put that this way. Many are ordained, when we talk about priesthood, many are ordained, but few have power. Let's just make a little change there, because that's true. That's going to fit into this in just a minute, you'll see. So, Bro Packer, a couple of years ago when he was incapacitated, but still able to speak in General Conference, lamented the following way. He said, "We generally have done a good job in the Church ordaining men to the priesthood. We now have conferred and ordained men throughout the world, but we have not done a good job in helping them to be powerful in the priesthood."

He stated that. He didn't give us any directions about how to turn that around. He just stated a fact about the current status of the Church when it comes to Melchizedek Priesthood. So now we look at vs. 34. Many are called (ordained, conferred priesthood) but few are chosen. They don't have power. And why are they not chosen? Here are 2 reasons in vs. 35: Because (1) their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, (that's the #1 reason) and (2) aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson—

There's the 2 reasons why the M. Priesthood in the Church, according to Bro. Packer, that they lack power in the priesthood. They do not learn this one lesson, and here's the lesson. Vs. 36:36 That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.

Let's talk about 2 things for just a minute. Let's talk about the "rights of the priesthood" and "the powers of heaven". Let's look at this "powers of heaven". This is an ambiguous impersonal thing that's something like electrical celestial electricity, right? Let's switch this around and look at it a little differently. If one of the rights of the priesthood is to heal the sick, where does the power come from to perform that ordinance? Are you going to say, "well, it comes from God", and you'd be right. Because what He's doing is that you are officiating in something He possesses and He's allowing you to tap into that so that you can pronounce a blessing, that blessing is acknowledged, and the sick are healed. But the source of the power to perform that healing comes from behind the veil. No man or woman on this side of the earth can give you the power to perform that healing and have it acknowledged. It doesn't come from that. It has to come from a society of individuals who live on the other side of the veil. In other words, you're tapping into something, a group of men, that live in heaven on the other side of the veil. That's the "powers of heaven". So, instead of thinking of some celestial-electrical conduit, make the Powers of Heaven, with a capital P & H and turn it into something personal. God and Jesus Christ live in heaven on the other side of the veil. If you are going to have priesthood power, you're going to have to have a connection with them. They are the source of all power and miracles that are performed in the celestial world behind the veil. So look what he's saying: "the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven". Let's take a look and see what "the rights of the priesthood" are. Let's go to Joseph Smith's Translation, at the end of your Bible Dictionary, to Genesis 14. I think the most powerful scriptures in the J.S. Translation are Genesis 14: 25-40. We're going to look at vs. 30-31 to see what the "rights of the priesthood" are. In other words, if you have power in your priesthood, there are certain rights that you have available, that you can access and perform. Let's see what some of those rights are. I'd read that whole set of verses, but I just want to point out 30-31 right now. We are looking for the "rights" of the P.

30 For God having sworn unto Enoch and unto his seed with an oath by himself; (By the way, Enoch had established this connection with the powers of heaven, and as a result, look what it says) that every one being ordained after this order and calling should have power, by faith, (here are some P. rights) to (1) break mountains, to (2) divide the seas, to (3) dry up waters, to (4) turn them out of their course;

31 To (5) put at defiance the armies of nations, to (6) divide the earth, to (7) break every band, to (8) stand in the presence of God; to do (9) 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.

Those are the "rights" of the P. So now, let's go back to **Section 121: 36** That the rights of the priesthood (in other words, power comes from something that vs. 36 calls "inseparably connected with the powers of heaven)) are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.

Think "people", don't think "things" or some "thing" or an "it", think PEOPLE. "and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled (you can't control those people who have earned that right to have that power. They're sharing it with you, on conditions. The powers of heaven "cannot be controlled nor handled"--I think that's interesting, because when the powers of heaven manifest themselves physically to you, you're going to have to know if they are powers from the dark side or they are powers from the light side. The only way you can do that is "handle" them.) they "cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness."

