

Remembering the covenants of the Father “Ye that follow after Righteousness”

message given on 8-4-18, by Kari Durfee

I am a descendant of Joseph Smith Sr. through his son Hyrum Smith. In this sense I am the seed of Joseph Smith Sr., as are some of you here today. Those of us that fit this criteria could say that Joseph Smith Sr. is our Father. We look upon him with gratitude just as the descendants of Lehi and Nephi looked upon their Fathers with honor. Laman and Lemuel were also descendants of Lehi, as are all who follow in their footsteps. The question I would like to ask is how do we become not only the blood descendants of our Fathers but also the spiritual and priesthood descendants? Because being a blood descendent only requires being born to someone who is in the bloodline, which includes the Lamans and the Lemuels. Generations can pass between Abraham and his apostate fathers with no one connecting back to the original line or “seed”, even that same priesthood which was in the beginning, which necessarily included all Things within it when it existed as a unitary fellowship upon the earth in the days of Adam. How do I connect back to that unitary priesthood as the seed or adopted family member of the Fathers? Because it came down to Abraham from the Fathers. And if we would receive it then we must receive it in the same way: from the Fathers. (Abraham 1: 1-3). My bloodline will not save me without this connection.

Abraham, the Father of all the Righteous after him makes “seed” and priesthood equivalent: quote: “And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy Priesthood) and in thy seed (that is, thy Priesthood)” (Abraham 2;11) Take the words literally. “in thy **seed**, that is, thy **priesthood**.” This is saying that when a person becomes the seed or descendent of Abraham, they get adopted into his family, and they get adopted into his family by sharing, inheriting and being endowed with the same priesthood Abraham was given. It is not necessarily bloodline only. We must rise up and receive it as did all those who went before.

One of the concepts that we fail to comprehend is Righteousness. We fail both to understand it according to God’s meaning, and we fail to possess it. We tend to apply our list of do’s and don’t’s, various opinions and dictionary definitions rather than what the word of God plainly tells us it means in scripture. I do not mean this as a criticism, but that we must necessarily know how we err so that we may correct our unbelief and false ideas. The Book of Mormon and works of Joseph Smith are the key by which we must define and come to the understanding of

Gods definitions rather than opinions or google. We must comprehend God's meaning of Righteousness first, before we can comprehend Righteousness as Power within us.

Abraham said that he "sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; having been myself a **follower of righteousness**, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a **greater follower of righteousness**, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers." (Abraham 1:2)

Abraham had followed righteousness which brought knowledge. He then later desired to be a greater follower of righteousness, and the result was even greater knowledge. Knowledge saves a man, according to Joseph Smith, and a man is saved no faster than they gain knowledge. What is the connection then between righteousness on the one hand and knowledge on the other? Why are they tied together? If I want to be saved I need knowledge. Before I can get saving knowledge from God I need greater righteousness. Righteousness leads to knowledge, greater righteousness leads to greater knowledge. So what is this righteousness that leads to knowledge and how do I get it?

One of the titles of our Lord is "Righteous". "if any man sin and repent, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (JST, 1 John 2:1) Abraham is the Father of any who come after him who become Righteous. (2 Nephi 8:1-2). Zion includes those who are able to dwell in Righteousness, (Moses 7:16), or dwell in Christ. This indwelling is two edged in that Christ will also take up His abode in the Righteous. Joseph Smith also became the Father of all the Righteous who followed after him, because he was the first to return to God from an apostate tradition handed to him from his fathers. It is always this way. Abraham was firstborn because he was the first to return in an age of apostasy.

In Moses 7 we read :“And the Lord called his people Zion because they were of one heart and one mind, dwelt in **righteousness**, and there were no poor among them.” (Moses 7:18.)

We know Christ is Righteous. That's His Name. How does one take upon them Christ's Name? Of the many Names and titles of our Lord, what Name is it that is

necessary to bring Zion? I just read it to you! quote: “They dwelt in Righteousness.” That is the Name title of every person who will be in Zion. That’s the Name required to be known by, for those who attain this will know as they are known, another reference to knowledge. So how do we become Righteous, so we can be called by that Name by virtue of who we are?

“And Melchizedek lifted up his voice and blessed Abram. Now Melchizedek was a man of faith, who **wrought righteousness**; and when a child he feared God, and stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire. And thus, having been approved of God, he was ordained an high priest after the order of the covenant which God made with Enoch, (Genesis 14: 25-27.)

Melchizedek got the same covenant as had been previously made with Enoch. He possesses the same, single High Priesthood which was in the beginning. This is what Abraham also obtained. Continuing, —”It being after the order of the Son of God; which order came, not by man, nor the will of man; neither by father nor mother; neither by beginning of days nor end of years; but of God; And it was delivered unto men by the calling of his own voice, according to his own will, unto as many as believed on his name.” (Vs. 28- 29.)

