

Podcast Episode 25: Sacrifice

QUESTION: What is sacrifice, why is it so important, and what kind of sacrifice does God want us to offer Him?

DENVER: We believe that sacrifice is necessary if a person is to have faith. You can believe a lot of things, but if you're going to have faith, it's the order of heaven that you have to make sacrifice to demonstrate your faith.

Joseph Smith said (and this goes hand in hand with that Mormon 9:2-5): "A man is his own tormentor and his own condemner. The torment of disappointment in the mind of man is as exquisite as a lake burning with fire and brimstone" (*TPJS*, p. 357). The quickest way to achieve that is to act in this life like the coward who is unwilling to be valiant in the testimony of Christ. And to stand up when opposed by those who tell you it ought not to be so. Valiance is the only way by which you secure the blessings of God.

When Uriah was killed, he was killed with a message sent by King David, delivered by the hand of Uriah himself to Joab. In the integrity of his heart, King David knew Uriah could be trusted with the order condemning him to die. And Uriah, faithful to his king, carried the message to Joab. There are accounts-- not the one we have in our Old Testament version-- there are accounts that suggest that when Joab opened the message and read it, that he read it to Uriah. And Uriah knew he was sent to his death. And in those accounts, the men who died with Uriah died with him wittingly. It's one of the few places in scripture where the word "valiant" appears. Those men went "where the valiant men were." And the unworthy king forfeited something in his cowardice.

Don't be cowards. Stand, and be valiant no matter what it is. In the day of judgment you will find yourself wanting. And in this life you will find you lack the power of godliness, unless you obey the law upon which all blessings are predicated. You make sacrifices. You obey *Him*. And to obey Him is to find yourself oddly incongruent with everything about you-- not about *you*, *about* you, meaning the external world in which you find yourself moving about within.

Well, keep that in mind because you're here to be trained. You're here to learn something. You're here to learn about the power of godliness. And by "here" I don't mean this room tonight, although I think that is certainly true. I'm talking about this lifetime in which you find yourself-- this place, this terrible fallen world, this glorious opportunity in which sacrifice is actually

possible. You don't avoid it, and you don't necessarily seek it out. But when it comes upon you, you face it down bravely. And you stand where God places you. And you don't let any man move you from where it is that God would have you be. Because therein lies salvation. You are obeying a law ordained before the foundation of the world. You can't lay hold upon such blessings unless you obey the law upon which it is predicated. There will always be, in absolute numbers, only a few who will find that straight and narrow path. There will be an overflowing abundance of those who will fight against it, because they serve their master. You don't have time to worry about them. You serve yours. And that Master needs to be Christ.

“And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying, Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said... I know not, save the Lord commanded me. And then the angel spake, saying, This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth; ...thou shalt do all that thou doest, in the name of the Son. And thou shalt repent, and call upon God, in the name of the Son for evermore” (Lectures on Faith 2:23-24).

Verse 2 of Lecture 3: *“Let us here observe, that three things are necessary in order that any rational and intelligent being may exercise faith in God, [faith in God] unto life and salvation.”* Faith in *God*, not in man, not in men, not in an institution, not in some magic talisman-- faith in God. You will never be saved because you relied upon some guy to elevate you. The only way in which that will happen is when you connect with God. You have to exercise faith in God unto life and salvation.

There are three things: *“First, the idea that He actually exists.”* You can get that from someone else.

*“Secondly, a **correct** idea of his character, perfections and attributes.”* Any error in that prevents you from having faith. Therefore, in order to get that right, it's going to require something of you in the way of study and effort. Look at the word, they italicized it-- a *correct* idea of His character perfections and attributes. That's what you need to study, to show what it is you're going to have faith in.

“Thirdly, an actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing is according to his will.” You must know this. And you cannot cover the gap by lying to yourself. You can't lie to yourself pretending that you are on God's course and then have actual knowledge that the course of life you're pursuing is according to His will. Nor can you depend entirely upon what other people are telling you.

You're supposed to be asking and getting answers from God. And the answers from God are going to tell you what you need to do. And the sacrifices that He will require of you are unique to you, because the contribution that you can make for the salvation of yourself and others is unique to you. There are things that you and only you can do. And if you will sign up with God, He will have you do them. And you may find yourself doing things you would rather prefer not doing. It doesn't matter. If you have faith in Him and you do what He asks, you'll know that the course you're pursuing is according to His will. And doing things He asks of you, according to His will, invariably produce faith. And they produce faith unto salvation, because it always grows-- light grows or dims; it never stays static. Therefore, when you set out on this course, you never turn back. If you turn back, you lose everything that you've gained up to that point.

