

Come Follow Me Class Insights 30 D&C Sec. 81-83

I'm Taylor, and I'm Tyler. This is Book of Mormon Central's Come Follow Me Insights. Today, Doctrine and Covenants sections 81 through 83.

Have you ever started on a journey with great intentions but never quite arrived at the location you had intended? Or have you ever started to work on a project and you got into it and it was underway and it never did get completed? Unfortunately, there are a lot of characters that we run into throughout this history of the Church as it's unfolding, that they “embark in the service of God”, they start on the covenant path, they – they get their trajectory and they begin that journey, but then it seems they don't ever arrive (Doctrine and Covenants 4:2). It is a – it's a sad thing to watch some of these stories unfold. Some of them we know the ending and it doesn't end well; others we're left with a lot of question marks. We don't have a lot of information.

One of those characters is Jesse Gause in section 81. Let's – let's tell you his story of who he was and what's going on in his life. So, he starts out as a Quaker. Yes, born in Pennsylvania, a lot of Quakers there as you guys might remember. Quakers are pacifists and they have a Society of Friends. About age 21, when he's considered an adult, he's admitted into the Society. And so that's a – that's a religious group he wants to be part of and he – he was born in 1785 so he's about twenty years older than Joseph Smith. The War of 1812 breaks out and he wants to defend his country, and so even though he's a Quaker which declares pacifism, he – but he wants to defend his country so that he can live in peace. And so he actually joins the Delaware militia, later marries, and has a family – four kids – and actually he – his wife dies in 1828 soon after the birth of their fourth child, and he later remarries, moves to Massachusetts, and then he actually decides he wants to become a Shaker, which is – we've talked about in the past, a Shaker is a group that believes very much in the power of the Holy Spirit – God be with you and expressing those gifts by physical manifestations, like you might shake as a sign that the Spirit is with you.

And so, Jesse and his wife Minerva, apparently they decide, yeah, let's join the Shaker group, and they move out to Ohio, about fifteen miles east of Kirtland, and they're living in this communal society, and that's when he meets the missionaries. Yeah, so he's in North Union, Ohio, not far from Kirtland, when he ends up joining the Church. So, we don't know when exactly Jesse joined the Church, but our first time-stamp that we get for him regarding the Church is on March 8, 1832. The Prophet wrote: chose this day and ordained Brother Jesse Gause and Brother Sidney Rigdon to be my counselors of the ministry of the presidency of the high priesthood.

Fascinating, because today we make a big deal about first counselor, second counselor. You'll notice Joseph listed Jesse Gause first, Sidney Rigdon second. Jesse is twenty years older than Joseph, as Taylor has already mentioned, and he's older than Sidney. It's possible that he was actually put in as the first counselor even though he's a brand-new convert and Sidney's been around a lot longer. The problem is he gets called into this First Presidency calling, and he only

lasts for about six months before he's going to be excommunicated near the end of the year in 1832, in December, after serving a mission.

Now on his mission, he – he goes with Zebedee Coltrin, and they're traveling back through the North Union area where his wife Minerva lives. And by the way, Minerva did not join the Church, so she had joined with him to become a Shaker and moved from Massachusetts out west on the – nearly the frontier of Ohio, but she didn't want to join him as a member of the Church. And now he's going back to preach to the Shakers, and he kind of gets received like all the other missionaries have, like, the Shakers are not really interested in the message. And so, he's trying to get his wife Minerva to – to rejoin him as well as to join the Church with the children.

With the children.

Notice the wording here in a letter from one of the elders in the Shaker community we have access to by the name of Matthew Houston. He wrote a letter to Seth Wells about Jesse's visit to North Union. This comes out of the book *Who's Who in the Doctrine and Covenants*. “I presume you was acquainted with Jesse Gause from Hancock he was here a few days since after his wife Minerva--she utterly refused being his slave any longer--he had to go away without her. Although he tried what the law could do for him he was very much intraged threatened to take away Minerva's child – she presented it to him but he went away without it and her – he is yet a Mormon – and is second to the Prophet or Seer – Joseph Smith – this state of exaltation may tend to steady him or keep him away from us a little longer – for which I am heartily glad for he is certainly the meanest of men.”¹

These are real people with real struggles and we – we don't know all of the details around Jesse's excommunication, his life, what happened to him after. We know he's not going to live very long after this. He dies in 1836 at age 51 and Jesse drops out of the record. You get a stray comment from a sister in 1873, and we really, that's about all we hear about him after August 20, 1832, when Zebedee Coltrin's, like, I'm so sick, I've got to return to Kirtland, and so they break off as being missionaries. So, very little that we really hear about him. And again, we don't know about people's motivations, their hurts, their pains, their fears, and so sometimes it's very easy for us to say, well, that person got excommunicated, that person sinned. And it is instructive for us to pay attention to where people have made mistakes and hopefully we can be wiser. But that's what we learn in the Book of Mormon, but not to the point that we judge and we say, man, I'm so much better than this person; I would never have done the same thing had I been in their exact circumstances.

So, the amazing thing for me, when you get to know Jesse's story, is to realize the ultimate judgment is in the hands of the Lord. It's not our place to condemn him ultimately or pass final judgment. That's - that belongs to the Lord. What we do know is he began a journey and doesn't seem to have completed that journey as far as the Church, as far as his calling in the First

¹ Black, Susan Easton. *Who's Who in the Doctrine and Covenants*. Bookcraft, 1997.

Presidency. That's a significant assignment where we didn't even have a First Presidency previous to this time in 1832, and it's not really going to become formalized until a little bit later. But he – he comes into the Church, into this high position as a counselor to Joseph Smith, and then he leaves, falls away for one reason or another or is excommunicated, and instead of the Church now struggling, the Church moves forward. That's the thing. We talk about journeys and arrivals. The Church is on a journey collectively and it will arrive. The promise is sure. There will be people who fall away or fall off of that – that Church along the journey or choose to step away, but the Church will move forward.

Section 81 is a classic example of that because what they did in the revelations moving forward, they didn't change section 81 that was given specifically to Jesse Gause to be a member of the First Presidency; they simply replaced his name with Frederick G. Williams. So the Church moved forward. Jesse was replaced, so if you just picture the original, in place of Frederick G. Williams in verse 1, put in Jesse Gause's name and it's the same section, which implies that any member of the First Presidency as a counselor since 1832 could insert their name here, and it is beautiful counsel for not just members of the First Presidency, but I would propose for members of any presidency or members of any group or organization within the Church.

