

Episode 95: Good Cheer

Today, Denver addresses the question: How can we be of good cheer, even when we have a broken heart and a contrite spirit?

And behold, I have given you the law and the commandments of my Father, that ye shall believe in me, and that ye shall repent of your sins, and come unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Behold, ye have the commandments before you, and the law is fulfilled. (3 Nephi 12:19)

This hearkens back to the doctrine of Christ given preliminarily to the audience. Repent. Be baptized. Receive the Holy Ghost. These commandments are the foundation upon which all else is to be built.

To all that He explained before, He has added, *repent of your sins, and come unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit* (ibid). Repenting will be accompanied by a broken heart and a contrite spirit. When you turn to Him and see clearly for the first time how dark your ways have been, it should break your heart. You should realize how desperately you stand in need of His grace to cover you, lift you, and heal you. You can then appreciate the great gulf between you and Him (see Moses 1:10).

If you had to bear your sins into His presence it would make you burn with regret and fear (see Mormon 9:3-5). Your own heart must break.

When you behold how little you have to offer Him, your spirit becomes contrite. He offers everything. And we can contribute nothing but our cooperation. And we still reluctantly give that, or if we give a little of our own cooperation, we think we have given something significant. We have not. Indeed, we cannot (Mosiah 2:20-21). He honors us if He permits us to assist. We should proceed with alacrity when given the chance to serve.

How patiently He has proceeded with teaching us all. We have the law. We have the commandments. Still we hesitate. Still He invites and reminds us: Repent. Come to Him. Do what was commanded. The law is fulfilled, and He is its fulfillment. Look to Him and be saved.

The proud spirit is foolish and blind. Our perilous state is such that we can forfeit all that we have ever been by refusing Christ's invitation to repent and turn again to Him.

But we still hesitate. We still hold back.

He really can save you. He has that power. He holds those keys. Even death and hell are conquered by Him (Mosiah 15:7-9). But His victory cannot become ours unless we repent and turn again to Him.

Think of those you have lost to the grave. All those living will likewise be lost unless we come to Christ. We have hope only in Him.

It seems too simple a thing to achieve so great a result. It has always been like that (1 Nephi 17:41). Look to Him and be saved. Keep His commandments. Repent. He can and will lead you from wherever you find yourself at present back into the light. It really does not matter what foolish traps you have surrounding you. So soon as you turn to face Him, He will direct you back safely. Repent and keep His commandments and they will bring *you* to Him. (Denver's blog entry entitled "3 Nephi 12:19," posted October 10, 2010)

Then will ye longer deny the Christ, or can ye behold the Lamb of God? Do ye suppose that ye shall dwell with him under a consciousness of your guilt? Do ye suppose that ye could be happy to dwell with that holy Being, when your souls are racked with a consciousness of guilt that ye have ever abused his laws? Behold, I say unto you that ye would be more miserable to dwell with a holy and just God, under a consciousness of your filthiness before him, than ye would to dwell with the damned souls in hell. For behold, when ye shall be brought to see your nakedness before God, and also the glory of God, and the holiness of Jesus Christ, it will kindle a flame of unquenchable fire upon you. (Mormon 9:3-5)

Peter literally experienced the bitterness of hell in that disappointed glance from the Lord. It came from recognizing how great a disappointment he was to the Lord. It was produced by a mere glance from Christ. He who loved all of us the most was the One whom Peter, in return, cursed and denied. When he saw himself through the Lord's disappointment, it made Peter bitter, filled with remorse, and caused him to retreat to weep alone.

We do not want to disappoint the Lord. None of us want to see that same look from the Lord that He showed Peter. We have opportunities to do what He asks us every

day. All of us do. Little things, moment to moment, particularly if you look for them. They matter. Every thought, every word, every deed—they matter. Let them reflect credit upon your faith in Him.

I'm not saying be dour, long-faced or stoic. Quite the contrary. "Be of good cheer" was His oft repeated expression, even using it as a greeting on many occasions (see Matt. 14:27; Mark 6:50; John 16:33; Acts 23:11; 3 Ne. 1:13; D&C 68:6, among others). Cheerfully go about doing good, and trust in Him. He will guide you. He was happy. He was cheerful. So are those who know Him best (see, e.g., JS-H 1:28).

There isn't a single thing you do for His sake which He will forget or fail to credit to you. Nor is there a single mistake which He will remember and hold against you, *if* you repent (see D&C 58: 42).