37 That they may be conferred upon us, (think about conferred upon us, as many are called. That's the ordination and conferral that Pres. Packer is talking about) it is true; (and we've done a good job in that area) but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, (Those are the things that break the commitment) in any degree of unrighteousness, (that's husbands exercising that control or dominion) behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; (See, what I would do is I would draw a line from the words "the heavens" up to vs. 36 and connect the heavens with the "powers of heaven". We're talking now about "people". We're talking about individuals. Some one, not some thing.) "the heavens withdraw themselves, the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that

man." 38 Behold, ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks, to persecute the saints, and to fight against God.

This is where we need to go. These are the things we need to do. Now, in the last few minutes, I want to share with you a couple of thoughts that will take us into next weeks lesson. All my life I have been a shooter. I've had guns. I started shooting when I was 7-8 yrs old. My dad was a police officer. I had my first 12 gauge shotgun when I was 10-12 yrs old, as soon as I could get a duck hunting license. I'm wearing dual hearing aids now at this point in my life. One of the reasons I'm wearing hearing aids is because my hearing has been impaired by gunfire over a lifetime. I still enjoy shooting. I've been shooting for all of my life. Part of my reasoning for learning how to shoot, at least later in life, is, when I would read the "signs of the times" and the B of M and see what was required of them and what might be required of me. The members of the Church in 3 Nephi 2 were compelled to be armed. The members of the Church were compelled to arm themselves and to take up weaponry in defense of their families, their faith, their religion, their country, and their liberty, which was a B of M theme all through it. You can read it starting in Alma 43 with Moroni, which was today's Gospel Doctrine's class, and you can take it right on up through to the end of the B of M where you see the members of the Church struggling with weaponry to stay alive. And, we're commanded to do so by the Lord. So, reading all that, I've become over the years, quite proficient with the use of firearms. Not only handguns, but rifles, and for many many years I've stockpiled battle weapons and literally 10's of thousands of rounds of ammunition as a part of my preparedness storage program. This, along with a years supply of food, clothing, and where possible, fuel. Get out of debt, save a little is the program of the Church. Mike Stroud had quite an arsenal, because I interpret what I read in the scriptures as to needing that. However, when we were in the Philippines we had a different feeling that came upon us and the Lord brought us to something. We're praying to be a part of that remnant that we spoke of a few weeks ago: a small group of people that are going to be able to "come up" and claim the priesthood power that we've been talking about a little tonight. As I studied the scriptures and looked into it, it became obvious to me, and this is what I'm going to go over with you next week, that in the coming day with the establishment of Zion and New Jerusalem, from what I understand in the scriptures, if you take up a weapon--in that day it will disqualify you from being a part of that remnant. And of building the New Jerusalem. And of helping establish the cause of Zion.

We're in a different time now. Things are going to be expected of us that's different in a future day than it has been in the N.T. and in the early history of the Church, and especially in the B of M. You'll notice that when the Saints were persecuted, that even though Joseph Smith raised up a force called Zions Camp, where the mobbers thought that was a force to come down and use the force of arms to deliver their ?? in Jackson County, and to restore stolen property, and to make wrongs right, it ends up that no shots were fired by Joseph Smith. The force of arms was not used. The Lord had a different program involved there. We'll talk a little about that.

Let me share with you a little story that took place in the Philippines. We have pictures that we'll put with this that's just marvelous. While we were there, there was a non-member woman who was staying in a hotel in downtown Cebu, on the island of Cebu, in central Philippines. She was on vacation, I think, and she was standing on her balcony taking pictures of the Cebu skyline. As she took pictures, she didn't pay any attention to it at the time, but later was looking at the pictures she had taken from her balcony. She noticed there was this building with a big tall spire on it in her photograph. It had a bubble around it. So she thought that was a photographic anomaly, maybe a light refraction, maybe it was the glass in the hotel room window or whatever. She went out and found that same scene and took numerous pictures of this white building with this spire at night, during the day, in the early morning, in the late evening, and everyone of them showed this "bubble". We've got the pictures and I'll let you see it. So, she's curious, and gets a Philippino taxi cab and shows a picture to the cab driver, and asks, "do you know this building?" The cab driver says, "everyone knows that building, that's the Mormon temple".