And as we jump – as we read this, remember that they didn't know about the First Presidency as we understand it today, and what they were taught is that this is going to be the presidency of the high priesthood. So even here we don't yet actually have a full revelation of the totality of the First Presidency. So, it's simply revealed that there's going to be a presidency of the high priesthood. Even at this time they didn't call it the First Presidency, and so the Church was still – remember, we're early, this is March of 1832, we're not even three years old yet. This is pretty young. Some two-year-olds are still trying to learn – well, I guess they're walking by age one, but yeah, this is – this is a very young Church.

So, look at verse 3 as far as counsel to a counselor: "Therefore, verily I acknowledge him...". So, this is speaking of his servant, Joseph Smith, Junior. From the bottom of verse 1, "...verily I acknowledge him and will bless him, and also thee, inasmuch as thou art faithful in counsel, in the office which I have appointed unto you, in prayer always, vocally and in thy heart, in public and in private, also in thy ministry in proclaiming the gospel in the land of the living, and among thy brethren" (Doctrine and Covenants 81:3). You'll notice that a counselor is to be the support, to give counsel, and to help shore up that role of the president whom God has chosen.

I love that imagery from the Old Testament that we get of Moses with his arms raised and needing two people to help sustain, uphold, to never leave – to never leave that president exposed or vulnerable or isolated to attack, but to uphold and sustain him or her in that presidency. In this context in the – in the First Presidency, this is a nice way for the Lord to say

to us, “follow the prophet; don't go astray. ... follow the prophet; he knows the way.”² Hey, that has a nice ring to it. Somebody should write a song. It's a beautiful concept to say I've chosen him, now you counsel him and you support him and you sustain him.

Look at verse 4: "And in doing these things thou wilt do the greatest good unto thy fellow beings, and wilt promote the glory of him who is your Lord." So, it is this “house of order” that the Lord chose this president who now chose these two counselors, and the greatest good we can do in this hierarchical organization that God set up – this isn't man-made - that's where we do the greatest good (Doctrine and Covenants 88:119). So, what's our – look at the verbs, what are we supposed to do in these roles? Verse 5: "Wherefore, be faithful; stand in the office which I have appointed unto you; succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees." And then the promise comes in verse 6. If you are faithful, you'll have "a crown of immortality, and eternal life in the mansions which I have prepared in the house of my Father" (Doctrine and Covenants 81:6).

I love these verses, and I love that I've heard these verses so often through my life. Originally it was given to Jesse Gause, and I love how the Doctrine and Covenants may have been revealed for specific individuals, but God intends for all of us – this is true for all of us. I love “succor the weak” (Doctrine and Covenants 81:5). We've talked in the past that “succor” means literally “to run underneath” somebody. It's one thing to stand underneath somebody and support them, but imagine if we change the story of Moses just a little bit. Imagine he had to be running while he's holding his arms up and somebody had to run along. That actually makes it a little more challenging, a bit more effort, and literally that's what “succor” means. And I also love the fact that Joseph Smith needed support at times. I mean, he's human like the rest of us and God's like, you know, “lift up the hands [that] hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees” (D&C 81:5).

We – I've had my moments of being strengthened by people in counsel with me and friends and family members, and there's power in unity. I want to say like recently I was at church at testimony meeting and I just felt so strengthened by listening to other members in my community who, very human like me, are expressing their devotion and a love to God, their desire to do good. And I just walked out of Church feeling buoyed up, like, man, God is great, God is awesome. And I'm so grateful for members of the Church who are striving to do their best, though weak that we are, but their efforts I feel strengthen my feeble knees and encourage my hands not to hang down.

I love that and you see that pattern throughout scriptures, of God using - his own words here – “the weak and the simple” things of the earth to do his work, that he can pick up me or you or Taylor or anybody because of his infinite capacity, as long as we're willing to – to move forward, open our mouth, do the best we can to serve, he will use just exactly who you are or exactly who

² Hiatt, Duane E. “Follow the Prophet.” *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1989, www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/childrens-songbook/follow-the-prophet?lang=eng.

I am, what we've got, he will use that to build up those around us in – in beautiful ways that we may never know about in this life and that's powerful (Doctrine and Covenants 1:23).

One more - other verse to look at, verse 2, it says: "Unto whom I have given the keys of my kingdom." Now, this is not the first time the word "keys" shows up in the revelations, but it's useful to pause for a moment and realize and reflect, a key is something that opens, and so it's a symbol of power, of unlocking. You know this principle shows up, Taylor, in, I think it's one of your favorite stories from the New Testament up in Caesarea Philippi. Yeah, that experience where Jesus takes his apostles on this long hike to get up to the basically the capital city of idol worship of the day, right, and he asks some pretty critical questions there.

Yeah, it's interesting, they'd hiked about 25 miles, and Jesus asked these questions: who do men say that I am? So let's imagine you and I going on a 25-mile hike and at the end of the hike I say, Tyler, who am I? You might wonder if I'm a little dehydrated because we know each other pretty well, and I actually could have asked that question back in Capernaum. Why did we need to hike?

So, the fascinating thing is, "Whom do men say that I am?" (Mark 8:27-28). And the apostles are saying – giving the obvious answers: well, some think you're Elias, or others saying, you're John the Baptist come back or one of the prophets. But then his ultimate question: Who do you say that I am? Oh, now, that's significant because it's not just what other people are saying about you, Jesus. Now the question was who – who are you, to me? And I love the fact that Peter steps in there and gives voice for the whole group. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matthew 16:16).

That's just beautiful, one of the most powerful phrases in all of scripture. And then soon thereafter, God declares, I'm going to give you the keys of the kingdom. And so, in Christian artwork you often see Peter – well, if you are ever actually looking at Christian art and you see somebody holding a key or a key ring with two keys on it sometimes, various ways, it's often Peter, and again, this is the power of opening and closing. This is the power of God, that he opens doors for us. He also closes down doors that we don't need in our lives. It actually does – this same phrase of keys shows up elsewhere in Luke chapter 11:52. He actually, Jesus is talking about the lawyers, their key of knowledge, they're actually closing down people's knowledge because they're misusing the keys.

