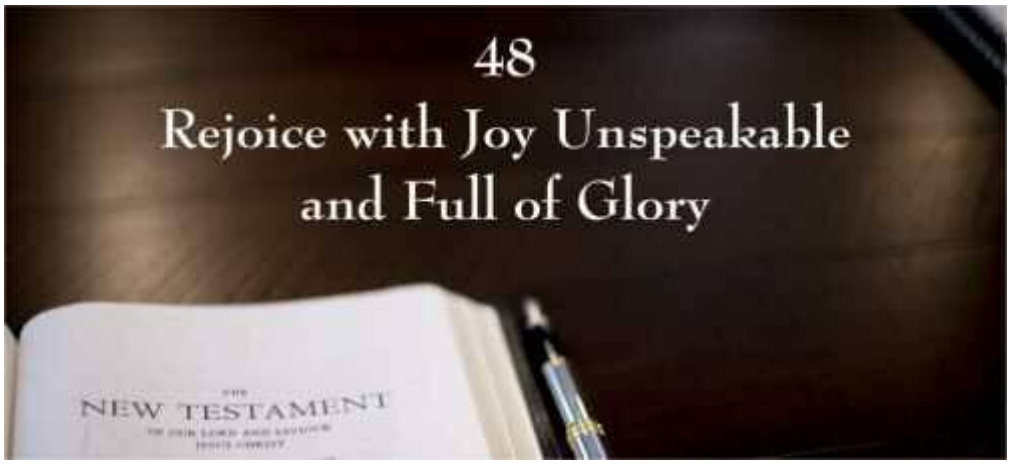

Scheduled for study Nov. 25 - Dec. 1, 2019. This week we talk about why we live the way we live. We discuss how the gospel plan includes every child of God, whether on this side of the veil or the next. We talk about the reason for living as purposeful Saints, and not haphazard Saints.

Day 1

1 Peter 1:3-9; 2:19-24; 3:14-17; 4:12-19 - I can find joy during times of trial and suffering.

Record your impressions in your journal or notebook. Record these promptings while you are "yet in the Spirit" (D&C 76:80) so you can accurately capture what you are being taught.

I have just one point I would like to make in today's lesson. Why are we able to find joy in Christ when all the world is falling apart around us? It depends on where our focus is. If we are focusing on the world then the world is all we see. If we are focusing on Christ then His love, goodness, and all his promises of salvation are what captivate our attention.

In most of the verses of study for today's lesson, we are taught that when we keep our focus on what God has promised us in the next life, we are able to continue to glorify God and praise Him, with joy in our hearts, even during the trials and hardships in this life. For our focus is to do all in our power to be worthy to walk back into God's presence with our heads held high. By keeping our gaze on the future, the next life and

the rewards our faith tell us are awaiting us there, we can rejoice in our promised blessings and glory, despite what happens to us in this life.

As in all things, Christ set the perfect example for us. He suffered at the hands of those who resented his good works and goodness. Through all of his suffering he thanked God for His goodness to him and to those he had called to spread the gospel message throughout the world. He showed us by example that those who suffer for God's purposes, while doing God's work, will be glorified and lifted up to sit on the right hand of God in the hereafter. The Apostles were witnesses of the fulfillment of this wonderful promise in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Day 2

1 Peter 3:18-20; 4:1-6 - The gospel is preached to the dead so they can be judged justly.

Record your impressions in your journal or notebook. Record these promptings while you are "yet in the Spirit" (D&C 76:80) so you can accurately capture what you are being taught.

The best way to see the promises of today's verses played out is to go and read Doctrine and Covenants 138 - the vision of the redemption of the dead. When Jesus was in the spirit world between his mortal death and his resurrection, he spent his time organizing the priesthood in the spirit world to take the gospel message to those who lived and died in mortality without the opportunity to hear the gospel message.

Sometimes we hear people ask why those from Adam's day down to the days of Christ had to wait to hear the gospel message. The answer is as follows: In the wisdom of God, our Father decided that the best course of action was to wait until the resurrection of Christ for the gospel to be taken to those in spirit prison. We don't have any idea if it was necessary to have resurrected bodies to take the message to the prison, if there was a need for sufficient priesthood holders to take the message, or if there was any one of a thousand reasons why it was wise for them to have to wait until Christ's resurrection for this to happen. We only know that it is the wisdom of God that declared that it be so.

The same question has been asked about temple and family history work. Why are these primarily a latter-day work? They were only done in a very limited sense before the restoration of the Lord's Church. Now this is the focus of all we do. Temple and family history work is how we gather Israel back to Christ, their Lord, on both sides of the veil.

The point of all of this is that this missionary work in the spirit world allows ALL of God's children, without exception, to hear the gospel message then decide for themselves whether they want to accept Christ's sacrifice for them or reject it. It doesn't matter if they are on this side of the veil or the other side of the veil. The message is the same, and the opportunities and blessings are the same. This is the original "No child left behind" policy. No one will arrive at judgment day without having first had the gospel preached to them and having had the offer of the saving ordinances. Our work in the temple is how they who have already died will have the saving ordinances provided to them. All they have to do is accept them and live according to the Spirit, just like we have to learn to live by the Spirit.

Salvation is truly free, and it is offered to every child of God who enters mortality. No exceptions. Some are blessed to hear the message here and are able to live through mortality with the blessings of the gospel in their lives. Most won't. Most will have to wait until they are in the spirit world to hear the gospel message. But their opportunities are no less than our opportunities, for God is truly no respecter of persons.

Day 3

2 Peter 1:1-11 - Through the power of Jesus Christ, I can develop my divine nature.

Record your impressions in your journal or notebook. Record these promptings while you are "yet in the Spirit" (D&C 76:80) so you can accurately capture what you are being taught.