So she asks the cab driver to take her to this building. So, they drive up, past the guards, go down into the complex, there's a mission home complex there and the patron housing complex there, the mission office is there, and the temple. So, she finds herself in the mission office talking to Sis. Ernstrum there, who is Pres. Schmutz's private mission secretary. And she says, "What is this place?" And Sis Schmutz, sensing a mission opportunity, begins to explain to her what this is all about. So the lady says, "What's this?" and she opens up her camera photos and shows the pictures with this bubble around the complex. Sis Ernstrum says, "Can I have a copy of that?" So, she was able to make a copy of that and gave it to the mission president who, in turn, gave it to all the senior missionaries. Perhaps you've seen it. At one time it made a pretty potent round throughout the internet community.

What happened on that was, I saw something there, and the spirit whispered to me, "this is something that you need to look at and ponder and pray about, because it's the key to surviving what's coming." What that boils down to is this, brothers and sisters, in the day that's coming we're going to need to have that kind of priesthood shielding and protection in order to make it through what's coming. If necessary, you're going to have to be able to, through the priesthood, make yourself invisible to your enemies, so they cannot see you. As we'll see next week, and here's a closing thought. We need to have a shift in our thinking. I'm going to present this to you in scriptures. You do with it

what you want. I know what I've done. Once this distilled upon me, and I felt that it was true, and I feel even more so now, I asked myself what kind of a sacrifice would be acceptable to the Lord, to access this kind of shielding and protection. What can I give the Lord? What can I show Him that I've received this message and I believe that this is verily true? The one thing I had was thousands of rounds of battle ammunition, and semi-automatic military weapons. I've kept and stored and learned how to use and have become pretty proficient at it. So here's the thought. Do you really believe that if I'd given you this message I sense from the Lord? Then show how much faith you have in this by sacrificing something that you feel strongly about. So, when we came home from the Philippines, and this is at a time when everybody, because of Obama and his war on guns and the 2nd Amendment, everybody is buying weapons, and you couldn't get ammunition. At that point, I sold all of my battle ammo and my military weapons. I might mention, I made a tidy little profit in all that, but I sold it all as a sign, as an indicator, that what I believe that the Lord has shown me is true. I want to put my money where my mouth is. I don't want to talk about it, but I want to show Him that I believe in what I had been shown. We did that.

As a result, the Lord has opened up more to us where we're even more convinced that what's coming, which Bro McConkie said that if you take the worst that this world has to offer...I think he worded it this way: "all the turmoil, all the trials, all the adversity of the past (and I interpret that as from Adam up to the present day) will be but a fortaste of what is coming". I was reading in Isaiah today. If you will go to Isaiah 10 (It's also 2 Nephi 20, the Isaiah chapters that were included in the plates of Nephi, coming off the Brass Plates). The chapter heading says: "The destruction of Assyria is a type of the destruction of the wicked at the Second Coming—(this part right here) Few people will be left after the Lord comes again—The remnant of Jacob will return in that day—Compare 2 Nephi 20."

I think the only way that we can get through this is to put our trust in the Lord. Sanctify ourselves. Come up through sacrifice, observe our covenants through sacrifice, and let the Lord teach us how to be shielded and protected by Priesthood Power.

With that in mind, I'll close with just one statement here, and we'll go into this a little deeper next week. This was given this last General Conference. I'll refer to it just a little. We'll go into more detail next week. It is by Russell M Nelson, April 2016. Think about what we've been talking about here tonight.

"Well, brethren, in like manner, (He talked about being in a meeting where a guy was playing the organ and all of sudden the power went off. He was playing on the keys, but there was no sound. Pres Nelson whispered to his wife, Wendy, 'he has no power'. Then he begins his talk.) "Well, brethren, in like manner, I fear that there are too many men who have been given the *authority* of the priesthood but who lack *priesthood power* because the flow of power has been blocked by sins such as laziness, dishonesty, pride, immorality, or preoccupation with things of the world." See, he's coming right out of Section 121.