Look at verse 5: *“For without an acquaintance with these three important facts, the faith of every rational being must be imperfect and unproductive; but with this understanding it can become perfect and fruitful, abounding in righteousness, unto the praise and glory of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Therefore, these three things you need to know:

1. God exists;
2. You need to study until you have a correct understanding of his character, perfections, and attributes;
3. And then you have to live your life so that you actually know that the course you're leading in your life conforms to what He would have.

Four, towards the bottom of that: *“Nothing short of an actual knowledge of their being the favorites of heaven, and of their having embraced that order of things which God has established for the redemption of man, will enable them to exercise that confidence in him, necessary for them to overcome the world, and obtain that crown of glory which is laid up for them that fear God” (Lectures on Faith 6:4).*

Because we ought to fear God more than we fear man. We ought to fear God more than we fear the loss of anything that is down here. We ought to fear God more than we fear the approval or disapproval, the criticism, the ostracism. We ought to love God and fear Him, because it's our relationship to Him, and Him alone, that matters.

This requires more than mere belief or supposition that he's doing the will of God but actual knowledge, realizing that when these sufferings are ended, you will enter into eternal rest and be a partaker of the glory of God. It does require more than mere belief or supposition. But it's obtained in accordance with this set of principles. And it is purchased by the same price, paid by each of us, in turn, on the same conditions. And no one gets it on any other condition.

Your life may be uniquely situated. You may be inside an environment, a group of friends, a family, a neighborhood, an association that is completely unique to you and has nothing in common with anyone else in this room. Inside of that, whatever the sacrifices are that are required, it will be exactly the same as it was for Moses, who gave up everything... and then gave up everything again. It will be the same as for Abraham, who gave up everything... and then gave up everything again. It will be the same. And you'll be called upon to make a sacrifice. Because knowing God requires obedience to Him and sacrifice to Him and not to some man-- certainly not to me, but not to a pope, not to a president, not to a priest. To Him. You're not trying to get to know me, or if you are, you're damn fool. You're supposed to be getting to know the Lord. You're not supposed to be getting to know some local presiding authority.

So paragraph 6: *“For unless a person does know that he is walking according to the will of God, it would be offering an insult to the dignity of the Creator were he to say that he would be a partaker of his glory when he should be done with the things of this life. But when he has this knowledge, and most assuredly knows that he is doing the will of God, his confidence can be equally strong that he will be a partaker of the glory of God.”*

“Let us here observe, that a religion...”-- not an institution, not an organization, not a club, not a fraternity-- “...a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation; for, from the first existence of man, the faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation never could be obtained without the sacrifice of all earthly things. It was through this sacrifice, and this only, that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life; and it is through the medium of the sacrifice of all earthly things that men do actually know that they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God. When a man has offered in sacrifice all that he has for the truth's sake, not even withholding his life, and believing before God that he has been called to make this sacrifice because he seeks to do his will, he does know, most assuredly, that God does and will accept his sacrifice and offering, and that he has not, nor will not seek his face in vain” (Lectures on Faith 6:7).

And I tell you what is vain: *“It is in vain for persons to fancy to themselves that they are heirs with those, or can be heirs with them, who have offered their all in sacrifice, and by this means obtained faith in God and favor with him so as to obtain eternal life, unless they, in like manner, offer unto him the same sacrifice, and through that offering obtain the knowledge that they are accepted of him” (verse 8).*

The authenticity of God's message is not proven by the means of delivery. Even if an angel comes, an angel can come and mislead you. The only way to distinguish between what is, and

what is not, of God is through the medium of sacrifice. Because when you do this, the vessel is cleaned. And when the vessel is clean before God, then even an angel of light cannot mislead you. Because what they offer is darkness, and you can tell it, because they have not the power to mislead. Everyone can be misled unless the course in life that they pursue is according to God's will. In the end, the only thing that matters is if God will vouch for us in the day of judgment. And if He will, and if He does, then it's a gift. My belief is that every one of you have lived lives so much more worthy of the Lord's recognition than my own, that for the life of me I can't understand why you don't have the faith and confidence to realize that He loves you, and you are more lovable than am I. He probably finds it a lot easier to love you than me.