You see, Abraham got it in the same way as did Melchizedek, who got it the same as Enoch before him. It is always the same. So Melchizedek wrought or performed righteousness. That is part of what all must do. You must perform Righteousness. Does the word performed cite your mind forward to other scriptures? Is there another scripture that informs us of what this “performance” may consist of?

Nephi in 2 Nephi 32 has just finished teaching Laman and Lemuel the Doctrine of Christ. He leaves for a time and returns to find them sitting there debating the Doctrine of Christ. Nephi gets a little frustrated at this point because they don’t seem to get it. They are sitting there arguing instead of taking action. Nephi tells them that the reason the doctrine of Christ is not resulting in them receiving the ministry of angels and the receipt of the Holy Ghost, is because they are focused on the list of blessings which they covet. Instead of focusing on the ministry of angels he tells them, they need to ask God to “consecrate their performance unto the welfare of their soul.” (2 Nephi 32:9), they need to focus on **being** someone who is worthy or in other words **being** righteous, rather than looking past the mark at the coveted blessings. But again, what performance? What is Nephi referring to when he instructs Laman and Lemuel to ask God to consecrate their **performance** to the welfare of their soul?

What had Nephi just taught them? What vision had Nephi just related to them? What ordinance had he just finished testifying He had seen Christ perform, that would act as the mechanism by which they could find and become Holy and Righteous? (2 Nephi 31: 1-6) You see, they treated repentance and baptism as a dead work, or as a ordinance that could save them simply by engaging in it.

Nephi has spent all this time teaching them to repent and be baptized for the receipt of the Holy Ghost in greater abundance, and to reconnect their apostate, dormant priesthood back to heaven, which will lead to the baptism of fire and the tongue or language of the angels, who will come and speak the words of Christ to them, and they don't understand! They sat debating rather than getting into the water and repenting. They were grown men and had presumably been baptized more than once because Lehi invites Laman to be baptized way back in Chapter 2 when he asks him to “run unceasingly into the fountain of all righteousness”, which is what we’re talking about today as well, and they don’t get it. They haven’t had angels, so they think Nephi is holding back or not telling them everything they need to know.

But Nephi is telling them. And Nephi is telling us if we have ears to hear it. The gospel of Jesus Christ is an endless cycle of learning and could be called the Plan of Education as easy as the Plan of Salvation. And the thing they lacked was the Holy Ghost, which would have brought them the word of Christ which invariably grants forgiveness of sins or the baptism of fire, which was intended to lead to the ministry or tongue of angels, which was intended to allow the words of Christ to be spoken to them, hence the gift of the ministry of angels in the first place.

Laman and Lemuel looked at repentance and baptism with its attending blessings as a list to check off, instead of as a path of ascension. These are not steps to be checked off, they are progression or ascension which invariably leads to one eternal round because when you walk on a globe (or within the sphere in which you're placed) in a strait and narrow line, you will invariably end up back at the beginning. (Alma 7:20) That’s where the doctrine of Christ is intended to lead you: right back to the gate where the Holy One of Israel waits for you still to come unto Him (again) and be healed! (2 Nephi 31:17) To be forgiven! To be made whole once more. And The Holy One of Israel employs no servant at the gate, which gate Nephi tells us is in the **waters of baptism**.

So if Christ doesn't have anyone to take over for Him so He can take a break, then I am here to tell you if no one else will, that you can always be sure to find Him there, at the gate, which gate is baptism, waiting to forgive your sins so you can move ahead again, finding a greater abundance of the Holy Spirit, a greater abundance of forgiveness, a greater abundance of the tongues of angels, who will in fact speak a greater abundance of the words of Christ, because you will be clean enough, you will know enough to be taught more, to be taught how you are still off, to be taught how you still need more knowledge and you can finally be taught **How** great Things are in store for you in comprehending God in a deeper way.

The Spirit then constrained Nephi from saying more to his brothers. He had told them the way, the path and the gate to enter, and they refused or denied the greater abundance offered them. They denied the connection through the doctrine of Christ to these greater Blessings and Things that are available from the foundation of the world to those who are willing to perform in accord with the Things of God. (D&C 128:11). They refused to rise again.

Will we also stop up the Word of God by our negligence and tendency to be drawn off into other things other than penitence and repentance, the first fruit of which is baptism? (Mormon 8:25)

Now I mentioned the "fountain of all Righteousness" and Lehi counseling to "continually running into it", and I want to ask you, why is the language relating to Righteousness which we are here to better understand, why does the Book of Mormon refer to Righteousness as a Fountain? Why this reference to water? Is water related to Righteousness? If so how? And why are we told as an act of mercy to us to continually run into it? Is Fountain also speaking of revelation and connection to the Holy Spirit? Are the fountains and water then associated with revelation and the Spirit?