You should let your thoughts be such that you will be confident in His presence (D&C 121: 45). Be of good cheer. (Denver's blog entry entitled "Be of Good Cheer," posted May 21, 2010)

DENVER: I know of no more cheerful a being in the universe than Christ. When He says: "Be of good cheer," we ought to all accept that as the mantra. There is nothing that any of us will ever go through that He hasn't gone through, with a considerable greater degree of difficulty. He lived with a higher specific gravity than any of us had to ever fight against. And He won for each of us a prize that is potentially eternal. It will be eternal, one way or the other. But if you take full measure of what He offers, it will be delightfully eternal.

Cowardice is largely predicated upon fear. Don't be cowardly. Don't be fearful. Fear is the opposite of faith. For goodness sake, you're already in the battle! You're already going to be overtaken. The fact of the matter is that no one gets out of here alive. Live this life nobly, fearlessly. When you take the wounds that come your way, you make sure that they come to your front! Don't let 'em shoot you in the back. Go about your life boldly, nobly, valiantly; because it is only through valiance in the testimony of Jesus Christ that you can hope to secure anything—not valiance in your fidelity to anything other than Jesus Christ. The fact of the matter is that faith must be based in Him, and Him alone.

The work of God really is of deep import and the "light-mindedness" issue doesn't have a single thing to do with a sense of humor or laughter. It doesn't have anything to do with that. Light-mindedness has to do with treating lightly things that are really important. Light-mindedness means that you do not assign the correct value to something that comes from God—you treat it lightly. I don't care how much you laugh—and yes, God has a sense

of humor—and when I'm all dour, and desperate, and pleading, very often the first response of the Lord is a quip about how inappropriately I'm behaving. The first message in the first talk of the “10 talks” was to be of good cheer because our Lord is of good cheer. He takes seriously the things that will save us, but he really does enjoy our company and wishes that we likewise enjoyed one another's company as we ought to do.

It is not enough to receive my covenant, but you must also abide it. And all who abide it, whether on this land or any other land, will be mine and I will watch over them and protect them in the day of harvest, and gather them in as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. I will number you among the remnant of Jacob, no longer outcasts, and you will inherit the promises of Israel. You shall be my people and I will be your God, and the sword will not devour you. And unto those who will receive will more be given, until they know the mysteries of God in full.

But remember that without the fruit of repentance, and a broken heart and a contrite spirit, you cannot keep my covenant; for I, your Lord, am meek and lowly of heart. Be like me. You have all been wounded, your hearts pierced through with sorrows because of how the world has treated you. But you have also scarred one another by your unkind treatment of each other, and you do not notice your misconduct toward others because you think yourself justified in this. You bear the scars on your countenances, from the soles of your feet to the head, and every heart is faint. Your visages have been so marred that your hardness, mistrust, suspicions, resentments, fear, jealousies, and anger toward your fellow man bear outward witness of your inner self; you cannot hide it. When I appear to you, instead of confidence, you feel shame. You fear and withdraw from me because you bear the blood and sins of your treatment of brothers and sisters. Come to me and I will make sins as scarlet become white as snow, and I will make you stand boldly before me, confident of my love.

I descended below it all, and know the sorrows of you all, and have borne the grief of it all, and I say to you, Forgive one another. Be tender with one another, pursue judgment, bless the oppressed, care for the orphan, and uplift the widow in her need for I have redeemed you from being orphaned and taken you that you are no longer a widowed people. Rejoice in me, and rejoice with your brethren and sisters who are mine also. Be one. (T&C 157:48-50)

It's almost amusing for people in their arrogance to assume that they know enough to understand what God is doing or has done because the things of God are of deep import; and careful and solemn and ponderous and prayerful thought can only find them out. Your understanding has to reach into heaven itself and search into and contemplate the darkest

abyss, if you're going to save any soul, including your own and that's not accomplished casually, nor is it accomplished without sacrifice. (see *TPJS*, pg 137, March 25, 1839)

A Lord, whose own heart was broken, ultimately requires a great deal to happen to create a broken heart and a contrite spirit, willing to endure, however uncomfortable it may make you feel, all that God requires of you to do in order to be a son of God—and that's not accomplished in an instant suddenly. It's accomplished carefully and over trial after trial, test after test, temptation after temptation; but, ultimately, it will be required before the return of the Lord. It will be mandatory, before the return of the Lord, for the original Holy Order to exist in all of its components. It has to. And there has to be established, on the earth, all of the rites that originally belonged in the days of Adam, because that has to be surrendered back. And it has to go back through those that had possessed it in order for God to have the right to come and claim this world as His own, and to exercise dominion over it; because if the dominion over the world belongs to someone other than Him, His word cannot be broken, and He cannot come and interfere with the right of dominion that exists on the Earth. It has to exist. It has to be fully restored, and it has to be in the possession of those who will not covet it—those who will not, like Cain, attempt to influence the conditions of salvation for the souls of men—those who look upon it merely as a burden to be held, under the authority of God, belonging to Him, to be returned to Him so that He can come and fix this broken world and bring wickedness to an end.