That's really important because if you look at key holders in the scriptures and then in our Church today, what is the role of a key holder? It's not just a gate keeper – which it is – but it's way more than that. So, Peter was promised, I'm going to give you the keys of the kingdom, that whatsoever you seal on earth will be sealed in heaven, and whatsoever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. So, opening and closing, this opening and closing. Think about the fact that a key holder can unlock the gates of heaven, but keys can also be used to lock the gates of hell, can be used to push back, to drive darkness from among us, as well as open windows and doors for light. It goes both ways between heaven and hell. These keys are really important, and you can

see why Satan and the hosts of devils would be so interested in fighting against this beginning phase of the Church where these keys are starting to spread, and there – there is real power given to mere mortals. This is – this is a significant section.

So, we talked earlier that Jesse Gause was granted or given this blessing to be part of the presidency of the high priesthood. We don't know all the reasons, but it seems somewhere in August of 1832, being rebuffed by his wife, not having access to his family that he then just drops out of the record and he gets excommunicated from the Church in December, I think December 3, 1832, and later it's Frederick G. Williams who, by revelation, is invited in and his name gets put here.

And Frederick's story is an interesting one, and it seems from the best information that he was faithful throughout, although there's this one moment that Frederick G. Williams gets excommunicated during the time that Joseph Smith was in Liberty Jail and Brigham Young is helping to manage the Church, and a whole group – about half a dozen men get excommunicated for basically apostasy and fighting against the Church. And Frederick G. Williams' name is in there, but we don't really have any information about how his name got included, and later he gets rebaptized. In fact, I think he gets rebaptized twice. He dies in 1842, but look, he's faithful, something happens, he gets rebaptized, he gets rebaptized, he's faithful. So, it's like, if you look at the bookends, this guy is really is out for the cause of Zion. He wants to be supportive. We're lacking detail on really what happened, which is back to what you said before that we have to be careful not to pass final judgment on people but to look to the past for instruction and say, okay, how could I learn to be better? What can I learn from what they did well and replicate, and where did they possibly make mistakes and I could try to avoid walking on that path?

Absolutely. That's the key, the take home. Now, in between section 81 and section 82 there is a fairly significant event that takes place that is not mentioned specifically in the Doctrine and Covenants. The date is March 24, 1832. We're in Hiram, Ohio, at the John Johnson farm. Joseph and Emma are living in the parlor; it's just inside the front door and to the left. It's the nicest room in the house. There's a bed with a little trundle bed that goes underneath it for the children. They have twins that -- the Murdock's twins – Sister Murdock had passed away shortly after childbirth or at childbirth with these two twins at roughly the same time that Emma and Joseph had lost their twins right after their birth, so they've now adopted Julia and Joseph Smith Murdock, is what they've named the boy – these two twins, the Murdock twins.

They have, it seems, the measles at the time, and on that night there's a knock on the window. They ignore it. So, Emma has Julia in the bigger bed, and it seems that Joseph is with the little boy, the little baby boy, Joseph Smith Murdock. And he's sleeping there, when all of a sudden, the front door is broken open and a crowd of men, drunk on liquor, come in and grab Joseph by the hair, by the arms, and they start dragging him. Apparently, he's able to get a foot loose and kicks one of them with some pretty serious force, knocking him over, and they subdue him and get him out, and it's cold outside in Ohio in March of 1832. And they drag him out, and he sees

Sidney Rigdon laying on the ground who had been dragged out of the log cabin across the street from the John Johnson home. They'd dragged Sidney out by his feet, banging his head on the steps as he comes down and then hooking him up to a rope and actually dragging him a distance behind a horse with his head banging on the ground.

Brothers and sisters, some interesting things are going to happen in the life of Sidney Rigdon from this date moving forward. He's going to do some things and say some things down the road, especially twelve years down the road after the death of the prophet. And there are some who would say, who would surmise, that it seems that Sidney is a little different after this experience, and once again, it's a high thing to act as a judge of people. I don't know, but the possibility is there that he sustained some pretty serious injuries through this traumatic event that have messed with his mind and the way he's able to just live his life moving forward. And so, I would say we should – we should tap the brakes before we pass final, ultimate, condemning judgment on Sidney or any of these other people, because we really don't have all the details.

We all should just look at what the mob did to Joseph and Sidney. They ripped off their clothes and scratched them, and then they take these ripped up bodies and pour tar in. I don't know if you guys have ever touched tar that just gets stuck on your fingers and when it's hot – and oh, and it – it's - it can be very painful to get inside your open wounds, so this is a very terrible way to be tortured.

And then they dump feathers on him. In fact, there's one person there who has a bottle of poison. They intend to poison Joseph. So, he tries to get Joseph to open his mouth, but Joseph keeps his jaw clenched and refuses to open his mouth, and so he – this individual hits Joseph in the mouth with the bottle and it chips one of Joseph's front teeth. From that point on, Joseph is going to have a slight whistle on his S's when he's speaking because of that little chipped tooth. They leave him and Sidney there to basically die, so once Joseph Smith makes his way back into the home of John Johnson, in his own words, here's what he says, “My friends spent the night in scraping and removing the tar, and washing and cleansing my body; so that by morning I was ready to be clothed again. This being sabbath morning the people assembled for meeting at the usual hour of worship, and among them came also the mobbers ... With my flesh all scarified and defaced, I preached to the congregation as usual and in the afternoon of the same day baptized three individuals.”³

Must be really frustrating for the devils down in hell to fight against the work and think okay, we've got him this time, and the next day he gets up and preaches and three individuals got baptized. I want to show you something interesting going on here. Previous to the modern era that we live in, back in antiquity, if you go way back to these ancient cultures, your identity was largely determined by the collective group. You would – you would find your identity in the

³ Smith, Lucy Mack. “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1845, Page 217.”, *Page 217*, Joseph Smith Papers Project, 1845, www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1845/225.

group, the family, the tribe, the kingdom under this monarch or under these rulers. You would find your greatest sense of identity in belonging to a collective group.