Have you ever noticed how a child changes just by attending school? By doing that one thing they learn to think differently, behave differently, their outlook on the world changes, and they are able to comprehend things they were unaware of before going to school. This is what happens when we start down that covenant path.

As you study the scriptures, really study them for meaning and enlightenment, you begin to change. Little by little the Spirit reveals greater understanding of eternal principles, changing your perspective, your understanding, your wisdom, etc. My point here is that nothing in the gospel of Christ is a solo object. Everything that happens to us in the process of living his laws changes all of us, and in more ways than we are even aware of.

We don't have to worry about being Christlike this week. We just need to worry about whether or not we are even slightly better this week than we were last week. Becoming like Christ is an endeavor that will take us well into the next life to accomplish. But the process is like picking up a stick. When you lift a stick off the ground you only have ahold of one end of the stick, yet the other end comes off the ground as well. Changing one end of the stick has profound consequences for the other end of the stick. The same is true as you choose to keep the commandments, pray, pay your tithes and offerings, serve your neighbors, and strive to understand God's laws and the plan of salvation. Every part of you changes at the same time.

Read the list of attributes in the scriptures for today's lesson. Can you see that by adding one attribute at a time it makes it easier to acquire the next one? We don't have to be charitable all at once. Charity is a step by step change that happens over time as we come to understand better the plan of salvation and how to live it. Have hope, for all of it is possible to obtain and accomplish, but not all at once. God knows this better than anyone, and He is patient.

Day 4

1 Peter 3:8-17 - Be ready always to give an answer.

Record your impressions in your journal or notebook. Record these promptings while you are "yet in the Spirit" (D&C 76:80) so you can accurately capture what you are being taught.

I don't know about you, but I sort of struggled with this passage of scripture. It took some thought before I was able to feel comfortable with what it was telling me I should do. Let's look at the two pivotal verses.

> 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

> 16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

The first seven verses of this passage tell us how we should behave in our daily lives. Verse 16 refers to our behavior/conduct as our "conversation in Christ." So verses 15 and 16 are telling us that given that we make the effort to behave in all these good ways, we should be ready to face our accusers when they ask us why we behave or live the way we do.

It has been my experience that when I forget to at least periodically examine my life and instead, set myself on autopilot, I slowly forget why I do what I do. After a while, if someone asks me why I won't drink with them or why I won't go to this event or that place of business, my mind goes blank. It goes blank because I have forgotten why I have chosen to live my life as a Christian. Once in this vulnerable position, it is much easier for someone to convince us to try something new and different. And without a reason for why not to do those things, we might find it difficult to give good reason for not trying those things.

It isn't enough for us to just live a certain way, to have certain traditions and habits, to pay our tithes and offerings, and to minister in a routine way. We need to know why we do what we do. Periodically we should be reminding ourselves that we do this for the joy our lifestyle brings us. If called upon by someone of another faith, can we recall the last time the Lord answered a prayer? Can we recall the last time we witnessed a miracle in our life? When was the last time you know you felt the Spirit witness the truth of something to you or when he gave you clear directions to do something that blessed someone else? These are our connecting threads to the joy we feel from living the gospel of Christ.

The gospel of Christ is supposed to consist of a life lived with joy. Do we still remember the last time we felt that joy? Can we readily bear our testimony of the love we have for our God? Can we, with pleasure and gratitude confess our love for Jesus and the sacrifice he made for each of us? These are things no one can argue with. The bearing of a testimony, that which you have come to know through the Spirit of God, is your personal experience with God. No one can disprove that experience, and no one can take it away from you. But we can let it wither and die through neglect.

Scripture Study and Home Evening

Improving Our Teaching – Be ready always

When was the last time you were hoping to make a point about something, and as you listened to the other person speak, it suddenly became clear that what they were saying was the perfect example for illustrating what you wanted to say? How does this happen? Well, first of all, if you aren't thinking about the topic then the likelihood you will recognize that perfect teaching opportunity is pretty small. As an example, if you aren't always (or at least regularly) thinking about cooking then how can you expect a cooking example to spring to the forefront of your mind when you are in a conversation about something entirely different from cooking?

When we are always thinking about a particular subject it is amazing how we are able to connect that subject to almost everything that happens around us. As an example, have you ever had someone in Church who had only one note in their repertoire of conversation? Let's say this person's one note is family history. It seems like no matter what they are asked to speak about in Sacrament meeting they always manage to bring the subject back to family history. If they contribute in a Sunday School class on chastity, somehow their comment instead is about family history and how chastity affected their research. As amazing as it may sound, you can give them almost any assignment, but they end up steering it back to family history.

The point here is that when we have something in our minds on a regular basis, we see connections to that thing all around us. This is where teaching moments come from for parents. If we as parents are studying the gospel on a regular basis then what we will see in the behavior of our children and ourselves are examples of how what we have been studying fits into the current situation. How can we as parents expect to teach our children life lessons that are relevant to what they are experiencing if the gospel is far from the thoughts and intents of our heart?

Link this concept back with yesterday's lesson on being ready to give an answer. When we approach the gospel and learning spiritual things with purpose, instead of like learning of spiritual things happens on accident, we will see more connections to spiritual things in our life. The more we study deliberately, and live the gospel purposefully, the more we will begin to see that almost everything that happens around us can be fit into the teachings of the gospel and the plan of salvation. This expanded worldview will begin to slip into our conversations, our perspectives, and our

testimonies. The more it happens, the more we begin to view life from an eternal perspective, and less from a worldly perspective.

Here is a PDF of this week's study material.
Print it out for greater convenience in your studies.

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