

## Episode 101: Love, Part 2

**This is the second part of a special series on Love, where Denver teaches us how we can live according to the two great commandments: Love God, and Love One Another.**

DENVER: Doctrine and Covenants section 93, verse 1, says: *VERILY, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am* (D&C 93:1; see also T&C 93:1 RE).

*Every soul who forsaketh his sins*—you're not gonna get past your sins until God forgives you, but you need to awaken to the fact that you possess them, and turn from them; because turning from them is repentance—turning to face Him. You can still have a load that needs to be dropped because we are all heavy laden with sin. But forsaking your sins means that you would prefer Him over everything else there is. So turn and face Him.

*Cometh unto me*—well, the only way you can leave that load behind is to get down in prayer, seeking Him, and asking Him to free you from the load, and to allow you—as Alma recounts in his 36th chapter of the book of Alma: the terrible agony that he felt, and calling upon God to be redeemed, and then, when God answered, he could remember—the pain, the distress that he had, was equaled by the joy and the exhilaration he felt on the other side of that—being cleansed.

*Calleth on my name*—you have to do that.

*And obeyeth my voice*—that would include not merely the things that were given to us by Joseph Smith that you may be neglecting, but obeying His voice in what He tells you here and now. Because your agenda is different from mine. Your needs are different from mine. Your responsibilities are different from mine. You have your own family; you have your own ward; you have your own neighbors; you have your own issues. Fathers and sons, mothers and daughters—you're part of a community somewhere, and inside of that, all of you need to listen to the voice of God, because He loves everyone. He loves that eccentric aunt that you just dread having come around, and you can't for the life of you understand why she thinks cloves should be poked into a turkey on Thanksgiving. And you wonder if maybe there shouldn't be a procedure that more easily confines her to someplace where they administer psychotropic drugs. God loves her as much as He loves you. God loves all of us. And the agenda that you have, and the people you can affect, and the relief that you can administer, and the needs that go in front of your eyes day by day are uniquely yours. And the relief that you can grant to those around you—that's yours. It was given to you by God as a gift. Don't harden your heart.

I was reading about the problems that the early saints experienced in that 1857/1856/1858 timeframe—from the diaries; not the official history, not from the stuff that is made public; these are the private diaries and journals—I was reading from that in Sacrament (we went home, and I attended my church meetings this morning), and I literally cried as I

read what they were called upon to go through. I am very disinclined to be critical and non-appreciative of the fact that those who went before us suffered as they suffered, in order to preserve and make possible for us today the programs, the scriptures—the fact that they would not allow the Restoration through Joseph to lapse into silence and neglect. It doesn't matter that they made mistakes. We make mistakes, too—every one of us. If you'd lived a perfect life, you wouldn't be here. The fact is, we **all** are broken, and we are **all** in need of repair.

Come to Him, because the only repairman that exists in the universe—inside of **this** matrix—is Christ, whose assignment it is to repair and redeem and to heal us. Obey His voice, no matter how much it may disagree with the flow of that that goes on all around you. People thought I was a madman (teaching gospel doctrine) when we got to the King Benjamin talk about not allowing beggars to go by and neglecting them. And I got push-back every four years when we got through that material because I'm saying, "You don't judge the beggars." You really don't have any right to do that. And then you have Paul's statement about being careful to entertain strangers because angels sometimes come among you unawares.

Let's assume, for argument's sake, that John lingers still. And let's assume, for argument's sake, that John would like to know your heart. How might he do that best? I would suggest, coming to you as a beggar, smelling foul and in need, asking you for relief is the perfect way to find out if that same spirit animates you as animated King Benjamin, when King Benjamin said, 'Don't suffer the beggar to put up their petition to you in vain because are we not all beggars?' And of course, that's not merely a rhetorical question. Are we not all beggars? Well, it's self-evident—yeah.

*Obeyeth my voice and keepeth my commandments—my commandments—*given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, entrusted to you, should be respected by you; given by the voice of the Spirit to you, asking you to help those around you, because the relief that people need sometimes can only come from one source, and that is you; under the inspiration of the Spirit, relieving the burdens of those around you. Why do you think God cares about the widows, and the orphans, and the poor, and the infirm? And who at Bountiful appreciated His coming the most? Was it those that were called to preside, whose names are given to us because they were recorded in the record? Or was it those that He said—the nameless group—'Bring them up here, and let me heal them?' And all of those in need of healing were brought forward and healed. We read the record and say, 'I got a name here; I got a Timothy. I got a name here; I got a Nephi. I got a name here, and this must be someone big and great and important.' But unto whom did the Lord minister more? And who was it in Bountiful who appreciated more what the Lord had come to do?