Then the Greek philosophy comes along, 400 BC. You get Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and then his star student Alexander who then goes and Hellenizes that Mediterranean region, turns them all into more Greek thinking: Greek philosophy, Greek language, Greek theater, Greek schooling, Greek government, Greek gods and goddesses. Well, the Greeks are the ones who introduce this democracy to the world. Well, in democracy the focus is on the individual vote. You matter, you individual person, you matter, and so it shifts away from this collective identity to this independent identity. And now that's where we're living today, is in more of that kind of a mind – mindset which is, wait a minute, how is this going to help me, or what's in it for me? It's the I mindset, the individual, the independent I mindset.

Isn't it fascinating that in the scriptures God is trying to take these individuals who love their independence and trying to continually get them to go back to this ancient Hebrew and many ancient cultures mindset which is no, your greatest happiness and your greatest identity is going to be found when you forget yourself and you look at where the “feeble knees” and “the hands that hang down” and the weak arms, strengthen – strengthen the people around you and in so doing, you'll end up be strengthening – being strengthened, and it's that collective idea that becomes this ideal (Doctrine and Covenants 81:5).

The Lord defines it in Moses chapter 7:18, “the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them.” They - they are not in it for, hey, what's in it for me? They're in it for, what can I do to serve you? How can I lift you? How can I bless you? And if everybody's doing that, you no longer need to worry so much about your own struggles because other people are worrying about them, too, as you're worrying about them, and you're opening up all these conduits with heaven.

It's interesting, even though the Greeks kind of promoted this idea of independence, they also realized the power of the collective, that nobody can be all on their own. Living off in the woods on your own, I mean, I guess you have a few stories, but most humans need to be in a society for the mutual support and benefit and encouragement, and I think many of us recognize that. There has been a pandemic, and how many of us have missed the sociality that we have known in the past?

I think it's interesting for the Greeks, they had this word that they used a lot for people who were so focused on themselves and not with the intention of helping the collective. They used this word, “idiot”. Now this is a word my kids sometimes hear from me while I'm driving my car, and I'm usually not talking about myself but probably I should be describing myself, but the word “idiot” in Greek literally means “to be self-focused”. Isn't that interesting? So, they wanted people to be independent, but they're, like, if independent simply means all you do is just pay attention to yourself and nobody else and any of their needs and the larger interests of society, you're an idiot. You are self-focused, and they actually, this was a pretty significant word –

negative word. Nobody wanted to be an idiot because they wanted to be part of this larger society, but where their voice actually mattered. It wasn't simply just a king dictating and saying, I don't care what any of you citizens think, I'm in charge. No, we want to hear what the citizens think, but let's all get to this unified, although they didn't quite have the same vision of Zion.

Now let's jump into the section. So, we're in section 82. Now keep in mind you have the two Church centers, one in Kirtland, one in Independence. You have leaders here with Newel K. Whitney being the bishop and over here in Independence you have Edward Partridge and all of the people associated with that part of building up this kingdom of God on the earth, and they've had some clashes, some disagreements, and when we first arrived you get another clash between Sidney Rigdon from this Kirtland group who have now come west and Edward Partridge again, another clash, but they forgive each other, and notice how section 82 begins. Verse 1: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, my servants, that inasmuch as you have forgiven one another your trespasses, even so I, the Lord, forgive you."

I think this is an important concept for us to nail down, not just in section 82 in that context historically, but in our world and in our life and in our families today. I love this section because it's a reminder to me yet again of the reality of mortality, that we are imperfect people in this collective group together doing our best to become one, and we are not perfect. I'm going to say things, I'm going to do things that will offend you at times and I'm sorry. And sometimes people are going to say and do things that offend me. I love the fact that Jesus is inviting us not just to forgive each other because it's a nice idea, because it's a good way to live life, but ultimately, because it's an invitation for us to become more like him. He is willing to forgive us, and he's asking us to take on that attribute. Notice, "...inasmuch as you have forgiven one another your trespasses, even so I, the Lord, forgive you", removing all scars, saying you can move on (Doctrine and Covenants 82:1).

Now isn't it interesting that the person who's doing this is the only person in the resurrected form who has in his body what you and I would classify as scars from the violence and the abuse that was done to him through his crucifixion event, that it's through his scars that you and I can find all of ours completely wiped out and forgotten as far as holding ourselves hostage to the past or holding anyone else hostage to the past?

Let's take a look at this word "forgive". Did you ever notice that in the word "forgive", that is the base word, to give? In fact, the word "give" is from the same root word for "gift", like the gift of the Holy Ghost. So, as we do forgiveness – forgive, and what are you giving? You're giving love, encouragement, you are saying sorry, you're giving people the benefit of the doubt. Forgiveness means to thoroughly give away anger and hurt and to let go of all those things that bind us down to a past pain. Now, it is a process; it takes time. But as you think about the principle of forgiveness, one additional way to consider it is what will you give away to yourself, to God, to others so you can fully – more fully experience God's love?

This is a beautiful concept, Taylor, and to me, the best time to give that gift is in the present – pun intended. It's to not wait. It's right now. And live in the present, give that gift, sorry for the play on words here. But it's – it's powerful when you don't have to carry that – that burden any longer into the future to ruin your day tomorrow or your week next week or your month next month or into the future. It's powerful.

Look at verse 3. Notice he says, "For of him unto whom much is given much is required; and he who sins against the greater light shall receive the greater condemnation" (Doctrine and Covenants 82:3). We're going to get later on some of these ideas where – where the Lord's going to refer to talents. "[Where] much is given much is required" could tie in very easily to that parable of the talents where God gives one man five talents, another man two talents and another man one talent "according to [their individual or] several ability" (Doctrine and Covenants 82:3, Matthew 25:15).

It's fascinating to me that the guy who had five talents turned them into ten and he was told, "well done, thou good and faithful servant:" (Matthew 25:21). The guy who has two talents turns it into four, and he is told in the exact same words, "Well done, [thou] good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:23). In the Greek text those two are given the exact, same response from the Lord. It wasn't God saying, come here, mister two-talent guy, stand next to the five talent guy. Hmm, you only have four, he has ten. Oof, it's not looking good for you. I love the fact that God won't grade you and me on the curve. Can you – could you imagine judgment day, me coming up before the judgment bar or you standing there and the Lord saying okay, let's see. Nephi, would you come up and stand next to Tyler on his left there, and Enoch, why don't you stand on his right. Okay, let me look. Ooh, Tyler, it's not – it's not looking very good for you. You're not really measuring up. I love the fact that we have heavenly parents who have endowed each of us with these divine attributes and gifts and abilities and weakness and struggles, this package that is unique to you and my package that's unique to me, and he's not comparing me with Taylor or with you. There is no comparison horizontally. "[Where] much is given much is required", and he – he knows what he's given me, and now I have to try to magnify that set of constraints and that set of gifts that are given to me (D&C 82:3).