Have faith. Be believing. Trust in Him. Go to Moses chapter 1. Look at verse 8: *"And it came to pass that Moses looked, and beheld the world upon which he was created..."* Moses beheld the world-- why, to me this is very interesting because he's describing a view that is very often in scripture referred to as "being caught up to an exceedingly high mountain." This is a view up and looking down. In any event...

Move to verse 18: *"And again Moses said..."*-- now he's talking, because Satan has come during this interlude period as an angel of light, tempting him-- Verse 18: *"...Moses said: I will not cease to call upon God, I have other things to inquire of him: for his glory has been upon me, wherefore I can judge between him and thee. Depart hence, Satan."*

The defect that Moses perceived in what Lucifer was saying, tempting him, did not consist merely in the presence of the... I mean, this is an angel. If you go to Section 76 in the description, an angel in a position of authority, in the presence of God, was cast down. That is not a being who, to look upon, would appear to be a vile creature. That would be someone, who to look upon, would appear to be a being of light, a being of glory, an angel of light. The reason Moses could discern between them had nothing to do with the appearance. It had to do with the content. It had to do with the Spirit. It had to do with what he radiated. And what Moses was able to discern was that this was not the source of something which he, Moses, chose to take in, as a consequence of which, he could judge between him and say, "You, I disprefer."

When you look at the *Joseph Smith History*, the thick darkness I talked about this last time-- the Orson Hyde account of that talks about the thick darkness that gathered around him. It consisted of the adversary benighting his mind with doubts, brought to his soul all kinds of improper pictures. The reason why it is possible to do that, and more easily so with many of us, is because we have ingested into ourselves all kinds of improper images which can then be summoned back up.

Look at 2 Nephi chapter 9. This is one of the early sermons given by Jacob: *“And our spirits must have become like unto him, and we become devils, angels to a devil, to be shut out from the presence of our God, and to remain with the father of lies, in misery, like unto himself; yea, to that being who beguiled our first parents, who transformeth himself nigh unto an angel of light, and stirreth up the children of men unto secret combinations of murder and all manner of secret works of darkness”* (verse 9). It’s not the physical appearance nor the transformation that takes place. It is the content, which is why you need to know that the course that you are pursuing is in accordance with the will of God. Because once you have made the required sacrifice, you acquire the required knowledge.

Look at Alma chapter 30. This is an explanation given at the bad end of Korihor-- his judgments were upon him, and he was writing his final confession for his death. Verse 53 of Alma chapter 30: *“But behold, the devil hath deceived me; for he appeared unto me in the form of an angel, and said unto me: Go and reclaim this people, for they have all gone astray after an unknown God. And he said unto me: There is no God; yea, and he taught me that which I should say. And I have taught his words; and I taught them because they were pleasing unto the carnal mind; and I taught them, even until I had much success, insomuch that I verily believed that they were true; and for this cause I withstood the truth, even until I have brought this great curse upon me.”*

You see, he was convinced by the devil, who appeared unto him in the form of an angel. It's not always that the adversary comes to you with murderous intent. Sometimes he comes to appeal to your vanity, to your pride. Oh, you can have acclaim; you could have wealth. No, you acquire what you need to acquire as a consequence of sacrificing for God. And in that process you will endure criticism, rejection, opposition, the world's hatred. You may even be cast out. But you obtain what you obtain from God, *by* sacrifice.

In 12-- verse 12 (or paragraph 12) of this Lecture 6: *“But those who have not made this sacrifice to God do not know that the course which they pursue is well pleasing in his sight; for whatever may be their belief or their opinion, it is a matter of doubt and uncertainty in their mind; and where doubt and uncertainty are there faith is not, nor can it be. For doubt and faith do not exist in the same person at the same time; so that persons whose minds are under doubts and fears cannot have unshaken confidence; and where unshaken confidence is not their faith is weak; and where faith is weak the persons will not be able to contend against all the opposition, tribulations, and afflictions which they will have to encounter in order to be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus; and they will grow weary in their minds, and the adversary will have power over them and destroy them.”* Well, he’ll darken their minds and, after having darkened their minds, leave them in a position in which they are simply unable to have faith, at least in the right things, in order to understand things of God.