Be like your Master. Do what you can for those around you who are infirm. They are here in abundance—the brokenhearted, the families that are in need. If you want to be saved, help the Lord save others—not by preaching and clamoring and demanding that they view the world like you do, but by giving them a hand. Your most powerful sermon can be in the effort that you make and the time that you take to let people know that you care about

them. If you would like to repent of your sins, take a look around at those in need and do what you can for them, because you've begun the first step. When your heart is like Him, then you open up so that He can enter in. And when your heart is unlike Him, well, there's no room except if He break it, which He will do. You do these things, *you shall see my face and know that I am*—**know**; not believe, but know.

This is still that paragraph nine of the Lectures on Faith, 7th lecture about—I don't know; it looks like it's only a third of the way down; it's a long paragraph. (By the way, in that 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, section 76, which in our current edition is like 118 verses, I think it's eight verses there. So, if you're gonna memorize a verse in those days, dude, you're like Gettysburg-Address-worthy. I mean, it's *formidable*. Formidable, depending on what part of the country you reckon from.) Okay, so about a third of the way down, it says—it poses the question:

*Where shall we find a saved being? For if we can find a saved being, we may ascertain without much difficulty what all others must be in order to be saved. We think that it will not be a matter of dispute, that two beings who are unlike each other cannot both be saved; for whatever constitutes the salvation of one will constitute the salvation of every creature which will be saved; and if we find one saved being in all existence, we may see what all others must be, or else not be saved. We ask, then, where is the prototype? Or, where is the saved being? We conclude, as to the answer of this question, there will be no dispute among those who believe the Bible, that it is Christ: all will agree in this, **he** is the prototype or standard of salvation; or, in other words, **he** is a saved being. [Skipping down a couple of lines:] If he were anything different from what he is, he would not be saved; for his salvation depends on his being precisely what he is and nothing else. (Lectures on Faith 7:9)*

So according to the Lectures on Faith, if you would be saved, you have to be **exactly, precisely** what Christ is **and nothing else**. Now, you've been told all your life that's an impossibility. Well, it's an impossibility in one sense, and it's a mandatory requirement in another sense. It's an impossibility because, as it turns out, we all err. All of us err; we always have. And that's what the atonement was designed to fix—because He picks that burden up, and He carries it for us.

But the fact that He will carry **that burden** for us doesn't relieve **us**—from the moment that He's taken that away—from then going forward to do good. You **can** be Christ-like. You **can** administer relief to those around you. You **can**, as He said, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, visit those who are in prison. Some of the most profound, deepest, spiritual experiences that I have had recounted to me by people I know, came from people who go out to the prison in Bluffdale and hold family home evenings with prison inmates. That ministrations, that service, elevates the servant. Their heart gets moved with compassion. Your heart needs to be like Christ's—moved with compassion for others.

And the way you do that is imitative at first, and then it is informed by the experience later. What begins as imitation, and merely that, finds room within to have genuine compassion

for the needs of others. Christ is the prototype, but you can be like Him. There are godly people walking around; many of them are elderly. Many of them have long since forgotten their own needs, and they spend their lives in service of others. You can find that even within the church with Relief Society presidents. You can find that within the church with people who do legitimate-needs home teaching. You don't have to go find another church in which to serve. You don't have to find new neighbors, and you don't have to have a new family. That eccentric group of people, that tribe into which you were born—you belong there. You belong there as an example—as an example of love and compassion.

And you know, the reason why in the sermon on the mount He says they're going to speak *all manner of evil against you falsely, for my name's sake* (Matthew 5:11; see also Matthew 3:14 RE) is not because of anything you've done. It's because down here, no one believes. No one believes the genuine thing exists. Everyone's heart has been broken; everyone has been disappointed. Everyone says, "The man I thought was going to be so great has turned out, instead, to be just another broken ship-wreck." Their skepticism of you has been earned in this environment by everyone they've ever met. Therefore, you've got to be different. And you've got to expect their broken heart is going to be taken out on you, until you at last—and it may require your life to do it—until you at last show that faith can yet exist here.

Let it exist here in you. Let it live and breathe in you. You needn't look for another life, another opportunity, somewhere else far away to go. It's right here; it's in your lap; it's in your family; it's in your home; it's in your community; it's among all those egotistical, hard-headed, stubborn Gentiles—that we parade around, lauding one another, and talking about what great things we are. Serve them. Submit to their rule. Do it in a way that will touch their hearts and be the real thing. Be the real thing, and finally, at last, there will be those who are worthy to lead.

You need to be like Christ. It is precise. It is exact.

Some things get asked of you that require you to lay *even the things you love most* on the altar, and you have to choose. Each of you must choose for yourself the things that you would prefer. But if you don't give primacy to the voice of God speaking to you, you'll never lay hold upon any key, any blessing, any right, any priesthood, if all you do is what some man tells you to do.