It's a powerful principle that God knows our potential, and he encourages us to get there, and he gives us the support and help to get to that potential. And if we choose to walk away from our potential, we consistently turn away, if we hide our talent, bury it in the dirt and say, I'm just going to go put my life in the dirt and just kind of wait until the Second Coming. Like no, if you have the potential to do X Y Z, you have the potential to do these things, God will call you a faithful servant if you are continually striving to achieve your potential.

I have to say I work in an educational context and I often think about this very concept because I have to pass judgment on students around their performance. And I remember some years ago thinking, what I would love is to know exactly where every student is at and what their potential is. And given all the circumstances, given the constraints of the teaching term, did those students

measure up to their potential, given where they're starting, the resources that we made available and their efforts? And then I just realized, okay, I'd have to be God to pull that off, but boy, that would be the best way to grade students. But God is the ultimate, perfect judge because he knows all the things, all of our weaknesses, our foibles, our strengths, our opportunities.

So, using that as an analogy, it's fascinating if you consider that if – if a person is given that much capacity from the Lord, “[Where] much is given much is required”, and another person is given this much capacity from the Lord, can you see how easy it is for us as individuals on this fallen world of ours to look around horizontally and make judgments, where this person could easily look down his or her nose at this other individual and say, I'm so much better than you (Doctrine and Covenants 82:3). But perhaps that person from heaven's perspective is doing far better than this person with what they've got, what they've been given.

I'm going to build on this so this person could completely reach their potential and gets a hundred percent okay? And this person might get all the way up to here and that's seventy-five percent. Now they've done more, but they had better potential, and so God is going to say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant:” (Matthew 25:21). This person, he'll say, mostly well done, thou mostly faithful and good servant – three quarters.

Sisters and brothers, as we look at each other in our families, in our wards, in our work, in our – in our colleague relationships, rather than being prone to point a finger of accusation or a finger of judgment at people around us and pointing out what's wrong with them, perhaps we could learn from the Lord's disciples at the Last Supper and be more prone to ask the question, “Lord, is it I?” (Matthew 26:22) Is there – “what lack I yet?” (Matthew 19:20) What could I do better? I don't want to sound preachy here, but I don't know that it's very fruitful when I kneel down and say, Heavenly Father, I'm really struggling with so and so, change him. Make him do this better so that he doesn't – so that I can like him better, so that my life can get easier. From my experience, those prayers haven't been answered very often, but when I kneel down and say, Lord, I'm struggling in this relationship. Teach me. What could I do to grow to learn to be better and to even help this individual? We “pray for [those who] despitefully use [us]” (Luke 6:28). By covenant obligation we're commanded to pray for our enemies. So, we pray for them, we don't pray against them, and in the process, we figure out what God wants us to do to become more like Jesus, more loving and more kind and more facilitating of these – these beautiful attributes growing in the collective group of Zion.

Now watch verse 4: "Ye call upon my name for revelations, and I give them unto you; and inasmuch as ye keep not my sayings, which I give unto you, ye become transgressors;". The more you ask for guidance and I give it to you and then you don't follow it, the more of a transgressor you become.

When I was a kid, I used to plead with God to show me an angel. When I was a kid, I just wanted to see an angel so badly, I asked for it all the time.

I did too.

As I've gotten older, I've stopped praying for God to send an angel, (a) because I'm married to one, and so I get to see an angel every day, but that the coming from heaven variety I've realized, wait a minute, God knows what he's doing. I'm going to simply move forward and I don't want – I don't want more than I'm able to bear, because I don't want to be accountable for things that maybe my spiritual maturity isn't at a level where it needs to be to not get into some serious trouble with this greater light and knowledge that God gives me.

Now look at verse 6: "And the anger of God kindleth against the inhabitants of the earth; and none doeth good, for all have gone out of the way." Notice the percentage there, "... none doeth good, [and] all have gone out of the way" (Doctrine and Covenants 82:6). You see we go from zero to a hundred percent.

That means everybody's wicked.

That means everybody is struggling. Look at verse 7.

Yeah, and to be clear here, God is basically saying, is there anybody perfect? No, nobody's perfect, everybody needs me and so it's – this verse is not intended to make you feel like guilty and depressed for the next week; it's to say, you can't be your own Savior. That is not the plan of God. You're – you've fallen and everybody needs help.

Look at verse 7: "And now, verily I say unto you, I, the Lord, will not lay any sin...". What percentage? "...Any sin"? (Doctrine and Covenants 82:7). "[I won't] lay any sin to your charge; go your ways and sin no more; but unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God" (Doctrine and Covenants 82:7). And I love hearing the voice of the Lord here inviting us to say, turn away from them, I'm not going to lay any of them at your charge, I'm not going to leave any scars on your spirit. You're going to be perfectly cleansed from that and forgiven from that, but move on.

An additional perspective might come from the symbolic perspective of when God covers us with his Atonement. The Hebrew word for "atonement", kaphar actually means to cover somebody like in a holy garment. God is basically just – he's trying to emphasize here that, I have forgiven your sins. But if you persist in committing the same sin over and over and over again, the consequences of those sins that you have just been forgiven of, if you do them again, I'm sorry but I have to let those consequences hit you again because that's just divine justice. So, this not simply that God is incapable of fully getting rid of our sins if we happen to sin again, it's whether we're willing to keep that garment of purity on us with the Atonement.

Now look – look at the wording in verse 8. If you've ever asked the question, why commandments? Why so many commandments? Why so many obligations from heaven? Look at verse 8: "...again I say unto you, I give unto you a new commandment". Notice "I give" – back to the idea of, what is a gift? It's something that, I'm giving you a gift, this new

commandment, why? "...that you may understand my will concerning you;" (Doctrine and Covenants 82:8). He's teaching us, now look at verse 9: "Or, in other words, I give unto you directions how you may act before me, that it may turn to you for your salvation."