Verse 10: *“Those, then, who make the sacrifice, will have the testimony that their course is pleasing in the sight of God; and those who have this testimony will have faith to lay hold on eternal life, and will be enabled, through faith, to endure unto the end, and receive the crown that is laid up for them that love the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

“Them that love the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” is talking about not just the Second Coming but is talking about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ whenever He should come, to whomever He should choose to come to, when He chooses to do that. And it is supposed to be an ongoing event.

I understand that we got off on rather a ragged foot at the beginning of the restoration of the gospel. How fully we got off on that ragged foot is really not well enough appreciated by Latter-day Saints who choose to see a sort of uniform continuity of progression from that moment until today, in a rather uninterrupted course of forward momentum. When in fact, Joseph Smith had to fight against terrible opposition inside of the church to get the doctrine (that he was trying to establish) established. Ezekiel chapter 14 was a topic that he raised early. And he raised it again at the time of the Relief Society organization in Nauvoo. Go read Ezekiel chapter 14. Go look at what Joseph Smith was concerned about. And he's talking to people who accepted him as a prophet. And yet they were more interested in getting from him what they wanted instead of receiving from him what the Lord wanted to give.

Well, look in verse 9 of this 6th Lecture. About halfway through there's a sentence that begins: *“And in the last days before the Lord comes...”* So this is before the Second Coming of the Lord, but it's in the last days. *“...he is to gather together his saints who have made a covenant with him by sacrifice.”* Not a covenant *to* sacrifice. You can go make a covenant *to* sacrifice every day the temple is open. Making a covenant *to* sacrifice is not at all the same thing as making a covenant *by* sacrifice. It's only through actually sacrificing that it is possible for the Lord to make a covenant with you.

“Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice” (Proverbs 50:3-5). That gathering will be made not by man or men or institutions. That gathering will be made by the angels of heaven who hold the keys of responsibility for that; that you can read in *D&C 77:11*.

Well, this is the last half of that paragraph 10: *“But those who do not make the sacrifice cannot enjoy this faith, because men are dependent upon this sacrifice in order to obtain this faith: therefore, they cannot lay hold upon eternal life, because the revelations of God do not*

guarantee unto them the authority so to do, and without this guarantee faith could not exist” (Lectures on Faith 6). It is a cause and effect. These things are inextricably linked together. If you make the sacrifice, you can enjoy the faith. But all of us, every one of us, were and are dependent upon making the sacrifice. If we don't do that we are simply unable to lay hold upon eternal life. And the revelations of God don't guarantee you eternal life on any other condition.

The good news is that we have the *Lectures on Faith*, and they make these things clear. The good thing is that every one of you, I suppose, has been baptized. The good thing is, I suppose, that every one of you believe in the Prophet Joseph Smith, the restoration of the gospel, the *Book of Mormon*, the *Doctrine and Covenants*; therefore, you have an enormous leg up. The only question is, will you allow it to become a living, breathing faith? Will you allow it to lay hold upon you? Will you allow it to become alive, animated, a fire again burning upon the earth today?

When He appears, you need to be like Him. Lay down the burden of guilt; lay down the burden of sin; stop focusing on that stuff, and become like Him. And you become like Him by doing His works. And you do His works by serving others, by ministering to the needs of others. And when you do that, it is a natural byproduct of that process, ordained by laws established before the foundation of the world, that light and truth will grow within you. You will have compassion when you minister with compassion to the needs of others. Your heart will open to, and receive within it, light and truth when your conduct reflects the same conduct as a merciful and holy and just God whom you claim to worship. Worship Him by imitating Him. Worship Him by doing His works. Worship Him by making a living sacrifice. Set aside the junk that occupies you, and go do something that is holy for someone else.

However mundane and trivial it may seem to you, when you relieve the suffering of other people, something changes in you. You become different. You become better. You become more like our Lord, because when you give whatever it is you give away, you get more in return. You have to sacrifice and you have to serve the Lord and you have to have Him, and Him only, as the reason for what you do, what you say, how you act. Because He's the one that's going to judge you.

“God cursed the children of Israel because they would not receive the last law from Moses. The sacrifice required of Abraham in the offering up of Isaac, shows that if a man would attain to the keys of the kingdom of an endless life; he must sacrifice all things” (TPJS, page 322). There is so much more that has to go on and be understood if you are going to save yourself and any soul in this generation in that kingdom which we claim we would like to inherit. And we claim we would like to inherit it without any idea of the consequences of what it would take in order to ascend there or without any regard to the fact that you don't take one of the “EI” and bring them

down into mortality pain-free. You say that the Son of God condescended to come and be here, and I say so did Michael and so did Raphael and so did Gabriel. Because coming down and condescending to be here on a rescue mission by those who dwell in glory is an act of service and sacrifice that we simply take for granted out of the abundance of our ignorance.