Until you listen to God and do what God tells you to do, you will never lay hold upon anything that gives you the ability to declare your own rights, keys, honor, majesty, glory, and power of your own priesthood.

The atonement isn't like Tinkerbell spreading some magic dust that will make you rise up. The atonement will erase your sins and mistakes, but **you** must rise up. **You** must acquire those virtues. The glory of God **is** intelligence. And repentance requires you to acquire that intelligence—that glory of God. And you acquire it by the things that you do in His name and for His sake. And those that are here with you, in need, they represent Him. And when

you do it to even the least of them, He will credit that as having been done for Him. And no good deed will be gone unnoticed with Him. He even notices when the sparrows fall. So is He not going to notice when your knee bends with compassion, praying for His mercy for someone that has offended you? And when you pray for those who have offended you, do you think for one moment that that doesn't change your own heart?

The reason to rejoice and be exceedingly glad when they *say all manner of evil against you falsely* is because it affords you the opportunity, with compassion—like our Lord, who forgave even those who were in the act of killing Him—not their brutality, but their ignorance; because when the day arrives that they see things aright finally, and they realize what offense they gave out—they had no intention of offending their Redeemer; they were carrying out the execution of a criminal—and so, He had compassion on them for their ignorance.

**You** have compassion for all those around you who are ignorant. If you think you know a little more than them, then use gentleness and meekness to persuade them. Sometimes what you try to persuade them of is going to offend them; couple it with your own testimony of the truth. Don't let them simply go away offended. Let them know that when you give offense, and you surely will give offense, let them know that you did it because of your love for them, your love of God, and your faith in the things that God is doing. When you offend, do it kindly and while bearing testimony of the truth and with the compassion that should hail from a position of greater light and truth, or intelligence. They don't know what they're doing. They don't understand it yet. So help them.

All priesthood is perishable. We saw that in Doctrine and Covenants section 121, verse 37.

*That they [it] may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness...[And let me couple that with, what is the tool? How do I get to use the Priesthood? How is it that I do get to exercise some influence?] No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned. (D&C 121:37, 41; see also T&C 139:5-6)*

I thank God that I do not preside over any of you! I thank God I have no responsibility for any of you, my family aside. Let me tell you that even within my own family, I don't feel it is my prerogative to do anything other than to use persuasion, to use long-suffering, to use gentleness and meekness, and love unfeigned. And to try kindly to use pure knowledge to lay the matter out. But it is ever so much better to lay that out when the question is asked, rather than it is to lay out the answer and force-feed it to someone who doesn't even have the idea occur to them that there is an issue to be discussed.

Turn to Doctrine and Covenants section 63, beginning—this is talking about Zion, beginning at verse 20 of section 63:

*Nevertheless, he that endureth in faith and doeth my will, the same shall overcome, and shall receive an inheritance upon the earth when the day of transfiguration shall come; When the earth shall be transfigured, even according to the pattern which was shown unto mine apostles upon the mount; of which account the fulness ye have not yet received. (See also T&C 50:5)*

He promised them that they would get to see the latter-day triumph. He took three of them up on the mountain, and He showed them the latter-day triumph. Therefore, there were those that were standing in that generation who did not die until they had seen the latter-day triumph of the Kingdom of God. He fulfilled His own word. And it was put into the gospel in that fashion for that reason.

**It will happen!** But it requires an awakening, and it requires an arising. It does not require a leader—a servant, maybe; not a leader. It does not require a president. It requires your common consent, by your deeds—not only to say, but to do. It will not be achieved by control. It will not be achieved by coercion. It will not be achieved by force. It will not be achieved because there's some big, strongman among you. It will only happen if each of you are strengthened in your faith and **know the Lord**. It **will** be achieved by humility. It **will** be achieved through meekness. It **will** be achieved by love which is unfeigned—the real thing.

Today, we manufacture leaders. Today, we produce them as a result of a skill set. And they will mimic it, and they will appear as though they are something that they are not. So when I say *love unfeigned*, it cannot be feigned. There cannot be anything about the establishment of Zion that is inauthentic, illegitimate, or insincere. You have to be your own judge about who you are and what you're about. But to the extent that you think you can behave and imitate and get in, all you would do is jeopardize your life. You have to **be** it; you can't feign it. Because if it is feigned, it will not satisfy you.

**If** you decide to experiment upon the words we have found in scripture today, and **if** you decide that you're going to try and, together, collect your own tithes and administer to your own poor among you, I would suggest that not only should women have an equal voice, but that Joseph Smith was really on to something. Long before the notion of a bishop controlling a storehouse, and even after the existence of a storehouse, the Relief Society was a lively partner in the process. I would suggest when you are 'one,' and when there is relief that is needed, and when, as a result of what the Lord needs to have happen is for people to gather with *love unfeigned*, forget the nonsense about who is greater and who is less. Look among whatever group you participate in and ask yourself, 'Who's more compassionate, and who loves more?' And listen to **her** [laughter], and listen to all of the **hers**, because when it comes to the home and the hearth and the needs of children, there is a competency among the women that is innate. And love can be feigned by the presiding authorities. But women generally have a difficult time pulling that kind of nonsense off. Men can pretend to many things.