I don't know of anywhere in all of scripture, nowhere in all of the world's writings, that is more clear than verse 8 and 9. I would – we would invite you to mark those two verses and write something in the margin like, 'why I need commandments'. Not 'why I should be so upset that we have so many dos and don'ts and thou shalt and thou shalt not'. It's – he gives them to us as a gift so that we can know how to act before him, all so that it may turn to our salvation. God's work and his glory is to "bring to pass the immortality and eternal life [of all of us]" (Moses 1:39)? How does he do it? He gives us commandments and these covenantal, connecting ordinances, and prophets and scriptures and revelations, to help us know how to act before him, because left, if you cut that off and left to the natural means of the flesh, we would very, very quickly behave ourselves into patterns that would not lead to salvation, but lead to becoming more like the enemy of our soul.

So, you think about how in a symbolic or in a temple context we want to encounter God face to face, and when he says I want you before me, that is a face-to-face experience, kind of like what the brother of Jared had in the mountain, or Moses. So, we often pass over these words "before me," this phrase, and he's saying I'm giving you a gift, a gift of commandments for how you can be face to face with me (Doctrine and Covenants 82:9). So, it's very covenantal, temple, very symbolic, very powerful. That's what "before me" means, and it leads to this amazing verse that we're going to now talk about in verse 10, one of the most powerful verses in all scripture (Doctrine and Covenants 82:9).

Anywhere. And it's so short and it's so, it's very few words, but it's a huge meaning. "I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise" (D&C 82:10). That – that covenantal binding, the - the way that he says, look, here's what I want you to do, these commandments I'm giving you, and there is justice and judgment affixed to that law and there is mercy and love affixed to that law. It's a gift given in love, and if you do what I say, I am bound. I will – I will never renege, I will never go back on what I promised to do for you if you'll keep those commandments, "but [if you] do not what I say, [you] have no promise" (Doctrine and Covenants 82:10). And it doesn't take a genius to look around the world at people in all layers of all cultures across this globe of ours to see what happens when you think that you can go through life totally ignoring God and disregarding his commandments and thinking you're smarter than the prophets and the scriptures and all of the wisdom from the past and saying, no, I'm going to go it alone; I'm going to figure this out. I'm going to be independent. I'll save myself. We know where that leads. Yeah, good luck on that one.

So, I love this metaphor of the sun. The sun's always shining. We may not always realize that the sun is shining, but imagine God commanded you to get outside, get outside of your house and experience seeing the warm, nourishing rays of sunlight. But what if you chose to disobey, what

if you decided I'm going to stay in my house and close the curtains and turn off the lights. Your action does not change the fact that the sun is ever shining. It does change your personal circumstances that you are not accessing that love, that warm embrace of the sunshine. This is like God's love and he's saying in this verse, my love is always there for you and my command is for you to get out of your house, metaphorically speaking, and fully experience my full love. But sometimes for all sorts of reasons, we retreat into our metaphorical homes and we close the curtains and shut ourselves off from God's love. We act as though the sun doesn't exist and our circumstances are such that we have reinforced ourselves that there is no sunlight in our lives, even though if we literally just opened the curtains or opened the windows or went outside, we would have it. And God is required to provide it for us. That is a powerful, trustworthy phrase. So, if anything that you ever worry about in life, just know in this truth, God's love, like the burning rays of the sun are always, always, always there and available for you, and he will always give it to you if you just simply turn and face him and be face to face with him.

Now again, God is doing this not just for individuals, but for the collective group, this building up of the cause of Zion. Look at verse 14: "For Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness; her borders must be enlarged; her stakes must be strengthened; yea, verily I say unto you, Zion must arise and put on her beautiful garments." We're using some phrases there from our Old Testament context of Isaiah, and it shows up in a variety of places in Isaiah's writings. Perhaps the sweetest is here in Isaiah 52, which most of you would recognize comes right before that famous suffering servant chapter Isaiah 53 describing the Lord being "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" and "despised and rejected of men", that great, atoning chapter of Isaiah (Isaiah 53:3). So right before that, 52, listen to these first words in Isaiah 52: "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion" (Isaiah 52:1-2).

Huh, wouldn't that be amazing if those two verses didn't just apply to people living in 700 BC in Jerusalem? Wouldn't that be amazing if those two verses applied to people in 1832, and wouldn't it be even more amazing if those two verses applied to you and to me today? That God is speaking to us through the corridor of time using these exact, same words, showing that stain and soil and falling down into the dust and into the dirt and having people trample over the top of you is simply a powerful metaphor not just for kingdoms being overthrown in antiquity, but for parts of my soul being overrun by sin and the stain of the world? And here is the God who has been designated as my Savior and your Savior who's coming to save us, and his invitation is wake up, don't – don't sleep anymore in this slumber of mortality. Wake up and put on strength because I'm giving it to you, and here is a new "kaphar", a new covering, put it on. It's my infinite Atonement and my love for you. And I will forgive you and you can put on these beautiful garments and you can sit down, and you can watch as he does his work bringing people into the Church, into Zion. The Jerusalem whose children have been carried away captive is

sitting on the ground mourning saying, I've lost everything. I've lost all my children, and now the Lord's saying, oh no, get up. You've got to stretch out the curtains of your habitation; you've got to strengthen the stakes because the people who are going to be coming in are going to be far more numerous than those that went out.

Once again, brothers and sisters, that is powerful for the overarching Zion or the whole Church perspective, but it's even more powerful when you bring it down to the I level within the collective, when you see that God is doing that very same thing with you as you turn to him and ask him to forgive you as you have faith in him and trust in him to move forward even though you're wrestling with terribly difficult things at times and questions and doubts and concerns and physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, financial, relational – all these – all these turmoils that we face in mortality. It's powerful when our Savior says, arise from the dust, put on those beautiful garments that I'm providing you. I'll forgive you. Just keep moving forward because I'm building Zion, not just out here, but I'm building Zion in here too.