There is an enormous gulf between the content of the material that was revealed to us in the restoration and the religion that you practice daily. That gulf is going to need to disappear. And you think-- you think you're trapped. In order to get from where we are to where we need to be, you can't do it inside the institutions that have trapped your minds. I am not preaching against your faith. If you're some fundamentalist, some RLDS member, some Latter-day Saint-- honor your churches. But by degrees, you need to begin the process of "by your works" showing what your faith is.

Doctrine and Covenants Section 64 beginning at verse 23: "*Behold, now it is called today until the coming of the Son of Man, and verily it is a day of sacrifice...For after today cometh the burning—this is speaking after the manner of the Lord—for verily I say, tomorrow all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and I will burn them up, for I am the Lord of Hosts; and I will not spare any that remain in Babylon. Wherefore, if ye believe me, ye will labor while it is called today*" (D&C 64:23-25).

Because as long as you're down here in this veil, clothed in this flesh, with the capacity to make sacrifices and the ability to exercise faith in Him, you will be amazed at the grace you can acquire if you will only do so while in this dark place. You're here to accomplish a great deal. When I first got an answer to prayer sitting in a barracks in New Hampshire, if I hadn't acted on that, if I hadn't had gone and done, I would never have beheld the Lord, much less been taught by Him. But I did, and I do. And whatever He asks of me, that's what I do now. And it doesn't matter how unpleasant I may find it or how reluctant in my heart I may be to go and do, I go, and I do. You need to do that. It may not even make much sense to you when you're going, and you're doing. You may think you're giving offenses when you absolutely do not intend to do so. You may find the people that you love rejecting you, finding a new family, and then having that family reject you again. I've laid it all on the line for the Lord, and I've done it twice now in a single lifetime. I can't tell you what sacrifices He may ask of you, but whatever He asks of you, that do you.

"And now I, Moroni, bid farewell unto the Gentiles, yea, and also unto my brethren whom I love, until we shall meet before the judgment-seat of Christ, where all men shall know that my garments are not spotted with your blood. And then shall ye know that I have seen Jesus, and that he hath talked with me face to face, and that he told me in plain humility, even as a man telleth another in mine own language, concerning these things" (Ether 12: 38-39). This is that

Lord who, when you get past the thunderings and lightnings, you'll speak with. He talks in plain humility. It is not His position to cause fear in your heart but to bring to you comfort. His purpose is not to leave you comfortless but to come and to comfort you. It's you that presents the barrier. It's you that presents the fear and that rightly so, because we ought to fear. And what we should fear is our own weakness and our own sins. Because our greatest sin is our ignorance.

“And only a few have I written, because of my weakness in writing. And now, I would commend you...”-- this is Moroni commending you, the Gentiles, who are going to receive this book-- *“...I would commend you to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of them, may be and abide in you forever”* (Ether 12: 40-41). He asked for grace to be given; God cannot give it. Then he turns, and he says, “You gentiles, please, seek for His grace; it cannot otherwise be given you.”

The *Book of Mormon's* assessment of us is sober indeed. And the arrogance with which we read that book blinds us to the predicament in which we find ourselves.

The plea: “seek for grace.” It is through grace that we obtain charity. And it is through charity we're able to bless others. Because the fact of the matter is, you can't bless anyone nor hold that priesthood primarily designed to administer blessings and not cursings, unless you have charity for others, unless you are willing to do things you would rather not do, unless you are willing to subordinate your will to the will of the Father. Because it is the purpose of the Father to bless all of His offspring. Therefore, it is only through grace you acquire what you need to be of use to God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.

You generally hail from a tradition that assures you that you're in the right way. You generally come from a tradition that says you're better than others. You are able to look down your nose at other people who stumble about in the dark because they don't have all the great truths that you have. The fact of the matter is, you (generally, not specifically, because there are some to whom this absolutely does not apply-- your hearts are right before God, but there aren't many)-- you've been handed this tradition. And the wicked one cometh, and he takes away light and truth, and he does it because of the false traditions you have been handed. The greatest among us is wholly inadequate. The greatest among us can't be trusted with the power of God; not yet, anyway. The greatest among us is still in need of repentance.