Read the chapter on “Gethsemane” in *Come, Let Us Adore Him*, and you’ll read an eyewitness account of how our Lord was smitten and afflicted, even beyond what man can endure. And each time, He was able to find peace and reconciliation and love, despite what He was put through.

This is the One about whom the scriptures are speaking. This is the Lord who’s asking you to come to Him. He’s not aloof, and He’s not distant. If He’ll speak to someone in a military barracks, He’ll speak to you, every one of you. And what He has to say to you is far more important than anything I can say. But I can bear testimony of Him. And I can assure you that He will not leave your petitions unanswered. And I can also assure you that today is once again *a day of salvation*. And He has set His hand again. No matter how unlikely it may appear. No matter how much reason there is to be skeptical. No matter how many more signs you think may need to be fulfilled. I’m telling you, He has set His hand again. The Heavens are open for business, and the question is whether you’re interested in becoming a customer or not.

A while ago we read a quote from Joseph in Orem about where the Kingdom of God is. And Joseph said [paraphrasing], “If you can find anyone sent by God, there **is** the Kingdom of God” (*History of the Church*, 5:259; emphasis added). It was good doctrine when Joseph declared it. It was good doctrine when Mosiah declared it. It’s good doctrine when I declare it. Because any of you who will hear, and then who will hearken unto their words, you become His seed. You have to hear it. You have to hear it from someone who has been sent. But it does you no good at all if you will not hearken to it, because it is in the hearkening that *you* will meet God; *you* will find redemption. *You* will hear His voice and *you* will become a holy vessel, because His word will be animated in you. And you will have no doubts about your salvation, because *you* will hear Him declare it in His own voice. And you will know that He’s no respecter of persons. And you’ll know that you, like any other person, can come unto Him; and look to Him and Him alone for your salvation, and not be dependent upon any other person or system. And you too can join in singing a *song of redeeming love* (Alma 5:26; see also Alma 3:5 RE).

Listen. **Religion is, or ought to be, deeply personal.** Religion is not something that at its most intimate level—it’s not even something that can be shared.

Go to Doctrine and Covenants section 76. There’s some closing verses in the vision in 76, beginning at verse 114:

*Great and marvelous are the works of the Lord, and the mysteries of his kingdom which he showed unto us, which surpass all understanding in glory, and in might, and in dominion; Which he commanded us we should not write while we were yet in the Spirit, and are not lawful for man to utter; Neither is man capable to make them known, for they are only to be seen and understood by the power of the Holy Spirit, which God bestows on those who love him, and purify themselves before him; **To whom he grants this privilege of seeing and knowing for themselves; That through the power and manifestation of the Spirit, while in the flesh, they may be***

*able to bear his presence in the world of glory.* (emphasis added; D&C 76:114; see also T&C 69:29)

I have been in that world of glory. I have abided in His presence. I know things not lawful to be uttered. But everything I've uttered today is lawful to be said, is contained in scripture, is the Lord's invitation to you, and you need to realize that this language is your invitation. Because God did not say, "There's some folks I don't love." He says He bestows it on any who love Him. The question isn't His love of us; that is a given. Those few of you who are sitting in this room with a hard heart, rejecting what I have to say, He loves every bit as much as those of you whose hearts are soft, and are open, and are willing. It is not that God loves one more than another; it is that some of you love Him, and others do not. And by this He knows whether you love Him: It's whether your heart is soft and willing to receive, or you deliberately choose to be blinded by the false traditions that you've studied through and hold fast to because you have not faith.

He came. He suffered. He lived. He died. He did what He did in order to lift all of Creation, and you are inextricably connected to Him. Therefore, trust that. Receive Him. It may start very slow, very small, very distant. Act on that! Harken to that! It gets louder. You will never wind up in the company of Gods and angels if you're not willing to have faith in those preliminary things that you receive that ask you to go and to do.

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 have 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. May not even make much sense to you when you're going and you're doing. You may think you're giving offenses where you absolutely do not intend to do so. You may find the people that you love rejecting you, finding a new family, and 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.

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The foregoing excerpts are taken from:

- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #3 entitled "Repentance" given in Logan, UT on September 29th, 2013
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #5 entitled "Priesthood" given in Orem, UT on November 2nd, 2013
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #6 entitled "Zion" given in Grand Junction, CO on April 12th, 2014



- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #7 entitled "Christ, Prototype of the Saved Man" given in Ephraim, UT on June 28, 2014