

Denver Snuffer Podcast 169: Good Cheer, Part 2

This installment is titled Good Cheer, Part 2, as a follow-on to the Good Cheer podcast originally released in 2019, where Denver discusses how we can be of good cheer even when the world around us seems to be getting darker.

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DENVER: Would you like to be like your Father in Heaven? Well, then, receive ye the Holy Ghost. He is as close, He is as intimate, He is as in connection with you as the very substance out of which you were originally organized. If you would like to be in touch with Him, keep His commandments.

Follow Him. You're not... Even if you do your best, you're not gonna do a very good job. But the Scriptures talk in terms of your sincerity: those who keep all His commandments or **seek earnestly to do so**. Even the best of us are doing things wrong that we don't even know are wrong yet, because we haven't **got** that much light and truth **yet**. And so, we proceed to blunder around in the china shop, breaking the furniture and damaging all of the things that we ought to be holding sacred, and we do it with reckless abandon. And God doesn't care about that, because He hasn't brought us that far up the ladder yet to respect the furniture. He's just trying to get us to stop messing our pants and stop putting graffiti on the walls—if we'll just settle down enough to do that.

The atonement of Christ is a work in progress. He's trying to fix us, and He does that by giving us a little light, and a little more light, and a little more yet. Until finally you look back upon yourself from two decades earlier, and you say, "What a wretch was I!" Well, it's a progression in light and truth. You're still a wretch, you're just 20 years away from recognizing it still. **Start obeying further** and getting more light and truth, and you'll be astonished at what it is you're going to become.

Well, let me end by bearing testimony to you that, in my view, the Church is exactly what it ought to be, staffed exactly as it should be, filled with all you good people, with all of the things that you bring with you to the party. And that this is a perfect environment in which each one of you get the opportunity to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling before the Lord. And you ought to be afraid. You ought to be fearful because the things that you hold onto in your secret sins are the very things that you ought to be abandoning. And the fact that you're holding on to them means you have not yet chosen the light and the truth. You ought to be abandoning that junk, whatever it is.

We all have our shortcomings. We all have our temptations. We all have our failings.:

- **Despite** the bundle of insecurities (and there were **many** in the prophet Joseph Smith), the prophet Joseph Smith met the Lord.
- Despite the fact that ~~Abraham~~ [Isaiah] was a self-confessed man of unclean lips in the presence of the Lord didn't stop him from entering into the presence of the Lord.

- The fact that Peter is... Peter is not even a personality; he's a syndrome. OK? He's got pathologies. This... Peter: the chief apostle, the rock, the one that the Lord relied upon, the one that He put first and preeminent.
- And Paul? Well, look... You have to trust Paul to someone with far more... They have to have prescription authority to deal with him. You can't... A psychologist is insufficient.

These people met with the Lord. It is not a distant mountain. It is not an insurmountable problem. Have faith, repent, go and partake of the sacrament—do so (and I use the word advisedly), do so **worthily**.

By the way, do you know how to determine if you're worthy or not? You ask the Lord. You don't do as brother Gaskill suggests and simply presume it. You do as Joseph said: And after thinking about his native cheery temperament and his inclination towards irreverence, he decided to inquire of the Lord to find out what his standing was. It had been four years since the First Vision, and Joseph wanted to know. Joseph didn't presume. In fact, if he were presuming, he would have presumed to the contrary that he was worthy. "How am I doing, Lord?" And the Lord answered, in the form of the angel Moroni.

You know, don't settle for a book about riding the bike. Don't settle for polishing up the launch pad. It was designed to be set in motion. It was designed to engage you. You're supposed to be part of this. The prophetic history of all that we read needs to come down to and be embodied in you and your life.

You have whole generations of people that went before you and you have people that are coming after whose faith, just like our faith in the pre-existence, was stimulated by the word of God embodied in the life of Christ. You have people looking upon you and having faith as a consequence of what you're doing. You're called "saviors on Mount Zion" not simply because you trek to the temple, and you fall asleep during the endowment. You're called that because all of those that went before and all who come after have an investment in your life. **You! You** are the source of faith. **You** are the source of light for many.

Live your life as if you're on stage because, believe me, you are. There are people who are being redeemed as a consequence of the investment that they have in you. A failing, flagging, despondent ancestor is being buoyed up by the example you set. You have no private moments, and you have no private sins, so stop holding on to them. For goodness sake, they're not only being shouted on the rooftops in the day of judgment, they're being shouted on the rooftops right now. This is only the illusion of privacy. Everything you do is on display, which is why it is so important that you be one who gathers light and truth.