Every one of us should walk fearfully before God, not because God isn't generous, but because what He offers can turn you into a devil. The only way to be prepared and not fall is to realize the enormous peril that you present potentially to the universe. Before you get in a position to

enjoy the status that God offers to us all, you need to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, exactly like Paul said. You need to purge, remove, reprove.

This attitude we see in this man, in this account [the brother of Jared]-- this is the man of God! Christ may be the prototype of the saved man, but I know of no record anywhere in scripture that exposes the heart of the real disciple of Christ as well as does this chapter expose the heart of this man. This is what we should become. This is why the Lord could open up to him. This is why this man became, in the history of the world coming up to this moment, despite the fact the Lord came to Adam-ondi-Ahman and administered comfort to Adam in the Valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman-- here He came and showed Himself as He truly was, as a preexistent spirit, possessing a soul as tangible as man's, and ministered to him in a way which, if you understood what it takes for a quickened being to condescend into the present and make Himself known as He does here, was an enormous sacrifice by our Lord.

Marriage was the first ordinance. It was introduced before the Fall; it was introduced before man was instructed on sacrifice. Go back to the book of Moses in chapter 4, and in verse 27 after they had transgressed, but before they had been sent out of the Garden, we learn in verse 27 of Moses chapter 4: *“Unto Adam, and also unto his wife, did I, the Lord God, make coats of skins, and clothed them.”* Now it's important that, while the account sometimes refers to “Adam” by meaning both “Adam and Eve,” in this case, it was necessary for a clarification to be made. The garment that was given unto them to clothe their nakedness is also referred to in the temple as the garment of the Holy Priesthood. And God wants the record to be clear: *“Unto Adam, **and also unto his wife**, did I, the Lord God, make coats of skins, and clothe them.”* Therefore, Adam was not clothed and then told, “You go and do this, and clothe your wife,” God clothed them both. God did not expect Adam to intercede when it comes to the clothing of the woman. God treated her as if she, too, were about to embark upon a journey into mortality that would require her likewise to understand the principle of sacrifice. Because think about it for one moment-- you learn (we'll look at this in just a moment)-- you learn that they practiced sacrifice thereafter, but when were they taught the principle of sacrifice? They were taught at this moment.

There are legends about the animal that was chosen by God to slay and to offer as a sacrifice in order to clothe them with the skins of an animal. And I rather like the theme of many of those. The theme is that when the animals were brought to Adam, and Adam named the animals, there were some that he really liked more than others. But there was one particular animal that he liked above all the rest. It was that animal, and that animal's consort, who were slain in order to provide the clothing for Adam and Eve, so that Adam and his wife Eve could understand that the principle of sacrifice came at an enormous price. And so the animal was no longer able to exist in this sphere, having been used originally, while yet in the Garden, to provide the coats and to

drive home the point about the sacrifice that's required in order to clothe the nakedness of the man and the woman.

So if you turn over to Moses chapter 5, beginning at verse 5, this is talking about after they had been expelled from the Garden. It says: *“And he gave unto them commandments, that they should worship the Lord their God, and should offer the firstlings of their flocks, for an offering unto the Lord. And Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord. And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying: Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me. And then the angel spake, saying: This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth.”*

So that sacrifice that was performed that brought such sadness in verse 27 of chapter 4 that occurred before they were driven out of the Garden was simply a commandment to do which Adam and Eve then did. And it was some time later, many days later. And “many days” is not defined. It appears to me from the context as we go further, that “many days” in this context means “many years.” In fact, it means more than “many years,” it means “many generations.” There were many generations of men alive on the earth while Adam and Eve were there before the definition of the explanation of why they were offering sacrifice is finally given to them. And *you're* impatient. And you want to know more, and you want to know it now. And you don't think that God tries the patience of all those to whom He will eventually come.