Nephi clarifies in his record, what his Father Lehi was teaching Laman when he instructed him to run continually into the fountain of all righteousness. (1 Nephi 2:9) In Verse 6 of chapter 31, Nephi says he saw Christ get baptized, that ought to jump out at you, but he sees Christ baptized by water to again : "fulfill all righteousness". Again, righteousness, again water and baptism, and again this doctrine of Christ. The only doctrine of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, which is One God without End, amen. (2 Nephi 31:21)

Repentance followed by baptism leads to Righteousness by cleaning you up and removing darkness from you grace for grace, moving from one principle to another, filling you with light all in all. (Moroni 10:8) This process of removing evil and replacing it with good is not magic. Baptism as a dead work will not achieve this. (D&C 22) The ordinances of the Doctrine of Christ are not meant to be a ritual done over and over as a dead work. that No ordinance of itself will save you. Rather, baptism is meant as a tool or aid of becoming more, to be done as needed when you find yourself in your ignorance and realize you desire greater righteousness to get greater knowledge. Baptism covers you in the robes of Righteousness. Then having been cleansed or covered, how will you behave? How will you respond when you find yourself as Adam and Eve with your shame and guilt removed? Well, in this dark place called mortality, you are not going to leave your sins and ignorance behind in an instant. God knowing this, provided baptism as a way of renewal as one of the first principles of the gospel, to be performed when you see you lack, and when you desire to ascend higher.

Interestingly we have been given two sets of “first principles” of the gospel. The ones we are familiar with are found in the Articles of Faith. Joseph taught of another set consisting of “attaining to the resurrection of the dead.” Of ascending and doing as Christ did, who is only doing what His Father before Him did. (See King Follet Sermon). I suggest to you that both of these ideas are together the first principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The ones we are so familiar with, faith, repentance, baptism for a greater abundance of the Holy Ghost, are designed as Christ’s one and only doctrine precisely to lead the soul to the other. Baptism is meant to lead to a literal resurrection. All the symbolism of being buried in the water, coming up out of the water, taking that big first breath of life, being born—again, being with the divine feminine— in her womb or in the holy of holies, (which are the same word in Hebrew) under the water, coming forth out of the water or the womb unto new life— all these symbols are found in the ordinance of baptism!

Even after we have become Righteous, we are not done with this Doctrine of Christ. “Sin is waste. It is doing one thing when you should be doing other and better things for which you have the capacity. Hence, there are no innocent idle thoughts. That is why **even the righteous must repent, constantly and progressively**, since all fall short of their capacity and calling.” (Denver Snuffer)

But we need to be becoming something more than we are now. It is not meant to be a dead act, a dead ordinance where we remain in static action, always doing, but never knowing. The ordinance is meant to do and be exactly what the Book

of Mormon says it is and will do. Namely, it is to put the Name of Christ on you: assist you in gaining the Holy Ghost measured out to you until you are so filled with light that there is no darkness in you; (D&C 88:67) to have the doctrine of Christ is How great Things, or the Powers of Heaven are sealed into you; (D&C 128). this ordinance symbolizing death and new life is to make you Holy; (2 Nephi 31:5) makes you righteous; cleans you up; forgives your sins; bring you into the Presence of God; lay down the old man of sin and rise again with priesthood and authentic power; it brings you unto Christ where He waits at the gate, and maybe most importantly for us in our day if we are going to see Zion, allows us to see eye to eye, because when there is finally a group of people who are penitent and will go down into the depths of humility as a group, seeking unity, seeking forgiveness, seeking to be of one heart and one mind, having an eye single to the glory of God or to the welfare of God's ancient and long dispersed covenant people, (Mormon 8:15) unified in the one and only doctrine, obeying the law upon which the blessings we seek is predicated, which is grace for grace, then!, then we have a chance, because we will dwell in Righteousness and He will dwell within us, and there will be Zion, and the earth will at long last say:

"I, the Mother of men am Blessed, I am at long last Sanctified, I am cleansed from the filthiness which is gone forth out of me and I have found Rest in the Lord, and Righteousness for a season abides upon my face! (Moses 7:48) May we fulfill the covenants of the fathers and so dwell in Righteousness! In the Name of Jesus Christ Ahman.

"We need to respond when repentance is preached, by repenting. Righteousness only comes after that. And this is the only way out of our similarly bleak, current condition. This! It is by remembering, it is by returning, it is by finding yourselves, no matter who you live among, being someone God has accepted. You must be someone God has spoken to from heaven. You must take the Holy Spirit as your guide, and not be taken off this task. You set in order the house of God, beginning with your own marriage. You do that." (DS, Marriage and Family, Talk 9) You be Righteous.