I want to build on this, this concept of strengthening the stakes and enlarging the borders. So I've spent quite a bit of time of studying in the Middle East, living there, learning the cultures and languages. And in Arab society, when you tell somebody you're welcome, the word is “Ahlan wa Sahlan”. And actually, it's been a bit of time, so I'm not sure if I've spelled that correctly, but the word “ahl” in Arabic means “a tent”, and a “sahl” is “a family”, and this “an” at the end actually pluralizes. So, when somebody says “welcome” to you, they're basically saying “family in tent”. Welcome into my family, join my tent and it's actually in the plural because now we're expanding the family and expanding the tent.

You might remember Abraham comes out of this Middle Eastern society and you might remember that he also enlarged his tent and welcomed people into his family. So, this idea that comes out of Arab society is very ancient. We see it here in these Isaiah verses, that God uses a symbol, that he's going to make the tent larger for more people to come into the family of God, and you have to strengthen the stakes that hold down that tent so it doesn't blow over in a storm. So, I just love this symbolism here from Arab society in Arabic. And God says to all of us, welcome into my family, welcome into my tent, and as members of God's kingdom, we should be doing the same. We should be welcoming everybody into the family of God, so it's families of God, and into these tents and these stakes so they too can feel the full protection, full covering that God has to offer, and then we all sit down in these beautiful garments that God has to offer us.

I love that. I love that concept that brings us back home. It's not - it's not chance that we call them stakes of Zion today. That was purposefully named after all of this analogy, so we strengthen those stakes wherever we may live across the globe. That's where we're building up Zion today.

Now look at verse 17: "And you are to be equal, or in other words, you are to have equal claims on the properties, for the benefit of managing the concerns of your stewardships, every man

according to his wants and his needs, inasmuch as his wants are just –". Why? Verse 18: "And all this for the benefit of the church of the living God, that..." notice that every individual, "...every man may improve upon his talent, that every man may gain other talents, yea, even an hundred fold, to be cast into the Lord's storehouse, to become the common property of the whole church –".

We don't need any spirit of competition, we don't need to feel threatened by other people's success, because if you succeed, if you grow, you're part of this collective Zion that we're building, this Church, this one heart, one mind.

This tent of God is getting stronger.

This tent of God is getting stronger, and if you're improving, you're now going to benefit me, and as I improve, I'm going to benefit you. And there may be times when I'm weak and I need help, but you're strong, so that's when you reach out and you help strengthen me so that I can then get back on my two feet and continue to grow and keep strengthening others as we pass those – those good deeds on.

This is right here in verse 19, a very powerful verse that sometimes as fallen humans, we struggle to implement: "Every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God." That's pretty powerful. We're trying to build the kingdom of God by actually helping other people accomplish their righteous desires. And we live in a fallen – a fallen society where people are, like, it's all about me, the reason it's called the me generation. But what if we just twisted that just slightly and said, sure, it's all about me when I focus on you. It's by me blessing your life and helping you, I get a benefit. So, God understands our fallen nature and he says if you really truly want to have benefit to you, look out for the other people in your society.

Which, Taylor, this concept, I think it finds beautiful application in a variety of aspects in our life, one of them being, there have been periods of my life where it feels almost as if there's a vault on the ceiling that prevent my prayers from getting any higher; they just bounce off the ceiling, and it feels very frustrating. And I understand there are a lot of reasons for why that might happen for individuals at different times. Maybe it's a period of testing, maybe there's struggles that they need to overcome first before they feel more connected with heaven. I get that.

But one thing is certain that I've figured out in my own experience that might apply to you is this – this struck me after I'd been home from my mission for, I don't know, maybe six months, three months, four months, five months, somewhere in there. I was having one of those moments where I was thinking what is wrong with me? Back in my mission I would pray and I would feel connected with heaven. I – and answers and revelation would flow and ideas would come and feelings would fill my soul, not a burning in my bosom but just that peace, that calm reassurance to move forward. And now, four, five, six months after my mission, I wasn't getting that, and I

was pretty frustrated one particular day when the realization crossed my mind, kind of just blipped across the screen of my mind that said, in your mission you weren't praying - 99.9 percent of your prayer petitions weren't for you; in your mission you were praying for everybody else. You were praying for your companion, you were praying for the ward members you were serving among, you were praying for the investigators, you were praying for the people that you hoped to be able to start teaching, you were praying for them and God was giving you lots of answers. And now at that period of my life, all of my prayers, like a hundred percent of them were oh, I'm struggling with school and I'm struggling with work and all of these other needs and praying me, me, me, me, me, I need, I need, which isn't evil. We should pray for what we need. But it shifted something in my heart and in my mind when I recognized that oh, I need to pray for other people, too, and that often will open up channels of communication to help you become a conduit and as God's love flows to other people through you like you were saying, Taylor, then you feel it and you grow in the process. You become "More fit for the kingdom," so to speak. "More used would I be, more blessed and holy – more, Savior, like thee."⁴

Now look at verse 20: "This order I have appointed to be an everlasting order unto you, and unto your successors, inasmuch as you sin not." So, it's like walking out of the tent. If you walk out of the tent, God's like, you can't get full access to these things, they're always there, you just have to come back into the tent.

You have to be in the tent. You know, Taylor, that is probably one of the most simple analogies for me to understand when somebody were to – if somebody were to ask the question, why do I need the Church? Why do I need to go to the church? Why can't I just be good independently, or with my little family in isolation? The point of building up the kingdom of God on the earth is to build up Zion; it's to help those around us. It's in verse 18 and 19. That's why we have a Church, because it gets us to turn outside of ourselves to lift and build other people around us. We need them, and they need us as we're – as we're focusing on helping each other, it's this collective body of saints that build Zion rather than the isolation or independent form of, what's in it for me? What can I get from you, Taylor, if I go to church? How's it going to benefit me is a less effective motivator for me to go to church versus me saying, Lord, who needs me today? Who can I help? We're trying to become more like the Savior Jesus Christ, and he never lived his life saying, what can you do for me? What can I get from you?

That's what tyrants do. That's exactly, like, be loyal to me so I can get all your resources. God is loyal to us, he's like, what can I do to provide for you? Here is an interesting exercise: you can make a list of all the things that you enjoy in your life and then imagine that nobody else except you existed. How many of those things that you enjoy in life would still be available? Oh sure, maybe the rocks, the water, the sunshine, but where do you get your food? Where are you going

⁴ Bliss, Philip Paul. "More Holiness Give Me." *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1873, www.churchofjesuschrist.org/music/library/hymns/more-holiness-give-me?lang=eng.

to get that social engagement? So, this idea of just being so self-focused, it plays well on our fallen nature, but ultimately will keep us from the full fruits of society, of Zion society, and the devil loves for us to be completely focused only on ourselves like he was.