So this occurs *before* the baptisms of Adam and Eve. Go to Moses chapter 6, beginning at verse 51. This is Enoch now, and Enoch is talking about this stuff. Enoch, in his record, is reminiscing about what went on before. We still don't have the full record of Adam and Eve, but we have enough snippets; if you begin to gather them together you can reconstruct the picture. And so beginning at verse 50: *“God hath made known unto our fathers that all men must repent. And he [that is God] called upon our father Adam by his own voice, saying: I am God; I made the world, and men before they were in the flesh. And he also said unto him: If thou wilt turn unto me, and hearken unto my voice, and believe, and repent of all thy transgressions, and be baptized, even in water, in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth, which is Jesus Christ, the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men, ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, asking all things in his name, and whatsoever ye shall ask, it shall be given you” (verse 50-52).*

So this was what God said to Adam preliminary to Adam being baptized, which was still later than when Adam learned about the purpose behind the sacrifice that he was offering. So he's told about it, then look at when it happened-- which again, this is not Enoch, this is going back to what Moses says about when it occurred. This is the voice of the Lord saying that it's going to

happen. When it happened is in verse 64. And this, again, is the record of Enoch, and this is still Moses 6:64 (we'll go back to the earlier incident in just a moment-- we'll do that next).

Verse 64: *"And it came to pass, when the Lord had spoken with Adam, our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord."* Understand that word "cried," after what we talked about yesterday, should mean something to you. Because the pattern is the same, and it doesn't matter which scripture you look at. Adam "cries" unto the Lord. *"And he was caught away..."*-- and what he "cried unto the Lord" is not known, but clearly when the Lord had told him about baptism, this is exactly what Adam wanted, and therefore he cried unto the Lord for a purpose.

And look what happens: *"...he was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water. And thus he was baptized, and the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened in the inner man. And he heard a voice out of heaven, saying: Thou art baptized with fire, and with the Holy Ghost. This is the record of the Father, and the Son, from henceforth and forever; And thou art after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity."*

This is Adam's baptism; confirmation; this is Adam's gift of the Holy Ghost; this is his baptism of fire; and this is his ordination by the voice of God out of heaven, ordaining him after the order of Him who is without beginning of days or end of years. This is all in one, at one moment. And this is many years later. There are generations of descendants of Adam and Eve that exist at the time this takes place. Okay?

Well the effect of that, when it happened, is picked up by Moses. This is Moses 5:9, *"And in that day the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, which beareth record of the Father and the Son, saying: I am the Only Begotten of the Father from the beginning, henceforth and forever, that as thou hast fallen thou mayest be redeemed, and all mankind, even as many as will."*

So these are the events that took place in that first generation of Adam and Eve among their descendants. Now together, look at verse 12: *"And Adam and Eve blessed the name of God."* And how did they do that? They did that by a ritual. They did that by offering sacrifice. They did that by observing what they understood-- but they did it together.

Zion can only come about as a consequence of consecration and sacrifice and not as a result of seeking to get gain. In fact, when you are in the employ of the Lord you ought to be sacrificing; it shouldn't be gainful. It should cost you in order to serve.

To accomplish purity, there are absolutes that are necessary. Sacrifice is absolutely necessary,

and equality is necessary, as well. Or at least, there be no poor among us. My guess is that among us sitting in this room here today, there are those who have significant issues with financial needs, and there are some sitting here today who could help in solving those.

In Alma chapter 1 it talks about the circumstance in which the priests served. Alma 1, beginning at verse 26: *“And when the priests left their labor to impart the word of God unto the people, the people also left their labors to hear the word of God. And when the priest had imparted unto them the word of God they all returned again diligently unto their labors; and the priest, not esteeming himself above his hearers, for the preacher was no better than the hearer, neither was the teacher any better than the learner; and thus they were all equal, and they did all labor, every man according to his strength. And they did impart of their substance, every man according to that which he had, to the poor, and the needy, and the sick, and the afflicted; and they did not wear costly apparel, yet they were neat and comely”* (verse 26-27).

They prospered in this, and they were blessed because of it. We should learn from their example when they were prospering about what it was that they did that was right that brought it about. The ideal is not to have a professional class of clergyman. The ideal is to have every one of us be equal.

There is no reason ever to pay for priesthood service. Serving should require sacrifice always and continually. We do not pay for ministers. I would recommend that if you choose to participate in a tithing group that you do it in the same manner that was described in Grand Junction, and you do it among yourselves. Community is necessary. I don't know how you can bear one another's burdens without administering your own tithes, without administering your own fast offerings, without doing things to help people in need.

The first wedding garment, if you want to call it that, is the original garment that was given to Adam and Eve in the Garden to cover their nakedness and to cover their shame before God-- all of which is an allegory.