...That doctrine which doesn't abuse, control, compel; but invites and entices, that is delicious, that makes you hunger for more; the principles of the gospel that not only edify but enlighten and enliven. The kinds of things which, despite everything else that separates you, you find you can come together in love and appreciation. That's the gospel. That's the Restoration.

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 Spirit cannot lean upon you and cannot focus your mind upon the revelation that you are entitled to receive unless you use the scriptures as they were intended to be used—as a Urim and Thummim; as the basis from which you draw out the truths of God. And the best version of that is, of course, the Book of Mormon.

You can look at D&C 138, and you'll find that Joseph F. Smith sat in his room pondering over the scriptures. He's near death—it's about eight weeks before the death of Joseph F. Smith. The Church had a lot of challenges going on at that time. Fortuitously for us, the man who sat at home—infirm and worried about death—happened to happily be the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. And so when he got an answer (not to his inquiry about leading the Church), when he got an answer to an inquiry that had nothing to do with his position or budgets or anything else that manages an organization—it had to do with his own concern, about his own deepest apprehensions, his impending death, which would follow about eight weeks after this—the scriptures opened like a Urim and Thummim to his view, and we get a vision of the redemption of the dead.

It entered... [this is back—verse 12 of the Joseph Smith History], *It entered [into his heart] with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again* (JSH 2:3 RE). Now that's an interesting statement, because it doesn't appear that this "labor" was a one-off event, but it occurred over and over as he sought more understanding, searching deeper and deeper into trying to understand what it was he ought to do and how it is he ought to accomplish it.

... again and again knowing... if any person needed wisdom from God, I did (ibid). You should be asking God so that you can understand scripture. You shouldn't be trusting the expositions of anyone, myself included. These scriptures have a message for you. God has a message for you. God would like to talk to **you**, not through me or any other man. God would like to talk with **you**. You'll be saved by knowledge, and the things you need to know are uniquely situated; the things you have the right to get from God are uniquely situated.

I got an answer from God. That's why 40 years ago today, I went in, and I got baptized. Elder

Brian Black baptized me. During the baptismal service, because it was approaching twilight, the sun was beginning to set, the moon had emerged, and the first stars began to shine. And Brian Black commented in the talk that was given by him before laying on hands that all the signs of heaven—the sun, the moon and the stars—had been visible during my baptismal ceremony. I have felt the presence of God with me from that moment through today. Just this morning I checked into my office before coming here, and when I arrived at my office, there was a dove on the lawn to meet me, and she stayed there as I went by. Now it's a small thing, but if you're acquainted with the scriptures, you understand what such a symbol can mean, and to me, did mean.

Your lives should be filled with wonder. Be not faithless, but be believing. And be of good cheer. He knows you better than you know yourself. I was belly-aching about an idiot friend, and as I am wont to do, it was prayerful.

The Stake President asked me a few weeks ago about whether I was praying at the time that I had one of the encounters he and I discussed, and I said: "It's not a fair question. I wake up in the morning, and I start to pray. Throughout the day, I will take care of a thousand things. And whenever I am free, my mind will revert back to the prayer, and we'll continue the dialogue." And it goes on all day. There's not a moment in my life in which I am not being prayerful. And so the answer to the question is, I suppose, Yes, I was praying. Because there's hardly a moment when I'm idle when I am not praying.

Well, God intends to speak to each of us about us and about what matters to us and about what matters to you. He, unlike us, is not bounded by the linear existence that we have. All things past, present, and future are continually before the Lord.

In fact, it's really sort of an interesting study. If you take and you look at what the Lord does in 3 Nephi, He has this agenda that He's been assigned by the Lord (or by the Father), and Christ discharges the agenda. And He goes through, and as you read the chapters in 3 Nephi, it's really structured, and it's really orderly. And then He announces: "Now I have finished what the Father has told me to deliver to you", and He just begins to talk; and as He begins to talk, what unfolds is non-chronological. It's topical, but it's past, present, and future. His thoughts are not like our thoughts. They aren't. They're nonlinear. And sometimes that's not easy.

At length, he says in verse 13: *I came to the conclusion that I must either remain in darkness and confusion, or else I must do as James directs, that is, ask of God.* And so it is for all of us. You wanna know the truth of a proposition? You ask God. And don't be fearful! If you ask, He'll answer. But you better be prepared for the answer. Because the battle that is already upon us is going to require valiance. Cowardly, effeminate, hen-like behavior can never, never obtain the promises of God. Christ asked: *What went you [forth] to see? A reed [shaking in] the wind?* (Matthew 11:7; see also Matthew 6:2 RE). That's what you want? I don't think John the Baptist cried on demand. And Zion isn't a bank.