"I fear that there are too many priesthood bearers who have done little or nothing to develop their ability (watch this) to access the powers of heaven. I worry about all who are impure in their thoughts, feelings, or actions or who demean their wives or children, thereby cutting off priesthood power." Now, I'll close by just quoting one part of this talk. He says, " In a coming day, only those men who have taken their priesthood seriously by diligently seeking to be taught by the Lord Himself, will be able to (here we go) bless, guide, protect, strengthen, and heal others."

Only a man who has paid the price for priesthood power will be able to bring miracles to those he loves, and keep his marriage and family safe now, and throughout all eternity. We'll go into that talk a bit more next week. Now I'll put up tonight's handouts, links to the Cebu Temple so that you can see it. Also, I told this to a friend of mine, who is a former temple president, and he put it into a little story book form, and I'll include that for you. That will set the state for next weeks lesson as we talk about accessing the powers of heaven.

Student: You said something recently, I'm not going to say by whom, when he talked about ??? (Mike: you're cutting out) and this gentleman became so confused. This person was trying to learn certain laws for their profession, and they were becoming very confused by the professors' method of teaching. The more they learned, the more confused they became. Finally, at the end, it all came together. They recognized that this professor was teaching them, actually through this mist of confusion, how to get to a place of understanding. That's where I feel I am. I feel sometimes like I know nothing. I know less today. All my adult life I have tried to be a scholar of the gospel to some degree, but I feel like I know nothing. I feel like I know less today than I've ever known. Does that sound right?

Mike: Yea, I think that's healthy. I think we come to a point, you've heard people say, "The more you know, the more you find out you really don't know." I think what that is, is you're comparing things you're learning now with a body of truth that's still in eternity, that's undiscovered. When you compare what the Lord has reserved for us, and we get these little feelings for it periodically, then it truly is astounding that what you know and the experiences you've have in comparison with what's available is really pretty small. The problem is, we end up comparing ourselves with others all the time. We determine our own self-worth, and where we are in our knowledge, based on where we perceive others are and what they know. In reality, the body of truth that is out there available from our Heavenly Father, is so massive, so unending, that once you start to get a grasp for that, it's truly humbling. You realize, you say, "man, I thought I knew

quite a bit", but then realize you don't know much at all! A friend of mine who has stood in the presence of Christ, that had his Second Comforter experience, he just said that the feeling that you have is that the distance between where you see the Savior is and where you observe yourself at, is so vast that you'll say things like Isaiah said, "Wo is me, I am undone, and a man of unclean lips."

So, all of a sudden, everything is put into perspective. And yet, even with that vast difference, of where the Son of God is, and at this point, where you are, you stand in His presence and He embraces you, it's like my friend said, "All of that disappears, when He took me in his arms and blessed me. Then there was no more feeling of 'I am nothing', all there was, was the love of Christ."

You know what he said about that love? I've never forgotten his words. He said, "His love will crush you." I thought that was so interesting. But, the first response is, as you stand in His presence, you see where He is and who he is, and where you are, it's intimidating and "hopeless". (Mike laughs) I think, Sherry, that's the same feeling you're talking about, maybe in a little different vein. Maybe that will give you a little better feeling. But, quickly, in His presence, that disappears. He doesn't want you to feel alienated. He wants you to feel included. He doesn't want you to feel "hopeless". He wants to fill you with hope. He doesn't want you to be afraid. He wants you to be of "good cheer". So, I read about these experiences, the chosen vessels that Moroni 8 talks about, and they share them at times, when the time is right, to the residue--those of us who haven't had that experience, and those who have had these experiences testify of them, so the residue may have faith in Christ, and come up and claim the same blessings and become a chosen vessel. That's how it works. Thanks for sharing that with us, it's time for us to end, and next week we'll talk about the establishment of Zion. I'll put a couple of handouts on this one tonight.