Look at verse 22: "...now, verily I say unto you, and this is wisdom, make unto yourselves friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, and they will not destroy you."

We should unpack this.

We have to unpack this. Are you familiar with Abraham Lincoln? He had all these amazing sayings. On one occasion, one of his close friends was perplexed by Abraham Lincoln, this president of the United States who had all this power, and he says, you have the power to destroy your enemies; you could crush them politically, they would be done if you just would – would do what you could do, but you insist on making friends with them; why don't you destroy your enemies? And what did Abraham say? Something along the lines of, I destroy my enemies by becoming friends with them.

Yeah, this idea, when you think about it, am I not destroying my enemies when I make them my friends? It's really powerful here in verse 22, that the Lord's telling them you don't want to go around stirring up your enemies. Become friendly. "Do good to [those] who ... spitefully use you" (Matthew 5:44). Pray for your enemies.

The word "enemy" comes from the word – "enemy" actually comes from "ami" which means "friend", like "amicable" – like "amicable", and the "en" means "not", so "not my friend". So literally, the word "enemy" is simply somebody who's not yet your friend. That's all that it means, you're not yet my friend. It's a – Abraham Lincoln totally understood that the – there is no such thing as enemy as we describe it. There are friends, and there are those who are not yet our friends. We should also say that what's going on here in Missouri is that you have all these, like, Yankee saints who have come down to Missouri, which is full of a lot of people from the south, and there's a little bit of culture conflict going on. And you have all these saints who want to live together in unity while the rest of the people who aren't members of the Church are, like, well how do we trade with you guys if you guys are just being totally insular? And what God is telling people, like, you have to learn to be friends with those people who are not part of the Church community. That's the code here of "the mammon of unrighteousness" (Doctrine and Covenants 82:22). And if you do not learn how to be civil and kind and friends with those who are not members of the Church community, when things get bad, you're going to deeply struggle, which is exactly what happened; they got pushed out of Independence and later got pushed out of Missouri. Some of the worst problems the Church experienced early on while it was in Missouri in part because the saints here were struggling to live in a Zion and they were being pretty insular and they didn't really want anything to do with the people who weren't members of the Church. And so when things got difficult, they had no friends or had very few friends outside the Church that could be of help to them.

Yeah, so look at verse 23, to finish this section: "Leave judgment alone with me, for it is mine and I will repay." Did you notice the word "alone"? He didn't say, leave judgment mostly with me; he said, "Leave judgment alone with me..." (Doctrine and Covenants 82:23). Now we've talked about this in previous episodes. President Dallin H. Oaks years ago gave a great talk regarding the form of judgment that we see. There's intermediate judgment and there's final judgment, so you can look up his article in the Ensign and revisit that, where we have to make intermediate judgments, but don't make any of these final judgments.⁵ He's saying that is alone with me and I will repay, and then he promises them, "Peace be with you; my blessings continue with you. For even yet the kingdom is yours, and shall be forever, if you fall not from your steadfastness. Even so. Amen" (D&C 82:23-24).

So to cap off 82, remember that God is trying to build this collective unity, this Zion, this Church and kingdom of God on the earth. But it requires that we do our part to let him work through us in building up the people around us, and as we follow the directions that he gives in section 82 and in every previous section on the Book of Mormon and the Bible, as we follow those things, those commandments, as we learn to act before him, that it will work towards our salvation, why? It's because those are the very things that you do in order to build that character, you become more like Jesus.

Brothers and sisters, the commandments are nothing more, nothing less than another piece of the bigger blueprint for how to become like God, how to become like our heavenly parents through the infinite Atonement of Jesus Christ. So next time you're sitting in General Conference or you're reading through the scriptures and you notice a commandment, instead of thinking something else I have to do, we should rejoice and say, thank heaven, he's revealed to me another portion of the overall blueprint for how to build a Christlike character and become more like my Lord and my Savior Jesus Christ.

So, let's move on to section 83. Just as a brief overview, let's take this metaphor of the tent of Zion. So as the people in the early Church are trying to live in unity, there were cases where a father or a husband would die, and a question arose, well what happens with the wife and the children who had claim on consecrated property, and the revelation came forward that the Church should maintain support of that wife and children so that they do not lose their place in Zion, get kicked out of the tent, and let's consider this. In many places in the world the economics of the world have changed, where women have far more opportunities for jobs and work and income and even legal representation, whereas back in the time of Joseph Smith, women did not have the same legal standing; they often were dependent on a male figure and often, many times they didn't have jobs, and so if you think about the man was the one who was bringing the income and had the legal responsibility, and if that's removed, well, that seems to put the wife and the children in a very precarious position. In fact anciently it was very similar. We often talk about – we hear in Isaiah and other chapters how important it is to take care of the

⁵ Oaks, Dallin H. "'Judge Not' and Judging." *Ensign*, Aug. 1999.

widow and the children, not because they are incompetent and incapable, but because the way society had been organized, it disadvantaged women and children, disadvantaged a woman who wasn't married or a woman who had lost her husband, children who no longer had a father, and that society, that culture was still going on in some ways in the Americas in the 1830s, and so God made this revelation, provided this revelation, that the Church, Zion, should make sure that the women and children are taken care of. And the principle here is that those who come into Zion should always be supported by other people in Zion, that we should not be focusing just on ourselves and say, too bad for you that your circumstances have changed, but we should say, your circumstances have changed, what else can I do to be supportive of you in the cause of Zion to strengthen the stakes and strengthen God's work?

In closing today, just know that the cause of Zion, the building up of the kingdom of God on the earth and the establishing of Zion and the gathering of Israel, this let God prevail on both sides of the veil, that runs so counter to our world's culture of individualism and independence and what's in it for me, but it runs directly in line of the straight and narrow path which is to become more like the Lord Jesus Christ, to turn outward, to become a Savior on Mount Zion in whatever way we possibly can. That's our prayer and our hope for all of us individually and collectively, and we leave that with you in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen. Know that you're loved.

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