So, [it is] in accordance with this, my determination to ask of God, I retired to the woods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early in the

spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally. After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed... finding myself alone, I knelt down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction. (Joseph Smith History 1:14-15; see also JSH 2:3-4 RE)

You know, we have Orson Hyde's account of this thick darkness, and I want to read it to you. This is Orson Hyde writing about the incident we just looked at:

He, therefore, retired to a secret place, in a grove, but a short distance from his father's house, and knelt down and began to call upon the Lord. At first, he was severely tempted by the powers of darkness, which endeavored to overcome him. The adversary benighted his mind with doubts, and brought to his soul all kinds of improper pictures and tried to hinder him in his efforts and the accomplishment of his goal. However, the overflowing mercy of God came to buoy him up.

You know, if salvation consists in obtaining knowledge, you can't afford to clutter your mind with the kinds of things which can readily summon up improper images, improper thoughts, improper ambitions. In fact, it doesn't matter what you **want**. There's only one thing that matters. And that is: What is the Lord's will for you, with you. And that will is always the same—to bring about your happiness; ultimately, to bring about your joy. He tells you that His burden is light, because however it may seem in the direful circumstances of 1838 in the life of Joseph Smith, **this** statement of faith, **this** testimony of truth was worth the price that Joseph was called upon to pay to obtain it.

The things of God are infinitely preferable to anything that can be offered to you here in this world.

(As an aside, Christ has a cheery temperament. Joseph has a cheery temperament. Be of good cheer.)

He—God—wants to have upon the earth again His family. But we must respond—**we**. This is your dispensation; this is your time. You came down here with the intent of living and finding the things that will bring you back. This is your opportunity. Don't let some other group claim that it doesn't belong to you. These scriptures are only going to be fulfilled when enough people awake and arise to realize that it is devolving upon you the obligation to find, to heed, to seek, to search, to pray, to obey, and to form what is necessary in order to fulfill the promises and the covenants that were made to the fathers.

This restoration merely got its toe in the door in the day of Joseph Smith—and hardly even that. The prophecies and the promises and the time and the opportunity are upon us. The question is: Is this generation gonna be just as careless, just as indifferent as the one when

last a real prophet's voice was heard among us? When Joseph Smith could tell you, "I know He lives, because I've seen Him." When Joseph Smith could say, "God commanded me that I should bear record of Him, because I have seen Him." It has been too long—too long—between that moment and today. And it's time now that we stop running away from the conflict. It's time for us to be valiant once again. Do not be fearful. Cowardice and fear are the opposite of faith.

If Joseph Smith, in the ruins of 1838, can write the testimony that we find in the history of Joseph Smith as an act of audacious courage and faith and confidence in the work of God that he was pursuing, despite the ruin that he saw the church existed in at that moment, if Joseph could do that, why can't you?

I don't care what a tattered ruin is that you see around you today. Zion can come.

There is nothing more delightful, there is nothing more delicious, there is nothing more exciting than the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

At the end of the whole thing, when you get all the way to the end, you can take Mormonism and go all the way back to James 1:5 and say, all Joseph is doing is saying that James 1:5 is true and it works. Therefore, you ought to attempt it. Take all the ordinances, take all of the promises, take everything that has been delivered and realize that all of that is simply God cheerleading you to reconnect with Him, and have an authentic experience. When that happens then the religion is alive. Then it matters. But it's living in you, it's not living in some chapel, it's not living in some temple, it's living in you. That's the objective of the original.

The work of God really is of deep import. We must respect it as a serious matter to contemplate. "Light-mindedness" doesn't have a single thing to do with a sense of humor or laughter. 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 because you treat it lightly. I don't care how much you laugh—and yes, God has a sense of humor. 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 ten talks [40 Years in Mormonism] 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.

There remains great work yet to be done. Receive my covenant and abide in it, not as in the former time 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 those 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 with 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. And so I ask you, What of the wheat? Let your pride, and your envy, and your fears depart from you. 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.

The foregoing excerpts were taken from:

- Denver's talk titled "Personal Revelation", given in Sandy, Utah on August 16, 2008;
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #1 titled "Be of Good Cheer" given in Boise, ID on September 10th, 2013;
- The presentation of Denver's paper titled "Was There an Original", given at the Sunstone Symposium on July 29, 2016;
- Denver's remarks during the Conference Q&A session in St. George, UT on March 19th, 2017; and
- The presentation of "Answer and Covenant", given at the Covenant of Christ Conference in Boise, ID on September 3rd, 2017.