Christ tried to explain what it was that would make us right in the Sermon on the Mount. He says here is the commandment: *Thou shalt not commit adultery*, but I say to you, you can walk around all day not committing adultery and still be a lustful, wretched, perverse, undesirable, unlovely, unbecoming, depraved soul. So don't lust in your heart. You have read and it's been told you: *Thou shalt not kill*. You can do a lot of damage to another human being without killing them. Words can be weapons. You can do a lot of damage with the words you speak, and never inflict a single bruise on another person's body; but you can break their heart, and Christ says: *Love your enemies*. Do good to those that hate you and spitefully abuse you. Don't be angry with your brother. Don't call them names. Return good for evil (see Matthew 5-7; see also Matthew 3 RE).

Christ was saying the problem isn't your conduct, the problem is your heart. And I want to take that heart—Christ telling us—I want to take that heart that you've got and I want to break it. I want you to have a broken heart and I want you to have a contrite spirit, because the only way you're going to let me come in is if what you're doing, to surround yourself, is broken down enough to permit me to come in.

There remains [a] great work yet to be done. Receive my covenant and abide in it, not as in the former time[s] when jarring, jealousy, contention, and backbiting caused anger, broke hearts, and hardened the souls of those claiming to be my saints. But receive it in spirit, in meekness, and in truth. I have given you a former commandment that I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men. And again, I have taught that if you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your trespasses. How do I act toward mankind? If men intend no offense, I take no offense, but if they are taught and should have obeyed, then I reprove and correct, and forgive and forget. You cannot be at peace with one another if you take offense when none is intended. But again I say, judge not others except by the rule you want used to weigh yourself.

I will give to you words to speak to the people to accept my covenant, and you shall read [these] words to them. Read first to the people these words I now speak, and then read the words of the covenant, and the people who will receive and do my words and my covenant shall then stand and say, Yes.

Then by my law and my word they will be mine, and I will be with and lead my people onward through the spirit of Truth, the Comforter, the Record of Heaven, the peaceable things of immortal glory, even the holy ghost which will abide with them, and you will be children of the Most High God, fellow servants and numbered with the congregation of the just. Therefore rejoice! And the angels are given charge to watch over and protect my people. My eyes are over the whole earth and all men everywhere are before me. Men conspire to overthrow and oppress, and use violence to control others through fear. My Spirit restrains the destroyer, to allow those who are in the world and willing to give heed to my words time to prepare, but I will not always suffer...the wickedness of man.

The Earth groans under the wickedness of mankind upon her face, and she longs for peace to come. She withholds the abundance of her bounty because of the offenses of men against me, against one another, and against her. But if righteousness returns and my people prove by their actions, words, and thoughts to yield to my Spirit and hearken to my commandments, then will the Earth rejoice, for the feet of those who cry peace upon her mountains are beautiful indeed, and I, the Lord, will bring again Zion, and the earth will rejoice.

In the world, tares are ripening. ...So I ask you, What of the wheat? Let your pride, and your envy, and your fears depart from you. [And] I will come to my tabernacle and dwell with my people in Zion, and none will overtake it.

Cry peace. Proclaim my words. Invite those who will repent to be baptized and forgiven, and they shall obtain my Spirit to guide them. The time is short and I come quickly, therefore open your mouths and warn others to flee the wrath which is to come as men in anger destroy one another. The wicked shall destroy the wicked, and I will hold the peacemakers in the palm of my hand and none can take them from me.

Be comforted, be of good cheer, rejoice, and look up, for I am with you who remember me, and all those who watch for me, always, even unto the end. Amen. (T&C 157:58-66)

The foregoing excerpts are taken from:

- Denver's blog entry entitled "3 Nephi 12:19," posted October 10, 2010
- Denver's blog entry entitled "Be of Good Cheer," posted May 21, 2010
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #1 entitled "Be of Good Cheer," given in Boise, ID on September 10th, 2013
- Denver's conference talk entitled "Things to Keep Us Awake at Night," given in St. George, UT on March 19th, 2017
- The presentation of "Answer and Covenant," given at the Covenant of Christ Conference in Boise, ID on September 3rd, 2017
- A fireside talk entitled "The Holy Order," given in Bountiful, UT on October 29, 2017
- His remarks given at the Joseph Smith Restoration Conference in Boise, ID on June 24, 2018