The covering required the sacrifice of an animal to teach them the principle of sacrifice and to foreshadow the death of our Lord that would be required in order to restore us back to a state before God. And so what the covering given to Adam and Eve in the Garden represented was the sacrifice of our Lord. It was our Lord's atoning sacrifice which makes it possible for us to be covered so that our shame is no longer there. Instead, God looks upon the righteousness of His Son who has clothed us and not upon our own guilt and our own weakness and our own shortcomings. He beholds the image of His Son in the garment that we have put on.

I would dare not participate in a ministry in which service and sacrifice wasn't compelled. I wouldn't dare do that. There's a hardness that is associated with taking pay for what you do. There is an arrogance that sets you above the flock. It is better to pay than to receive tithes and offerings. It is better to give than to take.

It is our relationship to, and our connection with, God that matters. And you form that not through me or through some other man and not through the groups to which you belong. The groups to which you belong are a place to render service. They're a place where you can sacrifice to help others. And I don't care if that group is Methodist, Presbyterian, Latter-day Saint, or one of the fellowships that have been organized. That is of little consequence. You can be a Christian soul wherever you are, serving whoever you happen to be in contact with.

And the things of heaven were never intended to be given into the hands of men so that they might profit from them. We are expected to sacrifice for God. A religion that does not require sacrifice is a religion that will not produce faith. And if there is one thing that is going to be necessary for the establishment of Zion, it is going to necessarily be faith. You obtain it through sacrifice. You do not obtain it through adoration. You do not obtain it through the praise of men. You do not obtain it by sitting in chief seats. You don't obtain it by fairing sumptuously and administering the wealth that is surrendered to you as if you were God. It belongs to God. It is His.

There are ambitious men who offer to lead others hastily into new paths, claiming to be so mighty and strong that they can offer great rewards in the afterlife in exchange for following them here. I offer you no such thing. You must look to Christ for forgiveness of your sins, and follow His example of self-sacrifice, patience, obedience, and virtue. I can only urge you to patiently allow the True Shepherd to guide us all into His pastures, showing Him the respect due to a Redeemer.

If you participate in a fellowship, you're probably losing money. If you're conducting a conference, you're probably losing money. If you're giving talks as I do, or you're writing as I do, or you're assisting in projects as I do, you're probably losing money. I think you'd be surprised at how much money I've lost trying to do some good in the world. And I won't tell you the number because I think that ought to remain between me and the Lord. Far from being supported, I work hard to produce a living so I can afford to do some preaching.

There are churches that are built up to get gain. *We can't do that.* We can't do that. We shouldn't even tempt one another to do that. Realize that every one of us is required to sacrifice, and that's a good thing. That's a godly thing. That's a reflection of the sincerity of your heart. If you're losing money because of this, then you're probably pleasing the Lord. And if you're building

something up to get gain, well, I read you the punchline-- you're going to be burnt like stubble, so enjoy the gain.

Take courage. Life was meant to be a living sacrifice, to be lost in the service to God. Only by losing your life will you find it. Saving faith is so rare precisely because it requires courage to engage the opposition in this world and to cheerfully endure the abuse, lies, threats, and fiery darts sent by those who fear your faith above everything. Faith in God will save you through His grace. It can render every weapon of this world and hell powerless. But it takes courage.

When friends betray you and fear overtakes your associates and causes the knees to buckle under the weight of the burdens God allows to be imposed upon you, remember the Lord descended below it all, and when He cried out asking for the bitter cup to be removed, there was no relief. He is the prototype of the saved man. And the Father loved Him for His sacrifice.

It was the Lord's sacrifice for us that perfected His love for us. He values us because of the great price He paid for each one of us. If you love God, you will be given the opportunity to prove your love. You will be proven by the things you endure for His name's sake. Do not fail.

The foregoing are excerpts taken from:

- Nine of the lectures given in Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series* during 2013 and 2014;
- His talk entitled "Zion Will Come," given near Moab, UT on April 10, 2016;
- His conference talk entitled "The Doctrine of Christ," given in Boise, ID on September 11, 2016;
- Denver's conference talk entitled "Things to Keep Us Awake at Night," given in St. George, UT on March 19, 2017;
- His "Opening Remarks," given at the Covenant of Christ Conference in Boise, Idaho on September 3, 2017; and
- Denver's *Christian Reformation Lecture Series*, Talk #1, given in Cerritos, CA on September 21, 2017.